

Europe in the Middle Ages

Map of Europe in the Middle Ages

Name: _____ Date: _____

In this unit, you will learn about Europe in the Middle Ages. Look carefully at the map. Put a K on the Kingdom of the Franks. Draw a circle around the Kingdom of England. Put an N on Normandy.



Europe in the Middle Ages

Vocabulary

1. **apprentice**—person who learns a craft or trade from a master of that trade
2. **Asia Minor**—what Turkey was called in the Middle Ages
3. **baron**—member of the nobility in a feudal society
4. **bubonic plague**—disease which killed millions during the Middle Ages and was spread from rats to humans through flea bites
5. **Charlemagne**—King of the Franks in the eighth century
6. **Christendom**—countries in the Middle Ages that were Christian
7. **Crusades**—military campaigns launched against the Muslim world, especially Palestine
8. **feudalism**—social structure of the Middle Ages
9. **feudal relationship**—relations between people in a feudal society based on duty and obligation
10. **fife**—piece of land given to a vassal from a baron
11. **Franks**—Germanic tribe that conquered most of Europe in the eighth century
12. **guild**—organization of people who practiced the same trade or craft
13. **Magna Carta**—English document of 1215 which limited the power of the king and guaranteed certain rights to the people
14. **monarch**—king or queen
15. **monk**—man who enters a religious order and lives in a monastery
16. **Norman Conquest**—Norman conquest of England at Hastings in 1066
17. **Normans**—tribe of people who lived in Normandy in France
18. **nun**—woman who enters a religious order and lives in a convent
19. **serf**—farmer, peasant
20. **Silk Road**—4,000 mile trade route from Europe to China
21. **William the Conqueror**—first Norman king of England
22. **vassal**—person who swears loyalty to a baron in return for land

Politics in the Middle Ages

Brief #1

Focus

The Middle Ages is a period of time that bridges the ancient and modern worlds.

The Middle Ages is a period of time that links the ancient and modern worlds. In order to better study this thousand-year expanse of time, scholars divide it into three parts:

- **The Early Middle Ages:** about 476 to 900
- **The High Middle Ages:** about 900 to mid 1200s
- **The Late Middle Ages:** mid 1200s to 1500

The Roman Empire, which fell in 476 A.D., was invaded by groups of different people called the Germanic Tribes. These groups of people lived in communities all over the continent of Europe. Some of the Germanic tribes were called the Vandals, the Visigoths, the Angles, and the Saxons.



Charlemagne

One of the Germanic tribes was called the Franks. In 771, the King of the Franks was Charlemagne.

He ruled over a huge kingdom which covered the areas of France, Germany, Italy, Austria, the Netherlands, Belgium, and Luxembourg.

During Charlemagne's reign, the arts, literature, and architecture flourished. Charlemagne was a great believer in education and scholarship, although it is believed that he was illiterate.

Charlemagne was also a devout Roman Catholic. When the Franks invaded and conquered new territory and people, they converted the people to Christianity.

After Charlemagne's death in 814, other tribes began to invade and take over parts of his kingdom. But Charlemagne is still considered to be one of the most influential kings of the Middle Ages. Charlemagne is buried in a Roman Catholic cathedral in Germany.

Vocabulary

1. Charlemagne
2. Franks
3. Normans
4. Norman Conquest
5. William the Conqueror
6. Magna Carta

Fast Fact

Charlemagne set up schools, opening them to peasants as well as nobles.

Politics in the Middle Ages

Brief #1 (cont.)



William the Conqueror

The Normans were a tribe of people who lived in Normandy in France. They were descendents of the Vikings from Scandinavia. They were Christians and practiced many Frankish customs and traditions. In the 11th century, their leader was a king named William. **In 1066, the Normans invaded England. They won a battle at a town called Hasting. The Normans became the new rulers of England, and William became the first Norman king of England. This event is called the Norman Conquest, and William is known as William the Conqueror.** He is also known as William I.

Before the Norman Conquest, England was ruled by the Scandinavians. Their king was Harald III. The Norman Conquest of England changed the course of English history. It meant that England was now more closely aligned with and influenced by European culture, as opposed to Scandinavian.

William died in 1087. He is buried in France.

Fast Fact

The Normans introduced castle building to England.



The Magna Carta

John was the king of England in 1199. He was not a strong leader, and his rule was often unfair. He believed that the fact that he was king gave him the right to do whatever he pleased.

In 1215, the ruling class, or barons of England, got angry with King John and the way he was running the country. The king needed to keep in good standing with these barons. They were the ones who paid the taxes. And it was the barons who raised armies when the king wanted to go to war.

In June of 1215, King John met with the barons at a town called Runnymede. At this meeting the king agreed to the provisions set out in a document called the Magna Carta. **The Magna Carta is a collection of 63 clauses or statements about the rights of the barons, ordinary people, and the limits of the power of the king.** *Magna Carta* means “great charter” in Latin.

The Magna Carta states that the king may not take a person’s property or demand money from them unless they agree to it. It also establishes the rule of habeas corpus. *Habeas corpus* means that the king can’t have someone thrown in jail unless they have broken the law. In other words, the king can’t imprison someone just because they may not like a person or because a person disagrees with them.

The Magna Carta is a very important document. It is the foundation of many legal systems in the world, including the United States Constitution.

Social Structure in the Middle Ages

Brief #2

Focus

Life in the Middle Ages was very structured.

Civilizations have ways in which they organize and structure society. Different cultures and civilizations have different systems, and these systems change over time. Things like religion and economics often play a part in how the social structure of an area evolves.

For example, in the 1940s and 1950s in the United States, it was common for men to work outside of the home and for women to stay at home and take care of the house and children. Nowadays this is not so common. A big reason that this changed is because of economics. Many two-parent families need the income of both adults to earn enough money to survive.



Feudalism

The social structure in the Middle Ages was called feudalism. In a feudal society, people of different levels in society had duties and obligations to one another.

At the top of a feudal society was the king or queen. **A king or queen is called a monarch.** Often kings would need to raise armies. **In order to do this, the king gave large pieces of land to select men in society. These men were called barons or lords.** In return for the land, these barons would have to provide soldiers if the king needed to raise an army.

But where would the baron get the soldiers to fight in a king's army? Just as the monarch gave land to the barons, the barons would give smaller portions of that land to vassals. **Vassals swore their loyalty to their lord or baron, and agreed to fight for him when asked.** Some vassals were also known as knights. **The land that a baron gave to a vassal was called a fife.**

In the Middle Ages, serfs were the farmers in the society. The lord of the manor, or the baron, would allow serfs to live on his land. He would provide food, shelter, and protection. In return the serfs had to work the land. Serfs were also called peasants.

Vocabulary

1. feudalism
2. monarch
3. baron
4. vassal
5. fife
6. serf
7. feudal relationship
8. monk
9. nun
10. guild
11. apprentice

Brief #2

Social Structure in the Middle Ages (cont.)



Feudalism (cont.)

The relationship between the king and the barons, the barons and the vassals, and the barons and the serfs are called *feudal relationships*. **A feudal relationship was based on duties and obligations that one person had with another.**



The Church

Feudalism was not the only thing that had a big impact on the social structure in the Middle Ages. The church was very important to the everyday lives of people and had a great influence on every part of society.

In Europe in the Middle Ages, most people were Christians. Some people were Jewish and Muslim. All Christians in Europe in the Middle Ages belonged to the Roman Catholic Church.

The majority of people went to church every week. Nearly every major city had a cathedral, which is a large church. Townspeople were expected to contribute part of their earnings to the church. They also helped to build the cathedrals themselves. Many Christians in the Middle Ages went on pilgrimages. They went to Rome to see the pope or to Jerusalem. There is a famous book from the Middle Ages about a group of Christians going on a pilgrimage. It is called *The Canterbury Tales* by Geoffrey Chaucer.

During this time, many people chose to live a religious life away from society. Men who chose this kind of life were called monks. **A monk is a man who lived in a monastery and studied and prayed. Women who chose this kind of life were called nuns.** Nuns lived in communities called convents. Both monks and nuns cultivated crops, copied manuscripts, and helped the poor.



Guilds

Not everyone in the Middle Ages was a monk or a knight or a serf. Many people did lots of different types of work. For example, there were barbers, bakers, shoemakers, weavers, and brewers, to name a few. **People with the same job or profession joined together and created guilds.** Guilds in the Middle Ages helped to set fair prices for the goods they produced. They also negotiated with their suppliers to try to get the best price for the raw materials they needed to produce their goods.

In the Middle Ages, boys could become an apprentice to a master of a particular guild. **An apprentice is a young person who goes to learn a particular trade or craft from an experienced person or master.**

Fast Fact

Tonsure is the practice of shaving the crown of a monk's head.

The Crusades and the Plague

Brief #3

Focus

Increased contact among people had both positive and negative consequences.

During the High Middle Ages, Muslim Turks began to conquer lands that were once controlled by Christians. Some of these lands were in an area that was called Asia Minor. **Asia Minor is the area that we call Turkey.** It was the location of the Byzantine Empire. The religion of Islam began to spread to the Middle East, eventually making its way to Palestine.

For Christians, especially in the Middle Ages, Palestine was a place of great importance. According to the New Testament, it is where Jesus lived and preached. The fact that Palestine was now Islamic angered many Christians.



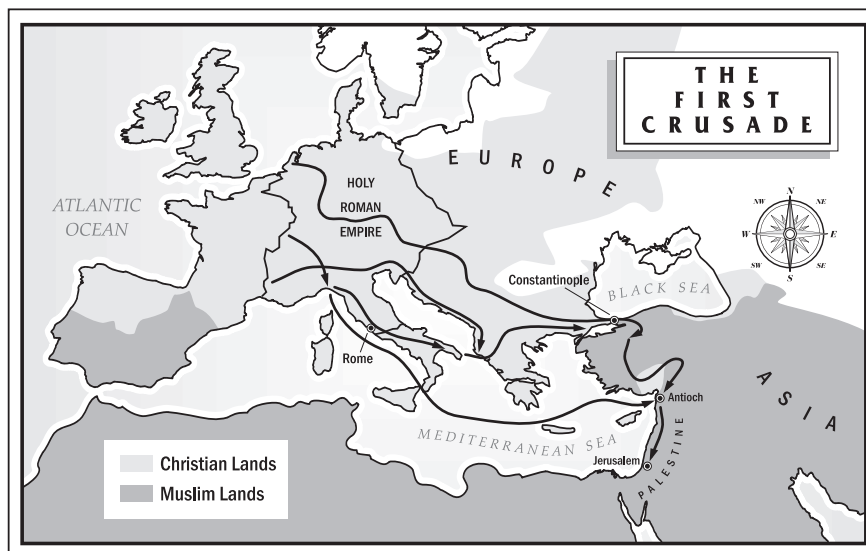
The Crusades

Several Roman Catholic popes gave permission for Europeans to create armies to march into Muslim lands, especially Palestine, and recapture them for Christendom. **In the Middle Ages, Christendom meant the countries in the world that were Christian. The military campaigns waged against Muslim countries were called the Crusades.**

There were eight separate military crusades between the years of 1095 and 1214. Knights, barons, serfs, and townspeople went on the Crusades. Many of these people were obligated by their feudal relationships with one another.

Vocabulary

1. Asia Minor
2. Christendom
3. Crusades
4. Silk Road
5. bubonic plague



The Crusades and the Plague

Brief #3 (cont.)



The Crusades (cont.)

The Crusades never managed to do what they set out to do. Sometimes they were victorious and other times they were not. The biggest impact the Crusades had was on something that neither the pope nor the Crusaders themselves could have anticipated.



Trade

The Crusades lasted for over a century. As the Crusaders traveled on horseback and on foot, they met many people. The Crusaders traded with these people; and when they returned home, they brought things with them from the East, like spices and different kinds of material. The Crusades led to increased contact between people from Europe and Asia. The Crusades created new routes which people could travel. The Crusades led to the expansion of trade among Asia and Europe.

One of the most famous trade routes of the Middle Ages was the Silk Road. **The Silk Road was a 4,000 mile route from Europe to China.** The Italian explorer Marco Polo traveled along the Silk Road and spent many years living in China in the 13th century. He wrote extensively about his experiences.



The Bubonic Plague

Increased trade in the Middle Ages improved the lives of people. People exchanged needed goods and new ideas. Unfortunately, scholars believe that they also exchanged something else that caused the death of nearly 25 million people in the Middle Ages.

The bubonic plague, also called the black death, was a fatal disease that spread over much of Europe in the Middle Ages. **The bubonic plague is a disease that is caused by bacteria that lives in rodents such as rats.** When a flea bites a rat, it ingests some of the rat's infected blood. Then the same flea bites a person and injects the diseased blood into them.

Scholars believe that the bubonic plague spread along the Silk Road as people came into contact with each other. Also, the flea-infested rats were accidentally transported all over Europe on trading vessels.

Medicine and knowledge about disease was not as advanced in the Middle Ages as it is today. No one knew what the disease was or how it was spread. The plague is sometimes called the "black death" because once a person was infected, black spots would develop on his or her skin.

The bubonic plague had a devastating impact on Europe in the Middle Ages. Some figures report that between 30% to 50% of the population was killed. The loss of population impacted business, food supply, and trade.