Europe in the Middle Ages  
1000–1500

Key Events
As you read, look for the key events in the history of medieval Europe.
• The revival of trade led to the growth of cities and towns, which became important centers for manufacturing.
• The Catholic Church was an important part of people’s lives during the Middle Ages.
• During the fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries, Europeans experienced many problems including the Black Death, the Hundred Years’ War, and the decline of the Church.

The Impact Today
The events that occurred during this time period still impact our lives today.
• The revival of trade brought with it a money economy and the emergence of capitalism, which is widespread in the world today.
• Modern universities had their origins in medieval Europe.
• The medieval history of Europe can be seen today in Europe’s great cathedrals.

The cathedral at Chartres, about 50 miles (80 km) southwest of Paris, is but one of the many great Gothic cathedrals built in Europe during the Middle Ages.

Medieval depiction of Death

1347
The Black Death begins to devastate Europe

1431
Joan of Arc is burned at the stake

1453
Hundred Years' War ends

1461
King Louis XI rules France

1485
Tudor dynasty is established in England

Louis XI

Chapter Overview
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Life in London

In the twelfth century, William Fitz-Stephen spoke of London as one of the noblest cities of the world: “It is happy in the healthiness of its air, in the Christian religion, in the strength of its defences, the nature of its site, the honor of its citizens, the modesty of its women; pleasant in sports; fruitful of noble men.”

To Fitz-Stephen, London offered a number of opportunities and pleasures: “Practically anything that man may need is brought daily not only into special places but even into the open squares, and all that can be sold is loudly advertised for sale.” “Any man,” according to Fitz-Stephen, “if he is not a good-for-nothing, may earn his living expenses and esteem according to his station.”

Sporting events and leisure activities were available in every season of the year: “In Easter holidays they fight battles on water.” In summer, “the youths are exercised in leaping, dancing, shooting, wrestling, casting the stone; the maidens dance as long as they can well see.” In winter, “when the great fen, or moor, which waters the walls of the city on the north side, is frozen, many young men play upon the ice; some, striding as wide as they may, do slide swiftly.”

To Fitz-Stephen, “every convenience for human pleasure is known to be at hand” in London.

Why It Matters

One would hardly know from Fitz-Stephen’s cheerful description that medieval cities faced overcrowded conditions, terrible smells from rotting garbage, and the constant threat of epidemics and fires. The rise of cities was one aspect of the new burst of energy and growth that characterized European civilization in the High Middle Ages, the period from about 1000 to 1300. New farming practices, the growth of trade, and a growing population created a vigorous European society.

History and You

Research current conditions in the city of London. Compare the city today with the way it was described by Fitz-Stephen. Write an essay in which you explain how London has changed and how it has remained the same. Why do certain problems persist? Document your argument with evidence and include a bibliography.


One monk reported in the twelfth century how his monastery used a local stream to grind grain and make cloth:

"Entering the Abbey under the boundary wall, the stream first hurls itself at the mill where in a flurry of movement it strains itself, first to crush the wheat beneath the weight of the millstones, then to shake the fine sieve which separates flour from bran. . . . The stream is not yet discharged. The fullers [people who finished the manufacture of woolen cloth] located near the mill beckon to it. One by one it lifts and drops the heavy pestles, the fullers’ great wooden hammers. How many horses would be worn out, how many men would be weary if this graceful river, to whom we owe our clothes and food, did not labor for us."

—The Medieval Machine, Jean Gimpel, 1976

Gradually, the growth of trade and manufacturing and the rise of towns laid the foundations for the transformation of Europe from a rural, agricultural society to a more urban, industrial one.

The New Agriculture

In the early Middle Ages, Europe had a relatively small population. In the High Middle Ages, however, population increased dramatically. The number of people almost doubled between 1000 and 1300, from 38 million to 74 million people.
What caused this huge increase in population? For one thing, conditions in Europe were more settled and peaceful after the invasions of the early Middle Ages had stopped. This increased peace and stability also led to a dramatic expansion in food production after 1000.

In part, food production increased because a change in climate during the High Middle Ages improved growing conditions. In addition, more land was cultivated as peasants of the eleventh and twelfth centuries cut down trees and drained swamps. By 1200, Europeans had more land for farming than they do today.

Changes in technology also aided the development of farming. The Middle Ages witnessed an explosion of labor-saving devices. For example, the people of the Middle Ages harnessed the power of water and wind to do jobs once done by human or animal power.

Many of these new devices were made from iron, which was mined in various areas of Europe. Iron was used to make scythes, axes, and hoes for use on farms, as well as saws, hammers, and nails for building. Iron was crucial in making the *carruca*, a heavy, wheeled plow with an iron plowshare. Unlike earlier plows, this plow could easily turn over heavy clay soils.

Because of the weight of the *carruca*, six or eight oxen were needed to pull it. However, oxen were slow. Two new inventions for the horse made it possible to plow faster. A new horse collar spread the weight around the shoulders and chest rather than...
the throat. Now a series of horses could be hitched up, enabling them to pull the new, heavy plow faster and turn over more land. The use of the horseshoe, an iron shoe nailed to the horses’ hooves, made it easier for horses to pull the heavy plow through the rocky and heavy clay soil of northern Europe.

The use of the heavy-wheeled plow also led to the growth of farming villages, where people had to work together. Because iron was expensive, a heavy-wheeled plow had to be bought by the entire community. Likewise, one family could not afford a team of animals, so villagers shared their beasts. The size and weight of the plow made it necessary to plow the land in long strips to minimize the amount of turning that would have to be done.

The shift from a two-field to a three-field system of crop rotation added to the increase in food production. In the early Middle Ages, peasants divided their land into two fields of equal size. One field was planted, while the other was allowed to lie fallow, or remain unplanted, to regain its fertility. Now, however, lands were divided into three parts. One field was planted in the fall with grains (such as rye and wheat) that were harvested in summer. The second field was planted in the spring with grains (oats and barley) and vegetables (peas and beans) that were harvested in the fall. The third field was allowed to lie fallow.

The three-field system meant that only one-third, rather than one-half, of the land lay fallow at any time. The rotation of crops also kept the soil from being exhausted so quickly, which allowed more crops to be grown.

Reading Check Analyzing What were the most important factors leading to the dramatic increase in population during the High Middle Ages?

The Manorial System

You will remember from reading Chapter 9 that feudalism created alliances between nobles (lords and vassals). The landholding nobles were a military elite whose ability to be warriors depended on their having the leisure time to pursue the arts of war. Landed estates, located on the fiefs given to a vassal by his lord, and worked by peasants, provided the economic support that made this way of life possible.

A manor was an agricultural estate run by a lord and worked by peasants. Although free peasants continued to exist, increasing numbers of free peasants became serfs, or peasants legally bound to the land. Serfs had to provide labor services, pay rents, and be subject to the lord’s control. By 800, probably 60 percent of the people of western Europe were serfs.

A serf’s labor services included working the lord’s land. The lord’s land made up one-third to one-half of the cultivated land scattered throughout the manor. The rest of the estate’s land was used by the peasants to grow food for themselves. Such tasks as building barns and digging ditches were also part of the labor services. Serfs usually worked about three days a week for their lords.

The serfs paid rents by giving the lords a share of every product they raised. Serfs also paid the lords for the use of the manor’s common pasturelands, streams, ponds, and surrounding woodlands. If a serf fished in the pond or stream on a manor, he turned over part of the catch to his lord. Peasants were also obliged to pay a tithe (a tenth of their produce) to their local village churches.

In the feudal contract, lords and vassals were tied together through mutual obligations to each other. On individual estates, lords had a variety of legal rights over their serfs. Serfs could not leave the manor without the lord’s permission and could not marry anyone outside the manor without the lord’s approval. Lords often had political authority on their lands, which gave them the right to try peasants in their own courts. Peasants were required to pay lords for certain services, such as having their grain ground into flour in the lords’ mills.

Even with these restrictions, however, serfs were not slaves. The land assigned to serfs to support themselves usually could not be taken away, and
their responsibilities to the lord remained fairly fixed. It was also the lord’s duty to protect his serfs, giving them the safety they needed to grow crops.

