



## Leonardo Da Vinci

*Kathleen Krull , Boris Kulikov (Illustrator)*

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For thirty years, the whole last half of his life, Leonardo da Vinci was obsessed with unlocking the secrets of nature. His notebooks are the mind-boggling evidence of a fifteenth-century scientist standing at the edge of the modern world, basing his ideas on observation and experimentation. Scrupulously researched, juicily anecdotal, this book will change children's ideas of who Leonardo was and what it means to be a scientist. Award-winning biographer Kathleen Krull will focus on five other "giants of science"— Isaac Newton, Charles Darwin, Marie Curie, Sigmund Freud, and Albert Einstein. Each book presents a compelling portrait of an individual as well as a picture of the world at a particular time and place.

## Leonardo Da Vinci Details

Date : Published July 21st 2005 by Viking Books

ISBN : 9780670059201

Author : Kathleen Krull , Boris Kulikov (Illustrator)

Format : Hardcover 128 pages

Genre : Biography, Science, Nonfiction, History, Childrens, Art

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# From Reader Review Leonardo Da Vinci for online ebook

## Sasha says

Title: Giants of Science: Leonardo Da Vinci

Author: Kathleen Krull (has won numerous awards and her books have been listed as New York Times Bestseller)

Illustrator: Boris Kulikov

Date of Publication: 2005

Genre: Non-Fiction/informational- Biography

Summary: Most people know Leonardo da Vinci as a famous artist of the Mona Lisa but he is less known for his scientific explorations. The book discussed da Vinci's origin and background, the major influences on his research, his work habit, character, relationships and his life long obsession with observing the world around him.

Evaluative Commentary: This text is best appropriate for older grades, as there are mature topics in this book. The book is very well written and is extremely informative. The black and white illustrations resemble the engraved images of the time and the art work of Leonardo da Vinci and his contemporaries. It can be a great book for a unit on Renaissance... as Leonardo da Vinci is a true Renaissance man!

### Discussion Questions

Leonardo De Vinci was interested in many disciplines (botany, astronomy, algebra etc.) Which discipline is most interesting to you and why?

What is something new that you learned about De Vinci? Did the discovery surprise you?

How do you think the discrimination Leonardo faced as a child/young man impacted his career?

Why was Leonardo not good at finishing projects? (support with evidence from text)

If you met Leonardo do you think you would want to be his friend? Why or why not?

Which men of science/philosophy and art had a major impact on Leonardo?

Do you think Leonardo was a scientific pioneer (why)?

Leonardo was very interested/obsessed about flight? Have you ever been very curious/obsessed about a subject?

How were women viewed during Leonardo's time?

What are some central ideas of the Renaissance?

What is the scientific model and why was it important to Leonardo's research?

Can you list the hardships of medieval Europe?

What did you learn about the Black Death?

What were Leonardo's suspicions in regards to the cause of the plague?

Comprehension Strategy: In the introduction chapters there is mention of homosexuality, prostitution, illegitimate birth.... if the teacher is not prepared to approach such controversial topics with elementary students, it might be best to focus on later chapters (5- onwards) that concentrate more on Leonardo da Vinci's interests, inventions and work habits.

Vocab study: Vacuum, astronomy, anatomy, zoology, botany, paleontology, philosophy, alchemy.

Extension activity: Look up DeVinchi's journals and pick out your favorite invention. Based on your reading of this book, make a journal entry as Leonardo outlining the activities and perhaps some observations from his day.

Make a comparison between the old beliefs in medicine to current medical knowledge. (can use graphic organizer, would need outside research, books or internet)

Make a statement that would correspond to Aristotle's model of logic (can be a great partners activity).

Leonardo was obsessed with flight... research the Greek Myth on Icarus that have inspired some of his flying machine designs.

Electronic resource: author's web link: [www.kathleenkrull.com](http://www.kathleenkrull.com), artist's web link : [www.boriskulikov.com](http://www.boriskulikov.com)  
[http://academickids.com/encyclopedia/...](http://academickids.com/encyclopedia/) additional information about Leonardo da Vinci.

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### **Jay Pruitt says**

*"a beautiful body perishes, but a work of art dies not"*

**---Leonardo da Vinci**

An excellent short summary (about 100 pages) of Leonardo. Covers both artistic and scientific contributions. Da Vinci is known today primarily for the rather small number of his art pieces which have been found, including the Mona Lisa and Last Supper. But it is not widely known that his real contribution is in the art of "learning" itself. He kept hidden thousands of pages of notes taken during his lifetime, some of which could have been viewed as heretical at the time, outlining theories, ideas, and observations that were conceptually well ahead of their time. Unfortunately these notebooks were not discovered until centuries after his death. His breadth of knowledge, particularly his understanding of the anatomy, is simply breathtaking. Truly the Renaissance Man.

