

**Overview of Unit 1: Transition to The Modern World:**  
**Renaissance and Reformation**  
**(Chapters 1 and 2)**

The end of the Medieval period (Middle Ages) corresponds with the beginning of the modern age as manifested by the Renaissance, the Reformation, and the beginning of modern nations.

1. To better understand the modern age, you need to understand what came before
2. Key questions regarding the transition:
  - a. Did the modern age represent a complete break from the medieval past?
  - b. Did various aspects of the Medieval period continue on into the modern age?
  - c. What were the middle ages all about?
  - d. What happened to the middle ages?

The two main institutions of the Middle Ages

- the feudal manor
- the Christian (Roman Catholic Church)
  - How did these institutional hierarchies compete with one another?
  - How did they reinforce one another?
  - Dilemma for both institutions: do you remain true to your original agenda and philosophies, or do you adapt to the changing times?
    - If you remain steadfast, then life passes you by
    - If you change with the times, then you lose your original essence
  - Identify the basic characteristics of each institution to then assess what happened: in both cases, success led to failure

Ultimately, the purpose of each institution was self sufficiency and self perpetuation- the irony is that both institutions, designed to maintain order and stability (hierarchies lock people in) eventually led to major changes and degrees of unheard of political, social, geographic, demographic, economic, and philosophical flexibility.

What were the specific challenges that undermined the 1000 years of medieval realities? (*get specific evidence*)

- Internal AND external challenges to the feudal hierarchy
- Internal AND external challenges to the church hierarchy

What were the factors that gave rise to a “renaissance” in both Italy and elsewhere in Europe, and how did this “re-birth” manifest itself politically, economically, demographically, artistically, philosophically, and religiously?

Was the Renaissance and the Reformation truly new conceptions of

1. humanity
2. the world
3. and humanity’s place in that world

Was there any “overlap” between medieval concepts and the modern age?

See the specific items from the summer assignment regarding the transition from the medieval to the modern way of life. This transition arguably occurred over a 250 year period from roughly 1300 to 1550. Yet, the fact that the following were all doing their thing at the same time strongly suggests that things changed because they were ready to change:

- Michelangelo’s *Sistine Chapel*: 1512
- Machiavelli’s *The Prince*: 1513
- Martin Luther’s *95 Theses*: 1517
- Henry VIII’s *Act of Supremacy*: 1534
- John Calvin’s *Institutes of the Christian Religion*: 1536
- Nicolaus Copernicus’ *On the Revolution of Heavenly Spheres*: 1543

