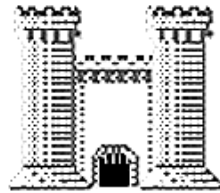


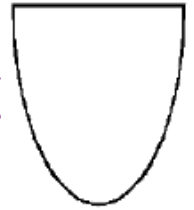
Medieval Life



MEDIEVAL LIFE

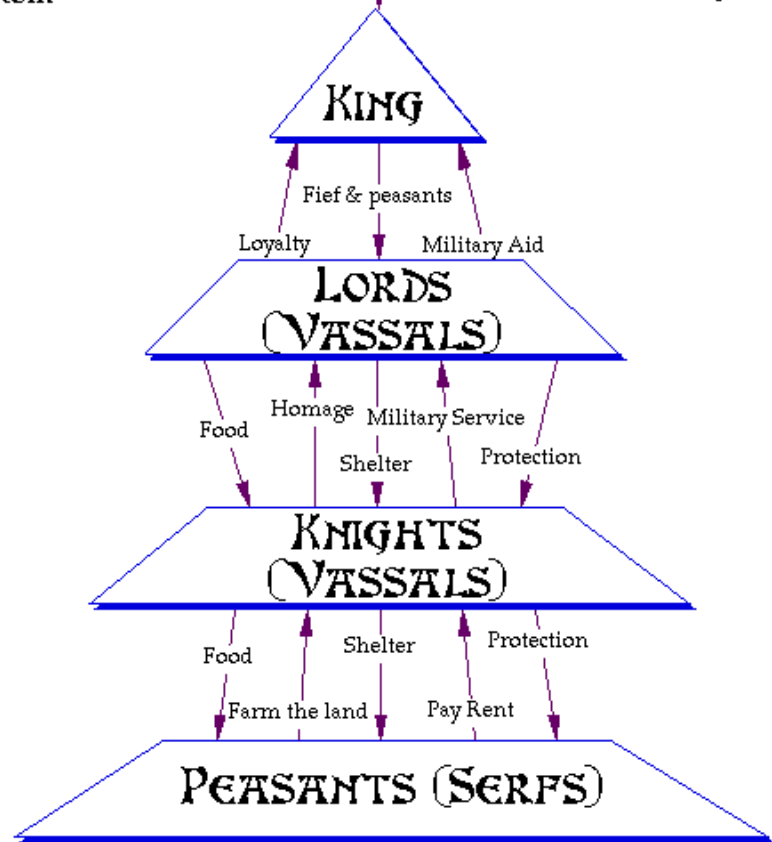


Manorialism =
Economic
System



Feudalism =
Political
System

1. According to the graphic, Medieval life consisted of what two types of systems?
2. What are the two factors that allowed Manorialism & Feudalism to function properly?
3. According to the graphic, what did the King expect in return for fiefs (land grant)?
4. According to the graphic, what did the Lords expect from the Knights in return for their food, shelter, and protection?
5. According to the graphic, what did the Vassals provide to the serfs (peasants) in exchange for their labor (farming the land) and rent?



6. Who clearly benefits from this system? Why?
7. Who clearly does NOT benefit from this system? Why?

Manor Houses and Castles

Most nobles and wealthier knights lived on manors, or large estates. The manor system was the economic arrangement of feudalism. The system rested on a set of rights and obligations between the nobleman (lord) and the peasants (vassals). The lord provided housing, farmland, and protection from bandits. In return, the peasants would tend to the lord's land, cared for his animals, and performed other tasks, like road repair, to maintain the estate.

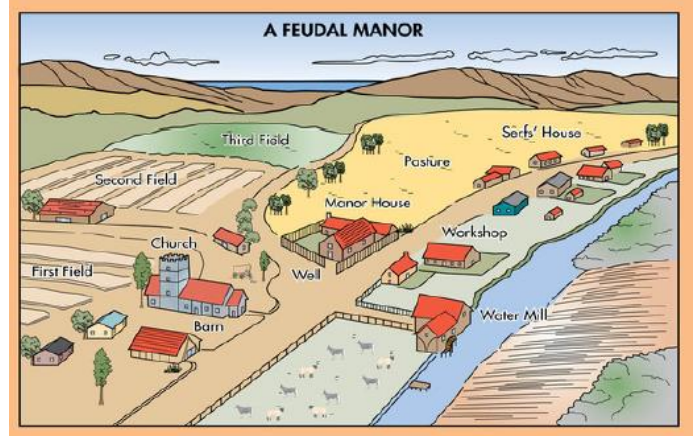
A manor included a castle or manor house, a church, one or more villages, workshops, and the surrounding farmland and woodlands. Usually 15 to 30 families lived in each village. Manors were in the country, far from towns. That meant the peasants had to produce everything the people on the manor needed. Only a few goods came from outside the manor, such as salt for preserving meat and iron for making tools. Warfare and invasions made trade nearly impossible. For the most part, manors were self-sufficient.

Many of the people on a manor lived with the lord's family in the manor house. Built of wood or stone, manor houses were surrounded by gardens and outbuildings, such as kitchens and stables. They were protected by high walls.

The manor house was the center of the community. In times of trouble, villagers entered its walls for protection. Its great hall served as the lord's court. It was also a place for special celebrations and feasts, such as those given at Christmas or after a harvest.

Kings and queens, high-ranking nobles, and wealthy lords lived in even grander structures: castles, or fortified manor houses. Castles were built for many purposes. Because of society's lack of a strong central government, warfare occurred frequently. As a result, nobles built castles, for defense against enemies. Castles were one of the most important forms of military technology. With their moats, strong walls, and gates, they were built for security. Another main function of a castle was to serve as a home. Finally, their large size and central locations made castles visual reminders of the social hierarchy and the power of the ruling classes.

The earliest medieval castles were built of wood and surrounded by high wooden fences. After about 1100 C.E., most castles were built of stone to resist attacks by more powerful siege weapons. Castles gradually became more elaborate. Many had tall towers for looking out across the land. The main castle building had a variety of rooms, including storerooms, kitchens, a library, a dining hall, sleeping quarters for distinguished guests, and the lord and lady's quarters.



1. What is the difference between feudalism and the manor system?

2. Use the box on the right to sketch a typical manor in medieval Europe. Be sure to include not only the house but also its surroundings.
3. How are castles a reflection of a decentralized government?

4. Explain the development of castles.

Monarchs

At the very top of feudal society were the monarchs, or kings and queens. Medieval monarchs were also feudal lords. They were expected to keep order and to provide protection for their vassals. Most medieval monarchs believed in the divine right of kings, the idea that God had given them the right to rule. In reality, the power of monarchs varied greatly. Some had to work hard to maintain control of their kingdoms. Few had enough wealth to keep their own armies. They had to rely on their vassals, especially nobles, to provide enough knights and soldiers. In some places, especially during the Early Middle Ages, great lords grew very powerful and governed their fiefs as independent states. In these cases, the monarch was little more than a figurehead, a symbolic ruler who had little real power.



Monks



The daily life of monks in the Middle Ages was based on three main vows: The Vow of Poverty, The Vow of Chastity and The Vow of Obedience. Medieval Monks chose to renounce all worldly life and goods and spend their lives working under the strict routine and discipline of life in a monastery. In addition to their attendance at church, the monks spent several hours reading from the Bible and praying. During the day the monks worked hard in the Monastery and on its lands. They were responsible for cooking, cleaning, farming, producing wine, providing medical care to those in the community, educating the boys and young men, and copying manuscripts.

The life of a monk during the Middle Ages centered on the “hours”. The Book of Hours was the main prayer book and was divided into eight sections, or hours, that were meant to be read at specific times of the day. Each section contained prayers, psalms, hymns, and other readings intended to help the monks secure salvation for himself. Each day began and ended with prayer services in the monastery church.

1. What responsibility did monarchs have in the feudal system?
2. Where did monarchs get their power?
3. Who do you think had more power? The Church or the State? Provide details to support your reasoning.
4. What are a monk's three vows?

Noblemen and Noblewomen

The noblemen and noblewomen were usually very wealthy people. They were lords to the knights and peasants that lived on their land. Most of them lived on manors. Some nobles had one manor, while others had several. Those who had more than one manor usually lived in one for a few months and then traveled with their families to another.

It was the nobleman's (lord) responsibility to manage and defend his land and the people who worked it. The nobleman appointed officials to make sure villagers carried out their duties, which included farming the lord's land and paying rent in the form of crops, meat, and other foods. They also acted as judges in manor courts and had the power to fine and punish those who broke the law. Some noblemen held posts in the king's government. In times of war, lower-ranking noblemen fought for their own higher-ranking lords, or at least supplied them with a well-trained fighting force.

