

## Unit 1 the European World – option

# Medieval Europe

Europe's medieval period began with the fall of the Roman Empire around 476 CE. Over time, a system called **feudalism** replaced Roman laws and the spread of **Christianity** changed societies across Europe. Over time social change in Europe was brought about by the rapid growth of towns and trade, and a series of Christian–Muslim wars known as the **Crusades**. In 1347, Europe was hit by a deadly plague – known as the **Black Death** – that killed around 30 per cent of the population. By 1500 CE, Europe's population had recovered and the discoveries of inventors and explorers, together with new ways of thinking, brought an end to the medieval period and led to the birth of modern Europe.



# chapter 10

## 10A

How were societies in medieval Europe organised?

- 1 Societies in medieval Europe were based on a system known as feudalism. In this system, everyone had a clear position in society and had certain rights and responsibilities. How do you think feudalism might have helped to ensure stability and order?

## 10B

Why did societies in medieval Europe change?

- 1 Christianity was a powerful force in medieval Europe. People believed that only the Church could grant them forgiveness for their sins and ensure their entry into Heaven when they died. How do you think this might have affected the lives of people in medieval Europe?

## 10C

What developments influenced life in medieval Europe?

- 1 A number of important developments took place during the medieval period in Europe. Some related to society and culture, while others related to technology. Make some predictions about the types of things that may have changed over this time and their effect on people's lives.

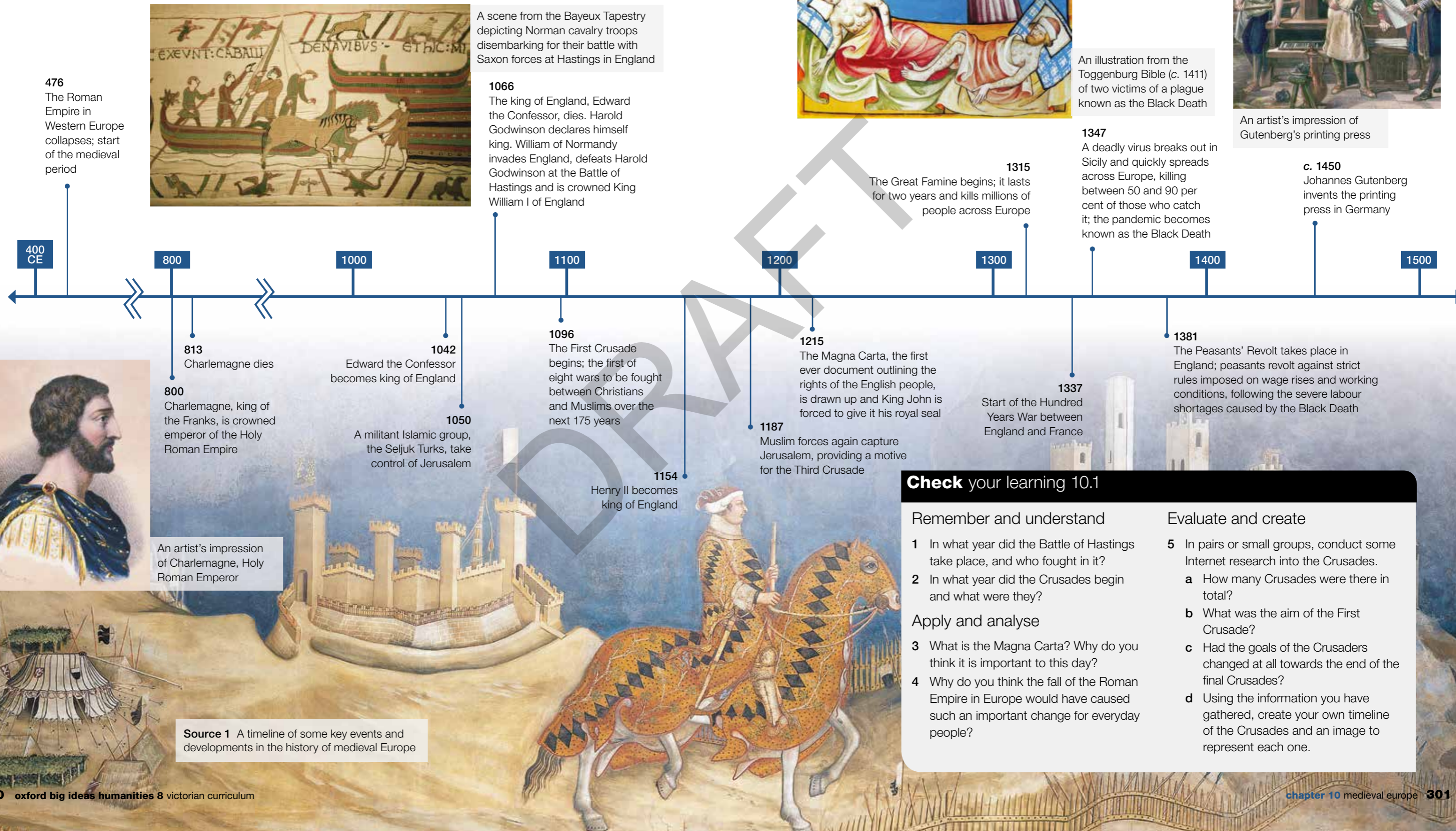
## 10D

How did the Black Death affect medieval Europe?

- 1 The Black Death was a deadly plague that killed around 30% of people in medieval Europe between 1330 and 1351. How do you think this loss of life would have affected societies across medieval Europe?

**Source 1** Bodiam Castle is located near the village of Robertsbridge in south-east England. It was built in 1385 during the medieval period in Europe. The high walls and moat of the castle were designed to protect the lord of the manor and his family (as well as villagers living in the area) in case of an attack.

# 10.1 Medieval Europe: a timeline



**Check your learning 10.1**

Remember and understand	Evaluate and create
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>In what year did the Battle of Hastings take place, and who fought in it?</li> <li>In what year did the Crusades begin and what were they?</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>In pairs or small groups, conduct some Internet research into the Crusades.                             <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>How many Crusades were there in total?</li> <li>What was the aim of the First Crusade?</li> <li>Had the goals of the Crusaders changed at all towards the end of the final Crusades?</li> <li>Using the information you have gathered, create your own timeline of the Crusades and an image to represent each one.</li> </ol> </li> </ol>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What is the Magna Carta? Why do you think it is important to this day?</li> <li>Why do you think the fall of the Roman Empire in Europe would have caused such an important change for everyday people?</li> </ol>	

# 10.2 Feudalism in medieval Europe

Europe's medieval period lasted for about 1000 years, beginning almost immediately after the collapse of the Roman Empire in Western Europe in 476 CE. It was a time of great change over a vast area – from the Viking homelands in the north to the Mediterranean Sea in the south, and from the Atlantic coast in the west to the borders of Russia and the peoples of the east (see Source 1). Over this time, the borders and rulers of European societies changed countless times as people competed for territory and power.

Without the Roman army to enforce the laws, society largely broke down. Barbarian raids were common, so people had to find new ways to protect and provide for themselves. A system known as **feudalism** held the answer for many societies across Europe. Feudalism was introduced across Western Europe between the 8th and 11th centuries and was a kind of social system based on rights and obligations around land ownership. It shaped medieval Europe for hundreds of years.



Source 1 A map of medieval Europe in 1360 (taken from a 1911 atlas of historical maps)

## The origins of feudalism

Tribal people began invading Western Europe from about the 4th century CE. These groups included the Huns, Visigoths, Vandals, Angles, Saxons and Vikings. The ancient Romans called them all **barbarians**. Some of these tribal people were warlike and aggressive.

During the rule of the Roman Empire, common people had been protected against these barbarians by Roman soldiers. When the Roman empire fell, there were no laws or soldiers left to protect the common people. As a result, they moved onto lands owned by wealthy and powerful lords, where they could be protected by the lord's private army and take shelter in his castle during attacks. As payment, these people worked the lord's land for him and tended his animals. This was the beginning of feudalism.

