



# Leonardo da Vinci

## Picture Study

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# Self-portrait

Leonardo da Vinci, c. 1512



Ginevra de' Benci

Leonardo da Vinci, c. 1474-1478



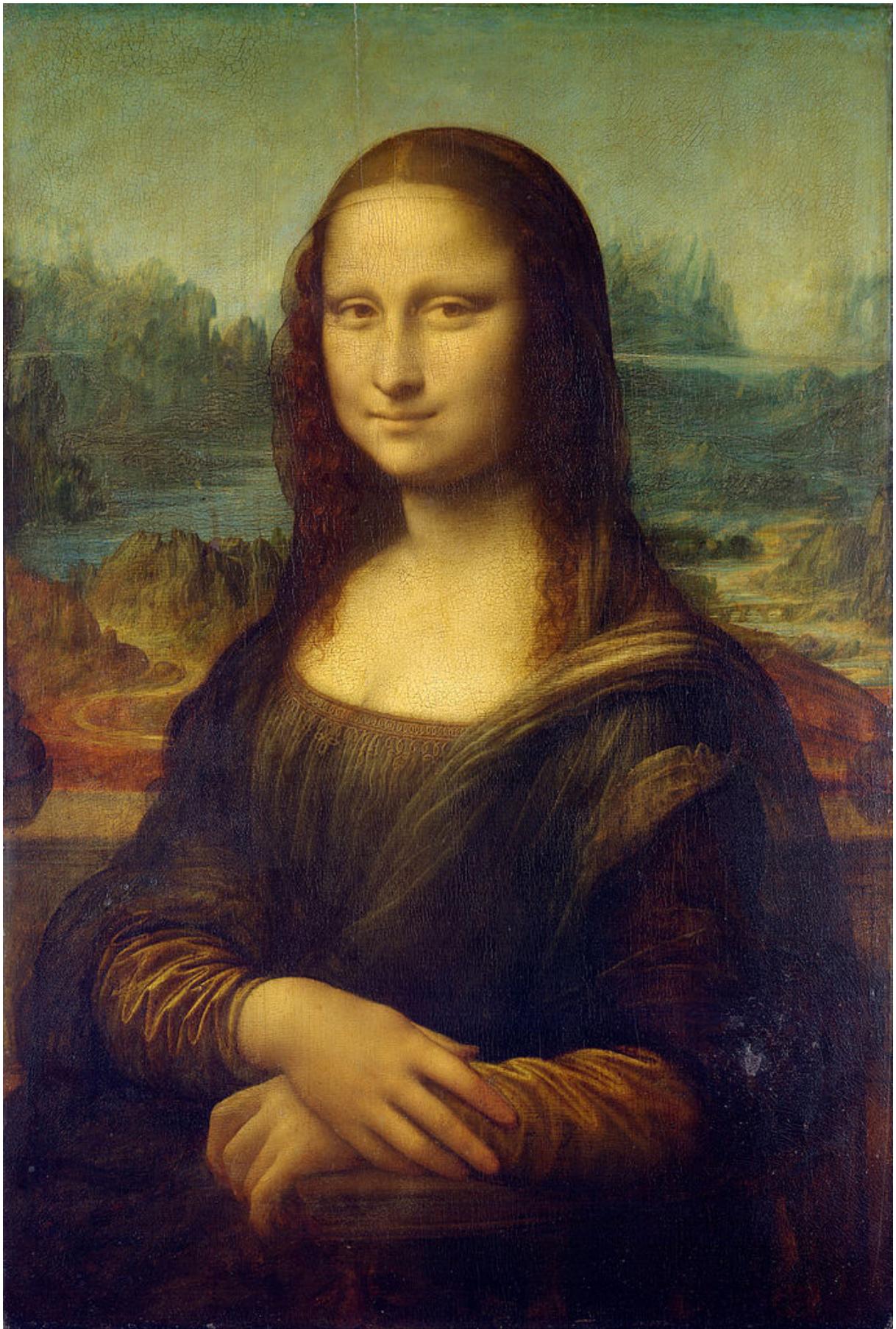
Lady with an Ermine  
Leonardo da Vinci, 1489-1490



LADY DELLA PERONIERE  
LEONARDO DA VINCI

# Mona Lisa

Leonardo da Vinci, c. 1503-1519



Virgin and Child with St. Anne

Leonardo da Vinci, 1503



The Last Supper  
Leonardo da Vinci, 1495-1498



# Leonardo da Vinci

## ARTIST BIO NOTES

*These notes are provided to aid the teacher's own background research on the artist and his or her works. This is not meant to be presented to students as a list of facts and dates. When you first introduce the artist, tell students where the artist fits into the timeline of history, and where the artist lived and worked. Add a few more details with each new picture, but the information you share should be short and simple unless your students ask questions or wish to know more. Keep the main focus of your Picture Study time on observation and narration of the details of the picture.*

*Note: if a footnote appears with a fact that is not a direct quote, the fact comes from ONE source only.*

