**Renaissance Primary Sources**

**Primary Source #1: Self Portrait of a [Renaissance] Man**

**Frame of Reference: The following is an excerpt of Self Portrait of a Renaissance Man. The author was Alberti, a famous writer during the Italian Renaissance in the 1450s. The point of this text was to describe the ideal “Renaissance Man,” something that every man should aspire to be. As you read the source, consider the physical and mental qualities “Renaissance men” were expected to have.**

“His genius was so **versatile** that you might almost judge all the fine arts to be his... He played ball, hurled the **javelin**, ran, leaped, wrestled, and above all **delighted** in the steep ascent of mountains... He learned music without teachers and his **compositions** were approved by learned musicians... When he had begun to mature in years […], he devoted himself entirely to the study of letters, and spent some years of labor on canon and civil law... At the age of twenty-four he turned to physics and the mathematical arts... Thus showing by example that men can do anything with themselves.”

**Word Bank**

**Versatile – To be skilled/smart at multiple hobbies**

**Delighted – To be happy with or enjoy**

**Javelin – A sport where a heavy stick is thrown as far as possible**

**Compositions – Musical writings**

1) What are some examples of skills an ideal “Renaissance man” should have?

2) How does this source reflect the Renaissance value of “humanism?”

3) Explain a quotation that demonstrates the source’s connection to humanism.

**Primary Source #2: The Prince**

**Frame of Reference: One of the most famous writers of the Italian Renaissance was Machiavelli. Machiavelli wrote The Prince, which was a book intended to teach political leaders how to best rule their country if they wished to stay in power and maintain order. The book was published in 1513; as you read, consider whether or not you disagree with Machiavelli’s description of the best leader.**

Upon this a question arises: [is it better for a leader to be feared or loved?] It may be answered that one should wish to be both, but, because it is difficult to unite them in one person, it is much safer to be feared than loved, when, of the two. Because this is to be asserted in general of men, that they are ungrateful, fickle, false, cowardly, covetous, and as long as you [are feared] they are yours entirely; they will offer you their blood, property, life, and children […].

And that prince who, relying entirely on their promises […]is ruined; because friendships that are obtained by payments, and not by **nobility** or greatness of mind, may indeed be earned, but they are not secured, and in time of need cannot be relied upon.

Men have less **scruple** in offending one who is beloved than one who is feared, for love is preserved by the link of **obligation** which, owing to the **baseness** of men, is broken at every opportunity for their advantage; but fear preserved you by a dread of punishment which never fails.

Nevertheless a prince ought to inspire fear in such a way that, if he does not win love, he avoids hatred; because he can **endure** very well being feared whilst he is not hated, which will always be as long as he **abstains** from the property of his citizens and subjects and from their women.

**Word Bank**

**Nobility – In this context, being a great person**

**Scruple – Doubt, hesitation, unwillingness**

**Obligation – Having a duty to someone**

**Baseness – Having a bad or immoral character/personality**

**Endure – To tolerate or survive**

**Abstain – To restrain or stop oneself from doing something**

1) According to Machiavelli, how should a ruler’s subjects feel about their ruler?

2) Explain a quote from the reading that backs up your answer to #1.

3) According to Machiavelli, why is it important for rulers to be “great of mind?”

4) According to Machiavelli, what must a good prince never do?

5) Evaluate: Which of Machiavelli’s teachings do you agree with? Which do you disagree with? Discuss with your group to see if you can reach an agreement or consensus.