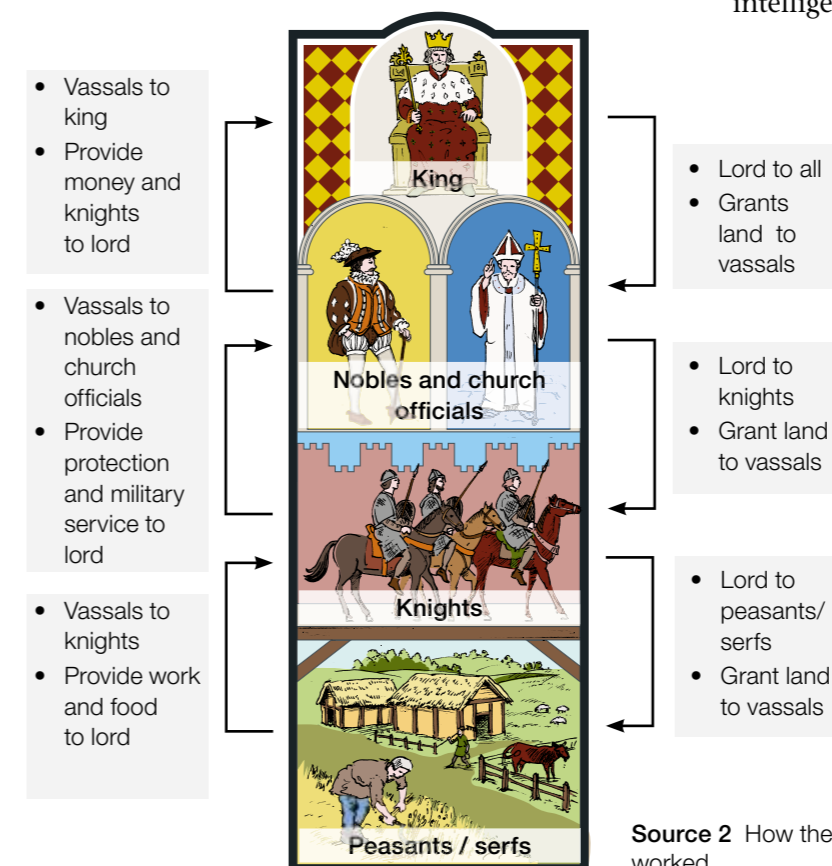
## How feudalism worked

Feudalism was a way of organising a society through a **hierarchy**. A hierarchy is a system that classifies its members from top to bottom in order of importance. In a feudal society, everyone from the king to the

poorest peasant had certain rights (things they could expect), such as land to live on or protection from attacks and responsibilities (work they had to perform in return), such as farming or fighting in wars.

Under feudalism, relationships in the hierarchy were between **lords** (people higher up in the hierarchy) and **vassals** (people lower down in the hierarchy). However, feudalism was not simply a top-down structure where the people at the top could tell the people below them what to do. Obligations were mutual (two-way). For example, a king (lord) had an obligation to the nobles directly below him (his vassals). He provided them with land to live on (known as a **fief**). In return, each noble promised to obey the king and provide military support when needed. At the same time, each of these nobles (lords) had obligations to the knights directly below them (their vassals). These relationships carried on down the hierarchy, as shown in Source 2.

In a feudal system, a person could almost never change their social position. If a person was born as a peasant (at the bottom of the feudal hierarchy), he or she died as a peasant. Peasants could not become nobles, no matter how hard they worked or how intelligent they were.



Source 2 How the system of feudalism worked

### Check your learning 10.2

#### Remember and understand

- 1 Why did feudalism emerge after the fall of the Roman Empire in Europe?
- 2 Explain the relationship between a vassal and a lord.
- 3 What was a fief?

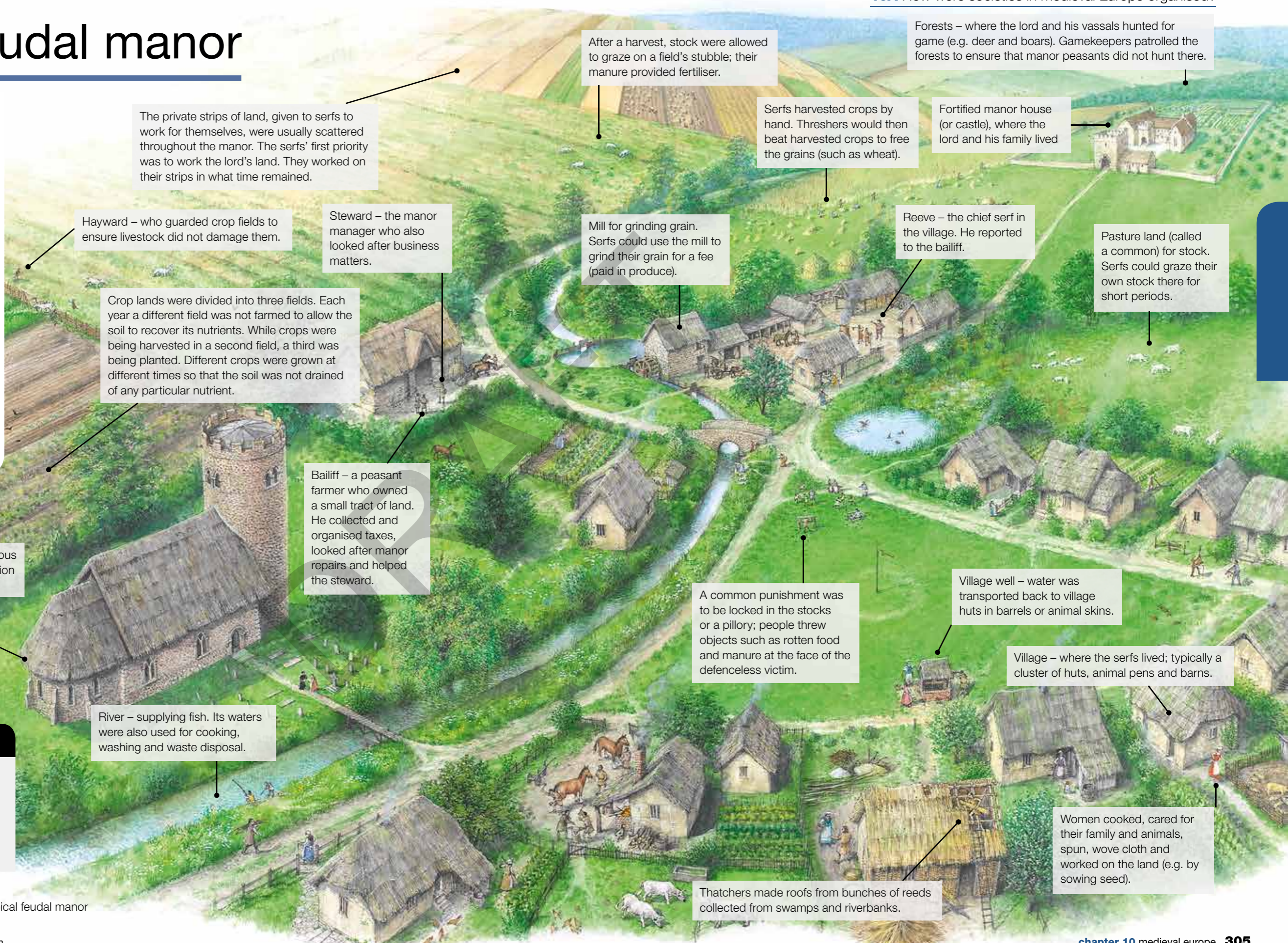
#### Apply and analyse

- 4 What is a hierarchy? Do we have hierarchies of any kind in Australia today? Explain.
- 5 How do you think a medieval ruler's position might have been strengthened by giving fiefs to those who provided loyalty and support?

# 10.3 The feudal manor

Under feudalism in Europe, land not belonging to the ruler or the Church was mostly divided into manor lands. Each manor was owned by a noble or knight who was given it by his lord as a fief. Manor lands were made up of the demesne (the lord's land), and peasants and serfs farmed the land to meet their own needs.

Under this arrangement, the lord of a manor provided serfs on his estate with a place to live and the means to survive. In return, they provided him with their labour. They also provided taxes (a portion of what they produced on the land they farmed). Most serfs were not free to leave the manor lands and had to have the lord's permission to do many everyday tasks.



The private strips of land, given to serfs to work for themselves, were usually scattered throughout the manor. The serfs' first priority was to work the lord's land. They worked on their strips in what time remained.

After a harvest, stock were allowed to graze on a field's stubble; their manure provided fertiliser.

