

History's Greatest Hits!

ALL ABOUT

LEONARDO DA VINCI

A painter, inventor and all-round supergenius, Leonardo da Vinci rocked Renaissance Italy with his art and ideas. Find out about the life of this legend...

I SHOULD FRY THIS LATER FOR A SNACK.

START

1452

Leonardo da Vinci was born in Vinci, Italy (his name literally means 'Leonard from Vinci'). As a child, Leo loved nature and the great outdoors.

MY HAIR IS LIKE A GIANT BIRD'S NEST.

1460s

When he was a teenager, Leonardo moved to Florence, Italy, where he took painting lessons. Using a technique called **tempera**, the artist mixed colour pigments with water and egg yolk to make paint.

1470s

The genius started scribbling down some 20,000 pages of ideas. He spelled his words **backwards** and **reversed** each letter so his notes only looked normal when **reflected in a mirror**. This 'mirror writing' might have helped protect his ideas from snoops.

1480s

Leonardo sketched designs for **airplanes, helicopters and parachutes** some 500 years before they were actually built. Wow!

1495

Asked by the Duke of Milan to paint a mural for a dining room, Leonardo created **The Last Supper**. People loved the piece and Leo rocketed to superstardom.

1503

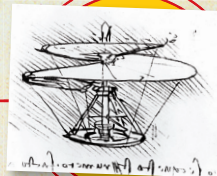
Leo started painting the **Mona Lisa**, the most famous work of art in the world. She appears to smile when you look at her eyes, but then stop when you stare at her lips. Creepy!



METHINKS HIS MAJESTY NEEDS MORE BLING.

1516

Asked to be the **King of France's** official painter, Leonardo went to, um, **France**, where he stayed until his death in 1519!



REFLECTED SIGNATURE

REAL SIGNATURE

LEONARDO, OVER HERE!



Illustrations: Julien Canavezes. Signature © James L. Amos / Corbis; Flying machine © Bibliothèque De l'Institut De France, Paris, France / The Bridgeman Art Library; Mona Lisa © Louvre, Paris, France / Giraudon / The Bridgeman Art Library.