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### **Jenny says**

This is a great young adult book that is also a fun read for adults. Most people know about and associate Leonardo Da Vinci with art and invention, but I bet few people know much about his scientific investigations with water, optics and human physiology. Leonardo was an amazing person with an enthusiastic curiosity about the natural world.

Krull's biography acknowledges and honors Leonardo's scientific thinking and self-directed approach to learning before the terms "scientist" or "scientific method" as we know them existed. Those who were fascinated by the natural world, made and recorded observations, endeavored to experiment and communicate their findings were then known as natural philosophers. Leonardo certainly fit this description. As a child he worked on his uncle's farm, he collected and studied plants, insects and seeds. As an apprentice artisan, he dissected animals and human corpses not only to improve his drawing techniques, but to better understand the functions of various organs and systems. His motivation in life was not art, but learning, and he devoted his career to securing patrons who allowed him to continue his independent studies and experiments, which he meticulously recorded in his famous notebooks.

The biography follows a chronological narrative frame that is delivered in an engaging and intelligent storyteller's voice. Contextual details about the Renaissance help to inform the reader about Leonardo's world--status and position of the middle class; society's views on homosexuality; political power struggles of Italian city-states, etc. These details unfold seamlessly and succinctly in the narrative and never derail into tedious, tangential commentaries, which I find that many of the academic biographies written for adults tend to do. If you want a fun, fast and smart read about one of the most famous people in Western Civilization, I highly recommend Kathleen Krull's Leonardo Da Vinci: Giants of Science #1. Appropriate for reader's age 12 and up.

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### **Addie says**

Audiobook with the kids, very interesting!

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### **Kris says**

A decent depiction about Leonardo Da Vinci's life and some history of the time period, however there is a brief and straight forward discussion of homophobia in the Middle Ages and use of words such as "procreation" and "homosexual sex." If you are not comfortable with your young child reading those words and understanding meaning, I would wait until they are mature enough to handle the subject matter. I personally skipped over this reading for my 8 year old. I did start to read it and in actuality he paid more particular attention to Leonardo's achievements in art. He has an extreme interest in art and artists. That said, in general, I think this is a book that is best read with parents for younger children since those words could be confusing for many children and quite possibly not appropriately ready. The language would be more suited for mature independent reading for teens. Due to the fact the book claims to be for ages 8+, I cannot see giving this 5 stars. Not something I expected for Scholastic. I'd be more inclined to a 12+

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### **Julia says**

I thought that this book was great because it had a lot of exciting stuff.

When I first read this book I thought about all the stuff I knew about Leonardo Da Vinci like how he made Mona Lisa. Then after that I thought about all the stuff I've read, what kind of new stuff I have learned, and what was new. For example, I learned that he was also interested in science before art. But, my other thinking was which one he liked the best because in this book he learned both.

Also I wondered what kind of science he learned. Then later, I found out that he was interested in body parts, anything that includes water, and a little bit of nature. There was one thing that confused me was if he loved body parts, and water, he should have been a doctor, and a scientist instead of a scientist, and a artist. Then I got my answer because he was making better medicines by looking at the ingredients of his own drawing, and then making them.

I disovered that medication that was unusual when Leonardo was alive. For example, in some cities in Europe, the streets were made as toilets and piles of excrement were left to mold until the next rain! If you

were to stop a nose bleed doctors used pig manure! Also ten green lizards, cooked slowly in olive oil were believed to heal an open wound! One medicine was made from earthworms washed in wine and donkey urine; another called for a horn of a unicorn. A painfull swelling joint of the joints, was treated by placing a sapphire ring on a certain finger of a patient. Then Blood-sucking leeches, applied when the planets were in alignments,could fix many ailments.

It's a great book for mostly kids who love non-fiction. So if you do you should read this book.

### **Julie says**

Part of the Giants of Science series, I was interested to learn about Da Vinci since I knew him as an artist. The book is filed in the children's section but covers some sketchy area of his being an illegitimate child, accused for homosexuality, and a few terms that go along with it. It kind of sets the stage for how despite being so talented and smart he never seemed confident of himself enough to publish the works of his science only the works of skills (paintings of which there were only 13). I thought this part was self-descriptive, "He believed that children who were born out of love and desire would become intelligent and beautiful, while unworthy children would result from relationships of reluctance or scorn."

The book focuses a lot on how he studied and experimented and essentially used the scientific method for gaining knowledge and his art skills in illustrating it. As with others of the time, he was questioning information, and performing experiments. In his found works he discovered many of the ideas that are attributed to various people after he had learned them (but he had never shared and published them). Some of the same time, people, and ideas that I read about in The Knife Man, and what can I say, I love to study, I love science!