Forests – where the lord and his vassals hunted for game (e.g. deer and boars). Gamekeepers patrolled the forests to ensure that manor peasants did not hunt there.

Serfs harvested crops by hand. Threshers would then beat harvested crops to free the grains (such as wheat).

Fortified manor house (or castle), where the lord and his family lived

Hayward – who guarded crop fields to ensure livestock did not damage them.

Steward – the manor manager who also looked after business matters.

Mill for grinding grain. Serfs could use the mill to grind their grain for a fee (paid in produce).

Reeve – the chief serf in the village. He reported to the bailiff.

Pasture land (called a common) for stock. Serfs could graze their own stock there for short periods.

Crop lands were divided into three fields. Each year a different field was not farmed to allow the soil to recover its nutrients. While crops were being harvested in a second field, a third was being planted. Different crops were grown at different times so that the soil was not drained of any particular nutrient.

Bailiff – a peasant farmer who owned a small tract of land. He collected and organised taxes, looked after manor repairs and helped the steward.

Village church and grounds, where religious services, marriages, funerals, school tuition and local markets were held

A common punishment was to be locked in the stocks or a pillory; people threw objects such as rotten food and manure at the face of the defenceless victim.

Village well – water was transported back to village huts in barrels or animal skins.

Village – where the serfs lived; typically a cluster of huts, animal pens and barns.

River – supplying fish. Its waters were also used for cooking, washing and waste disposal.

Women cooked, cared for their family and animals, spun, wove cloth and worked on the land (e.g. by sowing seed).

Thatchers made roofs from bunches of reeds collected from swamps and riverbanks.

## Check your learning 10.3

### Evaluate and create

- Carefully analyse Source 1. Imagine you are a serf living on medieval manor lands. Write a short diary entry describing a typical day in your life.

Source 1 A modern artist's impression of a typical feudal manor

# 10.4 Social groups in medieval society

In medieval Europe, a number of different groups made up society. These groups were organised in a strict hierarchy – from the very rich and powerful to the very poor and powerless.

## The king

In medieval times, the king (and occasionally a queen) sat at the top of the social hierarchy. All of the land ruled by the king was believed to belong only to him. In most medieval European societies, the king kept about 25 per cent of all land for himself and granted permission to nobles and Church officials to use the rest. The king enjoyed great wealth and privilege, hosting lavish banquets and balls. However, the role of king was also difficult – much time was spent administering the country, planning or fighting wars, and fending off challengers to the throne.

## Nobles

Below the king was a group of noble families loyal to him. They often lived in large manor houses built on land granted to them by the king (known as fiefs). These manor lands were farmed by peasants and

serfs who were allowed to live there by the nobles in exchange for labour and food. Noblemen often spent their days attending to business on their land, hunting, attending church and ruling over their vassals.

## Church officials

In medieval Europe, the Church was extremely powerful and influential. The Pope and the Church were supported by a large network of Christian workers – cardinals, archbishops, bishops, deacons, abbots, monks, nuns, village priests and friars. Some of these people (such as abbots) were often given fiefs by the king or ruler. By acquiring land and by collecting taxes and payments from the people who lived on it, the Church became very wealthy. For example, in England, the Church and the nobility owned about 75 per cent of all the land between them. Unlike nobles and peasants, the Church was not required to pay taxes to the king.

**Source 1** A medieval artist's impression of peasants harvesting grapes and tending grapevines on a feudal manor. In the foreground, the lord of the manor is inspecting their work.



**Source 2** A 16th-century artist's impression of monks creating manuscripts

## keyconcept: Significance

### The Catholic Church

The Catholic Church (which later became known as the Roman Catholic Church) was a very significant institution in medieval Europe. Its head was the Pope. He was seen as God's representative on Earth by believers. In medieval times, the Pope had enormous religious and political authority, even influencing kings. One of the Pope's greatest powers was the ability to **excommunicate** (expel from the Church forever) members of the faith – a punishment that terrified medieval Christians. An excommunicated person could no longer go to church, and his or her soul was doomed to live in hell.

The Catholic Church played a dominant role in the life of medieval Christians from birth to death. Its many religious festivals filled the calendar. Many were named after Christian saints and martyrs (people who died in the name of their religion). People's lives typically revolved around the activities of the village or town church.

People learned from childhood how the Church expected them to behave and what they should believe. Obeying the Church's teachings helped to preserve the social order in medieval Europe.

For more information on the key concept of significance, refer to page XX of 'The history toolkit'.

## Other members of the Church

Christians in medieval Europe with a deep commitment and faith in God, often chose to become monks or nuns. Their lives were controlled by their vows of chastity (no sexual relationships), obedience and poverty. They devoted their lives to serving God and their superiors. This meant living a simple life – praying many times a day (including late at night and early in the morning), caring for the poor and sick, and performing their religious duties. To help them keep their vows and show their devotion, monks and nuns lived apart from the community – monks in monasteries and nuns in nunneries.

In medieval times, monks were usually the only people who could read and write. Some were historians, and others were librarians and keepers of important documents for feudal lords. Many others copied or translated important **manuscripts** such as the Bible and ancient medical texts from around the world. The medieval Church played an important role in preserving ancient documents that might otherwise have been lost to us today.



**Source 3** A 12th-century artist's impression of a knight swearing allegiance as a vassal to his lord in return for favours such as a fief

## Knights

As a group, **knights** made up only a small percentage of the population. In feudal society, though, they played a particularly important role. Through the feudal hierarchy, many were given grants of land from their lords. In return they were expected to protect their lords when required, and also fight for the king. In addition to this, many knights also received income in the form of food and supplies from peasants in exchange for protection.



## Peasants and serfs

Peasants made up the largest group in medieval European society (about 90 per cent of the population). They undertook the bulk of the physical work, most of which was related to farming. Their labour produced the food and other goods needed by the wealthy (such as furniture and armour). They also provided much of the income of the rich through the rents and taxes they paid. Peasants lived hard lives that were usually short.

Farm work was difficult. Everything had to be done by hand, and tools were basic. These included sickles and scythes (large, curved, sharp-edged knives used to cut long grass and harvest grain crops like wheat and rye).

People went to bed early and woke up at dawn. For the peasants, there were few human comforts, especially when the weather was bad. Survival depended on working hard and staying healthy. There was little time for rest and leisure.



**Source 4** A medieval artist's impression of the life of a peasant, representing the 12 months of the year (from top left to bottom right)

### Rules for peasants on manors

- Work the lord's land as required
- Pay taxes to the lord, usually in the form of crops
- Ask permission to leave the manor or move house
- Ask approval from the lord to allow their daughters to marry or their sons to be educated
- Be punished or fined for breaking manor rules
- Pay fees to the lord for basic privileges (e.g. for grinding their grain in his mill)

**Source 5** Rules for peasants working on feudal manors

### Check your learning 10.4

#### Remember and understand

- 1 How did their Christian beliefs influence how monks and nuns typically lived their lives?

#### Apply and analyse

- 2 Look closely at Source 4. The 12 months of the year are depicted, in order, from left to right and top to bottom. Based on this source, what might be a task that a European peasant typically did in each of the following months: February, July, December?

#### Evaluate and create

- 3 Decide on three questions you would ask a medieval monk or nun to help you better understand why they chose to live the lives that they did.

# 10.5 Daily life in medieval Europe



**Source 1** An artist's impression of a range of garments worn by people in 11th-century England. The top panel shows the types of clothing worn by common people and soldiers; the bottom panel shows clothing typically worn by the rich – including the king.



**Source 2** An artist's impression of a medieval man enjoying a 'stew'

In medieval Europe, the lives of the wealthy and the poor were very different. These differences reflected the social group of which people were members, and could be seen in things like clothing, hygiene, food and entertainment.

## Medieval fashions

By the 11th century in Europe, there were great differences between the clothing worn by the rich and the poor. In fact, laws were passed to enforce this difference. Only people of royal blood were allowed to wear gold and silver materials and purple silk, and only noblewomen could wear veils and have dresses made from satin and velvet.

The clothes of the wealthy were almost always custom-made by tailors. Women typically wore long, trailing garments with elaborate sleeves and ornate headgear. Wealthy men commonly wore tunics, stockings, decorated cloaks and fancy hats. The clothes of the poor were, by contrast, drab and dull in colour. They were crudely cut, and made from coarse cloth woven by peasant women from handspun wool or linen.

