1 Italy had awakened from a thousand-year slumber, or so it seemed to fifteenth-century Italians. They felt that the fifth-century sacking of Rome by invading tribes was the bitter pill that had put the world to sleep. They began to call the centuries that followed the Dark Ages and the time period in which they lived the Renaissance, or “rebirth.” Was their comparison fair? Historians disagree. What is clear is that the Renaissance was a remarkable time of discovery and rediscovery that changed the world. . . .

2 Renaissance Italians turned to ancient Rome as the model for a great civilization. Lawyers studied Roman law. Others discovered the joy of reading classical books and became interested in poetry, history, and philosophy. Before long, scholars were rediscovering Greek and Roman art, science, and literature.

3 In the Middle Ages, the Church had taught people to think about the afterlife. During the Renaissance, people wanted to enjoy life on Earth. Enthusiasm for games, sports, and entertainment blossomed. Music flourished. . . .

4 A “Renaissance man” was supposed to be skilled in all the arts and sciences. A perfect example was Leonardo da Vinci, who was a painter, sculptor, architect, musician, engineer, and scientist. . . .

5 Art stimulated interest in anatomy, mathematics, and even physics. Leonardo’s famous flying machine, for example, was designed to make a decorative angel flap its wings when pulled through the streets during Carnival. Leonardo also studied anatomy by dissecting human bodies, enabling him to draw detailed studies of human figures.

6 The Renaissance achievement that had the greatest effect on the modern world was the printing press. Invented by a German craftsman named Johannes Gutenberg around 1455, the press revolutionized education and standardized language. Before the printing press, books were reproduced by hand. As a result, few were readily available, and they were very expensive. With the invention of printing, the number of books in circulation increased, and the cost of a book decreased. As more and more people bought books, the ideas of the Renaissance spread quickly. . . .

7 As the decades passed, the artistic, cultural, scientific, and intellectual achievements of the period between 1350 and 1550 gradually affected all levels of society. For scholars, philosophers, and artists of the time, the Renaissance led Western civilization from the Middle Ages to modern times.
Answer the questions. Mark your answers to questions 1–3 on the Answer Form to the right.

1. According to the article, why was Leonardo da Vinci a perfect example of a “Renaissance man”?
   A. He had a great enthusiasm for games and sports.
   B. He was skilled in all areas of the arts and sciences.
   C. He designed and built a famous flying machine.
   D. He wanted more people to study anatomy and science.

2. How did the printing press change people’s lives in the modern world?
   A. It had little effect, as most people never learned how to read.
   B. More people could afford to read books, and Renaissance ideas spread.
   C. It had a positive effect on people who studied human anatomy.
   D. More people were exposed to printed songs, and Renaissance music spread.

3. Read these sentences from the passage.
   Renaissance Italians turned to ancient Rome as the model for a great civilization. . . . Before long, scholars were rediscovering Greek and Roman art, science, and literature.

   Based on these sentences, what can you infer about the Renaissance?
   A. The Renaissance made Italians wish they had lived in a different time.
   B. The Renaissance helped the Italian people become more civil and cultured.
   C. The Renaissance in Italy introduced new and old ideas from the Greeks and Romans.
   D. The Renaissance in Italy was influenced by ancient Greek and Roman ideas.
Read the biography. Then answer the questions that follow.

from "From the Notebooks of Leonardo"

by Nick D'Alto, Odyssey

1. The chain and gears that power your bicycle were first designed in 1490. By whom? Of course... Leonardo da Vinci!

2. It was also Leonardo who invented the first contact lenses, the monkey wrench, the rotisserie oven, and the diving snorkel. He even developed an early form of air conditioning—five centuries ago!

3. Although most of Leonardo da Vinci's inventions never actually were made during his time, he still may have been the greatest inventor who ever lived. In his remarkable notebooks, the Italian master designed futuristic devices that were centuries ahead of their time. Some of his ideas still look modern today.

4. When armies were still using catapults, Leonardo invented a rapid-fire machine gun, and envisioned a rocket that would travel three miles into the sky. He even invented a submarine, and designed diving suits for the crew.