**Reading Check** Summarizing What legal rights did the lords have over the serfs?

## Daily Life of the Peasantry

The life of peasants in Europe was simple. Their cottages had wood frames surrounded by sticks, with the spaces between sticks filled with straw and rubble and then plastered over with clay. Roofs were simply thatched.

The houses of poorer peasants consisted of a single room. Others, however, had at least two rooms—a main room for cooking, eating, and other activities and another room for sleeping. There was little privacy in a medieval household.

A hearth in the main room was used for heating and cooking. Because there were few or no windows and no chimney, the smoke created by fires in the hearth went out through cracks in the walls or, more likely, through the thatched roof.

### Cycle of Labor

The seasons of the year largely determined peasant activities. Each season brought a new round of tasks. Harvest time in August and September was especially hectic. A good harvest of grains for making bread was crucial to survival in the winter months.

A new cycle of labor began in October, when peasants worked the ground for the planting of winter crops. In November came the slaughter of excess livestock, because there was usually not enough food to keep the animals alive all winter. The meat would be salted to preserve it for winter use. In February and March, the land was plowed for the planting of spring crops—oats, barley, peas, and beans. Early summer was a fairly relaxed time, although there was still weeding and sheepshearing to be done.

Peasants did not face a life of constant labor, thanks to the feast days, or holidays, of the Catholic Church. These feast days celebrated the great events of the Christian faith, or the lives of Christian saints or holy persons. The three great feasts of the Catholic Church were Christmas (celebrating the birth of Christ), Easter (celebrating the resurrection of Christ), and Pentecost (celebrating the descent of the Holy Spirit on Christ’s disciples 50 days after his resurrection). Other feasts dedicated to saints or the Virgin Mary, the mother of Jesus, were also celebrated. A total of more than 50 days were essentially holidays.

Religious feast days, Sunday mass, baptisms, marriages, and funerals all brought peasants into contact with the village church, a crucial part of manorial life. The village priest taught the peasants the basic ideas of Christianity so that they would gain the Christians’ final goal—salvation. However, village priests were often peasants themselves; most were not able to read. It is difficult to know how much church teaching the peasants actually understood. Very likely, they saw
God as an all-powerful force who needed to be appeased by prayer to bring good harvests.

The position of peasant women in manorial society was both important and difficult. They were expected to work in the fields and at the same time bear children. Their ability to manage the household might determine whether a peasant family would starve or survive in difficult times.

**Food and Drink** Though simple, a peasant’s daily diet was adequate when food was available. The basic staple of the peasant diet, and of the medieval diet in general, was bread. Women made the dough for the bread. The loaves were usually baked in community ovens, which were owned by the lord of the manor. Peasant bread was highly nutritious because it contained not only wheat and rye but also barley, millet, and oats. These ingredients gave the bread a dark appearance and very heavy, hard texture.

Numerous other foods added to the peasant’s diet: vegetables from the household gardens; cheese from cow’s or goat’s milk; nuts and berries from woodlands; and fruits, such as apples, pears, and cherries. Chickens provided eggs and sometimes meat. Peasants usually ate meat only on the great feast days, such as Christmas and Easter.

Grains were important not only for bread but also for making ale. In the Middle Ages, it was not easy to obtain pure sources of water to drink. Consequently, while wine became the choice of drink for members of the upper classes, ale was the most common drink of the poor. If records are accurate, enormous quantities of ale were consumed. A monastery in the twelfth century records a daily allotment to the monks of three gallons of ale a day. Peasants in the field probably consumed even more.

**Reading Check** Explaining What role did peasant women play in manorial society?

**The Revival of Trade**

Medieval Europe was basically an agricultural society in which most people lived in small villages. In the eleventh and twelfth centuries, however, new elements changed the economic foundation of European civilization. The new features included a revival of trade and an associated growth of towns and cities.

The revival of trade in Europe was gradual. During the chaotic times of the early Middle Ages, large-scale trade had declined. By the end of the tenth century, however, people were emerging with both the skills and products for trade.

Cities in Italy took the lead. Venice, for example, had emerged by the end of the eighth century as a town with close trading ties to the Byzantine Empire. Venice developed a mercantile fleet (a fleet of trading ships) and by the end of the tenth century had become a major trading center.

While Venice and other northern Italian cities were busy trading in the Mediterranean, the towns of Flanders were doing the same in northern Europe. Flanders, the area along the coast of present-day Belgium and northern France, was known for its much desired, high-quality woolen cloth.

The location of Flanders made it an ideal center for the traders of northern Europe. Merchants from England, Scandinavia, France, and Germany met there to trade their goods for woolen cloth. Flanders prospered...
in the eleventh and twelfth centuries, and such Flemish towns as Bruges and Ghent became centers for the trade and manufacture of woolen cloth.

By the twelfth century, a regular exchange of goods had developed between Flanders and Italy. To encourage this trade, the counts of Champagne, in northern France, initiated a series of trade fairs. Six fairs were held every year in the chief towns of the territory. At these fairs, northern merchants brought the furs, woolen cloth, tin, hemp, and honey of northern Europe and exchanged them for the cloth and swords of northern Italy and the silks, sugar, and spices of the East.

As trade increased, demand for gold and silver coins arose at fairs and trading markets of all kinds. Slowly, a money economy—an economic system based on money, rather than barter—began to emerge. New trading companies and banking firms were set up to manage the exchange and sale of goods. All of these new practices were part of the rise of commercial capitalism, an economic system in which people invested in trade and goods in order to make profits.

Evaluating Why were the towns of Flanders busy trading centers?

The Growth of Cities

The revival of trade led to a revival of cities. Towns had greatly declined in the early Middle Ages, especially in Europe north of the Alps. Old Roman cities had continued to exist but had dwindled in size and population.

Cities Old and New With the revival of trade, merchants began to settle in the old Roman cities. They were followed by craftspeople or artisans—people who had developed skills and saw a chance to make goods that could be sold by the merchants. In the course of the eleventh and twelfth centuries, the old Roman cities came alive with new populations and growth.
Many new cities or towns were also founded, especially in northern Europe. Usually, a group of merchants built a settlement near a castle because it was located along a trade route and because the lords of the castle would offer protection. If the settlement prospered and expanded, new walls were built to protect it. The merchants and artisans of these cities later came to be called *burgers* or *bourgeoisie*, from the German word *burg*, meaning “a walled enclosure.”

Medieval cities were small in comparison with either ancient or modern cities. A large trading city would number about five thousand inhabitants. By the late 1200s, London—England’s largest city—had more than 40,000 people. Italian cities tended to be larger. Venice, Florence, and Milan each had more than 80,000 inhabitants. Even the largest European city, however, seemed small alongside the Byzantine capital of Constantinople or the Arab cities of Damascus, Baghdad, and Cairo.

**City Government**

Most towns were closely tied to the land around them because they depended on the food grown in the surrounding manors. In addition, the towns were often part of the territory belonging to a lord and were subject to his authority. Although lords wanted to treat townspeople as they would their vassals and serfs, the townspeople saw things differently. Townspeople needed freedom to trade. They needed their own unique laws and were willing to pay for them. Lords and kings, in turn, saw that they could also make money and were willing to sell to the townspeople the liberties they wanted.

By 1100, townspeople were getting numerous rights from local lords. These included the right to buy and sell property, freedom from military service to the lord, a written law that guaranteed the freedom of the townspeople, and the right for an escaped serf to become a free person after living a year and a day in the town.

The people in almost every new town and city gained these basic liberties. Some new towns also received the right to govern themselves by choosing their own officials and having their own courts of law.

Over a period of time, medieval cities developed their own governments for running the affairs of the community. Only males who had been born in the city or who had lived there for some time were citizens. In many cities, these citizens elected the members of a city council, who served as judges and city officials and who passed laws. Elections were carefully rigged to make sure that only *patricians*—members of the wealthiest and most powerful families—were elected.

**Reading Check**

Analyzing Where did towns tend to be located and why did they appear there?

**Daily Life in the Medieval City**

Medieval towns were surrounded by stone walls. Because the walls were expensive to build, the space within was precious and tightly filled. Thus, medieval cities had narrow, winding streets. Houses were crowded against one another, and the second and third stories were built out over the streets.

The danger of fire was great. Dwellings were built mostly of wood before the fourteenth century, and candles and wood fires were used for light and heat. Medieval cities burned rapidly once a fire started.

The physical environment of medieval cities was not pleasant. The cities were often dirty and smelled from animal and human waste. Air pollution was also a fact of life. Wood fires, present everywhere, were the usual cause. Even worse pollution, however, came from the burning of cheap grades of coal by brewers, dyers, and people who could not afford to purchase wood.

Cities were also unable to stop water pollution, especially from the tanning and animal-slaughtering industries. Butchers dumped blood and all other waste products from their butchered animals into the rivers. Tanners, who converted animal hides to leather, unloaded tannic acids, dried blood, fat, hair,
and the other waste products of their operations. Because of the pollution, cities did not use the rivers for drinking water but relied instead on wells.

Private and public baths also existed in medieval towns. Paris, for example, had 32 public baths for men and women. Since nudity was allowed in the baths, city authorities came under pressure to close them down. The great plague of the fourteenth century (discussed later in this chapter) sealed the fate of the baths.

There were considerably more men than women in medieval cities. Women were expected to supervise the household, prepare meals, raise the children, and manage the family’s finances. Often, they were expected to help their husbands in their trades. Some women developed their own trades to earn extra money. Sometimes, when a master craftsman died, his widow carried on his trade. It was thus possible for women in medieval towns to lead quite independent lives. In fact, many women became brewers, weavers, and hatmakers.

**Reading Check** Identifying List three physical characteristics of medieval cities.

**Industry and Guilds**

The revival of trade enabled cities and towns to become important centers for manufacturing a wide range of goods, such as cloth, metalwork, shoes, and leather goods. A host of craft activities were carried on in houses located in the narrow streets of the medieval cities. From the eleventh century on, craftspeople began to organize themselves into guilds, or business associations. Guilds came to play a leading role in the economic life of the cities. By the thirteenth century, there were guilds for almost every craft, such as tanners, carpenters, and bakers. There were also separate guilds for specialized groups of merchants, such as dealers in silk, spices, wool, or money (banking).

Craft guilds directed almost every aspect of the production process. They set the standards for the quality of the articles produced, specified the methods of production to be used, and even fixed the price at which the finished goods could be sold. Guilds also determined the number of people who could enter a specific trade and the procedure they must follow to do so.

A person who wanted to learn a trade first became an apprentice, usually at around the age of 10, to a master craftsman. Apprentices were not paid, but they did receive room and board from their masters. After five to seven years of service during which they learned their craft, apprentices became journeymen and worked for wages for other masters. Journeymen aspired to become masters as well. To do so, they were expected to produce a masterpiece, a finished piece in their craft. This piece allowed the master craftspeople of the guild to judge whether a journeyman was qualified to become a master and join the guild.

**Reading Check** Evaluating What role did guilds play in the economic life of the cities?
In 1075, Pope Gregory VII issued the following decrees:

1. That the Roman [Catholic] Church was founded by God alone. (2) That the pope alone can with right be called universal. (3) That he alone can depose or reinstate bishops. . . . (10) That [the pope's] name alone shall be spoken in the churches. (11) That his name is the only name in the world. (12) That it may be permitted to him to depose emperors. . . . (19) That he himself may be judged by no one. . . . (22) That the Roman Church has never erred; nor will it err to all eternity, the Scripture bearing witness.

— Select Historical Documents of the Middle Ages, Ernest F. Henderson, ed., 1892

The popes of the Catholic Church exerted their power, as is evident from these decrees. Christianity was a crucial element in medieval European society.

The Papal Monarchy

Since the fifth century, the popes of the Catholic Church had claimed supremacy over the affairs of the Church. They had also gained control of territories in central Italy that came to be known as the Papal States. This control kept the popes involved in political matters, often at the expense of their spiritual duties.

At the same time, the Church became increasingly involved in the feudal system. Chief officials of the Church, such as bishops and abbots, came to hold their
offices as grants from nobles. As vassals, they were obliged to carry out the usual feudal services, including military duties. Lords often chose their vassals from other noble families for political reasons. Thus, the bishops and abbots they chose were often worldly figures who cared little about their spiritual duties.

**Reform of the Papacy** By the eleventh century, church leaders realized the need to be free from the interference of lords in the appointment of church officials. When an individual became a church official in the Middle Ages, he was given a ring and a staff. These objects symbolized the spiritual authority that the official was granted, or invested with, by the Church. Secular, or lay, rulers usually both chose nominees to church offices and gave them the symbols of their office, a practice known as lay investiture. Realizing the need to be free from secular interference in the appointment of church officials, Pope Gregory VII decided to fight this practice.

Elected pope in 1073, Gregory was convinced that he had been chosen by God to reform the Church. To pursue this aim, Gregory claimed that he—the pope—was truly God’s “vicar on earth” and that the pope’s authority extended over all the Christian world, including its rulers. Only by eliminating lay investiture could the Church regain its freedom, by which Gregory meant the right of the Church to appoint clergy and run its own affairs. If rulers did not accept this, the pope would remove them.

Gregory VII soon found himself in conflict with Henry IV, the king of Germany, over these claims. For many years, German kings had appointed high-ranking clerics, especially bishops, as their vassals in order to use them as administrators. Without them, the king could not hope to maintain his own power in the face of the powerful German nobles.

In 1075, Pope Gregory issued a decree forbidding high-ranking clerics from receiving their investiture from lay leaders: “We decree that no one of the clergy shall receive the investiture with a bishopric or abbey or Church from the hand of an emperor or king or of any lay person.” Henry, however, had no intention of obeying a decree that challenged the very heart of his administration.

The struggle between Henry IV and Gregory VII, which is known as the Investiture Controversy, dragged on until a new German king and a new pope reached an agreement in 1122 called the Concordat of Worms. Under this agreement, a bishop in Germany was first elected by Church officials. After election, the new bishop paid homage to the king as his lord. The king in turn invested him with the symbols of temporal (earthly) office. A representative of the pope, however, then invested the new bishop with the symbols of his spiritual office.

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**History through Art**

*Meeting with the Pope* by Giovanni Francesco Romanelli

Find descriptions of Gregory VII in the text that seem to match the way in which the artist has portrayed him. Explain your choices.
A New Activism

In the eleventh century, more new orders arose and became important. One of the most important new orders of the Middle Ages was the Cistercian (sis•TUHR•shuhn) order. It was founded in 1098 by a group of monks who were unhappy with the lack of discipline at their own Benedictine monastery. Cistercian monasticism spread rapidly from southern France into the rest of Europe.

The Cistercians played a major role in developing a new, activistic spiritual model for twelfth-century Europe. While Benedictine monks spent hours inside the monastery in personal prayer, the Cistercians took their religion to the people outside the monastery. More than any other person, Saint Bernard of Clairvaux embodied the new spiritual ideal of Cistercian monasticism: “Arise, soldier of Christ, arise! Get up off the ground and return to the battle from which you have fled! Fight more boldly after your flight, and triumph in glory!”

New Religious Orders

In the second half of the eleventh century and the first half of the twelfth century, a wave of religious enthusiasm seized Europe. This movement led to a rise in the number of monasteries and the emergence of new monastic orders. Both men and women joined religious orders in increasing numbers.
unable or unwilling to find husbands for their daughters, for aristocratic women who did not wish to marry, or for widows.

Female intellectuals found convents a haven for their activities. Most of the learned women of the Middle Ages, especially in Germany, were nuns. This was certainly true of Hildegard of Bingen, who became abbess of a religious house for females in western Germany. Hildegard was also one of the first important women composers. She was an important contributor to the body of music known as Gregorian chant. Her work is especially remarkable because she succeeded at a time when music, especially sacred music, was almost exclusively the domain of men.

The Franciscans and the Dominicans In the thirteenth century, two new religious orders emerged that had a strong impact on the lives of ordinary people. They were the Franciscans and the Dominicans.

The Franciscans were founded by Saint Francis of Assisi. Francis was born to a wealthy Italian merchant family in Assisi. After having been captured and imprisoned during a local war, he had a series of dramatic spiritual experiences. These experiences led him to abandon all worldly goods and material pursuits and to live and preach in poverty, working and begging for his food. His simplicity, joyful nature, and love for others soon attracted a band of followers, all of whom took vows of absolute poverty, agreeing to reject all property and live by working and begging for their food.

The Franciscans became very popular. The Franciscans lived among the people, preaching repentance and aiding the poor. Their calls for a return to the simplicity and poverty of the early Church, reinforced by their own example, were especially effective.

Unlike other religious orders, the Franciscans lived in the world. They undertook missionary work, first throughout Italy and then to all parts of Europe and even to the Muslim world.

The Dominican order was founded by a Spanish priest, Dominic de Guzmán. Dominic wanted to defend Church teachings from heresy—the denial of basic Church doctrines. The spiritual revival of the High Middle Ages had led to the emergence of heresies within the Church. Adherents of these movements were called heretics. Heretical movements became especially widespread in southern France.

Dominic believed that a new religious order of men who lived lives of poverty and were capable of preaching effectively would best be able to attack heresy.

The Inquisition The Church’s desire to have a method of discovering and dealing with heretics led to the creation of a court called the Inquisition, or
From Saint Nicholas to Santa Claus

Saint Nicholas was a bishop in Asia Minor (present-day Turkey) who lived during the 300s. He was known as a generous man who was fond of children. During the Middle Ages in Europe, Saint Nicholas became known as the patron saint of children. He brought them simple gifts of fruit, nuts, and candies on his feast day, which was December 6. Saint Nicholas was portrayed as being dressed in a red-and-white bishop’s robe and sporting a flowing white beard.

The Dutch brought the tradition of Saint Nicholas with them to their colonies in the Americas. In America, however, changes occurred in the practices associated with Saint Nicholas. For example, in Holland children placed wooden shoes next to the fireplace to be filled with gifts from Saint Nicholas. In America, stockings were hung by the chimney.

The Dutch words for Saint Nicholas were *Sint Nikolass*. In America, they became *Sinte Klaas*. After the English took control of the Dutch colonies, *Sinte Klaas* became *Santa Claus*. Later in the nineteenth century, the physical appearance of Santa Claus also changed. Saint Nicholas had been portrayed as a tall, thin man. By the 1880s, Santa Claus had become the jolly fat man that we still know today.

Holy Office. The job of this court was to find and try heretics, and it developed a regular procedure to deal with them. The Dominicans became especially well known for their roles as examiners of people suspected of heresy.

If an accused heretic confessed, he or she was forced to perform public penance and was subjected to punishment, such as flogging. Beginning in 1252, those who did not confess voluntarily were tortured until they did confess. Many did not confess but were still considered guilty and turned over to the state for execution. Relapsed heretics—those who confessed, did penance, and then reverted to heresy again—were also subject to execution.

The Christians of the thirteenth century believed the only path to salvation was through the Church. To them, heresy was a crime against God and against humanity. In their minds, using force to save souls from damnation was the right thing to do.

**Reading Check Analyzing** What impact did the Franciscans and Dominicans have on the lives of people in the thirteenth century?

Popular Religion in the High Middle Ages

We have witnessed the actions of popes, bishops, monks, and friars. But what of ordinary people? What were their religious hopes and fears? What were their religious beliefs?

The sacraments of the Catholic Church were central in importance to ordinary people. These rites, such as baptism, marriage, and the Eucharist (Communion), made the Church a crucial part of people’s lives from birth to death. The sacraments were seen as means for receiving God’s grace and were necessary for salvation. Only the clergy could administer the sacraments, so everyone who hoped to gain salvation depended on the clergy to help them achieve this goal.

Other church practices were also important to ordinary people. One practice involved veneration of saints. Saints were men and women who were considered especially holy and who had achieved a special position in Heaven. Their position enabled saints to ask for favors before the throne of God for people
who prayed to them. The saints’ ability to help and protect people in this way made them very popular with all Christians.

Jesus Christ’s apostles, of course, were recognized throughout Europe as saints. There were also numerous local saints who were of special significance to a single area. The Italians, for example, had Saint Nicholas, the patron saint of children, who is known today as Santa Claus. New saints emerged rapidly, especially in the intensely religious atmosphere of the eleventh and twelfth centuries.

Of all the saints, the Virgin Mary, mother of Jesus, was the most highly regarded in the High Middle Ages. Mary was seen as the most important mediator between mortals and her son, Jesus Christ, the judge of all sinners. From the eleventh century on, a fascination with Mary as Jesus’ human mother became more evident. A sign of Mary’s importance is the number of churches all over Europe that were dedicated to her in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. (Such churches in France were named Notre Dame, or “Our Lady.”)

Emphasis on the role of the saints was closely tied to the use of relics. Relics were usually bones of saints or objects connected with saints that were considered worthy of worship because they provided a link between the earthly world and God. It was believed that relics could heal people or produce other miracles.

A twelfth-century English monk began his description of an abbey’s relics by saying, “There is kept there a thing more precious than gold, . . . the right arm of St. Oswald. . . . This we have seen with our own eyes and have kissed, and have handled with our own hands. . . . There are kept here also part of his ribs and of the soil on which he fell.” The monk went on to list additional relics possessed by the abbey, which included two pieces of Jesus’ swaddling clothes, pieces of his manger, and part of the five loaves of bread with which he fed five thousand people.

Medieval Christians also believed that a pilgrimage to a holy shrine produced a spiritual benefit. The greatest shrine, but the most difficult to reach, was the Holy City of Jerusalem. On the continent two pilgrim centers were especially popular in the High Middle Ages: Rome, which contained the relics of Saints Peter and Paul, and the Spanish town of Santiago de Compostela, supposedly the site of the tomb of the Apostle James. Local attractions, such as shrines dedicated to the Blessed Virgin Mary, also became pilgrimage centers.

Examining Why were saints important to Christians in the High Middle Ages?
Main Ideas
- An intellectual revival led to the formation of universities.
- In the High Middle Ages, new technical innovations made it possible to build Gothic cathedrals, which are one of the great artistic triumphs of this age.

Key Terms
teology, scholasticism, vernacular

People to Identify
Aristotle, Saint Thomas Aquinas

Places to Locate
Bologna, Paris, Oxford

Preview Questions
1. What were the major cultural achievements of European civilization in the High Middle Ages?
2. What role did theology play in the European intellectual world?

Reading Strategy
Compare and Contrast Use a table to compare and contrast the Romanesque style of architecture to the Gothic style of architecture. How did the churches built in these two styles differ?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Romanesque</th>
<th>Gothic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Preview of Events

1100 The Song of Roland is written
1150 Architects begin to build in the Gothic style
1158 Students in Bologna form a guild
1200 Classical works are rediscovered by European scholars
1300
1400
1500 Eighty universities exist in Europe

Voices from the Past

University students in the High Middle Ages were probably quite similar to those of today, as is evident in this letter from a medieval father to his son:

"I have recently discovered that you live dissolutely and slothfully, preferring license to restraint and play to work and strumming a guitar while the others are at their studies, whence it happens that you have read but one volume of law while your more industrious companions have read several. Wherefore I have decided to exhort you to repent utterly of your dissolute and careless ways, that you may no longer be called a waster and your shame may be turned to good repute."

—The Rise of Universities, Charles H. Haskins, 1957

The High Middle Ages were a time of intellectual and artistic vitality—a time that witnessed the birth of universities.

