

46 - da Vinci

Who was da Vinci? What was he famous for? And did he really collect dead bodies so he could study their organs? He did! He also wrote his notes backward!

Besides being a scientist and inventor, da Vinci was an artist. His most famous works include, 'The Last Supper', 'The Mona Lisa', and 'The Vitruvian Man'. They incorporate da Vinci's scientific studies to elevate his art. For example, his knowledge of anatomy, how skin connects to muscle, and muscle connects to bone added realism to his portraits. His knowledge of Geometry improved his framing and composition. And his use of color theory, light and shadow, and depth of field helped bring his action scenes to life. All this, combined with insatiable curiosity helped turn a middle-class boy, with no formal education, into the world's most famous polymath: a person of wide ranging knowledge. Maybe one day you too can become an artist, a scientist, or both!

Activities

1. Would you like to be an artist like Leo? Print [this](#) template and you too can make your own version of the Mona Lisa. Should she have purple hair, a green dress or perhaps a polka dot dress and blue hair?
2. Would you also like to be a scientist? Sometimes scientists need to try something many times before they find a solution that works. [Here](#) is a paper glider you can cut out and put together. How far can you make it fly? Do you have any ideas that would make it fly even further?
3. Do you think you can write backwards or mirrored like da Vinci? Try on your own and then try writing while looking into a mirror. (The words should look right in the mirror) Did that make it easier or harder?

Additional Resources

Da Vinci was one of the world's first engineers. He loved to learn how things worked; how things interacted with the world; and, how inventions could be improved. Children are naturally curious -- and nothing beats hands-on activities. That's where amazing learning happens! Check out this [website](#) full of ideas for building toys that will keep your little inventor busy for hours.

Kid News

Often, we think of writers as older adults, who have years of experience. But, did you know younger people can be excellent writers too? Amanda Gorman is an adult now,

but she was the official Young Poet of Los Angeles when she was only 16 years old! You can read about her beautiful poem, "The Hill We Climb" [here](#). If you would like to read more of her work, she is publishing a book for children!¹

¹ This activity guide is for the Who Smarted? podcast www.WhoSmarted.com