

## March 16-Week 1: Feudalism (One hour)

- Introduce myself and ice breaker game

I want you to each tell me your name and what kind of candy you would be and why. I would be chocolate because people trust me and come to me for advice.

- Introduction

The Middle Ages were the time between the ancient world and the modern world. It is also called the Medieval Times or the Dark Ages. This was a time of knights, kings, castles, and ladies. We're going to learn about the life of different people during this time.

- Introduce tournaments

Tournaments were mock battles played as games. There were different categories that knights could perform in. The winner usually won a prize and honor.

- Explain our tournament

We are going to have our own tournament. Your group will answer questions at the end of each lesson about what we have learned so far. I will keep a total of every group's points and on our last day together, the group with the most points will earn a prize. I will also take points away if anyone in your group misbehaves. I'm going to give you your first questions later today.

- Feudalism

- M&M game

1. Explain to the students that the Middle Ages followed a special system of government called Feudalism. (The people were organized in levels by their amount of power. The king was at the top. He owned all of the land, but he needed support to keep his power. He gave land to nobles who pledged homage, or agreed to pay taxes and send knights to fight for the king. The nobles then gave land to vassals, usually knights, who agreed to fight for the noble or the king. A vassal is a person who holds land (a fief) from a feudal superior in return for homage and loyalty. Peasants were at the bottom of the pyramid; they gained land from knights or nobles in return for their loyalty and agreeing to fight.) Let them know that this make more sense as the lesson continues. Point out that serfs are not included in the Feudal System Pyramid because they are bound to the land and are not free.
2. Randomly pass out a Role Card to each student. Draw the Feudal System Pyramid on a large piece of paper or on the chalk board. Have the students stand in pyramid formation: King in front, Nobles behind them, Vassal A behind Noble A, Vassal B behind Noble B, Peasant A's behind Vassal A, and Peasant B's behind Vassal B. Read the following and tell them to pay attention to the different roles as they are mentioned:

*Imagine that you live in an area where there are several hills. The people live in great fear of what the people on the next hill might do to them. They are hungry and tired, so they find a leader, and they promise him that if he will protect them, they will serve him the rest of their lives. As long as they are near the hill, they feel more secure, but they dare not travel beyond that hill. They become suspicious of outsiders, fearing strangers are trying to find a way to attack them. A few merchants may come with goods to sell, but how will they*

*pay for the goods?*

*What would happen to trade in the downtown area? How would they eat? What would they wear? The people would have to produce everything themselves, wouldn't they? Since they could not get to outside goods, and goods could not get to them, they would have to learn to make their own. If you can imagine this, then you can understand the feudal system.*

*The vassal (the one who wanted the help, usually knights) came to the lord (the one who could give the help), and in return for protection, food, and clothing, the vassal would be the lord's servant for the rest of his or her life. The nobles were vassals of the king; the peasants were vassals to the nobleman. The king had authority over the nobles, but could not give orders to the peasants, who were nobles' servants. The land the noble received from the king was called a fief. If you were my vassal, what kinds of power did I have over you? I would have military power over you. I could expect you to fight for me. If I were the one attacked, you would serve without pay for as long as necessary. If I were the one attacking, then you would be my soldier for six weeks; after that, I would have to pay all your expenses. Even when there was no war, I could call on you to guard my castle occasionally.*

*If I wanted you to come to my castle for your advice on any subject (war, marriage, or anything else), you must come. I could also expect your financial help if I were going to fight a crusade or get married. When your father died, then you would have to pay for the right to continue as my vassal. If you were a girl, then you would need my permission to marry. You would also need my approval to give any land to the church.*

*If I failed to protect you as I promised, then you could protest to my lord (if I had one). If I were the king (and had no lord), then you might ask for help of someone strong enough to oppose me. If they succeeded in defying me, they would become your new lord and protector. If you did not live up to your obligations, I could try you in a court made up of my other vassals. If you were found guilty, you would have to surrender your fiefdom.*

*Wars were common, but there were rules against fighting from Friday through Sunday, from Thursday through Sunday of Holy Week (Easter), and on certain holy days. There was usually no fighting during the winter or harvest. These limits helped reduce the violence.*

