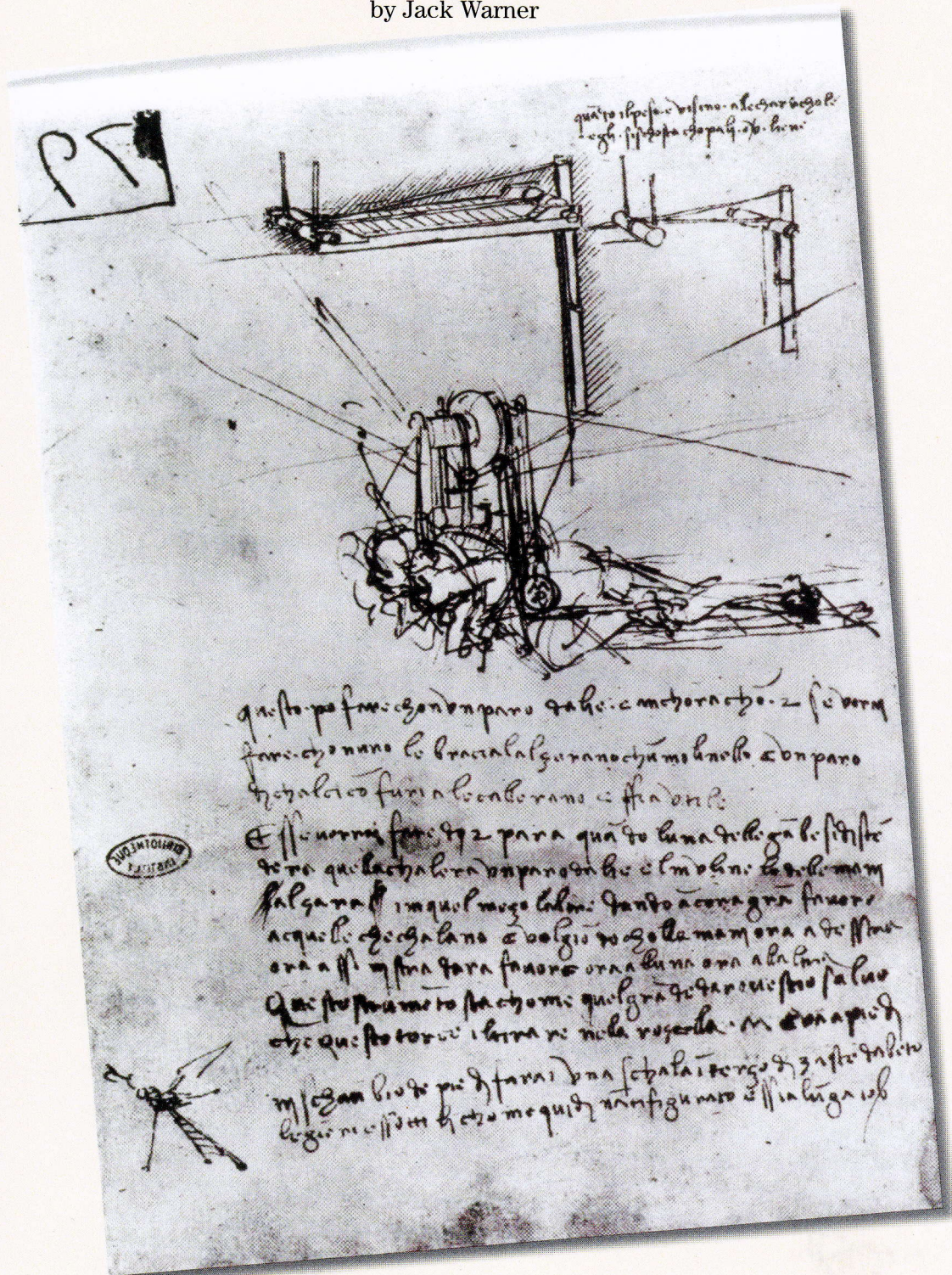


Leonardo da Vinci

by Jack Warner



- 1 Leonardo da Vinci was born on April 15, 1452, in a small town near Florence, Italy. He was a very talented boy who could do many things. He could draw, paint, and sculpt statues. Leonardo also had a wonderful singing voice. Leonardo's father noticed his son's talent and sent him to Florence to study art.
- 2 Leonardo impressed many people at a young age. One time his master was working on a large painting. He asked Leonardo to paint an angel. When Leonardo finished the angel, his master said Leonardo's angel was so much better than his own. The master said he would never paint again.
- 3 Many people thought Leonardo was smart and handsome. He was also a vegetarian (someone who does not eat meat). It is said that Leonardo loved animals so much that he would buy animals at the market and set them free.
- 4 In 1477, Leonardo da Vinci left the school. He took many jobs and in 1482 began working for the Duke of Milan. Leonardo painted, sculpted, and designed buildings for the Duke.
- 5 However, Leonardo sometimes failed to finish what he had started. The reason was that Leonardo kept stopping his work to do research. If he wanted to draw a horse or a plant, he wanted to know everything about it. This resulted in Leonardo finishing only six works in seventeen years.
- 6 Leonardo was once asked to make a bronze sculpture of the late Duke of Milan on horseback. At first the statue was supposed to be life-sized. Then the Duke's son said he wanted the statue to be four times larger. That meant the statue would be over twenty-three feet high and weigh eighty tons! Leonardo spent many years studying horses and making sketches. Leonardo had only finished a twenty-two-foot clay model when France invaded Milan. Leonardo was forced to leave.
- 7 In 1490, Leonardo began recording his research in notebooks. He made thousands of drawings. He drew sketches about architecture, mechanics, and the human anatomy. He drew birds, plants, legs, arms, and faces. There were many other odd drawings that people still do not understand to this day.
- 8 There was also something very curious about Leonardo's notes. Some people thought he had written everything down in a different language. It turned out that Leonardo had actually written his notes backward! When looked at normally, the letters were all gibberish. To read the letters properly, one had to hold up the paper to a mirror.
- 9 People were, and still are, amazed by Leonardo's notebooks. Some of the drawings were more than pretty sketches. They showed how birds fly. Leonardo showed how birds use their wings to fly and their tails to guide them through the air. He also drew how birds use their wings to slow down before they land.
- 10 Some of his strange drawings were for inventions. He made drawings of aircraft, engines, and parachutes. Many of his inventions came to him when he watched birds flying through the air. In his notebooks you can also find a machine designed to cool the air. You can find snorkels that help swimmers breathe underwater. He also made drawings for tanks and submarines. We can see many of the things found in Leonardo's notebooks in the world today.
- 11 Leonardo da Vinci died on May 2, 1519, at the age of sixty-seven. Most of his paintings were not finished when he died. However, he did finish two famous paintings: the *Mona Lisa* and *The Last Supper*.
- 12 Leonardo was not only a great artist. He was also a great inventor and thinker who was centuries before his time.

COMPREHENSION

A Choose the best ending for each sentence. Write *a*, *b*, or *c*.

- 1 Leonardo was a man who
 - a** wasted his artistic skill.
 - b** never finished anything.
 - c** was ahead of his time.
- 2 Leonardo took so much time finishing his work because he was
 - a** slow and tired.
