Objectives

• Explain how the printing revolution shaped European society.

• Describe the themes that northern European artists, humanists, and writers explored.
Terms and People

- **Johann Gutenberg** – in 1455, printed a complete Bible on a printing press with movable type

- **Flanders** – a prosperous region of cities in the present-day Netherlands, France, and Belgium, where the northern Renaissance began

- **Albrecht Dürer** – applied painting techniques to engraving; spread Renaissance ideas in northern Europe

- **engraving** – a technique in which an artist etches a design on a metal plate using acid; the plate is then used to make prints
Terms and People (continued)

- **vernacular** – the everyday spoken language of the common people

- **Erasmus** – an important religious scholar; called for the translation of the Bible into the vernacular

- **Thomas More** – wrote *Utopia*, which describes an ideal and peaceful society in which people live in peace, all are educated, and crime is eliminated

- **utopian** – idealistic or visionary, usually to describe a perfect society

- **Shakespeare** – the leading English language poet and playwright of the Renaissance
How did the Renaissance develop in northern Europe?

As the Renaissance began to flower in Italy, northern Europe was still recovering from the ravages of the Black Death.

But by the 1400s, the cities of the north began to enjoy economic growth and the wealth needed to develop their own Renaissance.
In 1455 Johann Gutenberg printed the first complete edition of the Bible using a printing press with movable type.

- Printed books were far easier to produce than hand-copied books.
- More people had access to a broad range of learning.
- From a few thousand, the number of books in Europe rose to between 15 and 20 million by 1500.
The Northern Renaissance began in the cities of Flanders.

From Flanders ideas spread to Spain, France, and England.

- Many painters focused on the common people, creating scenes of everyday life.
- Many writers also focused on the common people, writing in the vernacular.
Northern Renaissance painters focused on realism in their art.

- New oil paints were made using oils from linseed, walnuts, or poppies.
- More realistic colors reflected light, adding depth and glow.
- In the 1400s the paintings of Van Eyck were filled with rich and realistic detail.
- Pieter Bruegel used vibrant colors to portray scenes of peasant life.
Peter Paul Rubens blended the realistic tradition of Flemish painters with classical themes.

A humanist, Rubens used themes from classical history and mythology.

Albrecht Dürer applied Renaissance painting techniques to engraving.

Dürer’s engravings and paintings often portrayed religious upheaval or were quite realistic.
Northern humanist scholars stressed education and classical learning.

- They hoped to bring about religious and moral reform.
- Some began writing in the **vernacular**, the everyday language of ordinary people.
- This appealed to the new middle class that was arising in northern towns and cities.
Desiderius Erasmus was one of the major religious scholars of the age.

Born in 1466, Erasmus wrote texts on many subjects, including a new Greek edition of the Bible.

- Erasmus called for translation of the Bible into the vernacular.
- He was also disturbed by corruption in the church and sought religious reforms.
Sir **Thomas More** was an English humanist who pushed for social reforms.

In *Utopia* he described an ideal society where all are educated and justice is achieved for all.

**Francois Rabelais** was a French humanist who used comedy.

In *Gargantua and Pantagruel*, two giants on a comic adventure offer opinions on religion and education.
The towering figure of northern Renaissance literature is William Shakespeare.

- Between 1590 and 1613 he wrote 37 plays, many of which are still performed today.
- He explored Renaissance ideals such as the complexity of the individual.
- He used common language understood by all, and added 1,700 words to the English language.
Section Review

QuickTake Quiz

Know It, Show It Quiz