3. Give each student a plastic cup with exactly 10 M&M's. Let them know that they are not to touch the M&M's until instructed. Tell the students that the M&M's represent the crops from the land. Tell the peasants that they must pay for their protection with their crops. Their assigned vassals *will confiscate six M&M's*. From each peasant's payment, the *vassal is to keep one piece and give five to his noble* to pay for his loyalty. From each of the vassal's payment, the *noble is to keep two pieces and give three pieces to the king*. The M&M (crop) distribution should look like this: peasants each have 4 pieces, vassal A has 12 pieces, vassal B has 13, noble A has 14 pieces, noble B has 16 and the king will have 25 candies. Write the distribution numbers on the board, so that every student can see what the others received. Ask each different role or students how they feel about what they received. Ask the students if they think that the Feudal System is fair and why. Ask them if they think that this system could cause wars and why. Allow students to eat their M&M's, but don't let them have anymore to reinforce the unfairness of the system.

- Discuss the simulation:

Explain that in this system, there are a few winners and many losers. It is better to have more peasants underneath you.

- Puzzle pieces

The students cut out names of classes and tape them onto the feudalism pyramid.

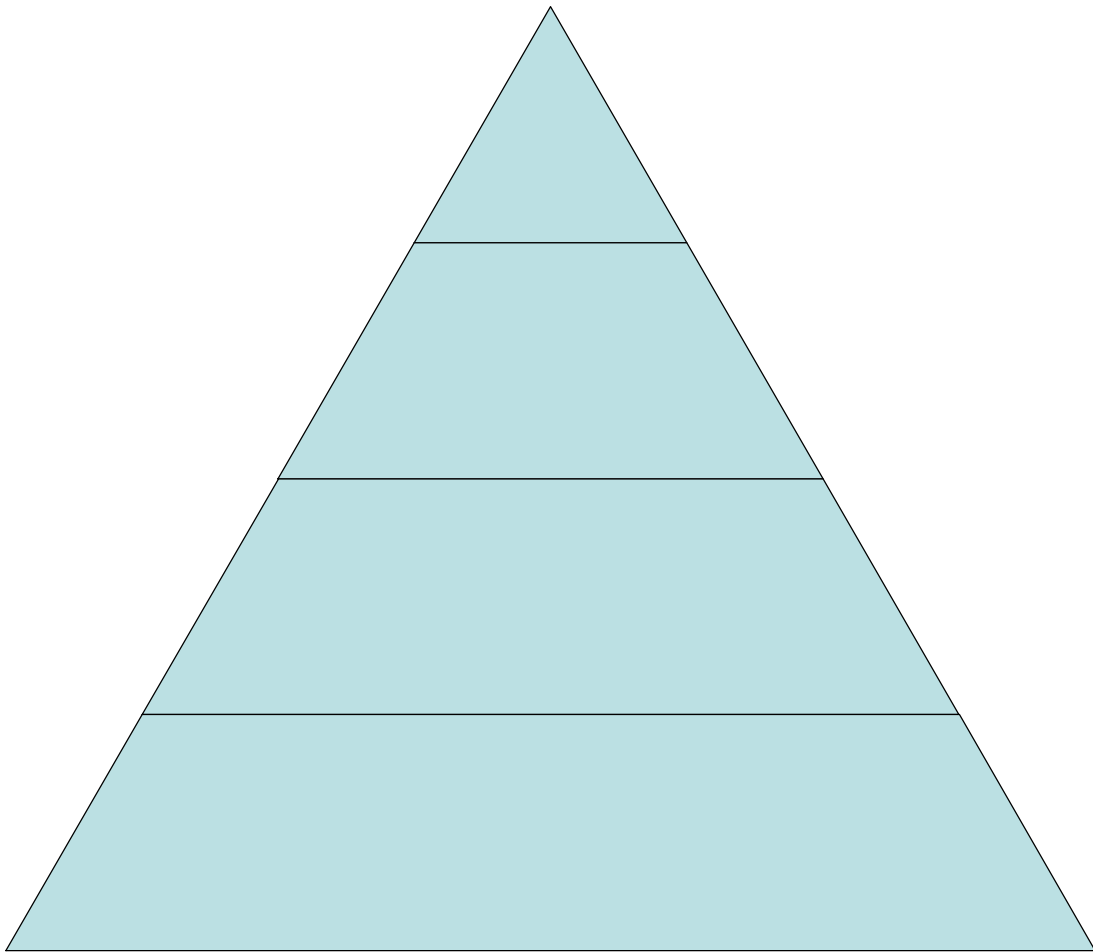
- Read and color picture about tournaments
- Tournament questions
  - I'm going to divide you into groups now and then I'll give you your questions. Get with your group. Work together as a group to answer as many as you can in the remaining time.