## Hygiene

Cleanliness was valued by medieval people, even though they did not understand the health benefits of staying clean. For the poor, personal hygiene was very basic. Peasants washed in a dish of cold water. Wood was a scarce and valuable resource for the poor, so it was not wasted on heating water for washing.

Only the wealthy could afford the luxury of a long, hot bath. This was called a 'stew'. Scented oils, rose petals or herbs such as rosemary and spearmint were added to the water. Often, expensive perfumes from faraway places such as Arabia were also used. Dried herbs and spices such as mint and cinnamon were also burnt to purify and sweeten the air while bathing.

Dental hygiene for both the rich and poor was almost non-existent. People occasionally cleaned their teeth, but only by rubbing them with a piece of cloth. Sometimes, mixtures of herbs and ash were also used. There was only one treatment for a bad tooth – it was pulled out with no anaesthetic or pain medication.

## Medieval food

There were no supermarkets, refrigerators or ovens in medieval times. People killed their own animals and preserved meat by salting, smoking or pickling it. Spices were also used to disguise the taste of meat when it was old and rotting. Sometimes dogs were used to test this meat before it was eaten to see if it was safe. Vegetables were commonly dried or pickled. Grain was ground into flour to make bread. People used spoons, knives or their fingers to eat; instead of plates, most people ate off thick slices of bread called trenchers.



**Source 3** A 15th-century illustration of a rich man's feast

### Eating habits of the rich

The rich ate the meat of both domestic animals (such as cows, pigs and sheep) and game animals (such as deer, wild boars and pheasants). They also ate fish, fruit, soft cheese, eggs, coloured jellies, vegetables, sauces and soups, salads, white bread, pies and tarts, and ornate sweet dishes called subtleties. Food was washed down with ale, wine or mead (a brew made from honey and water).

Banquets were held on important religious feast days, and to mark events such as marriages, coronations, special birthdays, tournaments and the arrival of important guests. Important people (such as members of the lord's family) sat at a higher table than other diners. Feasts often lasted for hours. In between the many courses, diners were entertained by acrobats, **minstrels**, **troubadours**, storytellers, jugglers and jesters.

### Eating habits of the poor

The poor ate a simpler and less varied diet than the rich. It included stews, grainy bread, vegetables and fruit (when available), milk, hard cheese, porridge made from oats or barley, and perhaps some nuts from the forests. Most peasants ate their main meal for the day while working in the fields. If peasants were lucky enough to live near the sea or rivers, they ate fish. Generally, however, they ate very little meat, as they were often too poor to own and raise animals. Hunting for game (wild animals) in the lord's forests was forbidden.

## Medieval entertainment

Many pastimes in medieval Europe were the privilege of the wealthy. These included lavish banquets and, for the men, activities such as hunting, falconry and playing chess. Wealthy women might embroider, stitch tapestries or listen to musical performances.

Hunts were typically conducted in the woods and forests surrounding feudal manors. Sometimes, women, riding side-saddle, would be part of the hunting party. Access to these areas was forbidden to the poor; instead, they hunted for rabbits and birds in the fields.

**Source 4** This 14th-century illustration shows a hunting party of nobles carrying birds of prey on their wrists. They are led by a falconer, who trains and looks after these birds. The long stick in his hand was used to beat trees and bushes to flush out small game animals, which would then be caught by the trained birds of prey.



**Source 5** This painting by Pieter Bruegel the Elder, *Children's Games* (c. 1560), shows a wide range of games played by children in medieval Europe.

Falconry involved using trained birds of prey such as eagles, falcons and hawks to catch small animals such as pigeons and hares (see Source 4). The type of hunting bird used indicated a person's status – eagles, for example, were only owned by kings. Appearing in public with a bird of prey on a leather-strapped wrist was a sign of a person's wealth and social status.

The poor did not have many opportunities for entertainment, but during special feasts, such as at harvest time, there might be dancing, dice throwing, ball games and wrestling, for example. Many of the games played by medieval children, such as hopscotch and hide-and-seek, are still played today (see Source 5).

## Check your learning 10.5

### Remember and understand

- 1 Describe one way in which an 11th-century noblewoman might 'advertise' that she was wealthy in the way she dressed.
- 2 What did 'having a stew' mean in medieval times? What social group might engage in this activity? Why?

### Apply and analyse

- 3 Compare and contrast the diets of the rich and poor. Which diet do you think was healthier? Justify your opinion.
- 4 With a partner, identify as many medieval games and activities as you can in Source 5. Create a table and sort the activities into those you recognise instantly and those that seem strange to you.

### Evaluate and create

- 5 Refer to Source 1 and conduct some further research on the Internet in order to design two separate outfits for:
  - a peasant man or woman in medieval England
  - a nobleman or noblewoman in medieval England.
 Sketch and colour your finished garments, ensuring that they follow the established rules and laws in medieval England (in terms of colours, materials and styles).

# 10.6 Housing for the rich and poor

In addition to fashion, food and entertainment, there were also marked differences between rich and poor in terms of living conditions.

## Living conditions for the poor

Conditions for the poor were not very comfortable. Peasant farmers often lived in a one- or two-roomed hut shared with domestic animals such as chickens and pigs (see Source 1). This was often one of a number of similar huts on a feudal manor (see Source 1 on

page XX). These huts were usually dirty, sooty, smelly and dark. Walls were mostly a mixture of mud, manure and sticks (called wattle and daub). They might be painted white with lime. Roofs were made from thatch (straw). Windows were narrow openings that could be boarded up in winter. The toilet was a hole in the ground outside.

Peasants who worked as servants in manor houses and castles lived in more secure and pleasant surroundings; however, their daily lives were hard like those of other peasants, with few personal comforts.



**Source 2** The restored bedroom of the French king Henri III in the Château de Blois in France. Often the beds of the wealthy had blankets, sheets, feather pillows, fur covers and linen curtains. Tapestries covered up draughty cracks in the stone walls of castles.

## Living conditions for the rich

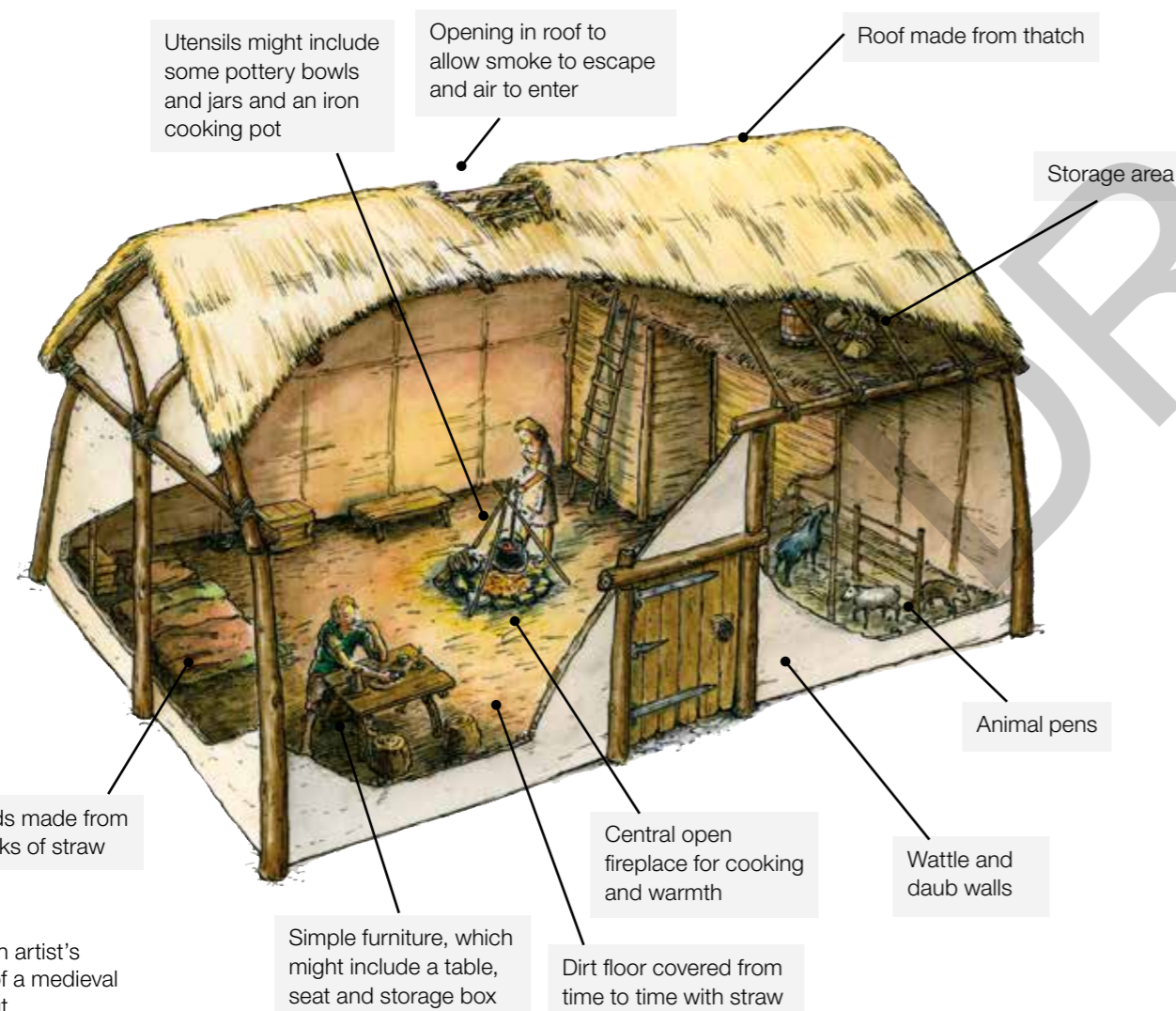
The rich included kings and queens and their extended families, feudal lords and their ladies, and the families of knights. When not fighting wars, the wealthy led mostly comfortable lives, often in manor houses and castles (See Unit 10.7). The Church, too, had great wealth and certain members lived very comfortably despite their vow of poverty.

