

Student Writing Samples

Student Sample #1 An Expository Biography

Leonardo Da Vinci

I was always a very curious little boy who used to ask many questions. My father was very proud of me because I was always so busy with imaginative ideas. My father was a notary and belonged to a family in which all the men for over 200 years had been notaries.

I was born in a small Italian town called Vinci, in 1452. When I was little, I loved to draw things like plants, insects, flowers, animals, and birds. I lived during the Renaissance time. I became famous because I could do so many other things like sculpting, writing, science, music, inventing, math and architectural designs. I used to design many churches, bridges, and occasionally a town.

I used to make many notes about my art because I never wanted to forget an idea. I would write backwards so that no one around me would copy my notes, and then to read them, I would hold them up to a mirror.

My father took me to Florence, Italy, when I was a teenager, to learn about being an artist at the workshop of the famous Andrea del Verrocchio. I was one of the first artists to paint the mother of Jesus smiling and playing with her baby. I was asked to paint "St. Jerome" and the "Adoration of the Magi," but never finished.

About 1482, I decided to go to another great art city, Milan. One of the first things I did when I got to Milan was paint "Virgin of the Rocks." The painting was very important in the history of art. Before it was painted, most artists

would outline their people and use very flat backgrounds. A lot of people must have liked "Virgin of the Rocks," because a few years later I painted another one. Before I moved to Milan, I promised the Duke of Milan that I would make him a war machine to protect the city against the Duke's enemies. It was very unusual for me because I was a very gentle person who hated war.

My greatest work was done for the wall of a dining room that was used by the monks at the church of Santa Maria Dlle Grazie, in Milan. The "Last Supper" shows Jesus with his closest friends, the Twelve Apostles.

Today, paintings of the "Last Supper" are hard to see because the paint is chipping off. I was always trying to make my own paint.

Some things that happened to my paintings weren't my fault. The bottom of the "Ginevra de' Benci" was cut off and the painting of "Saint Jerome" cut in half and used as a table top. Someone even cut the sides off of my most famous painting, the "Mona Lisa." No matter where you stand, the "Mona Lisa" always looks in your eyes. I died in France in 1519.

BIOGRAPHY RESOURCE

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