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Walking the Streets of Florence: From the Renaissance to the Present

Imagine a world where:

- Street markets
- Smell smoke from a nearby blacksmith
- Roads of dirt, with footprints of people and livestock alike
- People wearing clothing very different from me and you
- Speaking a language you may not understand
- Politics, law, art, science, history—topics of all sorts

You might be asking yourself, “Where am I?” “Why am I here?”

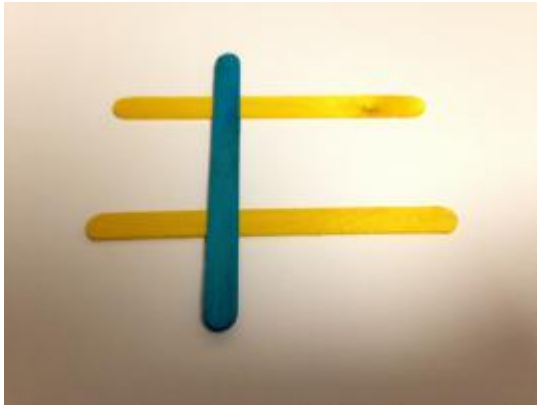
Well, you’re currently in Florence, Italy. 15th century Florence to be exact. And if you ask any of these people why anyone would come to a place like this... [slides] they would tell you one thing and one thing only. For IDEAS.

That’s the main point I would like to drive home today, that the city of Florence is a lively city that has fostered amazing ideas and raised some of the greatest intellectuals in the history of the world. We’ll start with the Renaissance, the time and place where it all began, and see how things have evolved over time, all the way through modernity.

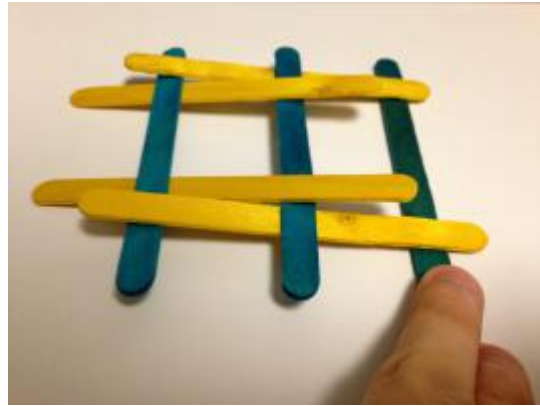
First we have the Dark Ages, hence, a black slide. Very dark. Europe faced a lot of conflict, political, religious, you name it. Black Death. In Italy, a combination of factors led to each city being very protective and its own entity. No unity. If you go to Florence today, you can still see city walls surrounding the main area of the city.

How to Build a Freestanding Bridge!

Step 1: Arrange three popsicle sticks as pictured. The parallel ones are the sides of your bridge.



Step 4: Add another horizontal one (like step 2) below the two sides you just placed.



Step 2: Add a horizontal one on the bottom.

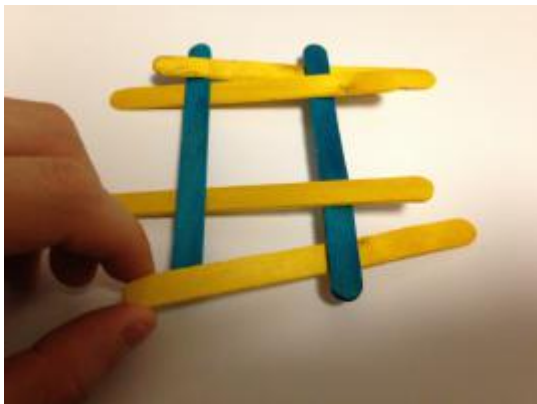


Step 5: Add two more sides weaved through the horizontal sticks.

Hint: I found it helpful to hold the “working end” of the bridge up. (pictured).



Step 3: Weave two more sides through the two horizontal sticks. (can be tricky!)



Step 6: See if it stands up! Can you put weight on it? How big can you make the bridge? Just repeat steps 4-5 indefinitely.