Video

Simply Genius!

The *Mona Lisa* is a masterpiece of Renaissance art and perhaps the most famous painting in the world. Its creator was Leonardo da Vinci, but he wasn't just an extremely talented artist. He was skilled in many **fields** – as an artist, a mathematician, a scientist, a biologist, an engineer, an architect, a sculptor, an inventor and many more. In fact, he **mastered** so many skills that his name is now a synonym for **genius**.[1]

Born in 1452 just outside the small Italian town of Vinci, from which he got his name, da Vinci was a **brilliant** artist from an early age. As a teenager, he became an apprentice to Andrea del Verrocchio, a master painter in Florence. Within a few years, he was creating his own works. In 1482, da Vinci was offered work by the Duke of Milan. Over the next seventeen years, da Vinci painted, sculpted and drew ideas for inventions, many inspired by the natural world.[2]

Da Vinci predicted aeroplanes with his 'ornithopter', which has bird-like wings. Another design for a flying machine, the 'aerial screw', came from **observing** leaves spinning in the air and is similar to our modern-day helicopters. His notebooks also have sketches of diving suits, parachutes and carts that could move without horses. Da Vinci even **constructed** an early robot – a suit of armour that could move its arms, sit and stand. Interestingly, a number of experts now believe that da Vinci probably had learning difficulties. ADHD would explain why he didn't build most of his inventions, or gave them up halfway through and moved onto something else.[3] Also, his famous 'mirror writing' could be something he was comfortable with because of dyslexia.

Da Vinci died in 1519 but his genius lives on in his paintings and sketches, which are displayed in **major** museums worldwide. Leonardo da Vinci was one of a kind, but the world always needs great inventors. Could you be the next da Vinci?