5. How did Leonardo dream up so many great ideas? A true "Renaissance man," he was interested in everything, and saw each idea as connected to another. Drawing the petals of a flower might inspire him to create a new type of gear, or a multibladed shield to protect a soldier, or even a radiating system of highways. You might try this creativity technique yourself.

6. Leonardo filled notebooks with thousands of sketches for his inventions, often crowding many ideas on the same page, jumping from one concept to another.

7. Today, he is remembered as one of the first modern engineers. He emphasized the role of experiment, and constructed models to test his ideas. His drawings are so detailed that modern craftsmen can build replicas of his remarkable machines, and watch them work.

8. Do you want to be a great inventor, too? Then try building some ingenious inventions from the notebooks of Leonardo da Vinci.
How did drawing inspire Leonardo da Vinci's inventions?

A. Drawing helped him to record and remember his countless ideas.
B. Drawing was how he learned to build models of all of his inventions.
C. Drawing helped him to see how different ideas were connected.
D. Drawing sketches for his inventions emphasized their importance.

Which sentence from the passage best shows why Leonardo da Vinci may have been the greatest inventor who ever lived?

A. "He even developed an early form of air conditioning—five centuries ago!"
B. "In his remarkable notebooks, the Italian master designed futuristic devices that were centuries ahead of their time."
C. "When armies were still using catapults, Leonardo invented a rapid-fire machine gun. . . ."
D. "He emphasized the role of experiment, and constructed models to test his ideas."

Summarize the reasons Leonardo da Vinci's ideas still seem modern today. Include three details from the passage in your summary.
from "Johann Finds a Way . . ."

by Louise L. Greene, Appleseeds

1 Johann (YO-hahn) Gutenberg made quite an impression on the world. He invented the mechanical printing press in Germany more than 560 years ago. His invention changed the way people got information, and it changed the world.

2 Before the printing press, books were rare and expensive. And they were written by hand. Books were like treasures in a museum, seen only by the few people who could read. Almost no one actually owned a book. But Gutenberg’s printing press changed that.

3 The idea of a printing press is simple. Instead of being written by hand, words are stamped, or printed, onto a page. Imagine a set of rubber stamps of the alphabet. If you wanted to write a message, you could ink each letter you needed, then stamp it onto the page. You would need only one copy of each letter, because you could use each one over and over. . . .

4 Gutenberg’s printing press took this idea even further. He figured out how to bunch letters into words, words into sentences, and sentences into whole pages. Then he could ink the page, and stamp, or print a whole page of words at once. And he could print that same page as many times as he wanted. Suddenly, books could be made much more quickly. . . .

5 On his press, Gutenberg printed 300 copies of a book he knew everyone would want: the Bible. The Bible was the most important book in Europe at that time, but few people ever had a chance to see one.

6 Gutenberg’s Bibles started a huge demand for books. Everybody wanted one. In the year 1455, all the printed books in Europe would have fit into one horse-drawn wagon. Fifty years later, there were millions of books on many topics, and printing presses all across Europe.

7 Today, we have come even further. Millions of people have computers and printers in their homes, allowing them to print anything they can think of. Where will printing be in another 100 years? Just imagine . . .
Answer Parts A and B below.

**Part A**

Based on the article, which of the following statements about the printing press is true?

A. The printing press was a machine that most people could use in their homes.
B. The printing press was a machine that took more than fifty years to build.
C. The printing press gave people access to information they never had before.
D. The printing press gave people the ability to have access to daily news.

**Part B**

Which sentence from the article best supports the answer to Part A?

A. "On his press, Gutenberg printed 300 copies of a book he knew everyone would want: the Bible."
B. "Fifty years later, there were millions of books on many topics, and printing presses all across Europe."
C. "Millions of people have computers and printers in their homes, allowing them to print anything they can think of."
D. "Books were like treasures in a museum, seen only by the few people who could read."

The inspiration behind Gutenberg's press was the idea of

A. inking each single letter of a stamp by hand.
B. repeating the printing of a whole page of words.
C. trying to meet the great demand for books.
D. wanting to publish millions of books to sell.