

# Lords, Knights and Peasants

## Living in the Middle Ages

### Table of Contents

#### **For the Teacher:**

Introduction .....	2
Suggestions for Teaching the Unit .....	2
Suggestions for Whole Class Activities .....	4
Resource List .....	6
Tracking Sheet .....	8
Individual Tracking Sheet .....	10
Video Viewing Sheet .....	11
Peer Evaluation Sheet .....	12
Self Evaluation Sheet .....	13
Rubric for Evaluation .....	14
Evaluation Sheet .....	15
Vocabulary List .....	16
Activities for Vocabulary List .....	17
Map .....	18

#### **Activities:**

Information Cards .....	19
Work Sheets .....	38

#### **Activity Cards:**

Thinking About Words .....	51
Grammar & Punctuation .....	54
Creative Writing .....	59
Research .....	63
Art and Drama .....	66

<b>Answer Key</b> .....	<b>69</b>
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## Information Card B

### The Feudal System



The feudal system was based on the allocation of land in return for service.

The Feudal system divided people into four classes. The first class was the monarch: the king or emperor. The second class consisted of important noblemen, the barons, and the officials of the church. The third class was made up of less important nobles, the lords and knights. The fourth class consisted of the peasants, villeins and serfs. Most of the population were in the third class.

The Feudal system meant that all the land was owned by the king, which meant he was all-powerful. In return for their loyalty and support he rewarded the barons and the Church by giving them land. They were allowed to keep this land for as long as they remained loyal to the monarch. If they failed the monarch in any way, the land could be confiscated. The barons agreed to provide the King with armed men in time of war, money and advice.

Many barons divided their large areas of land into smaller sections and gave this to the lesser noblemen, the lords. They in turn, were expected to support the baron with money and armed men. In order to provide the armed men the lords often trained members of the lesser nobility to become knights who would serve as soldiers in time of war. Some knights were given land which they would then rent out to peasants who worked on it for them.

Most of the population were peasants, known as villeins and serfs. Villeins were given some land by the lord, but also had to work on the lord's land two or three days each week and provide him with some of the crops and animals they raised. They were expected to work for him and give him some of the crops they raised. Peasants could not leave the land unless the knight gave them permission to do so.

Serfs did not own land. They worked for the knight or baron and were given a place to live and food to eat in return for their labor. They could not leave the service of their master or travel to a different place without permission.

## Work Sheet 2 - The Feudal System

- A. Read Information Card B.
- B. *The information about the feudal system tells us there were several classes of people in the Middle Ages.*
- a) Create a chart that gives information about each class of people. Your information should include how many people in each class, their responsibilities, the control and power of each class and any other information you find interesting.
  - b) Create a diagram to illustrate how the feudal system worked. Your diagram should show the numbers of people in each class, the power of each group and how this power was distributed.

## Work Sheet 3 - The Medieval World

## Thinking About Words - 1

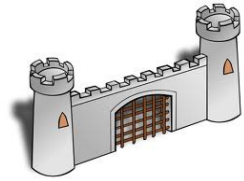
Match the words with the correct definition.

You may use a dictionary if necessary.



- |                  |       |   |
|------------------|-------|---|
| 1. portcullis    | _____ | a) a wealthy nobleman                           |
| 2. apprentice    | _____ | b) a person who broke the law                   |
| 3. joust         | _____ | c) metal protection worn by a knight            |
| 4. outlaw        | _____ | d) an embroidered picture hung on a castle wall |
| 5. calligraphy   | _____ | e) a traveling entertainer                      |
| 6. baron         | _____ | f) a journey to the burial place of a saint     |
| 7. peasant       | _____ | g) this can be lowered to protect a castle      |
| 8. lance         | _____ | h) a man who obeys the code of chivalry         |
| 9. knight        | _____ | I) knights did this to prepare for warfare      |
| 10. chain mail   | _____ | j) these identified noble families              |
| 11. monastery    | _____ | k) a glove made of leather or metal             |
| 12. lute         | _____ | l) this used bows and arrows                    |
| 13. quill        | _____ | m) documents and books were written on this     |
| 14. troubadour   | _____ | n) a young man or boy learning a craft          |
| 15. gauntlet     | _____ | o) weapon used by knights in a tournament       |
| 16. archery      | _____ | p) a stringed musical instrument                |
| 17. parchment    | _____ | q) the dwelling place for monks                 |
| 18. pilgrimage   | _____ | r) a goose feather used in calligraphy          |
| 19. tapestry     | _____ | s) elaborate writing in books and on documents  |
| 20. coat of arms | _____ | t) a person who farms a few strips of land      |

### Creative Writing - 5



You are a knight who has just finished competing in a tournament.

Tell about the events in which you competed.

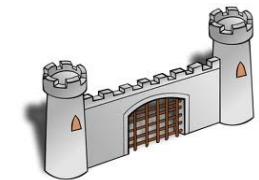
Describe the various ceremonies that took place throughout the tournament.

Tell how you felt as you took part in the various events and ceremonies.

Your story may be illustrated.

Some additional research may be needed to ensure your story is historically accurate.

### Creative Writing - 6



If you had lived in the Middle Ages you might have been apprenticed to a master craftsman.

What craft do you think you might have wanted to learn?

Write an account of what you would have had to do as an apprentice.

How would you have learned the craft?

What would your life as an apprentice have been like?

### Research Activities - 3



Johannes Gutenberg was an inventor who lived in Germany at this time.

He invented the first movable-type printing press.

What changes would this invention make to life in the Middle Ages?

Use the resources available to you to research the man and his invention.

Why do you think this invention was voted the most important of the millennium in the year 2000? Do you agree or disagree with this?

### Research Activities - 4



The Black Death was a plague that ravaged Europe in the Fourteenth Century.

Use the resources available to you to research this terrible event.

What caused the plague? What were its symptoms?

What treatment was available? How successful was the treatment?

Do we still have plagues today?

This website may help you: <http://www.middle-ages.org.uk/black-death.htm>

Present your findings in the form of an entry that might be found in an encyclopedia.

### Art and Drama - 3



Use the available resources to research the art of illuminating letters in the hand written books of the time.

Make a place card, using your full name, in full color using magic markers.

Illuminate the initial letters of your names.

The illuminated letters should be brightly colored and decorated.

### Art and Drama - 4



Stained glass windows were used in churches and cathedrals at this time.

Use black construction paper and colored tissue paper to design and make your own stained glass window.

- a) Fold a sheet of black construction paper in half.
- b) Draw your design, in pencil, on one half of the paper.
- c) Cut the same design through the two thicknesses of paper.  
Make sure you leave enough construction paper to support the tissue paper when you cut it out.
- d) Paste pieces of colored tissue paper in the appropriate places on one half of the paper, then duplicate these colors on the second half of the paper.
- e) Display your completed stained glass window.