**Knights (Vassals)**

**King and Queen**

**Nobles**

**Peasants**



Member names: \_\_\_\_\_

Group number: \_\_\_\_\_

Day 1: Feudalism



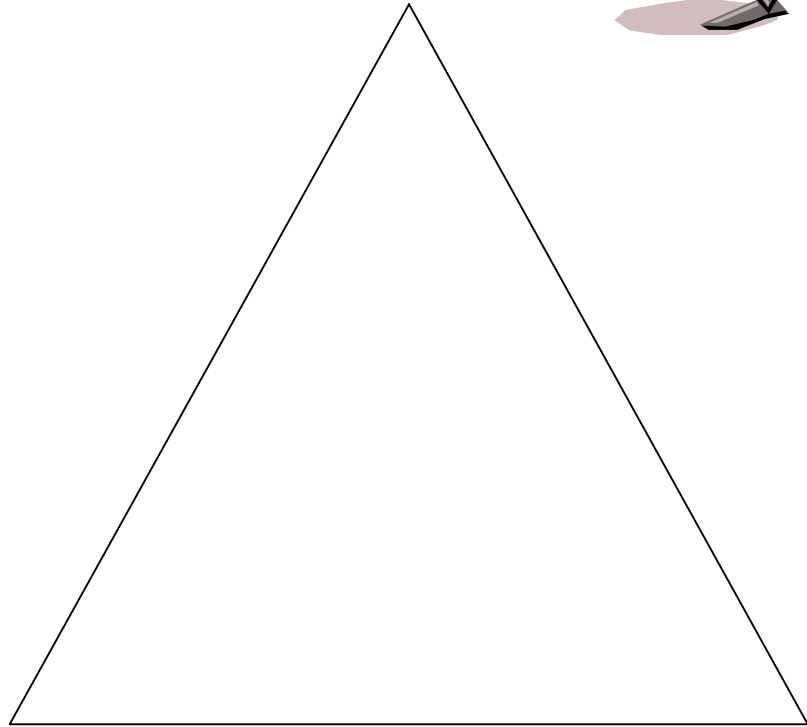
1. Put the following classes in the right spot in the pyramid. (4 points total)

Knight

King

Peasant

Noble



2. A person who holds land from a feudal superior in return for homage and loyalty is a

a. Peasant

c. Fief

b. Noble

d. Vassal

3. The person who gains the most from taxes is

a. the king

c. the vassal

b. the noble

d. the peasant

## March 30-Week 2: Knights (~One hour and 20 minutes)

- Review feudal system and where knights fall in it
- Knights: read p. 63-68 from *Magic Tree House Research Guide #2: Knights and Castles* by Will Osborne and Mary Pope Osborne
- Armor: Knights began by just wearing mail, which is small linked metal rings. This alone was heavy. However, daggers and arrows could fit in between the links. So they began to wear steel plates over the mail. They also wore metal helmets to protect their heads. Many had visors to protect their eyes. Tournament helmets were fancy and very heavy; some weighed over forty pounds! The knights even wore metal gloves and shoes. This all made up the coat of armor. The horses wore armor too, which was called a bard.
  - Pantomime putting on armor: Put on your mail first. This alone is heavy. Now put on the really heavy steel plates all over. Don't forget the gloves and shoes. Now put on your helmet. Can you keep your head up? Put down your visor to protect your eyes. How well can you move? Can you bend your arms and legs? Ok, time to take it off. First goes the helmet. Now your gloves and shoes. Now the steel plates. Now take off your mail. Don't you feel free?
- Tournaments

Does anyone remember what a tournament is? We learned last week that it is a mock battle played as a game for entertainment. Knights are the people who perform in the tournaments. They started out as a way to train knights, who were the most important men in fighting battles in the Middle Ages. The tournaments then became ways of settling disputes among knights and as entertainment for the viewers. The joust was the most common category in the tournament. A joust is a head-on clash between two knights on horses. The goal is to knock your opponent off his horse with a wooden lance.
- Heraldry/coat of arms

When knights were fighting battles, it was difficult to determine if someone was a friend or an enemy because they all wore metal armor. To help, knights began the practice of heraldry. Each knight had a coat of arms, a pattern that was a family symbol, passed down from generation to generation. Here are some examples of some coat of arms. By wearing different coat of arms, the knights could determine who the knights were.

  - Coat of arms project

I want you to come up with and color your own coat of arms for your family.

- Chivalry

It was difficult to become a knight. At the age of 7, a boy had to become a page and live and work with a knight to learn the job. He usually had to work and train until he was around 21. Once you become a knight, there are strict rules that you have to follow. This is called the code of chivalry. This became a way of life for the knights with strict rules for being honorable and brave, protecting the weak, and respecting women.

- Read chivalry code

This is an example of the chivalric code. I'm going to read it to you and I want you to follow along. *Read code*. Do you think these rules were easy to follow? The knights often did not live up to the code.

- Read *Sir Cedric* by Roy Gerrard and discuss
- Knight craft
- Tournament questions

## Code of Chivalry

- Unswerving belief in the church and obedience to its teachings
- Willingness to defend the church
- Respect and pity for all woman and weak people and steadfastness in defending them
- Love of country
- Refusal to retreat before the enemy
- Unceasing and merciless war against the enemy
- Strict obedience to the feudal lord, so long as those commands did not conflict with duty to God
- Loyalty to truth and to your pledge
- Generosity in giving
- Championship of the right and the good in every place and at all times against the forces of evil



Members names: \_\_\_\_\_

Group number: \_\_\_\_\_

### Day 2: Knights



1. The most common event in the tournament was the

- a. sword fight
- b. boxing
- c. joust
- d. wrestling

2. The \_\_\_\_\_ was developed so that knights could tell who was their friend and enemy in battle.

3. At what age did a boy who wanted to become a knight become a page?

- a. 7
- b. 14
- c. 10
- d. 21

4. The strict rules that knights had to follow were called the code of \_\_\_\_\_.

5. Sir Cedric saved Matilda from

- a. Black Ned
- b. Blue Arthur
- c. Black Ben
- d. Walter

6. A horse's armor is called

- a. a coat of armor
- b. metal
- c. a bard
- d. mail



### April 6-Week 3 (1 ½ hours)

- Review knights: What did they wear? What was a tournament? What was chivalry? Why did they have a coat of arms?
- Role of kings

The king was at the top of the feudalism pyramid and he was the most powerful person in the kingdom. His word was law and the taxes on the people were paid to him. He lived in a castle. He had to protect his castle and his throne from uprisings and invaders. Kings wore crowns, which were like badges showing their importance.
- Castles

Castles were built in a time of war to control and protect large areas of land. It was the home to the king and his lady and family. Many rich lords also built and lived in their own castle. There was also often a whole town inside the castle walls. This provided the town protection and promoted trade and markets in the castle. Often people loyal to the king or lord of the castle lived inside the walls. *Read p. 10-11(Castles)* The earliest castles were made from wood, but they soon changed to stone. *Why do you think stone was better?* (because stone is stronger and does not burn)

  - Parts of the castle: (pass out handout)
    - *Moat:* This is a deep trench filled with water outside the walls to keep out invaders.
    - *Drawbridge:* This goes up and down to let people in over the moat and keep out invaders.
    - *Walls:* The walls are normally tall and thick. There is an inner and an outer wall.
    - *Towers:* These are round with windows.
    - *Gatehouse and Portcullis:* These guarded the entrance by the drawbridge.
    - *Kitchen:* This had a separate building to prepare food. There are no stoves so the cooking is made on open fires, which can become very hot.
    - *Great hall:* This is a large room for meetings, gatherings, and feasts of food.
    - *Bailey:* This is the open courtyard, usually in the center of the castle.
  - Read about castles: p. 6-11 (100 Things....)
  - Castle craft in pairs
    - What were castles usually built out of?
    - What did the king use his money for?
    - How does a castle provide protection?
    - What was the Great Hall and what was it used for?
    - Who was on the top of the feudal pyramid?
    - Why did the feudal system cause wars?
- Tournament questions
- Extension Activities
  - Read *Walt Disney's Story of Mickey Mouse, Brave Little Tailor* and discuss the role of the king and how realistic it was.

Members names: \_\_\_\_\_

Group number: \_\_\_\_\_



### Day 3: Kings and Castles

1. Who was at the very top of the feudalism pyramid?

- a. nobles
- b. kings
- c. knights
- c. peasants

2. Kings were the only people who could afford to build castles.

- a. true
- b. false

3. Why were castles usually built from stone instead of wood? (2 points)

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4. What was the Great Hall used for?

- a. protection from invaders
- b. cooking the meals
- c. sleeping at night
- d. eating feasts

5. The open courtyard in the center of a castle is called

- a. the bailey
- b. the portcullis
- c. the tower
- d. the moat

## April 13-Week 4: Male peasants

### ▪ Peasants

The peasants were at the bottom of the feudal system. The males usually farmed the land for the nobles. They did the hardest work. They were required to pay heavy taxes. If there was a bad crop, many of the peasants starved. Peasants were a jack-of-all-trades. They had to be able to do everything for themselves, such as make their own shoes and clothes and fix their tools. The males usually wore a straw hat, leather smock, long-sleeved white cotton shirt, pants, and leather shoes. A peasant's home was really just a shack. There was normally 1-2 rooms and the family shared the living space with any livestock they owned. The animals lived in a fenced-off part of the home. The shacks were made from wattle-and-dub, or mud and twigs. The family slept on bags of straw. There was no privacy since everyone lived in the same room. Peasant's diet usually consisted of thick soup, bread, dairy products, and vegetables from the garden. They were also known as villains, which has become the word villain that we use today. It was not an easy life.

#### ○ “Baa Baa Black Sheep”

It's really about the heavy taxation of the Middle Ages. The peasants got to keep 1/3 or less of their earnings because of taxes. In the rhyme, “my master” refers to the King and “my dame” refers to the noble the peasant worked for. The “little boy who lives down the lane” is the peasant himself. Passing along this rhyme was a way for the peasants to rally together without the authorities realizing it.

#### ○ Read *Robin Hood*

- Why did Robin Hood rob only the rich?
  - Because the poor had no money.

#### ○ Begin characterization process (*Have pictures to look at*)

- We've now learned about many different people who lived in the Middle Ages. We've studied kings, knights, peasants, and we will study women next time. I want you to choose one character that we have or will study. Think about what their life was like; what did they eat, where did they live, what did they do for a living, what did they look like. *Hand out paper and pencils*
- 1. Name your occupation and where you fall on the feudal system.
- 2. Often people in the Middle Ages used occupations for their last name/family name. What is your full name?
- 3. Draw a picture of your character. What do you look like? What would you wear?
- 4. Do you live in a village or in the country. Why do you live there? Sketch and describe your home and living conditions.
- Hand in papers for next time

#### ○ Read “The Peasant's Lot”

#### ○ Read and color picture

### ▪ Tournament questions

Members names: \_\_\_\_\_

Group number: \_\_\_\_\_

Day 4: Peasants



1. What was *not* usually part of the peasant's outfit?

- a. leather shoes
- b. straw hat
- c. white cotton shirt
- d. armor

2. How many rooms were normally in a peasant's home? \_\_\_\_\_

3. Name two things that peasants often ate (2 points)

\_\_\_\_\_

4. The nursery rhyme, "Baa Baa Black Sheep" is really about:

- a. The easy life of the king
- b. The heavy taxes paid by peasants
- c. The peasant's job herding sheep
- d. The meat most peasants ate



