The 16th century

The High Renaissance, the globe circled, and the Sun at the center.

Michelangelo painted the Sistine ceiling, Magellan's expedition sailed around the world, Copernicus moved the Earth, and printing put the Bible and the classics in many hands.

What rose

1508–12. Michelangelo paints the Sistine Chapel ceiling. Source: Sistine Chapel ceiling

1517. Luther's Ninety-five Theses begin the Reformation. Source: Ninety-five Theses

1519–22. Magellan and Elcano's expedition circles the Earth. Source: Magellan expedition

1543. Copernicus's On the Revolutions; Vesalius's anatomy. Source: De revolutionibus orbium coelestium

1590s. Shakespeare's first plays are staged in London. Source: William Shakespeare

What fell or stalled

Wars of religion divided Western Christendom. Source: European wars of religion

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