In medieval times, artists usually represented religious buildings and icons. The pictures were two-dimensional. But in the Renaissance (15th–18th centuries), artists started to represent the three-dimensional world around them. Their pictures seemed more realistic.

1. What did artists usually paint in medieval times?
2. How did this change in the Renaissance?
People believe that the Italian architect Filippo Brunelleschi (1377–1446) ‘discovered’ the concept of perspective. This discovery had an enormous influence on artists. Lots of Italian artists started to use perspective, including Michelangelo, Piero della Francesca, Botticelli and Raphael. Artists continue to use the technique today.

3 Who was Filippo Brunelleschi?

Artists use linear perspective to create an illusion of three-dimensional space. Objects in the foreground appear bigger than objects in the background. The lines of perspective in a picture meet or converge at a point. This point is called the vanishing point. Some pictures have more than one vanishing point.

Glossary

discovered scoprì
space spazio
foreground primo piano
vanishing point punto di fuga

4 Which picture, A or B, is ‘in perspective’?