

The invention of the Printing Press:

The invention of the printing press in 1440 was the game-changer. Finally, books could be mass produced for far less money and time than the old handwritten methods. Ideas could be spread through libraries, booksellers, and schools in a way that weren't possible before. The spread of books also encouraged the study of literature itself, allowing new ideas to spread and grow as many cities and nations began to establish universities and other schools.

Patronage of Rulers, Popes and Nobles:

As the arts grew, artists needed wealthy patrons to support them, and Renaissance Italy was especially fertile ground. Political changes in the ruling class of Italy shortly before this period had led to the rulers of most of the major city-states being "new men" without much of a political history. They attempted to legitimize themselves with conspicuous investment in and public flaunting of art and architecture.

In addition, the developing bureaucracies of Italy and the rest of Europe generated new demand for highly educated humanists to fill the ranks of governments and bureaucracies. A new political and economic class began to emerge.

The Crusades:

The Crusades were expeditions of Christians, to reconquer the lost areas from infidels. The first crusade was launched in 1088 by Pope Urban. There were 7 more major and some minor crusades. The purpose was to take back Palestine from the Muslims. It was the land where Christ lived and died.

The Crusades failed in their religious purpose but brought in great effects in culture and economic life of Europe. They encouraged trade and commerce, which made Italian state prosperous. There was contact with the Arab world. Scholars could bring back many texts which were lost, since the Roman Kingdom ended. They translated Greek and Arab writings. People discovered Aristotle's classics and discussed his views. This encouraged a new era in learning. This contact with the new world brought in new ideas and gave an impetus to Renaissance.

Similarly, geographical discoveries brought in a change in the outlook of Europeans. They developed a spirit of adventure spirit which encouraged the rise of Renaissance.

Trade and Prosperity: