

The Middle Ages in Europe: Between Ancient and Modern

<u>Definitions</u>	<u>Key Ideas</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Middle Ages: The period in European history between the ancient and modern eras. Most Europeans had a hard life during this time period. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Middle Ages started when the Roman Empire fell (marking the end of ancient history). The Middle Ages are sometimes called the “Dark Ages.” Europeans at this time had a strong belief in Christianity, including the belief that life in heaven would be better than life in the world. Other areas outside of Europe were growing rapidly and were making discoveries during this same period.

Feudalism

<u>Definitions</u>	<u>Key Ideas</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Feudalism: A system of loyalties and protections in the Middle Ages. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Three major social groups in the Middle Ages were Kings, Nobles (or lords), and Serfs. Kings gave control of the land to nobles. In return, the nobles would give their loyalty to the king. Nobles forced serfs to farm the land. Serfs would get some of the food that they farmed in return for their work. Serfs had almost no rights and could not leave the land without permission from their lord.

Primogeniture

<u>Definitions</u>	<u>Key Ideas</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Primogeniture: A system of inheritance where the father passes all of his property to the oldest son when he dies. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Other children (daughters and younger sons) had to find their own paths in life, since they could not expect any inheritance from their father. Only men could own property in Europe at this time, though there were some exceptions to the rule. Many younger sons became knights or took up a trade if their family could afford the training. Women almost always got married as soon as they were able to, and they didn’t have much control over their lives since they weren’t allowed to own property.

Christendom

<u>Definitions</u>	<u>Key Ideas</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Christendom: Europeans referred to Europe as Christendom (see the first key idea for the reason why). Monks: Religious workers that lived in monasteries and devoted their lives to prayer. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Basically everyone living in Europe was Christian and religion played such an important role in their lives. Christianity was the most important influence in the Middle Ages. The Catholic Church was often the only way to get an education, especially if you were poor. The head of the Catholic Church is the Pope. The clergy was the people who worked for the Church. The clergy includes bishops, priests, monks, nuns, and other workers.

The Bubonic Plague

<u>Definitions</u>	<u>Key Ideas</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Bubonic Plague: A disease that spread through Europe during the Middle Ages and killed about ½ of Europe's total population.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The Bubonic Plague is sometimes called the “Black Death” because the skin of its victims turned to a dark gray color.• The plague began in Asia and traveled across the continent, killing 35 million Asians.• The plague was carried by fleas who were attached to rats. The plague was able to spread very quickly because of poor public sanitation and the fact that people in the Middle Ages did not know what caused diseases.• The plague was terrifying for both the victims and the survivors. It was extremely painful and awful to witness.

Byzantine Empire

<u>Definitions</u>	<u>Key Ideas</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Byzantine Empire: The civilization whose capital was Constantinople.• Turks: A group of Muslims from the Middle East who came into conflict with the Byzantine Empire.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The Byzantine Empire began as the eastern half of the Roman Empire, but it changed over time due to influences from the Middle East (so they changed the name).• The Byzantine Empire was mostly Christian.• The Turks lived on the eastern border of the Byzantine Empire. They fought with the Byzantine Empire and won.• The Pope launched a war against the Turks, which became known as the First Crusade.

The Moors

<u>Definitions</u>	<u>Key Ideas</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Reconquista: The attempt by European kings to take control of Spain from Muslims.• Moors: A group of Muslims from North Africa.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• People who believe in Islam are called Muslims (just like people who believe in Christianity are called Christians).• Europeans controlled Spain until 711, when the Moors invaded and took control.• The Moors controlled Spain for hundreds of years. Under their rule, Spain enjoyed an era of peace, wealth, and cultural growth.• European kings wanted to conquer Spain to get control of Spain's wealth. They completed the Reconquista in 1492 after a long struggle.

The Renaissance: The Dawn of the New Age

<u>Definitions</u>	<u>Key Ideas</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Renaissance: The period in European history that came after the Middle Ages.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Renaissance means “rebirth” in French. It marks the beginning of the modern era.• Europeans started to open their minds to the rest of the world during the Renaissance.• There was a lot of cultural growth. There were major accomplishments in writing, painting, sculpting, architecture, and other art forms.• The invention of the printing press encouraged literacy and helped to spread new ideas.

