



*The School of Athens — Raphael*

**Vicki:** *The School of Athens*, is in many respects the key painting of the High Renaissance.

This fresco depicts a meeting of all the most learned ancient Athenians. They gathered around the central figure of Plato in a grand classical setting. The figures are well rounded and the linear perspective leads the viewer to the two central figures enthusiastically chatting. The vast, vaulted background derives from the classically inspired structures of Renaissance architecture. The concepts of beauty, naturalistic expression, perfection, and noble principles are all exemplified in this highly detailed piece of art.

**Helen:** *The Sistine Madonna* depicts the Virgin Mary holding a small Jesus. Mary looks fitful and worried. The child shrinks back against his mother's shoulder as if he is about to cry from fright. Both Mary and Jesus look straight at the viewer as if they are pleading silently for an escape to their inevitable future. For the first time in art history *the Madonna and Child* are given true emotional gravity.

**Vicki:** Raphael also painted many portraits. *The Painting of Pope Julius II* was very unique at the time as it showed the pope from the side and in a pondering mood. It became the model for future portraits of the pope. Raphael began painting *The Transfiguration* in 1517. It was Raphael's largest painting on canvas and one of the last paintings he finished before his death.

### • Vocabulary •

portrait	['pɔ:tɪt]	n.	肖像画
absorb	[əb'sɔ:b]	vt.	吸收；理解；掌握
vaulted	['vɔ:ltɪd]	a.	拱形的
exemplify	[ɪg'zemplɪfaɪ]	vt.	作为…的例证；是…的典范
ponder	['pɒndə]	v.	沉思；考虑；琢磨
transfiguration	[ˌtrænsfɪɡju'reɪʃən]	n.	变形；变貌；（耶稣在三个门徒前的）变容