

# Scientific Revolution 1473–1794

During the Middle Ages, Europeans' understanding of the nature of the world around them was based on the writings of ancient classical philosophers such as Aristotle and Ptolemy. The Renaissance of the 15th and 16th centuries led scholars to examine these texts more closely. A new enthusiasm for knowledge, along with a greater belief in the abilities of humanity, led some to start making observations and formulating new theories. Central to this new spirit of inquiry was an insistence that theories should be based on experimental evidence and not on the authority of ancient sources. The Scientific Revolution of the 16th and 17th centuries changed the way Europeans saw the world and promoted the application of scientific methods of rational inquiry to all aspects of life.

## LEADING SCIENTISTS

