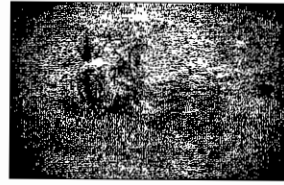


Leonardo da Vinci

FAMOUSLY DESCRIBED BY ONE biographer as "the most relentlessly curious man in history," da Vinci was many different things over the course of his extraordinary life. He was the man who painted *The Last Supper* and the *Mona Lisa* and was court artist to various royals and aristocrats. He was also a thinker and inventor whose interests extended to virtually everything: flight, human anatomy, mathematics, optics, weapons design, and mechanics.



Da Vinci's thirst for experimentation and knowledge went hand-in-hand with a tendency to start works but not complete them. This quality was noted in an early biography: "It is clear that Leonardo began many things and never finished one of them, since it seemed to him that the hand was not able to attain to the perfection of art in carrying out things which he imagined." Among the projects da Vinci left unfinished were two planned equestrian monuments and the *Battle of Anghiari*, a wall painting that was to have stood across from a painting by Michelangelo—thus, pitting the two giants of the Renaissance (who reportedly disliked each other intensely) against each other.

One of the equestrian monuments in question was commissioned by Ludovico Sforza, da Vinci's first important patron. While the monument did not make it beyond the clay model, another commission from the family made the artist famous: *The Last Supper* (c. 1495–1498). Among the most celebrated aspects of this painting is its variety of gestures and facial expressions—something of great concern to da Vinci, who combed Milan in search of expressive facial types and models for the apostles' hands.

Several years after completing *The Last Supper*, da Vinci began the *Mona Lisa* (1503–1506). A portrait of Lisa Gherardini commissioned by her merchant husband to celebrate the birth of their son and their acquisition of a new house, the *Mona Lisa* has inspired endless fascination and speculation, largely stemming from the subject's famously inscrutable smile. King Francis I of France bought the painting for 4,000 gold florins (equal to \$1,470 today) and brought it to France, where it later entered the Louvre.

Da Vinci spent the final years of his career in the service of the French monarch, where he was involved with the design of court festivities, an irrigation project, and drawings for a royal palace.

200 Daily Dose of Knowledge

standards S3a S3b S3c S4b S5a S5c S5d S6d S7c RI.6.1 RI.6.2 RI.6.4 RST.6-8.2

OUR GOAL IS TO FIND OUT ABOUT SCIENTISTS AND THEIR WORK

parent signature

daVinci painted the Mona Lisa. Give details surrounding this work of art

Why did daVinci Search Milan for expressive facial types?

How did daVinci spend his final years?

Cite all information used for your answers

Lexile level 940