In theory, only men were part of the feudal relationship between lord and vassal. However, it was quite common in the Middle Ages for noblewomen to hold fiefs and inherit land. Except for fighting, these women had all the duties that lords had. They ran their estates, sat as judges in manor courts, and sent their knights to serve in times of war if their husband was away.



Noblewomen who were not landowners were still extremely busy. They were responsible for raising and training their own children and, often, the children of other noble families. Noblewomen were also responsible for overseeing their household or households. Some households had hundreds of people, including priests, master hunters, and knights-in-training called pages and squires, who assisted the knights. There were also cooks, servants, artists, craftspeople, and grooms. Musicians and jesters who performed amusing jokes and stunts provided entertainment.

When they weren't hard at work, noblemen and noblewomen enjoyed hunting and hawking (hunting with birds), feasting and dancing, board games such as chess, and reading. Noblewomen also did fine stitching and embroidery.

Although nobles and monarchs had the most privileged lives in medieval times, they were not always easy or comfortable. Lit only by candles and warmed only by open fires, manor homes and castles could be gloomy and cold. There was little or no privacy. Fleas and lice infected all medieval buildings. People generally bathed only once a week. Clothes were not washed daily either. Diseases affected the rich as well as the poor. And, of course, warfare was a great and ever-present danger.

1. What responsibility did noblemen have in the feudal system?
2. What was the role of noblewomen in the feudal system? How does a noblewoman's role change when her husband is away?

Rules of Conduct for Ladies

Noblewomen of the Middle Ages were expected to follow certain rules of conduct in all circumstances of their life. By and large, these rules were set by their fathers, husbands, and brothers. In the 1200s, Robert de Blois, a French poet, codified these rules in *Chastiment des Dames* – a manual of conduct for ladies, or women of high social position. As you read the following excerpt, think about how women were thought of and treated.

1. En route to church or elsewhere, a lady must walk straight and not trot or run, or idle either. She must salute even the poor...
2. Women are criticized for the way they look at people, like a sparrowhawk ready to pounce on a sparrow. Take care; glances are messengers of love; men are prompt to deceive themselves by them...
3. Women must not swear, drink too much or eat too much.
4. The lady who, when a great lord salutes her, remains silent with bowed head is badly brought up. A lady removes her hood before those whom she would honor. One may only remain with head bent when one has something to hide...If you have an unattractive smile, however, hide it with your hand.
5. Cut your fingernails frequently, down to the quick, for cleanliness' sake. Cleanliness is better than beauty.
6. One must know how to eat – not to laugh or talk too much at table, not to pick out the best pieces, not eat too much as a guest, not to criticize the food.

~From Joseph and Francesca Gies, *Life in a Medieval City*

Comparison Chart: Noblewomen vs. Peasant Women

Noblewomen

PRIMARY SOURCE



She gets up at 7 a.m., and her chaplain is waiting to say morning prayers . . . and when she has washed and dressed . . . she has breakfast, then she goes to the chapel, for another service, then has dinner. . . . After dinner, she discusses business . . . then has a short sleep, then drinks ale or wine. Then . . . she goes to the chapel for evening service, and has supper. After supper, she relaxes with her women attendants. . . . After that, she goes to her private room, and says nighttime prayers. By 8 p.m. she is in bed.

DAILY ROUTINE OF CICELY, DUCHESS OF YORK,
quoted in *Women in Medieval Times* by Fiona Macdonald

Peasant Woman

PRIMARY SOURCE



I get up early . . . milk our cows and turn them into the field. . . . Then I make butter. . . . Afterward I make cheese. . . . Then the children need looking after. . . . I give the chickens food . . . and look after the young geese. . . . I bake, I brew. . . . I twist rope. . . . I tease out wool, and card it, and spin it on a wheel. . . . I organize food for the cattle, and for ourselves. . . . I look after all the household.

**FROM A BALLAD FIRST WRITTEN
DOWN IN ABOUT 1500,** quoted in *Women
in Medieval Times* by Fiona Macdonald

Rules of Courtly Love

Courtly love refers to a code of behavior to be followed by aristocrats during the Middle Ages. The nobles celebrated courtly love, an ideal form of spiritual love in which a knight or courtier completely devotes himself to a noblewoman.