The Rise of Universities

The university as we know it today, with faculty, students, and degrees, was a product of the High Middle Ages. The word university comes from the Latin word universitas, meaning “corporation” or “guild.” Medieval universities were educational guilds, or corporations, that produced educated and trained individuals.
The First Universities

The first European university appeared in Bologna (buh•LOH•nyuh), Italy. A great teacher named Irnerius, who taught Roman law, attracted students to Bologna from all over Europe. Most were men who were administrators for kings and princes. (Women did not attend universities.) These men were eager to learn more about the law in order to apply it in their own jobs. To protect their own rights, students at Bologna formed a guild. In 1158, the guild was given a charter—a document giving it the right to govern its own affairs—by the ruling authorities.

The first university in northern Europe was the University of Paris. In the second half of the twelfth century, a number of students and masters (teachers) left Paris and started their own university at Oxford, England. Kings, popes, and princes thought it honorable to found new universities. By 1500, there were 80 universities in Europe.

University Curricula

Students began their studies at a medieval university with the traditional liberal arts curriculum, or course of study. This curriculum consisted of grammar, rhetoric, logic, arithmetic, geometry, music, and astronomy.

Teaching at a medieval university was done by a lecture method. The word lecture is derived from Latin and means “to read.” Before the development of the printing press in the fifteenth century, books were expensive. Few students could afford them, so teachers read from a basic text and then added their explanations.

No exams were given after a series of lectures. When a student applied for a degree, however, he was given an oral examination by a committee of teachers. These examinations were taken after a four- or six-year period of study. The first degree a student could earn was a bachelor of arts. Later, he might receive a master of arts.

After completing the liberal arts curriculum, a student could go on to study law, medicine, or theology. Theology—the study of religion and God—was the most highly regarded subject of the medieval university. The study of law, medicine, or theology could take 10 years or more. A student who passed his final oral examinations in one of these areas was granted a doctor’s degree.

Those who had earned doctor’s degrees were officially able to teach, although they also pursued other careers. Universities provided the teachers, administrators, lawyers, and medical doctors for medieval society.

The Development of Scholasticism

As we have seen, theology was the most highly regarded area of study at medieval universities. Beginning in about the twelfth century, the study of theology in the universities was strongly influenced by a philosophical and theological system known as scholasticism. Scholasticism tried to reconcile faith and reason—to show that what was accepted on faith was in harmony with what could be learned through reason and experience.

The chief task of scholasticism was to harmonize Christian teachings with the works of the Greek philosophers. In the twelfth century, largely because of the work of Muslim and Jewish scholars, western Europe was introduced to the works of Aristotle. However, Aristotle’s works upset many Christian theologians. He had
arrived at his conclusions by rational thought—not by faith—and some of his ideas contradicted the teachings of the Church. In the thirteenth century, Saint Thomas Aquinas (uh•KWY•nuhs) made the most famous attempt to reconcile Aristotle with the doctrines of Christianity.

Thomas Aquinas is best known for his *Summa Theologica*, or *A Summa of Theology* (*summa* was a summary of all the knowledge on a given subject). Aquinas’s masterpiece was organized according to the logical method of intellectual investigation used by scholars. Aquinas first posed a question such as, “Does God exist?” He then cited sources that offered opposing opinions on the question before finally reconciling them and arriving at his own conclusions. Most scholastic thinkers used this logical process to investigate theological and philosophical questions.

Aquinas’s fame is based on his attempt to reconcile the knowledge learned through the Bible and other Christian writings with the knowledge learned through reason and experience. He took it for granted that there were truths arrived at by reason and truths arrived at by faith. He was certain, however, that the two kinds of truths could not be in conflict with each other. The human mind, unaided by faith, could use reason and experience to arrive at truths concerning the physical universe. However, reason alone could not grasp spiritual truths.

**Reading Check** Explaining What was the main goal of scholasticism?

**Vernacular Literature**

Latin was the universal language of medieval civilization. Used in the Church and schools, Latin enabled learned people to communicate anywhere in Europe. However, in the twelfth century, much new literature was being written in the *vernacular*—the language of everyday speech in a particular region, such as Spanish, French, English, or German. A new market for vernacular literature appeared in the twelfth century when educated laypeople (religious people who were not clergy) at courts and in the cities took an interest in new sources of entertainment. (See page 993 to read excerpts from Christine de Pizan’s *A Woman May Need to Have the Heart of a Man in the Primary Sources Library*).

Perhaps the most popular vernacular literature of the twelfth century was troubadour poetry, which was chiefly the product of nobles and knights. This poetry told of the love of a knight for a lady, who inspires him to become a braver knight and a better poet. For example, the noble Jaufré Rudel cherished a dream woman from afar:

```
Most sad, most joyous shall I go away,
Let me have seen her for a single day,
My love afar,
I shall not see her, for her land and mine
Are sundered, and the ways are hard to find,
So many ways, and I shall lose my way,
So wills it God.
Yet shall I know no other love but hers,
And if not hers, no other love at all.
```

Another type of vernacular literature was the *chanson de geste*, or heroic epic. The earliest and finest example is the *Song of Roland*, which appeared around 1100 and was written in French. The chief events described in heroic epic poems are battles and political contests. The epic world is one of combat, in which knights fight courageously for their kings and lords. Women play only a small role or no role at all in this literature.

**Reading Check** Identifying What were two popular types of vernacular literature in the twelfth century?
The evolution of architecture during the Middle Ages provided individuals with different ways to express their Christian faith. What examples of architectural innovations can you find in the churches shown on this page?

Early Christian Early Christian churches adapted the flat roofs and long rectangular shapes used in Roman basilicas. The exterior of the church (inset above) reflects this Roman influence. An example of the flat roof in many early churches is seen above.

Romanesque Romanesque churches (see exterior at left) replaced flat wooden roofs with rounded barrel vault ceilings, as shown in the above interior.

Gothic The use of flying buttresses, shown in the exterior below, allowed medieval architects to create a feeling of upward movement in Gothic cathedrals, as seen in the interior on the left.
Architecture

The eleventh and twelfth centuries witnessed an explosion of building in medieval Europe, especially building of churches. The cathedrals of the eleventh and twelfth centuries were built in the Romanesque style. Romanesque churches were normally built in the basilica shape used in the construction of churches in the late Roman Empire.

Basilicas were rectangular buildings with flat wooden roofs. Romanesque builders used this basic plan but replaced the flat wooden roof with a long, round stone arched structure vault (called a barrel vault), or with a cross vault, in which two barrel vaults intersected. The cross vault was used when the builder wanted to create a church plan in the shape of a cross. Although difficult to create, barrel and cross vaults were considered more beautiful than flat roofs.

Because stone roofs were extremely heavy, Romanesque churches required massive pillars and walls to hold them up. This left little space for windows, so Romanesque churches were dark on the inside. Their massive walls and pillars made these churches almost resemble fortresses.

A new style, called Gothic, appeared in the twelfth century and was brought to perfection in the thirteenth. The Gothic cathedral remains one of the greatest artistic triumphs of the High Middle Ages. Two basic innovations of the twelfth century made Gothic cathedrals possible.

One innovation was the replacement of the round barrel vault of Romanesque churches with a combination of ribbed vaults and pointed arches. This change enabled builders to make Gothic churches higher than Romanesque churches. The use of pointed arches and ribbed vaults also creates an impression of upward movement, as if the building is reaching to God.

Another technical innovation was the flying buttress—a heavy, arched support of stone, built onto the outside of the walls. Flying buttresses made it possible to distribute the weight of the church’s vaulted ceilings outward and down. This eliminated the heavy walls that were needed in Romanesque churches to hold the weight of the massive barrel vaults.

Gothic cathedrals were built, then, with relatively thin walls. Since they were not supporting great weight, these walls could be filled with magnificent stained glass windows. These windows depict both religious scenes and scenes from daily life. The colored glass windows create a play of light inside the cathedral that varies with the sun at different times of the day. Natural light was believed to be a symbol of the divine light of God. The Gothic cathedral, with its towers soaring toward Heaven, bears witness to an age when most people believed in a spiritual world.

Identifying In what shape were Romanesque churches usually built?

Critical Thinking
6. Explain How did the architecture of the Gothic cathedral reflect medieval religious values?