In times of peace, castles were the settings for feasts, workshops, markets, romance, raising and entertaining children, crafts and music. They were also the focal point for military training, the day-to-day running of the realm, and for administering justice.

A typical day for a lord's family began when the sun rose. By then, servants were preparing meals and had lit the fires in the kitchen and great hall. The noble family would wash in tubs (often with

the help of servants) and dress. They would also visit the garderobe (a medieval toilet), which was a small, cold room with a seat that opened directly onto a stinking pit or moat below. A chamber pot kept in the bedroom was typically used for toilet visits during the night. Strips of torn fabric were used as toilet paper.

After breakfast, the lord and lady would usually visit their private chapel. The lord's tasks for a day might include making decisions about the manor, receiving rents, presiding over a manor court and planning to visit another castle he owned. At night, there might be a feast for an important guest (perhaps the king) or to celebrate something special, such as the end of a **tournament**.



**Source 1** An artist's impression of a medieval peasant's hut

## Check your learning 10.6

### Remember and understand

- 1 What were some of the typical activities and events that took place in medieval castles?
- 2 How would a typical lord in medieval Europe spend his day?
- 3 Why was there a high risk of fires in medieval towns?

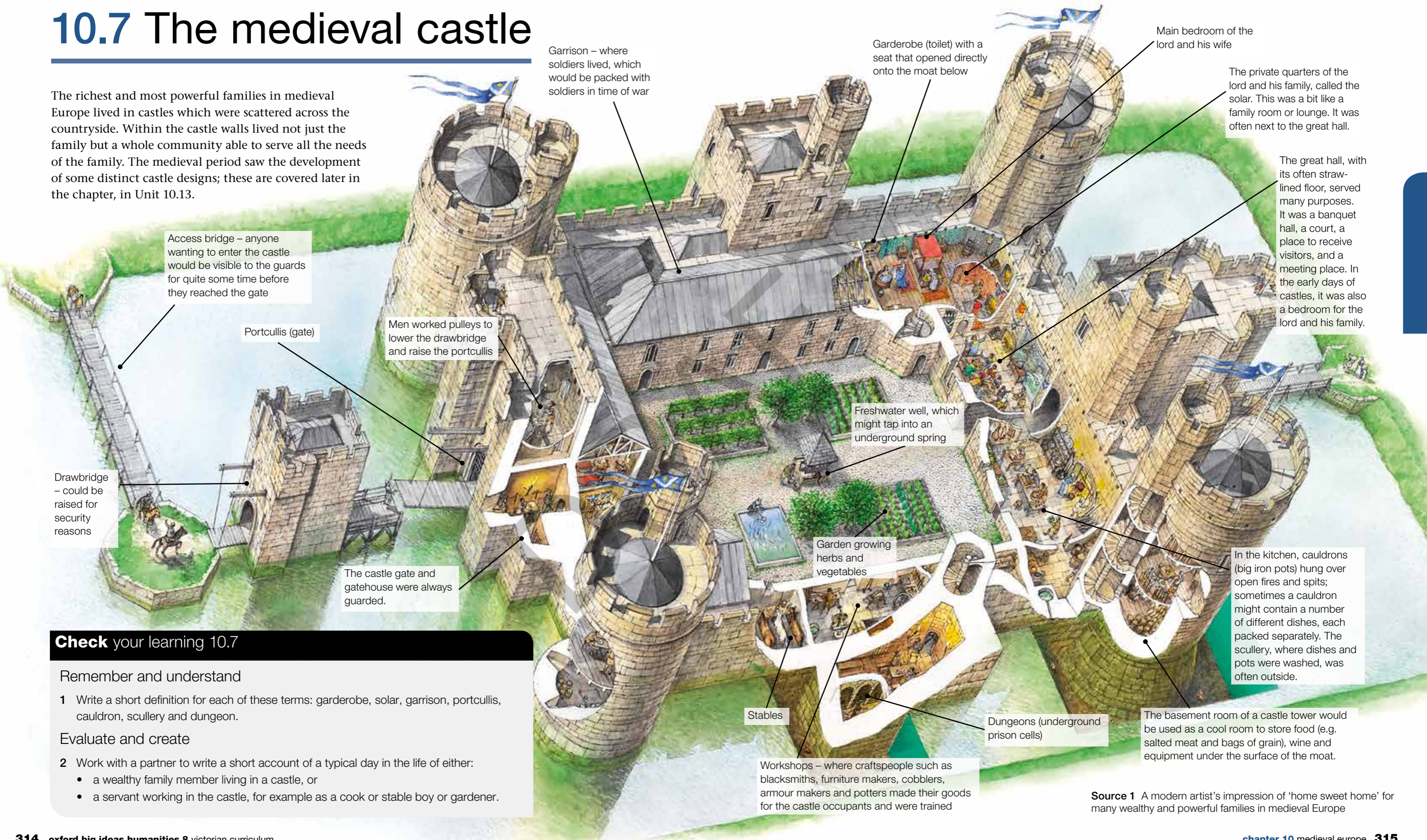
### Evaluate and create

- 4 Work in groups to construct a model of either the hut of a poor medieval family or the bedroom of a rich medieval noble. Share responsibilities, including research, preparing materials, assembling the model and presenting it to the class.



# 10.7 The medieval castle

The richest and most powerful families in medieval Europe lived in castles which were scattered across the countryside. Within the castle walls lived not just the family but a whole community able to serve all the needs of the family. The medieval period saw the development of some distinct castle designs; these are covered later in the chapter, in Unit 10.13.



Access bridge – anyone wanting to enter the castle would be visible to the guards for quite some time before they reached the gate

Portcullis (gate)

Men worked pulleys to lower the drawbridge and raise the portcullis

Drawbridge – could be raised for security reasons

The castle gate and gatehouse were always guarded.

Garrison – where soldiers lived, which would be packed with soldiers in time of war

Garderoberie (toilet) with a seat that opened directly onto the moat below

Main bedroom of the lord and his wife

The private quarters of the lord and his family, called the solar. This was a bit like a family room or lounge. It was often next to the great hall.

The great hall, with its often straw-lined floor, served many purposes. It was a banquet hall, a court, a place to receive visitors, and a meeting place. In the early days of castles, it was also a bedroom for the lord and his family.

Freshwater well, which might tap into an underground spring

Garden growing herbs and vegetables

In the kitchen, cauldrons (big iron pots) hung over open fires and spits; sometimes a cauldron might contain a number of different dishes, each packed separately. The scullery, where dishes and pots were washed, was often outside.

