

The Battle of San Romano

c.1438-40

by Paolo Uccello

Term 6 Art project WEEK 1

Trumpets blare, the ground shakes, and two armies on horseback clash in the Italian countryside. It is a distant time when soldiers wear ornate armour, and cities, not just countries, go to war.

But how much of this is fact, and how much is fiction?



Paolo Uccello, *Niccolò Mauruzi da Tolentino at the Battle of San Romano*, c. 1438-40, Rm 59 The National Gallery, London

The Story behind the Painting

600 years ago, Italy was not the united country it is today; it was a collection of cities and states, each with their own rulers and ambitions. Florence was a powerful city, but it wanted to expand and control a wider area. It was at war with Lucca, a city on the coast to the west and an important trading port. When Lucca's allies Siena, Pisa, and Milan threatened to surround Florence and cut it off from the coast, it needed to take action.

On 1 June 1432 Florence's soldiers fought against a much larger army of soldiers from Siena in a valley outside the small town of San Romano, 30 miles west of Florence. For eight hours the soldiers clashed, Florence charging three times at Siena. The heat in the heavy suits of armour must have been stifling, and an exhausted Florence would have lost, had reinforcements not arrived late in the day and Siena ordered its forces to retreat.



Florence

Siena



Old Italy c.600 year ago

The battle

The painting is dominated by the man in the centre, rearing up on a white horse and pointing his commander's baton.

Instead of a helmet, he wears an elaborate hat made from red and gold fabric (the painting uses real gold leaf).

He is one of the few figures whose face you can actually see, along with his page (the boy behind him carrying his helmet).

The commander leads the charge of knights on horseback, lances raised.

All charge from left to right except for one lone figure on the other side of the painting, fighting three men off with a hammer.

Is this all that's left of the opposition?

You can easily guess which side has the upper hand: the charging group represents the city of Florence, and the lone defender represents the city of Siena.



TASK:

Use the next slide to write a news article

Will it be fake news or real news?

It depends which side of the battle you are on- will you be on the Florence or Siena side?

You can write in the style of a newspaper report or you can make a news video

Try to write at least two paragraphs

Real or Fake News?

Use the snippets of "information" to create your own news report. Will it be real news or fake news? It depends which side of the battle you are on!

Exhausted Florence would have lost had reinforcements not arrived late in the day, and Siena ordered its forces to retreat.

Money was much lacking due to the long war and, if the battle did go the other way, Florence were doomed.

Both sides fought over 8 hours continuously. Those fights were more similar to tournaments and military games, rather than true and real battles.

Siena captured prisoners including 400 horsemen, and had a grand celebration and a bonfire with trumpets and bells.

This battle was held to be amongst the greatest and best news ever arriving in Florence

Two days after, Florence also seized the fortress of Pontedera.

San Romano is around 30 miles outside Florence.

The Florentines were led by Niccolò da Tolentino, the Sienese by Bernardino della Cerna.

Florence deployed 4000 cavalry and 2000 infantry.

Florence was at war with Lucca and her allies Siena, Milan and Genoa.

Niccolò da Tolentino prevailed, although neither side rose up victorious.

The Sienese captains and their allies broke through the Florentine line

Florence had a big celebration, but this was a mistake because Siena bravely and vigorously retaliated and eventually defeated the enemies.

The battle took place in June 1432.

Fierce and extremely large, the battle lasted between six and seven hours.

A small section of the Sienese Army were defeated. Following this, the Florentine messengers reported that they had defeated the entire army.

Florence would have lost were it not for a second charge led by Micheletto Attendolo.

Florence defeated the enemies capturing over 1000 horsemen and 160 prisoners as well as numerous foot soldiers.

The people of Florence Had a conflict with the people of Siena.