7. Compare and Contrast Use a table like the one below to compare what you know of modern university courses of study with those of the first European universities. What are the similarities and differences?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Similarities</th>
<th>Differences</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

8. Examine the image on page 331. What does it convey about the role of the troubadour in European society during the Middle Ages?

9. Persuasive Writing Create an illustrated brochure to entice students to enroll in a new medieval university opening in Venice. Include information on the method of education and degree and course offerings. Provide a “frequently asked questions” section for students and for parents.
Analyzing Historical Maps

Why Learn This Skill?
What changes have you noticed in your town the past few years? Has the corner bank been replaced by an ethnic restaurant? Would a map of your town that was drawn today look different from one drawn 15 years ago?

Changes take place on a larger scale across nations and continents. Wars, economic troubles, and natural disasters change borders and landscapes; once-powerful nations crumble; displaced people move from one country to another, taking their language and their culture with them. These political, social, and cultural changes can be clearly traced and interpreted through the use of historical maps.

Learning the Skill
Follow the steps below to learn how to analyze a historical map.

• Read the title of the map to identify its theme.
• Read the map’s key, labels, and captions to determine what time periods and changes appear on the map.
• Identify the chronology or order of events on the map. Many historical maps show changes over time. For example, a map may use colors to show land acquisitions of different rulers over a period of time. On the map of France above, however, the colors represent areas controlled by different rulers at the same time.
• To compare historical maps of the same region in different time periods, first identify the geographic location and time period of each map. Identify the features that have remained the same and those that have changed. For example, has the country’s size changed over time?
• After analyzing a map, draw conclusions about the causes and effects of the changes it shows.

Practicing the Skill
Analyze the map on this page and answer these questions:

1. What geographic region and time period are represented in the map?
2. What information is shown in the map’s key and labels?
3. Find a present-day map of this region to compare with the map on this page. How has the region changed since the 1400s?

Applying the Skill
Compare a map of Europe today with a map of Europe in 1985 or earlier. Identify at least five changes that have occurred since the early 1980s.

Glencoe’s Skillbuilder Interactive Workbook, Level 2, provides instruction and practice in key social studies skills.
The Late Middle Ages

Main Ideas
• Europe in the fourteenth century was challenged by an overwhelming number of disastrous forces.
• European rulers reestablished the centralized power of monarchical governments.

Key Terms
Black Death, anti-Semitism, Great Schism, new monarchies, taille

People to Identify
Pope Boniface VIII, King Philip IV, John Hus, Henry V, Isabella, Ferdinand

Places to Locate
Avignon, Crécy, Agincourt, Orléans

Preview Questions
1. How did the Black Death impact European society?
2. What were the “new monarchies”?

Reading Strategy
Cause and Effect
Use a diagram like the one below to identify three reasons for the decline in the power of the papacy.

1346
Battle at Crécy is fought

1350
The Black Death spreads

1378
The Great Schism begins

1435
War of the Roses begins

1469
Ferdinand and Isabella marry

Voices from the Past

Giovanni Boccaccio, a fourteenth-century Italian writer, described the impact of the Black Death on Florence:

In the year of our Lord 1348 the deadly plague broke out in the great city of Florence. . . . A great many breathed their last in the public streets, day and night; a large number perished in their homes, and it was only by the stench of their decaying bodies that they proclaimed their death to their neighbors. Everywhere the city was teeming with corpses. . . . Huge trenches were dug in the crowded churchyards and the new dead were piled in them, layer upon layer. A little earth covered the corpses of each row, and the procedure continued until the trench was filled to the top.

—The Decameron, Giovanni Boccaccio, 1348–1351

Florence was only one of many European cities struck by the Black Death.

The Black Death

In this section, you will learn how fourteenth-century Europe was devastated by the terrible plague known as the Black Death. This plague greatly decreased the population of Europe and brought about significant economic and social changes in the late Middle Ages.

The Middle Ages in Europe had reached a high point in the thirteenth century. In the fourteenth century, however, some disastrous changes took place. Especially catastrophic was the Black Death.

The Black Death was the most devastating natural disaster in European history. One observer wrote that “father abandoned child, wife [abandoned] husband, one
brother [abandoned] another, for the plague seemed to strike through breath and sight. And so they died. And no one could be found to bury the dead, for money or friendship.” People were horrified by the plague, an evil force they could not understand.

**The Plague Spreads** Bubonic plague was the most common form of the Black Death. It was spread by black rats infested with fleas carrying a deadly bacterium. Italian merchants brought the plague with them from Caffa, on the Black Sea, to the island of Sicily in October 1347. The plague had spread to parts of southern Italy and southern France by the end of 1347.

By 1353, the Black Death epidemic (bubonic plague) had affected all of Europe.

1. **Interpreting Maps** What questions would you pose to determine the pattern of the spread of the Black Death?
2. **Applying Geography Skills** Create a database of other epidemics in history. Are these diseases a threat today?

Usually, the path of the Black Death followed trade routes. In 1348 and 1349, the plague spread through France, the Low Countries (modern Belgium, Luxembourg, and the Netherlands), and Germany. It ravaged England in 1349 and expanded to northern Europe and Scandinavia. Eastern Europe and Russia were affected by 1351.

Out of a total European population of 75 million, possibly as many as 38 million people died of the plague between 1347 and 1351. Especially hard hit were Italy’s crowded cities, where 50 to 60 percent of the people died. In England and Germany, entire villages disappeared.

**Social and Economic Consequences** People at the time did not know what caused the plague. Many believed that it either had been sent by God as a punishment for their sins or had been caused by the devil. Some reactions became extreme, leading to an outbreak of anti-Semitism—hostility toward Jews. In some towns, Jews were accused of causing the plague by poisoning town wells. The worst attacks occurred in Germany. Many Jews fled eastward, especially to Poland, where the king provided protection.

The death of so many people in the fourteenth century also had severe economic consequences. Trade declined, and a shortage of workers caused a dramatic rise in the price of labor. At the same time, the decline in the number of people lowered the demand for food, resulting in falling prices.

Landlords were now paying more for labor while their incomes from rents were declining. Some peasants bargained with their lords to pay rent instead of owing services. In essence, this change freed them from serfdom, an institution that had been declining throughout the High Middle Ages.
The Decline of Church Power

The popes of the Roman Catholic Church reached the height of their power in the thirteenth century. Then, in the fourteenth century, a series of problems led to a decline in the Church’s political position.

The Popes at Avignon  The European kings had grown unwilling to accept papal claims of supremacy by the end of the thirteenth century. This is evident in a struggle between Pope Boniface VIII and King Philip IV of France. Their struggle would have serious consequences for the papacy.

To gain new revenues, Philip said that he had the right to tax the clergy of France. Boniface VIII claimed that the clergy could not pay taxes to their ruler without the pope’s consent. He argued that popes were supreme over both the Church and the state.

Philip IV refused to accept the pope’s position and sent French forces to Italy to bring Boniface back to France for trial. The pope escaped but died soon after from the shock of his experience. To ensure his position, Philip IV engineered the election of a Frenchman, Clement V, as pope in 1305. The new pope took up residence in Avignon (a•veen•YOHN), in southern France.

From 1305 to 1377, the popes lived in Avignon. Sentiments against the papacy grew during this time. The pope was the bishop of Rome, and it seemed improper that he should reside in Avignon instead of Rome. The splendor in which the pope and cardinals were living in Avignon also led to strong criticism of the papacy. The Italian poet Petrarch expressed this feeling when he wrote:

“Here reign the successors of the poor fisherman of Galilee; they have strangely forgotten their origin. I am astounded . . . to see these men loaded with gold and clad in purple, boasting of the spoils of princes and nations.”

At last, Pope Gregory XI, perceiving the disastrous decline in papal prestige, returned to Rome in 1377.

The Great Schism and Its Aftermath  Gregory XI died soon after his return to Rome. When the college of cardinals met to elect a new pope, the citizens of Rome warned that the cardinals would not leave Rome alive unless an Italian was elected pope. The terrified cardinals wisely elected an Italian, who became Pope Urban VI.

