

In Days of Yore

Grades 4-6

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IN DAYS OF YORE

A MEDIEVAL COMMUNITY

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Medieval Times

Information Card #1

The Middle Ages

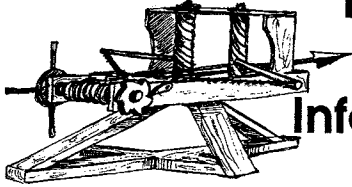


The Middle Ages was also called the medieval period. It is believed to be 500 A.D. to the 1500's. Before the Middle Ages western Europe was part of the Roman Empire. The Roman Empire became very weak and barbarians (uncivilized people) began to invade it. Soon it was divided into many kingdoms. The invading barbarians destroyed the trade that the Romans had developed with other countries and the laws that protected the people. Without trade the people had no money and had to return to farming in order to make a living.

The land was divided into very large estates called *manors* which were owned by a few wealthy men called *landlords* or *lords*. Most of the people were peasants and they worked the land for the landlords. At this time a man's life and his possessions were not safe. The Feudal System, a new way of living, was developed in order to protect people's lives and possessions. The Feudal System was like a kind of government.

Medieval Times

Medieval Times



Information Card #2

The Feudal System

The Feudal System was like a government. It provided justice and protection for the people. The word "feudal" comes from a Latin word for "fief". A *fief* was an estate granted by a king or lord in return for military or political service.

The feudal system was like a pyramid. At the top of the pyramid was the king or lord. Under the king were his barons who served him. The knights served the barons and the peasants served the knights.

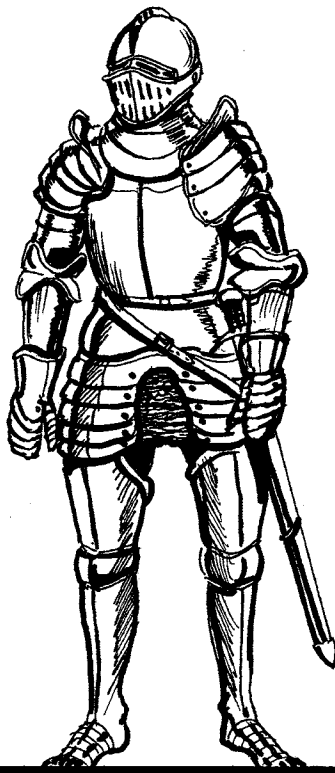
The king or lord owned all of the land in the kingdom. The king or lord gave areas of land called "fiefs" to his barons who were called his vassals. A fief was given to a vassal during a ceremony called "homage". During the ceremony a vassal promised to fight for the lord, to obey him and to pay his taxes. The vassal did not own the land but could possess it as long as he fulfilled his duties.

Each vassal had many powers over his fief. He received crops produced on the land, collected taxes, held court, passed sentences and had work

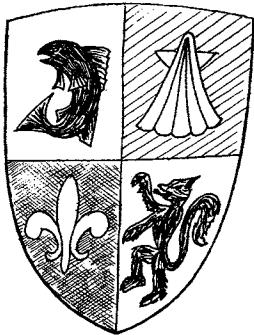
FEUDALISM

A baron would divide his land up amongst his knights. The knights became the baron's vassals and they had to pay taxes and swear to fight for him when it was necessary. The knight in turn would divide up his land amongst the peasants who promised to pay taxes and to help him when they were needed.

The vassals promised to protect and help their lord and in return the lord or king was bound to protect his vassals. The introduction of the Feudal System during the Middle Ages gained protection for the people and their property and established law and order.



S:O T:W:G



Medieval Times

Information Card #3

The Manor

In England the land was divided into areas called "shires". The shires were divided into manors. A manor was made up of the lord's land and smaller plots of land worked by the peasants. The Lord of the Manor was usually a knight who was the baron's vassal. He had sworn an oath to protect the baron's land and to pay him homage.

The home of the Lord was called the manor house. Around the manor house were gardens, orchards and farm buildings. The peasants lived in huts nearby. A manor usually had a church, a mill for grinding grain into flour, and a wine press.

The peasants farmed the Lord's land as well as their own. They were bound to the soil. They were part of the property and stayed even if a new lord acquired it. The peasants seldom traveled far away from the manor.