The following set of rules is based on *De Amore* of the Andreas Capellanus written 1174.

1. Marriage should not be a deterrent to love. (most marriage were arranged, so spouses had to be encouraged to love one another)
2. Love cannot exist in the individual who cannot be jealous.
3. A double love cannot obligate an individual.
4. Love constantly waxes and wanes.
5. A lover must observe a two-year widowhood after his beloved's death.
6. Only the most urgent circumstances should deprive one of love.
7. A lover should not love anyone who would be an embarrassing marriage choice.
8. Public revelation of love is deadly to love in most instances.
9. The sight or presence of one's beloved causes palpitation of the heart.
10. Good character is the one real requirement for worthiness of love.
11. Apprehension (anxiety) is the constant companion of true love.
12. Love is reinforced by jealousy. Suspicion of the beloved generates jealousy and therefore intensifies love.
13. Eating and sleeping diminish greatly when one is aggravated by love.
14. No act or thought is worthy to the lover, unless it is to show undying love.
15. Thought of the beloved never leaves the true lover.

1. How should a lady "behave", according to the Rules of Conduct for Ladies?
2. How are the roles and routines different for noblewomen and peasant women? How do the concerns in their lives differ?
3. What is courtly love?
4. How should a nobleman or knight treat his beloved?

Name: _____ Date: _____

Period: _____

Knights - *Knights were the mounted soldiers of the medieval world. In general, knights had to have a good deal of wealth, since a full suit of armor and a horse cost a small fortune. Knights were vassals of more powerful lords.*

Becoming a Knight. The path to becoming a knight involved many years of training. A boy started as a page, or servant. At the age of seven, he left home and went to live at the castle of a lord, who was often a relative. Nearly all wealthy lords had several pages living in their castles and manors. A page learned how to ride a horse and received religious instruction from the local priest or friar.

During this first stage of training, pages spent much of their time with the ladies of the castle. They were expected to help the ladies in every way possible. During this period, the ladies taught pages how to sing, dance, compose music, and play the harp. These skills were valued in knights.

After about seven years as a page, a young boy became a squire. During this part of his training, he spent most of his time with the knight who was his lord. He polished the knight's armor, sword, shield, and lance. He helped care for his horse. He even waited on him at mealtime, carrying water for hand washing, carving meat, and filling his cup when it was empty.

Most importantly, squires trained to become warriors. They learned how to fight with a sword and a lance, a kind of spear that measured up to 15 feet long. They also learned how to use a battle-axe and a mace (a club with a heavy metal head). They practiced by fighting in make-believe battles. But squires also went into real battles. A squire was expected to help dress his lord in armor, care for his weapons and horses, follow him into battle, and look after him if he was wounded.

In his early 20s, if deserving of the honor, a squire became a knight. Becoming a knight could be a complex religious event. A squire often spent the night before his knighting ceremony in prayer. The next morning, he bathed and put on a white tunic, or long shirt, to show his purity. During the ceremony, he knelt before his lord and said his vows. The lord drew his sword, touched the knight-to-be lightly on each shoulder with the flat side of the blade, and knighted him. Sometimes, if a squire did particularly well in battle, he was knighted on the spot.

The Responsibilities and Daily Life of Knights. Being a knight was more than a profession. It was a way of life. Knights lived by a strong code of behavior called chivalry. (Chivalry comes from the French word *cheval*, meaning, "horse.") Knights were expected to be loyal to the Church and to their lord, to be just and fair, and to protect the helpless. They performed acts of gallantry, or respect paid to women. From these acts, we get the modern idea of chivalry as traditional forms of courtesy and kindness toward women.

Jousts and tournaments were a major part of a knight's life. In a joust, two armed knights on horseback galloped at each other with their lances extended. The idea was to unseat the opponent from his horse. Jousts were held as sporting events, for exercise, or as serious battles between rival knights. A tournament involved a team of knights in one-on-one battle. These events served as entertainment for people in the Middle Ages. Knights fought wearing heavy suits of armor. In the 11th century, armor was made of linked metal rings, called chain mail. By the 14th century, plate armor was more common and offered better protection.