 - b** curious and careful.
 - c** eager and excited.
- 3 The master said he would never paint again because
 - a** he didn't like to paint anymore.
 - b** Leonardo's angels were much better than his own.
 - c** he wanted to sculpt instead.

- 4 Because Leonardo drew about architecture, mechanics, and anatomy, we can conclude that he
 - a** was interested in many different subjects.
 - b** wanted to be a doctor.
 - c** wanted to sell his sketches for money.
- 5 Because Leonardo sang and painted, we can conclude that he
 - a** liked to read as well.
 - b** was disliked by jealous rivals.
 - c** was a talented artist who could do many things.

LEARN ABOUT WORDS

B Often you can find out the meaning of a word by seeing how it is used in a story. The other words in the story give you clues.

Find the word in the story that best fits each meaning. (A paragraph number tells you where to look.) Write the word.

- 1 figures of people or animals carved in wood or metal (1)
- 2 great ability; expertness in doing things (1)
- 3 good-looking (3)
- 4 went in and attacked (6)
- 5 the science of designing buildings (7)
- 6 meaningless language (8)
- 7 direct; lead (9)

C A word may have more than one meaning. Its meaning will depend on how it is used.

The *fly* buzzed around the room.
The bird will *fly* to its nest.

Look at each word in **bold type** below. Note the paragraph number. Look back at the paragraph. Which meaning does the word have there? Write *a* or *b*.

- 8 **draw** (1)
 - a** make a picture of
 - b** cause to move by pulling
- 9 **master** (2)
 - a** become expert in
 - b** someone who has power over another person
- 10 **free** (3)
 - a** without cost
 - b** not under control of someone

THINK ABOUT IT

- D** A fact is something that can be proved. It is a true statement. An opinion is what someone thinks. It cannot be proved.

Fact: Leonardo died in 1519.

Opinion: He was the best artist.

Read each sentence. If it can be proved, write *Fact*. If it cannot be proved, write *Opinion*.

- 1 Leonardo studied art in Florence.
- 2 You should know all about a horse before you paint one.
- 3 Millions of people see the *Mona Lisa* every year.
- 4 Leonardo wasted his talent by not finishing his work.
- 5 Leonardo wrote backward.

- E** The words *a*, *an*, and *the* are called articles. You use *a* if the next word tells about one thing and begins with a consonant.

Leonardo painted *a* masterpiece.

You use *an* if the next word tells about one thing and begins with a vowel.

He painted *an* amazing picture.

You use *the* if the next word names a particular person, place, or thing. You also use *the* if the next word tells about more than one.

The pictures are in *the* museum.

Read the sentences. Which article in parentheses () fits each sentence? Write the word.

- 6 Leonardo planned (a, an) unusually large statue.
- 7 Leonardo painted *The Last Supper* on (a, an) damp wall.

- 8 (A, The) notes that Leonardo wrote were hard to read.

- 9 Leonardo made (a, an) exact drawing of a flying machine.

- 10 (An, The) sketch Leonardo made of a car is amazing.

- F** Read each question. Write *a* or *b*.

- 11 Which sentence says that Leonardo tried to learn more?

- a Leonardo recognized birds.
- b Leonardo studied birds.

- 12 Which sentence says that he had a hard time walking?

- a He struggled on the path.
- b He raced on the path.

- 13 Which sentence says that people were disappointed?

- a They felt Leonardo had wasted his skills.
- b They felt Leonardo had practiced his skills.

- 14 Which sentence says that people found out something?

- a People announced that the notes were written backward.
- b People discovered that the notes were written backward.

- 15 Which sentence says that people were surprised?

- a People were pleased with his drawings.
- b People were amazed by his drawings.