Stables

Dungeons (underground prison cells)

The basement room of a castle tower would be used as a cool room to store food (e.g. salted meat and bags of grain), wine and equipment under the surface of the moat.

Workshops – where craftspeople such as blacksmiths, furniture makers, cobblers, armour makers and potters made their goods for the castle occupants and were trained

## Check your learning 10.7

### Remember and understand

- 1 Write a short definition for each of these terms: garderoberie, solar, garrison, portcullis, cauldron, scullery and dungeon.

### Evaluate and create

- 2 Work with a partner to write a short account of a typical day in the life of either:
  - a wealthy family member living in a castle, or
  - a servant working in the castle, for example as a cook or stable boy or gardener.

**Source 1** A modern artist's impression of 'home sweet home' for many wealthy and powerful families in medieval Europe

10A rich task

# The achievements of medieval women

The societies of medieval Europe were dominated by men. The Pope and bishops controlled the Catholic Church, and the king and his nobles governed all other social and legal matters. The man was the head of his household, just as the king was the head of his kingdom. Both noble and peasant women were expected to work in the family home until they were married. After marriage, they had to run their husband's household and raise children. Typically they received very little education and had few rights. Every woman was required to obey her father or husband in all matters and was not able to make decisions for herself. Despite these challenges and restrictions, some women in medieval Europe became very influential and their stories live on to this day.



Source 1 A 19th-century artist's impression of Eleanor of Aquitaine

**Eleanor of Aquitaine (1122–1204)**

During her lifetime, Eleanor of Aquitaine was queen of France and England, and also ruled England as **regent**. She was an intelligent, creative and sensitive woman. Eleanor was born in France in 1122. She was the daughter of the Duke of Aquitaine and heir to his land. When her father died, however, the land became the property of Louis VI, the French king. When

she was 15, she married the king's son and later became queen of France. She took part in the Second Crusade alongside her husband, taking 300 women to fight and help care for the wounded. She was not happy with Louis VII and the marriage was annulled (declared non-existent) in 1152. In 1154 she married the Duke of Normandy, who later became Henry II, the king of England. Eleanor supported her sons when they revolted against Henry in 1173, and was imprisoned for 16 years. When Henry II died she was released, and helped rule England with and for her eldest son, Richard the Lionheart.

**Joan of Arc (1412–1431)**



Source 2 A 19th-century artist's impression of Joan of Arc

Joan of Arc was born in 1412 in a small French village called Domrémy. As the daughter of a peasant farmer, she received no education apart from the lessons of the Church. When she was 13, she believed she began to see visions and hear the voices of saints. They told her that she would help the French defeat the English and so secure the coronation of Charles VII, then crown prince of France.

Aged 18, she travelled in men's clothing to see Charles. Her conviction and faith inspired many nobles and common people. She helped lead the French to victory, and in 1429 Charles was crowned. Less than a year later, Joan was captured and imprisoned by the English. Wanting to discredit the new French king, they accused her of **heresy**. Because she refused to confess that she did not hear the voices of saints she was burned at the stake in 1431.



**Christine de Pizan (1363–c. 1430)**

Christine de Pizan was born in Venice in 1363. Her father was Tomasso de Pizzano, a respected physician. She grew up at the court of King Charles V of France, where her father made sure she received a good education. At 14, Christine married Etienne du Castel, a court secretary, and they had three children. In 1389, however, her husband died. Her father and the king were now also dead, and she decided to support her family by writing. Over the next 50 years, Christine wrote many poems, essays and books. As well as entertaining stories and love poems, she wrote serious works about the place of women in society, defending them against those who dismissed them as ignorant and worthless.

Source 3 A 19th-century artist's impression of Christine de Pizan

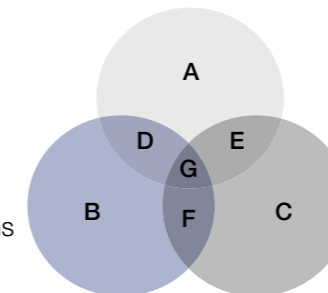
**skilldrill: Historical significance**

Using Venn diagrams to compare information from a range of sources

Venn diagrams are simple diagrammatic tools that help you organise your thinking. They help to quickly identify the similarities and differences of two or more things. These 'things' can be anything – people, events, political systems and so on. Venn diagrams are a useful tool to compare information you have gathered from a range of sources.

To complete the Venn diagram in Source 4, follow these steps:

**Step 1** Think about how each of the three things you are comparing are different. Record these individual features in the non-overlapping sections (A, B and C).



Source 4 A Venn diagram

**Step 2** Then think about how two of the things are similar or share common features. Write any features that are common to A and B in section D, features common to A and C in section E, and features common to B and C in section F.

**Step 3** Finally, think about the features that all three things have in common. Record these common features in section G.

Apply the skill

Use the written and visual sources about the three women provided to compare, select and use the most relevant information as evidence. Copy the Venn diagram from Source 4 into your notebook, and arrange facts from the written and visual sources to show what they had in common and what was different about them.

Consider the following topics:

- family connections
- education
- type and extent of influence.

**Extend your understanding**

Consider the place of women in Australian society today. Create a table to compare the ways in which women's social positions are similar, and the ways in which they are different.

Investigate the following areas:

- home life
- legal rights
- work and roles performed
- access to education
- family.

In order to collect this information you may need to conduct some additional research on the Internet.

**Comparison of women's social positions in modern Australia and in medieval Europe**

Similarities	Differences

# 10.8 New empires, kingdoms and rulers

The medieval period in Europe was a time of great change. New groups of people moved and settled across the region; new empires and kingdoms were established; new ideas and beliefs spread throughout the population; and important events such as wars, famines and plagues brought about changes at all levels of society.

The kingdom of the Franks was one of the most important kingdoms in medieval Europe. During the 8th and 9th centuries, it was dominated by the Carolingian Dynasty, which rose to power at a time of great instability in Europe. The Carolingian kings commanded a powerful military force and had a close relationship with the Catholic Church. They created a single kingdom out of much of Western Europe and played a key role in converting tribal groups, such as the Saxons, to Christianity. The Carolingian **monarchy** was at its most powerful during the reign of Charles I (also known as

Charlemagne). Under Charlemagne, the Christian lands of Western Europe were united to form the Carolingian Empire.

The Carolingian Empire did not last long after Charlemagne's death in 814. His son, Louis the Pious, and grandson, Charles the Bald, headed an empire increasingly

**Source 1** An artist's impression of Pepin the Short, one of the Carolingian kings and father of Charlemagne and Carloman I

at war with itself. By 887, the empire had largely been reduced to a few smaller kingdoms. These laid the foundations of what we know today as France, Germany and Italy.

## Arrival of the Vikings

The decline of the Carolingian kings was helped by the arrival of the Vikings between about 850 and 1050. Initially they raided coastal settlements and monasteries in England, Ireland, Scotland and coastal France. Over time, however, they came to control large areas of medieval Europe, settling in places they had previously attacked and raided. They built new towns, like Dublin, the capital of modern Ireland, and set up their own kingdoms, such as the **Danelaw** in England.

## The Normans

In France, the Vikings established a strong base. In 911, a Viking leader named Hrolf defeated the Frankish king, Charles the Simple (a descendant of Charlemagne). Hrolf forced Charles to pay a heavy penalty – a **fief** (a grant of land) in a region of western France. This area became known as Normandy, which derives its name from 'Norman' meaning 'Northman' or 'Viking'. In return for this land, Hrolf promised to stop raiding and to convert to Christianity.

In their new country, the Vikings (or Normans) adopted and refined some of the political and cultural practices of the Franks, including their language. By the early 11th century, the Normans had made further conquests in Europe and established a kingdom in southern Italy.



**Source 2** A scene from the Bayeux Tapestry (an embroidery retelling the Battle of Hastings, made in around 1080). This scene shows the mounted soldiers of William, Duke of Normandy, attacking the Saxon foot soldiers of Harold Godwinson.

## The Normans in England and the Battle of Hastings

The Normans also had long-standing interests in England. For example, Emma of Normandy (the sister of Richard II, Duke of Normandy) had married the English king Ethelred II. Their son, Edward the Confessor, became king of England in 1042. During his reign, many Normans became involved in English politics.