## LIFE AND CHARACTER

- ◆ 1452-1519
- ◆ Born in Vinci, Italy (from which he got his last name) as an illegitimate son to a wealthy man and a peasant woman
- ◆ Move to Florence early on
- ◆ 1482, worked for Duke of Milan. 1502, worked for another duke. Worked as an engineer and architect in military affairs all while producing art, such as The Last Supper
- ◆ Worked for two kings and the pope's brother
- ◆ Died in France while in the service of King Francis I

## TRAINING AND CAREER

- ◆ Around age 15, his father procured for him an apprenticeship to leading Florentine painter and sculptor at the time Andrea del Verrocchio; his contribution of an angel in a work by his tutor displays more skill than his tutor
- ◆ 1472, joined a painter's guild in Florence

- ◆ Around 26, began work on his own
- ◆ Worked on commissions; took in apprentices and pupils
- ◆ 1507, court painter to the king of France
- ◆ Around 1514, worked in Rome for the Pope's brother
- ◆ 1516, moved to France to work for King Francis I
- ◆ Known for works going unfinished

### ART STYLE AND ACHIEVEMENTS

- ◆ Credited with being the first contributor to High Renaissance art
- ◆ Influential in art and far-seeing in science (scientific ideas were not published or created, but were validated by modern discoveries, such his ideas about the moon's effect on tide)
- ◆ His art always influenced by his scientific mind; used the powers of keen observations to figure out how to make his paintings look true to life
- ◆ One of first to create a more faded perspective in landscape backgrounds.
- ◆ Innovative in crafting emotional, life-like compositions, adding character and depth
- ◆ Only around 15 of his paintings survive because he often didn't finish a painting and experimented with different methods for painting (such as oil on the wall for The Last Supper).
- ◆ Drew, but never finished or created, wondrous plans for sculptures and architecture
- ◆ Praised as the human definition of the Renaissance man for his prodigious work in many branches of art and science
- ◆ *Mona Lisa* - seems to have loved the painting because he took it with him on travels; four years to paint
- ◆ *Mona Lisa* – Da Vinci noted for excelling in the following techniques in this work: sfumato-tiny changes between colors as they become more distant, creating smoky effect; chiaroscuro-contrasts of light and shadow to define forms.

- ◆ *Mona Lisa* recently theorized to be a self-portrait of Da Vinci. Most scholars agree that the portrait is of the wife of a merchant who commissioned the painting. A group of researchers, though, wish to dig up Da Vinci's skull and reconstruct what he looked like in order to compare his likeness to the famous portrait.
- ◆ His composition (interaction of characters, symmetry around Jesus) and his choice of depicting the moment Jesus announces his betrayal in *The Last Supper* set him apart from earlier painters of the Last Supper.
- ◆ *The Last Supper* considered the first artwork of the High Renaissance

### ARTIST BIO LINKS

<http://www.wga.hu/frames-e.html?/bio/l/leonardo/biograph.html> (good detail, long)

<http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/15440a.htm> (detailed, long)

<http://www.nationalgallery.org.uk/artists/leonardo-da-vinci> (interesting detail, medium length)

<http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/336408/Leonardo-da-Vinci> (very good detail, very long)

<http://phys.org/news183667169.html> (Mona Lisa/Self-Portrait article)

### PICTURE SOURCES

[http://www.scottzagar.com/arthistory/images\\_gallery/da\\_vinci\\_003\\_self\\_portrait\\_595.jpg](http://www.scottzagar.com/arthistory/images_gallery/da_vinci_003_self_portrait_595.jpg)

[http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Leonardo\\_da\\_Vinci\\_-\\_Ginevra\\_de%27\\_Benci\\_-\\_Google\\_Art\\_Project.jpg](http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Leonardo_da_Vinci_-_Ginevra_de%27_Benci_-_Google_Art_Project.jpg)

<http://artseverydayliving.com/blog/wp-content/uploads/2012/04/Leonarda-da-vinci-woman-ermine.jpg>

[http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/f/f2/Leonardo\\_da\\_Vinci\\_-\\_Mona\\_Lisa\\_%28La\\_Gioconda%29\\_-\\_WGA12711.jpg](http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/f/f2/Leonardo_da_Vinci_-_Mona_Lisa_%28La_Gioconda%29_-_WGA12711.jpg)

[http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Leonardo\\_da\\_Vinci\\_-\\_Virgin\\_and\\_Child\\_with\\_St\\_Anne\\_C2RMF\\_retouched.jpg](http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Leonardo_da_Vinci_-_Virgin_and_Child_with_St_Anne_C2RMF_retouched.jpg)

[http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Mona\\_Lisa,\\_by\\_Leonardo\\_da\\_Vinci,\\_from\\_C2RMF\\_retouched.jpg](http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Mona_Lisa,_by_Leonardo_da_Vinci,_from_C2RMF_retouched.jpg)

[http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Leonardo\\_da\\_Vinci\\_\(1452-1519\)\\_-\\_The\\_Last\\_Supper\\_\(1495-1498\).jpg](http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Leonardo_da_Vinci_(1452-1519)_-_The_Last_Supper_(1495-1498).jpg)