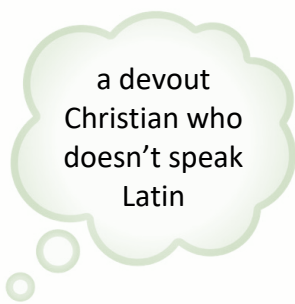


Radical Renaissance Writers – Pre-Class Activities

Week 3: Girolamo Savonarola (1452 – 1498)

1. Read the extracts from the *Renovation Sermon*, in which Savonarola recalls his prophetic visions. Imagine that you are listening to these sermons live in an audience in Florence.¹

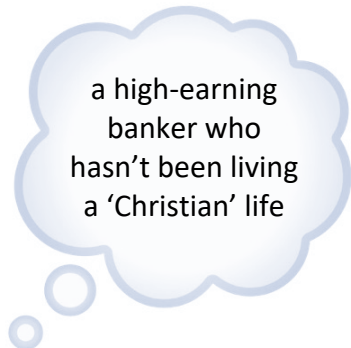
- **First Impressions.**
 - What impression do you get from this speech about a) Savonarola as a person and b) his style of delivery?
 - List types of people or behaviour that Savonarola seems to be criticising.
- Write down how you might feel listening to this sermon, as each of the following people:



a devout
Christian who
doesn't speak
Latin



the Pope



a high-earning
banker who
hasn't been living
a 'Christian' life

2. Read the opening of the sermon, *The Art of Dying Well*. Highlight anything you find interesting about his ideas on death or similarities with the previous sermon.

- **Rhetorical strategies.** How does Savonarola *engage* his audience with the topic?
 - Note down any rhetorical devices that you find effective or *persuasive*.
 - What is the purpose of this sermon? i.e. what result is Savonarola aiming for.
- **Classical vs Christian thought.** How does Savonarola contrast classical and Christian beliefs about death in this sermon?

¹ Both of these speeches would have been in Italian, but Savonarola quotes Latin frequently. Keep in mind what effect this might have on Latin-speaking and non-Latin speaking audience members.