When Edward the Confessor died without an heir to the throne in 1066, a number of people believed they had a right to rule England. One contender, Harold Godwinson (the powerful Earl of Wessex), had himself crowned king that year. Harold claimed that Edward had promised him the throne on his deathbed.

Edward's cousin William, Duke of Normandy, was another contender for the throne. He also claimed that Edward had promised him the throne on his deathbed. Later that year, he invaded England to take the throne for himself. William's army defeated Harold's army at the Battle of Hastings. King Harold was killed, shot in the eye with an arrow. William (who became known as William the Conqueror) was then crowned King William I of England. More information about The Battle of Hastings is provided on pages XX–XX 10B Rich task.

After 1066, William I and his Norman nobles began imposing their rule on the English. Many of the former **Anglo-Saxon** nobility fled to Denmark, Scotland and Wales. William claimed their lands, giving some to the Church and some as fiefs to his loyal followers and knights as a reward.

The Normans built castles in their new kingdom to protect their territory and enforce their rule. They also introduced the system of **feudalism** already common across mainland Europe.

## Check your learning 10.8

### Remember and understand

- 1 Who were the Carolingian kings and why were they so powerful?
- 2 Why is Charlemagne considered to be one of the most significant rulers of the medieval period in Europe?

### Apply and analyse

- 3 Explain how a large region of France came to be ruled by the Vikings. What was this region called?
- 4 Why did Harold Godwinson and William of Normandy both believe they were legitimate contenders for the English throne in 1066?

### Evaluate and create

- 5 Explain the relationship between the Battle of Hastings in 1066 and the beginnings of a feudal system in Britain.
- 6 Draw a simple sketch diagram showing how the system of feudalism worked.

# 10.9 Significant individual: Charlemagne



**Source 2** A medieval bust of Charlemagne, Emperor of the Romans

**Source 3** A selection of statements describing Charlemagne

[Charlemagne] was large and strong, and of lofty [grand] stature ... the upper part of his head was round, his eyes very large and animated, nose a little long, hair fair, and face laughing and merry. Thus his appearance was always stately and dignified, whether he was standing or sitting ...

He ... was temperate [controlled] in eating, and particularly so in drinking, for he abominated [hated] drunkenness in anybody ... While at the table, he listened to reading or music.

He ... had the gift of ready and fluent speech, and could express whatever he had to say with the utmost clearness. He was not satisfied with command of his native language ... [he] was such a master of Latin that he could speak it as well as his native tongue.

He ... cherished [valued] with the greatest fervour [passion] and devotion the principles of the Christian religion, which had been instilled into him from infancy [childhood].

Translated extracts from *Life of Charles the Great*, a biography of Charlemagne, written by Einhard

Charles I (742–814), more commonly known as Charlemagne (meaning Charles the Great), was one of the most important kings in medieval Europe. Charlemagne and his brother Carloman both took the throne of the Frankish kingdom when their father, Pepin the Short, died in 768 (see Source 1 on page XX). After Carloman's death in 771, Charlemagne ruled in his own right.

He was active in overseeing his kingdom and regularly travelled around it. He also set up a network of messengers to report back to him on what was happening. Under his rule, his kingdom rose to dominate Western Europe.

## Charlemagne, the man

Much of what we know about Charlemagne today was written by Einhard, a scholar and dedicated servant of Charlemagne. Einhard's accounts were written at the request of Charlemagne's son, Louis the Pious, between 817 and 836.



**Source 1** An artist's impression of Charlemagne leading his troops over the Swiss Alps on a military campaign to conquer new territories

## Charlemagne, the conqueror

Over his lifetime, Charlemagne fought many wars. His victories expanded the territory under his control. He was helped by the armies of his loyal supporters. Charlemagne had earlier given many of these men grants of land, a common practice among the Franks. This was done partly so they could support themselves, and partly so they could equip themselves to help Charlemagne in battle. It also encouraged their ongoing loyalty and support.

## Charlemagne, the leader

Charlemagne did not just lead in battle. He was also a leading thinker, introducing many political and social reforms. For example, he set up a common system of currency, bringing back coins as the means of buying and selling goods and services as the Romans had done hundreds of years earlier. He also encouraged the arts and education, setting up a number of schools for both peasants and nobles alike. Many of the cultural and artistic traditions of the Greek and Roman empires were brought back to life during Charlemagne's rule. As a result, the period of his rule is often described as the Carolingian **Renaissance**. His leadership encouraged many new developments in literature, architecture and the arts.

## Charlemagne, Emperor of the Romans

Charlemagne had always had a close relationship with the Catholic Church. In 799, he came to the aid of Pope Leo III. The Pope, accused of adultery, had fled Rome. His accusers had threatened to gouge out his eyes and cut out his tongue. Charlemagne escorted the Pope back to Rome and forced his reinstatement.

Pope Leo III was understandably grateful to Charlemagne. On Christmas Day in 800, the Pope crowned Charlemagne as Emperor of the Romans. This endorsement from the Pope not only reinforced Charlemagne's position as the most powerful king, but also ensured that the Catholic Church remained a strong force in Europe (as the ancient Roman Empire had been). Kings that followed Charlemagne were referred to as Holy Roman Emperors.



**Source 4** An artist's impression of Charlemagne, who established a number of schools for boys from different social classes during his rule

## Charlemagne's death

In late 813, Charlemagne crowned his son Louis the Pious co-emperor. Shortly after, on 28 January 814, Charlemagne died. He had ruled for 47 years.

## Check your learning 10.9

### Remember and understand

- 1 Explain who each of the following people were: Charlemagne's father, his brother, his son.
- 2 How did giving grants of land to his closest supporters benefit Charlemagne?

### Apply and analyse

- 3 Consider the statements in Source 3 and answer the following:
  - a Are these accounts primary or secondary sources? Why?
  - b Do you think these accounts are truthful and reliable? Give reasons for your answer.
- 4 Why do you think the Pope decided to crown Charlemagne Emperor of the Romans?

### Evaluate and create

- 5 Conduct research to learn more about the regions of Europe ruled by Charlemagne. On a blank map of Europe, shade the area ruled by Charlemagne when he and his brother took the throne. Next, shade the area covered by his empire at the height of his rule. Use two different colours to distinguish between the two areas. Now use your atlas to discover which modern European countries were originally ruled by Charlemagne.
- 6 Provide three reasons why you think Charlemagne deserves to be considered a significant individual.

# 10.10 The spread of Christianity

One of the most significant and lasting changes that took place across Europe during medieval times was the spread and adoption of Christianity. Christianity was one of the legacies of ancient Rome. At first, Roman emperors made every effort to stamp out Christianity across the empire, even feeding Christians to the lions. But over time it became accepted and was declared the official religion of the Roman Empire in the late 4th century CE. As a result, Christianity was well established as a religion in Europe when the Roman Empire collapsed and the medieval period began. Its influence and relevance was kept alive by the Catholic Church (today referred to as the Roman Catholic Church). Christianity influenced the arts, education, medicine, architecture

and even wars. It also affected medieval Europe's relationships with other societies, such as the Muslim nations of the Middle East.

The influence of Christianity across Europe increased under the rule of Charlemagne. He supported missionaries that travelled across Europe converting people who were not Christians. He was a dedicated and passionate believer in Christianity and made constant efforts to improve the religious life across his realm. He defended the Church with his forces and protected the Pope from his enemies in Rome. In 800, the Pope crowned Charlemagne Holy Roman Emperor in order to strengthen ties between the Church and the ruler of Europe.



**Source 1** Canterbury Cathedral in England is significant not only because of its impressive architecture but also because it played a vital role in the lives of medieval Christians.

## The organisation and influence of the medieval Church

The Church and its leader, the Pope, had great power and influence over almost every person in medieval society. From a very early age, all people, from the very rich to the very poor, were educated in the customs and traditions of the Church that would grant them salvation (entry into heaven). The desire to gain entry into heaven and the terrible fear of hell were strong incentives for people in medieval times to obey Church rules and customs.

By the middle of the 11th century, the Church was a well-organised hierarchy, reaching every level of medieval society. Small parishes, headed by priests, were set up across every region. These parishes were organised into larger dioceses, headed by bishops. Bishops were responsible for all religious affairs. They controlled church courts, which sat in judgement of cases involving members of the clergy and church property, and also ruled over other matters like marriages and wills.