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### **Shelli says**

This was a fantastically informative read about the original Renaissance Man , Leonardo da Vinci; prefect for any middle/high school library or classroom. Kathleen Krull focused on Leonardo's devotion to science instead of what he is mostly known for, being an artist. I loved this particular bit about him in the last chapters "True, he was like a surfer on a huge wave-the spirit of intellectual tolerance fostered by the Renaissance, the empowering access to information supplied by the new printing presses. Yet he always remained out of step: a left-handed, illegitimate, homosexual, antiwar vegetarian with extraordinary artistic talent. His outside status took him on paths others couldn't even see. "

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### **Cpapas7 says**

Leonardo Da Vinci wants to learn everything he can and preserve all of his studies and discoveries. One thing that is stopping him from doing that though is that he doesn't have the money and the resources to be able to do it as well. A solution to his problem is to work for any of the wealthy Monarchs or Popes to get paid a nice sum. This way Leonardo continues his journey and his studies whilst being able to do it easily and comfortably.

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### **Celia says**

I was rather disappointed in this book. Da Vinci was such a fascinating man, painter and inventor, that I feel a book for young people must at least include illustrations of his many sketches. This book does not do that, and it's a shame. There are so many excellent biographies for middle school and high school readers today, which captivate our interests. I fear that when a middle school student takes this book off the shelf, and sees

virtually no illustrations, maps or portraits, they will not give this book a chance. I know that this book is part of the Giants of Science series, and the author does not elaborate on the artistic side of Da Vinci, but there could still be illustrations of his inventions. There is some very good information, and I do hope that some young people will at least try to read this.

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### **Tony says**

LEONARDO DA VINCI. (2017). Walter Isaacson. \*\*\*\*1/2.

The first thing I'd like to share is that you needn't be afraid of the size of this book. It runs to 525 pages, plus notes and index. With my experience of reading other Isaacson's books ("Ben Franklin," and "Einstein") I know his skill with the written word. He has the ability to capture the reader's attention in such a way that the pages whizz past without your knowing it. This was especially true with this book because of the inclusion of so many illustrations of art works and reproductions from Leonardo's notebooks. His approach to telling us about this great artist was to – in a sense – to use his own words. Leonardo early on developed the habit of keeping notebooks with him; jotting down thoughts and questions, and doodling illustrations for his many ideas. What a great chronicle to follow his life. That's what Isaacson did. What we are treated to in a rather intimate examination of those notebooks that lets us follow the artist in a chronological manner. Of course, if background information was needed, then Isaacson jumped in with that. The result was a thorough and fascinating look at the artist: his thoughts and his works. This has got to be the best biography yet to be written about one of the world's best artists.

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### **Ellen says**

Fascinating! I'll get more of her books.

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### **Joan says**

Excellent biography of Leonardo, unless you are mostly interested in his artistic work. The focus was definitely on his scientific work, not, of course, that it was called such in his time. Perhaps the most interesting parts were information about his notebooks, starting with the fact they weren't notebooks as we would think of them. They were collections of notes, bound in all sorts of ways, or even loose.

Unfortunately, after his death, the person who ended up with them had no concept of their value and just let them disappear, a sheet to one person here, another there. Krull provides a list of who has what now. Bill Gates has a volume, the only one in private hands. The rest are in a huge variety of museums, based on how they were originally distributed. Krull also discusses how much influence Da Vinci had on scientific development and acknowledged that he really had very little since he never published his discoveries. He was centuries ahead of scientific discovery in many cases, but never got credit since he hadn't published the information. Apparently even Da Vinci himself realized that was a real problem for him, that he wasn't publishing his information. It was one of his main faults, along with his perennial habit of leaving art commissions unfinished. BTW he and Michelangelo did not get along at all. Da Vinci didn't fit into his society, being left handed, Vegetarian, likely homosexual, and a completely independent thinker. At times this likely put him in real danger from the powers that be, the Church. This likely accounted for at least some of his paranoia in using mirror writing in his notes and never publishing his discoveries.

This is a well done biography of someone with quite limited information. Some of that was due to his mirror writing, some is due to how long ago he lived. Highly recommended. The loss of a star is due to the unavoidable lack of information on him rather than any defect in the presentation.

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### **Tracy Fischbach says**

Nice overview of his work in the sciences and doesn't shy away from his controversial lifestyle. He was probably gay and was most definitely a vegetarian in a time when that was unheard of.

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### **Li Par says**

This book is about leonardo da vinci life about how he pushed himself to be a famous person n also how he help develop science the we now use today.

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