The medieval style of knighthood lasted until about the 17th century, when warfare changed with the growing use of gunpowder and cannons. Knights, who fought one-to-one on horseback, were no longer effective against such weapons.

1. Describe the three basic stages for a boy to become a knight.
2. What responsibilities did knights have in the feudal system?
3. What is the code of chivalry?
4. What purposes did jousts and tournaments serve?



Peasants - Most people during the Middle Ages were peasants. Peasants supported the entire feudal structure by working the land. Their labor freed noblemen and knights to spend their time preparing for war or fighting.

During medieval times, peasants were legally classified as free or serf. These categories had to do with the amount of service owed to the lord. Free peasants rented land to farm and owed only their rent to the lord. Unfree peasants, or serfs, farmed the lord's fields and could not leave the lord's manor. In return for their labor, they received their own small plot of land to farm. Even if a peasant was free, they rarely left their manor.

The daily life of peasants revolved around work. Most peasants raised crops and tended livestock (farm animals). But every manor also had carpenters, shoemakers, smiths (metalworkers), and other skilled workers. Peasant women worked in the fields when they were needed. They also cared for their children, their homes, and livestock.

Fortunately a few agricultural improvements were discovered during the Middle Ages. The first was the development of a heavier plow. This new plow made deeper cuts in the ground and pushed soil sideways, making farming easier and faster. Less time in the fields, leads to better methods of planting. The three-field system was developed which greatly increased crop production. In this system, one-third of fields are left fallow, or unused, for the year in order to preserve nutrients in the soil. Despite these advancements, peasants were still under a lot of strain from their lords.

Along with the work they performed, peasants and serfs might owe the lord numerous taxes. There was a yearly payment called "head money," at a fixed amount per person. The lord could demand a tax, known as tallage, whenever he needed money. When a woman married, she, her father, or her husband had to pay a fee called a tithe, worth one-tenth of their income. Peasants were also required to grind their grain at the lord's mill (the only mill on the manor). As payment, the miller kept portions of the grain for the lord and for himself. Lords could keep any amount they wanted. Peasants found this practice so hateful that some of them hid small hand mills in their houses. If a peasant was found with a hand mill, they would be criminally charged.

Most peasants lived in small, simple houses of one or two rooms. A typical house was made of woven strips of wood covered with straw or mud. Peasants had little furniture or other possessions. There was a hearth fire in the middle of the main room, but often there was no chimney, so it was dark and smoky inside. An entire family might eat and sleep in one room that sometimes also housed their farm animals.

Peasants ate vegetables, meat such as pork, and dark, coarse bread made of wheat mixed with rye or oatmeal. Almost no one ate beef or chicken. During the winter, they ate pork or fish that had been preserved in salt. Herbs were used widely, to

improve flavor and
reduce saltiness, or
to disguise the taste
of meat that was no
longer fresh.

Despite the
hardships they
endured, peasants
and serfs accepted
their lot in life as
part of the Church's
teachings. They, like
most Christians
during the Middle
Ages, believed that
God determined a
person's place in
society.

Life of A Serf

To cheer up their children who chafe for their food
And they themselves suffer surely much hunger
And woe in the violence with waking at nights
And rising to rock an often restless cradle
Both to card and to comb, to clout and to wash,
To rub and to reel yarn, rushes to peel.
So tis pity to proclaim or in poetry to show
The woe of these women who work in such cottages:
And of many other men who much woe suffer.
Crippled with hunger and with thirst, they keep up appearances.
And are abashed for to beg, and will not be blazoned
What they need from their neighbors at noon and at evensong.
This I know full well, for the world has taught me,
How churls and afflicted who have many children.
And have no coin but their craft to clothe and to keep them. (Spielvogel)

Name: _____ Date: _____ Period: _____

1. What were the responsibilities of peasants in the feudal system?
2. What is the difference between a free peasant and a serf?
3. What is the difference between a serf and a slave?
4. What were two improvements in farming that occurred in the Middle Ages? Describe their impact on the peasants.
5. Draw your own interpretation of the three-field system.
6. Describe the types of taxes that peasants would pay to their lords.
7. Why did most peasants accept their role within the feudal system?

(Use the provided sources (Life of a Serf) to complete the following question. Cite specific details from the document.)

8. What were some of the difficulties or challenges of being a peasant or serf?