

The Continents



Africa

North America

South America

Asia

Antarctica

Europe

Australia

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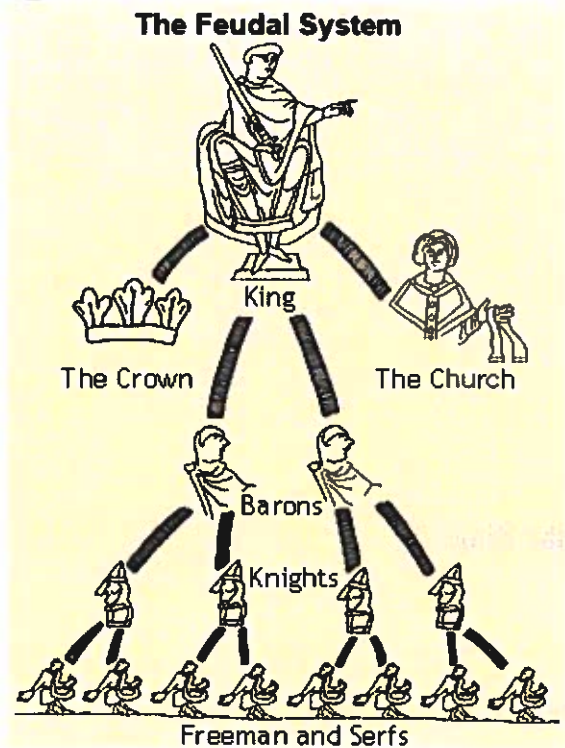
FEUDALISM & MEDIEVAL LIFE

The Feudal System was introduced to England following the invasion and conquest of the island by William the Conqueror.

The Feudal System had been used in France by the Normans from the time they first settled there around 900 AD. It was a simple, but effective system for the control of society by the King. All land was owned by the King, and one quarter was kept by as his personal property. Some land was given to the Catholic Church and the rest was leased out to others under strict controls. This means that others paid the king to use the land since he owned it. Land given to others was known as a fief.



The King was in complete control under the Feudal System. He owned all the land in the country and decided who he would grant a fief to. He therefore only allowed those men he could trust to lease land from him. However, before they were given any land they had to swear an oath to remain faithful to the King. This was done at a formal and symbolic ceremony which was composed of the two-part act of loyalty and oath of fealty. The receiving the fief then became a vassal of the king.



Vassals who leased land from the King were sometimes known as Barons and were generally wealthy and powerful. The fiefs that Barons were granted by the King were governed by the manor system. The vassal was known as the Lord of the Manor and established his own system of justice, minted money and set up taxes. In return for the land they had been given by the King, the Barons had to serve on the royal council, pay rent and provide the King with Knights for military service when he demanded it. They also had to provide lodging and food for the King and his court when they traveled around the country. The Barons kept as much of their land as they wished for their own use, then divided the rest among their Knights. Barons were very rich.

Knights were given land by a Baron in return for military service and also had to protect the Baron, his family, and the Manor from attack. The Knights kept land for their own personal use and distributed the rest to peasants or serfs. Although not as rich as the Barons, Knights were quite wealthy.

The serfs who were given land by Knights had to provide free labor, food and service when the knight demanded it and had no rights. The serfs were not allowed to leave the Manor and even had to ask their Lord's permission before they could marry.

Name _____

FEUDALISM & MEDIEVAL LIFE

Directions: After reading the passage, answer each question in a complete sentence or select the best answer.

1. What made the Feudal System an effective system for controlling society?

2. What was land called that as given out by the king?
 - a. A vassal
 - b. A fief
 - c. A serf
 - d. A Baron

3. What duties did Barons have to provide in return for the land they were granted?

4. What is another name for a vassal of the king?
 - a. Lord of the Manor
 - b. Serf
 - c. Fief
 - d. Knight

5. What role did knights play in the manor system?

6. What did serfs get in return for their labor?

7. Why do you think vassals had to swear an oath to remain faithful to the King?

8. Which group do you think would most want to end the Feudal System and why?



THE BLACK DEATH



The Black Death (also known as the Bubonic Plague or Black Plague) was one of the most devastating disease outbreaks in human history, peaking in Europe between 1348 and 1350, and killing between 75 million and 200 million people.

In the early 1330's an outbreak of deadly bubonic plague occurred in China and travelled along the Silk Road where it was brought to Europe.. It mainly affected rats, but fleas on the rats can transmit the disease to people. Once infected, people infect others very rapidly. Plague causes fever and a painful swelling of the lymph glands

(called buboes in Greek), which is why it was called the Bubonic Plague. It came to be called the Black Death because of the black spots that formed on the skin of diseased people. The plague is estimated to have killed 30 to 60 percent of Europe's population and killed about 100 million people.

The first sign of the plague was often an ache in the limbs. The lymph nodes would then swell. The lymph nodes are glands found in the neck, armpits, and groin. The swelling continued for three or four days until the lymph nodes burst.

The swiftness of the disease, the enormous pain and the grotesque appearance of its victims served to make the plague especially terrifying. Death from the plague was horrible, but swift. The Italian writer Boccaccio said victims often "ate lunch with their friends, and ate dinner with their ancestors in paradise."

Friars and nuns were left to care for the sick, and monasteries and convents were soon deserted, as they were stricken, too. Europeans were susceptible to disease because many people lived in crowded surroundings in an era when personal hygiene was not considered important. Europeans often ate stale or diseased meat because refrigeration had not yet been invented. At the time, medieval medicine was primitive and unable to remedy an illness that modern technology might have cured. People were even advised not to bathe because open skin pores might let in the disease.

The feudal system never recovered from the results of the plague. So many people died that there were serious labor shortages all over Europe. By the end of the 1300's, peasant revolts broke out in England, France, Belgium and Italy. Entire villages had been sickened, forcing the few remaining survivors to move to cities to find work. Labor shortages caused by the death toll led to increased wages. Feudal lands were often converted to grazing because grazing required less labor than farming. The need for a public response to the health crisis led to the development of more modern government in many places.

Name _____



THE BLACK DEATH



Directions: *After completing the reading, answer the following questions.*

1. Where did the Black Death begin?
 - a. India
 - b. Japan
 - c. China
 - d. America

2. What were the first symptoms of the Plague?

3. What made the disease especially terrifying?

4. About how much of Europe's population was killed by the Black Death?
 - a. 5-10%
 - b. 10-20%
 - c. 30-60%
 - d. 80-90%

5. Why were Europeans susceptible to the plague?

6. What effect did the Black Death have on the feudal system?

7. What eventual positive effects did the Black Death have?