## April 20-Week 5: Females

- Female peasants and queen

Females generally did not have a very good life in the Middle Ages. Women were often forced into marriages so their fathers could get money. Noble women gained their status, or class, through good marriages. Divorce is not allowed, so the women are stuck with their husband for life. The only alternative to marrying was to become a nun in the church. They would marry as young as 12 years old. Women have few rights, and when they marry, their property belongs to their husband. They cannot participate in law or go to school. Women's main roles were to take care of the house and children. Women's lot did improve with the beginning of chivalry, when knights began to respect women. Often the wives of nobles and kings ran the castle or land while the men were off fighting battles. Women were also influential in creating the music during this time.

- Introduce Medieval music?

- Pick a character and journal

We're going to continue the characters you chose last week. *Hand back papers and new paper.* Think more about what their life was like; what do you do at work, who do you interact with, what is your daily life like? On this piece of paper, I want you to write a journal entry from your person's point of view. Describe your person, how you feel, what you do in a day.

- If finish early, students will illustrate their journal entry

- Play Medieval music?

- Fill in graphic organizer: feudalism in center; then people; then 2 things learned about them

- Princess puppet or "friends" craft

- Make a crown??

- Read?

- Tournament questions

Members names: \_\_\_\_\_

Group number: \_\_\_\_\_

### Day 5: Females

Last tournament questions!!!!



1. Females in the Middle Ages often divorced their husbands.

- a. true
- b. false

2. Females could get married at the age of

- a. 14
- b. 10
- c. 12
- d. 16

3. Women's main role was to

- a. run the castle
- b. do fieldwork
- c. sew the clothes
- d. take care of the children

4. What helped improve women's lots in the Middle Ages?

- a. coat of arms
- b. wars
- c. chivalry
- d. divorces

5. What do you think that women contributed to the feudal society during Medieval times?

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6. Draw a picture of one medieval instrument:

## April 27-Week 6: Black Plague

- Chess-has anyone ever played chess?
  - This was a popular game in the Middle Ages. It was old even then; it came from the East. It was played as early as 550 BC. Chess pieces reflect life during the Middle Ages. There are kings, queens, knights, and bishops-leaders of the church. There are also pawns, who are regular soldiers, and castles. Pawns had the least value in the game and life. The object of the game is to capture your opponent's king-a lot like life in the Middle Ages.
- Black Plague (act out play)

This is also known as the Black Death, or Bubonic Plague. (Show pictures) From 1347-1351, this disease killed approximately 25 million people in Europe and Asia. **Scene I** The disease is thought to have been carried by fleas that lived on rats. Rats lived everywhere, especially in towns, so the disease spread very quickly. People of this time knew nothing about germs and how they spread disease. People came up with many reasons about why they were being inflicted with this deadly disease. The most accepted reason was that it was a sign of displeasure from God. People who developed the disease developed "buboes," which are swellings in the armpit and neck. These swellings often turned black, which is how it got the name of the Black Death. The disease is incurable, but many people try many different, and some very obscure, treatments. Some people did survive, but most died. **Scene II** The Black Death upset the feudal system because it created a lack of workers. Peasants soon found themselves in high demand and their wages went up. **Scene III**
- Ring around the Rosie
  - Meaning behind:
    - 'ring around the rosie' = a red, round rash that's the first symptom of the disease; it normally turns black later
    - 'ashes, ashes' = words in the funeral Mass: "Ashes to ashes, dust to dust"
      - or "Achoo, Achoo" =imitation of sneezing sound of infected person
    - 'a pocket full of posies' = the practice of putting flowers in their pockets to ward off the disease and the smell of dying people
    - 'we all fall down' = the many people who die from the plague and the fact that it affects all classes of people
- Read Horrible Histories: The Measly Middle Ages by Terry Deary p. 32-36
- End of tournament
  - Present prizes
  - Give certificates to everyone
- Review what has been learned if there is time