Five months later, a group of French cardinals declared the election invalid and chose a Frenchman as pope. This pope promptly returned to Avignon. Because Urban remained in Rome, there were now two popes, beginning what has been called the Great Schism of the Church.

The Great Schism, which lasted from 1378 to 1417, divided Europe. France and its allies supported the pope in Avignon. France’s enemy England and England’s allies supported the pope in Rome.

In addition to creating political conflict, the Great Schism damaged the Church. The pope was widely believed to be the true leader of Christendom. When each line of popes denounced the other as the Antichrist (one who opposes Christ), people’s faith in both the papacy and the Church were undermined.

A church council finally met at Constance, Switzerland, and ended the schism in 1417. The competing popes either resigned or were deposed. A new pope who was acceptable to all parties was then elected.

Meanwhile, the crises in the Catholic Church had led to cries for reform. A group of Czech reformers led by John Hus called for an end to the corruption of the clergy and the excessive power of the papacy within the Catholic Church. Hus was accused of heresy by the Council of Constance and burned at the stake in 1415. This angered the Czechs and led to a revolutionary upheaval in Bohemia that was not crushed until 1436.

By the early 1400s, then, the Church had lost much of its political power. The pope no longer had any hope of asserting supremacy over the state. Although Christianity remained a central feature of medieval life, the papacy and the Church had lost much of their spiritual authority.

Reading Check  Summarizing  List the problems that led to the decline of the Church’s authority in medieval Europe.

The Hundred Years’ War

Plague, economic crisis, and the decline of the Catholic Church were not the only problems of the late Middle Ages. War and political instability must also be added to the list. The Hundred Years’ War was the most violent struggle during this period.
At the Battle of Agincourt in 1415, the heavy, armor-plated French knights tried to attack Henry’s forces across a field turned to mud by heavy rain. They were disastrously defeated, and 1,500 French nobles died on the battlefield. The English were masters of northern France.

The war began in a burst of knightly enthusiasm. Trained to be warriors, knights viewed battle as a chance to show their fighting abilities. The Hundred Years’ War proved to be an important turning point in the nature of warfare, however. It was peasant foot soldiers, not knights, who won the chief battles of the Hundred Years’ War.

The French army of 1337 still relied largely on its heavily armed noble cavalrymen. These knights looked with contempt on foot soldiers, people they viewed as social inferiors. The English, too, used heavily armed cavalry, but they relied more on large numbers of peasants, paid to be foot soldiers. English soldiers were armed not only with pikes, or heavy spears, but also with longbows. The longbow had greater striking power, longer range, and more rapid speed of fire than the crossbow (formerly the weapon of choice).

Crécy and Agincourt The first major battle of the Hundred Years’ War occurred in 1346 at Crécy. The larger French army followed no battle plan but simply attacked the English lines in a disorderly fashion. The arrows of the English archers devastated the French cavalry.

As the chronicler Froissart described it, “[with their longbows] the English continued to shoot into the thickest part of the crowd, wasting none of their arrows. They impaled or wounded horses and riders, who fell to the ground in great distress, unable to get up again without the help of several men.” It was a stunning victory for the English.

The Battle of Crécy was not decisive, however. The English simply did not have enough resources to conquer all France. Nevertheless, they continued to try. The English king, Henry V, was especially eager to achieve victory.

At the Battle of Agincourt in 1415, the heavy, armor-plated French knights tried to attack Henry’s forces across a field turned to mud by heavy rain. They were disastrously defeated, and 1,500 French nobles died on the battlefield. The English were masters of northern France.

Joan of Arc The French cause, now seemingly hopeless, fell into the hands of Charles, the heir to the French throne, who governed the southern two-thirds of the lands of France. Quite unexpectedly, a French peasant woman saved the timid monarch.

Joan of Arc was born in 1412, the daughter of prosperous peasants. She was a deeply religious person who experienced visions and came to believe that her favorite saints had commanded her to free France.

In February 1429, Joan made her way to Charles’s court, where her sincerity and simplicity persuaded him to allow her to accompany a French army to Orléans. Apparently inspired by Joan’s faith, the
French armies found new confidence in themselves and captured Orléans.

Joan had brought the war to a decisive turning point but did not live to see its end. She was captured in 1430 and turned over by the English to the Inquisition on charges of witchcraft. At that time, spiritual visions were thought to be inspired by either God or the devil. Joan was condemned to death as a heretic.

Joan of Arc’s achievements, however, were decisive. Although the war dragged on for another two decades, defeats of English armies in Normandy and Aquitaine led to a French victory by 1453. Also important to the French success was the use of the cannon, a new weapon made possible by the invention of gunpowder.

Reading Check Analyzing Why was the Hundred Years’ War a turning point in the ways of warfare?

**Political Recovery**

In the fourteenth century, European rulers faced serious problems. Many dynasties in Europe were unable to produce male heirs. The founders of new dynasties had to fight for their positions when groups of nobles supported opposing candidates for the kingship. Rulers found themselves with financial problems as well.

In the fifteenth century, however, recovery set in as a number of new rulers attempted to reestablish the centralized power of monarchies. Some historians have spoken of these reestablished states as the new monarchies. This term applies especially to the monarchies of France, England, and Spain at the end of the fifteenth century.

**Western Europe** The Hundred Years’ War left France exhausted. However, the war had also developed a strong degree of French national feeling toward a common enemy. The kings used that spirit to reestablish royal power.

The development of a strong French state was greatly advanced by King Louis XI, who ruled from 1461 to 1483. Known as the Spider because of his devious ways, Louis strengthened the use of the taille—an annual direct tax, usually on land or property—as a permanent tax imposed by royal authority. This tax gave Louis a sound, regular source of income, which helped him to create the foundations of a strong French monarchy.

The Hundred Years’ War had also strongly affected the English. The cost of the war and losses in manpower strained the economy. At the end of the war, England faced even greater turmoil when civil conflicts—known as the War of the Roses—erupted. Noble factions fought to control the monarchy until 1485, when Henry Tudor established a new dynasty.

As the first Tudor king, Henry VII worked to create a strong royal government. Henry ended the wars of the nobles by abolishing their private armies. He was also very thrifty. By not overburdening the
nobles and the middle class with taxes, Henry won their favor. They thus provided much support for his monarchy.

Spain, too, experienced the growth of a strong national monarchy at the end of the fifteenth century. Muslims had conquered much of Spain by about 725. During the Middle Ages, Christian rulers in Spain had fought to regain their lands from the Muslims. Several independent Christian kingdoms had emerged in the course of the long reconquest of the Iberian Peninsula.

Two of the strongest kingdoms were Aragon and Castile. When Isabella of Castile married Ferdinand of Aragon in 1469, it was a major step toward unifying Spain. The two rulers worked to strengthen royal control of the government.

Ferdinand and Isabella also pursued a policy of strict conformity to Catholicism. In 1492, they took the drastic step of expelling all professed Jews from Spain. Muslims, too, after their final loss in 1492 to the armies of Ferdinand and Isabella, were “encouraged” to convert to Catholicism. In 1502, Isabella issued a decree expelling all professed Muslims from her kingdom. To a very large degree, Ferdinand and Isabella, the “most Catholic” monarchs, had achieved their goal of religious uniformity. To be Spanish was to be Catholic.

Central and Eastern Europe Unlike France, England, and Spain, the Holy Roman Empire did not develop a strong monarchical authority. The failures of German emperors in the thirteenth century had made Germany a land of hundreds of states. Almost all of these states acted independently of the German ruler.

After 1438, the position of Holy Roman emperor was held by the Hapsburg dynasty. As rulers of the Austrian lands along the Danube, the house of Hapsburg had become one of the wealthiest landholders in the empire. By the mid-fifteenth century, these rulers had begun to play an important role in European affairs.

In eastern Europe, rulers found it difficult to centralize their states. Religious differences troubled the area as Roman Catholics, Eastern Orthodox Christians, and other groups, including Mongols and Muslims, confronted one another. In Poland, the nobles gained the upper hand and established the right to elect their kings, a policy that drastically weakened royal authority. In Hungary, one king broke the power of the wealthy lords, and created a well-organized central administration. After his death, however, his work was largely undone.

Since the thirteenth century, Russia had been under the domination of the Mongols. Gradually, the princes of Moscow rose to prominence by using their close relationship to the Mongol khans to increase their wealth and expand their possessions. During the reign of the great prince Ivan III, a new Russian state was born. Ivan III annexed other Russian territories. By 1480, he had thrown off the yoke of the Mongols.

Explaining How did European rulers begin to recover politically after the Hundred Years’ War?
IN THEIR ATTEMPT TO EXPLAIN THE widespread horrors of the Black Death, medieval Christians looked for scapegoats. The Jews were blamed for spreading the plague by poisoning wells. This selection, written in 1349, gives an account of how Christians in the town of Strasbourg in the Holy Roman Empire dealt with the Jewish community.

In the year 1349 there occurred the greatest epidemic that ever happened. Death went from one end of the earth to the other. . . . This epidemic also came to Strasbourg in the summer of the above-mentioned year, and it is estimated that about sixteen thousand people died. In the matter of this plague the Jews throughout the world were accused in all lands as having caused it through the poison which they are said to have put into the water and the wells—that is what they were accused of—and for this reason the Jews were burned all the way from the Mediterranean into Germany. . . .

[The account then goes on to discuss the situation of the Jews in the city of Strasbourg.]

On Saturday . . . they burned the Jews on a wooden platform in their cemetery. There were about two thousand people of them. Those who wanted to baptize themselves were spared. [Some say that about a thousand accepted baptism.] Many small children were taken out of the fire and baptized against the will of their fathers and mothers. And everything that was owed to the Jews was canceled, and the Jews had to surrender all pledges and notes that they had taken for debts. The council, however, took the cash that the Jews possessed and divided it among the working-men. The money was indeed the thing that killed the Jews. If they had been poor and if the feudal lords had not been in debt to them, they would not have been burnt.

Thus were the Jews burned at Strasbourg, and in the same year in all the cities of the Rhine, whether Free Cities or Imperial Cities or cities belonging to the lords. . . .

—Jacob von Königshofen, The Cremation of the Strasbourg Jews

Analyzing Primary Sources

1. Who was blamed for causing the Black Death? Were these charges economically motivated? Why or why not?
2. Can you provide examples of discrimination today that are similar to what the Jews experienced in medieval times?
Using Key Terms

1. Governments that attempted to reestablish centralized power were called ________.
2. ________ is the study of religion.
3. Craftspeople began to organize themselves into business organizations called ________ in the twelfth century.
4. ________ were peasants tied to the land.
5. A ________ was an object that provided a link between the earthly world and God.
6. The ________ was an annual direct French tax on land or property.
7. The religious court whose job it was to find and try heretics was called the ________.
8. The school of thought that tried to reconcile faith and reason is called ________.
9. The language of a particular region is called the ________.
10. A Spanish priest founded the Dominicans to defend Church teachings from ________.

Reviewing Key Facts

11. Culture Give at least three reasons why medieval cities were not pleasant places to live.
12. History How did the Great Schism divide Europe?
13. Culture In what role in medieval society might women have had the most chance to be powerful?
14. History What new weapon, partly of Chinese origin, helped the French win the Hundred Years’ War?
15. Culture What was the role of women in medieval cities?
16. Citizenship What rights were townspeople given in medieval cities? Who could become citizens?
17. Science and Technology Why was the longbow superior to the crossbow?
18. History Discuss the major result of the War of the Roses.
19. Culture Explain the organization of medieval guilds.
20. Government What steps helped Spain to become a strong centralized monarchy?
21. History Identify changes that resulted from the revival of trade in Europe during the Middle Ages. What are the origins of the modern economic system of capitalism?
22. Culture Identify some examples of religious influence in historic events of the Middle Ages. Why did religious authorities and political rulers clash?
23. Government How did the governments of central and eastern Europe evolve differently from those of western Europe after the Hundred Years’ War?
24. History Explain the significance of the date 1492.
25. Geography What impact did geographic factors have on the population of the High Middle Ages?

Critical Thinking

26. Analyzing What forces led to Europe’s economic growth during the Middle Ages?
27. Evaluating How did the continual conflict between England and France strengthen the monarchies of those two countries?

Chapter Summary

The Middle Ages was a period marked by cultural diffusion, innovation, and conflict.

**Cultural Diffusion**

*The Crusades increase the exchange of goods and ideas between European and non-European cultures.*
- European monarchs gain strength through new taxes and through the new armies required for the Crusades.
- Increased trade, especially of luxury goods, leads to new importance for Italian cities.
- Classical texts are translated and reintroduced into Europe, leading to a revival in learning.

**Innovation**

*The rise of towns and the middle class leads to advances in all areas of society.*
- As trade increases, the importance of towns and guilds grows.
- A money economy replaces bartering.
- Universities are founded.
- Literature and poetry flourish and are increasingly written in the vernacular rather than in Latin.
- The Romanesque style of architecture gives way to the Gothic style.

**Conflict**

*The Hundred Years’ War and the Great Schism strengthen the authority of some and weaken the authority of others.*
- After the Hundred Years’ War, the French monarchy gains power.
- Conflict within the English monarchy leads to the War of the Roses.
- Conflict, corruption, and challenges by reformers weaken the authority of the Catholic Church.
Self-Check Quiz
Visit the Glencoe World History Web site at txwh.glencoe.com and click on Chapter 10—Self-Check Quiz to prepare for the Chapter Test.

Writing About History
28. Expository Writing Identify one medieval innovation and describe its influence on medieval society. Compare this to the impact of a twentieth-century innovation on a modern society. Which innovation, medieval or modern, had the biggest impact on daily life?

Analyzing Sources
Read the following description of an abbey’s relics by a twelfth-century English monk:

There is kept there a thing more precious than gold... the right arm of St. Oswald... This we have seen with our own eyes and have kissed, and have handled with our own hands... There are kept here also part of his ribs and of the soil on which he fell.

29. Why was the arm of St. Oswald preserved as a relic?
30. Why would the relic be considered “a thing more precious than gold”?

Applying Technology Skills
31. Creating a Multimedia Presentation Locate an e-mail address for your local historical society or chamber of commerce. Write a letter requesting information about buildings in your area that reflect the influence of medieval architecture. Using the information you receive, create an illustrated tourist pamphlet filled with information about these buildings.

Making Decisions
32. Pretend you are living in a medieval town when suddenly your fellow townspeople start dying from the plague. You want to stay in the town, but your family wants to leave. Create a dialogue between you and your family giving reasons for why you should stay in the town or leave.

Analyzing Maps and Charts
33. Select an event or invention from each category on the chart at the top of the next column. What was the effect of that event or invention?
34. How did farming practices affect population?

Economic Changes in the Middle Ages

Better Farming Practices
- Climatic change favorable to growing conditions
- Clearing of trees and draining of swamps by peasants
- Use of iron to make labor-saving devices, including scythes, axes, hoes, and wheeled plows
- Harnessing of wind and water power
- Shift from a two-field to a three-field system of crop rotation

Population Increase
- Peaceful conditions following the invasions of the early Middle Ages
- Dramatic expansion in food production

Growth of Cities
- Gradual revival of trade, including the initiation of trade fairs
- Slow emergence of an economy based on money (rather than barter)
- Movement of merchants and artisans to cities; organization of craftspeople into guilds
- Granting of basic liberties to townspeople by local lords
- Rise of city self-government

T A K S

Test Practice

Directions: Choose the best answer to the following question.

What effect did the Black Death have on Europe?
F The plague resulted in an increase in the number of universities and the rise of scholasticism.
G The plague led to an acute labor shortage that resulted in higher wages and the emancipation of many serfs.
H The plague inspired new ideas about faith that led to the formation of the Cistercian, Franciscan, and Dominican orders.
J The plague sparked the Hundred Years’ War between France and England.

Test-Taking Tip: Although these questions mostly ask you about what you’ve learned in class, using common sense can help you arrive at the correct answers too. For example, to answer this question, think about what you know about the Black Death first and then read the answer choices.