Most importantly, bishops also held the authority to **excommunicate** any Christian who did not follow Church law. Excommunication prevented people from participating in church services or receiving the sacraments (sacred rituals) – meaning they would spend eternity in hell.

**Source 2** An illumination (an illustration decorated with gold or silver) from an early 15th-century French manuscript showing a school lesson



**Source 3** An artist's impression of Christian pilgrims travelling to a shrine at the Canterbury Cathedral in England. This shrine attracted many pilgrims during the Middle Ages.

In addition to exercising great power over people in medieval society, the Church also provided many benefits. More than anything, it provided a stable and unifying system of beliefs and rules that all Christians were bound to follow. The Church was also responsible for providing a great deal of practical help. In most parishes the Church established schools and universities, provided care for the poor and sick, and offered legal advice and other community services.

### Holy pilgrimages

As Christianity spread across Western Europe, people of all social classes started to set out on journeys to places of religious importance (such as shrines and burial sites). These journeys, known as **pilgrimages**, were designed to prove Christians' loyal devotion to God. Each region of Europe had its own sites popular with pilgrims; however, the most sacred pilgrimage site for all Christians was the Holy City of Jerusalem. The Holy Land had been held by Muslim Arabs since 637 CE, but Christian pilgrims had been allowed to travel there freely. This changed in 1050, when a group known as the Seljuk Turks, who had recently converted to Islam, took control of Jerusalem. They began harassing pilgrims and refusing them entry to the city. These events led to the start of a series of religious wars known as the **Crusades**.

## Religious warfare – the Crusades

The Crusades were a series of religious wars between Christians and Muslims between 1096 and 1270 to gain control over key religious sites in and around the city of Jerusalem – an important spiritual and religious location for believers of both Christianity and Islam.

Historians argue about the total number of wars that were fought, but most agree that eight major crusades took place (see Source 4).

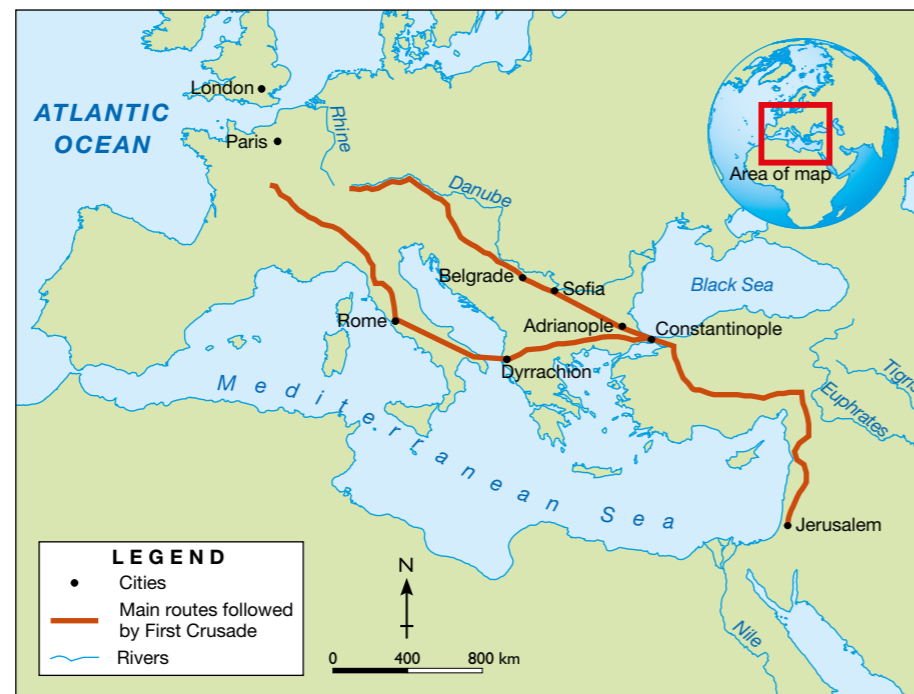
**Source 4** The dates of the eight major Crusades

Date	Crusade
1096–1099	First Crusade
1147–1149	Second Crusade
1188–1192	Third Crusade
1202–1204	Fourth Crusade
1217–1222	Fifth Crusade
1228–1229	Sixth Crusade
1248–1254	Seventh Crusade
1270	Eighth Crusade



**Source 5** An artist's impression of a battle during the First Crusade, painted in 1490

THE ROUTES OF THE FIRST CRUSADE



**Source 6**

Source: Oxford University Press

### The start of the Crusades

Following the takeover of Jerusalem by the Seljuk Turks in 1050, Christian pilgrims and traders no longer felt safe in the region. Many believed that this new Islamic regime would also move to invade Constantinople, capital of the Byzantine Empire (formerly the Eastern Roman Empire), which was under Christian rule. This growing threat caused the Byzantine emperor to ask for support from Pope Urban II in 1096. In response, the Pope rallied Christians all over Europe to fight for control of Jerusalem and to help defend other Christians in the Middle East against the Turkish invaders. This was the start of the First Crusade.

People from all walks of life – from kings to peasants – joined the Crusades. Young people were particularly caught up in the desire to fight in the name of Christianity. Many young peasants who took part in the Crusades were encouraged by their local parish priests to join the fight. The priests believed that young people, free from 'sin', would make more successful Crusaders than older people.

Although most people joined the Crusades to return control of the Holy Land to Christians, many people also went for other reasons. During this deeply religious time, most Christians believed that taking part would be a sure way of gaining entry into heaven when they died. Some were also hoping to find wealth and fame; others were looking for adventure.

### The effects of the Crusades

Although there were eight major Crusades, only the first was successful in bringing Jerusalem under Christian control. All remaining Crusades were either designed to protect the gains made during the First Crusade or motivated by a desire for wealth and fame. By the time of the Eighth Crusade in 1270, the Holy Land had not been regained by the Christians and many Crusaders had never returned home at all. Some were killed in battle for the Holy Land, while others died of disease or injuries. Others were sold as slaves, never to see their homes and families again.

The Crusades did, however, have enormous effects on Europe and its people. Crusaders who returned home brought new wealth, new ideas, new customs and new products (such as foods, spices, perfumes, pearls and precious stones). The power and wealth of the Church increased greatly. Trade with the East also increased. Goods from the East poured into Europe through trading ports in Italy. With the growth in trade came the desire to explore and discover unknown lands. This, in turn, brought new ideas, greater knowledge and more inventions.

People's lives improved. New trade and opportunities often meant greater wealth, and with this wealth came better living standards, health and access to education and work. The Crusades were also responsible for weakening the system of feudalism that had dominated Europe for centuries. Many lords had mortgaged or sold their estates before heading off on Crusades and many more never returned at all. All of these changes led to a move from a land-based economy to a money-based economy. All of this contributed to increased commerce in towns – causing them to grow into cities.

#### Some effects of the Crusades

- New inventions and devices (e.g. the windmill, the magnetic compass, new ways of drawing maps)
- New products and goods (e.g. foods, perfumes, precious metals and stones)
- New castle designs and weapons
- Weakening of the feudal system and the development of a more money-based economy
- The growth of more towns and cities
- New ways of practising medicine (Arabic medicine was far more advanced than that in Europe at the time)

**Source 7** Some of the new ideas and technologies Crusaders brought back to Europe from the Holy Land



**Source 8** An artist's impression of a medieval Crusader

### Check your learning 10.10

#### Remember and understand

- 1 Why was the Catholic Church so influential in the lives of all people in medieval Europe?
- 2 List some of the positive contributions made by the Catholic Church to society in medieval Europe.
- 3 What event caused Pope Urban II to call for people to go on the First Crusade?
- 4 Why did so many Christians take up Pope Urban's call to go on a crusade?

#### Apply and analyse

- 5 When did the First Crusade take place? What was the goal of this crusade?
- 6 List three reasons why the Crusades were such significant events for societies across medieval Europe.

#### Evaluate and create

- 7 Consider what you have read about the takeover of Jerusalem by Seljuk Turks in 1050.
  - a What was the immediate effect on the Middle East region of Jerusalem's takeover by this group of people? Why?
  - b Predict what might have happened in 1096 if Pope Urban had ignored the Byzantine emperor's request for support.

10B rich task

# The Battle of Hastings

The Battle of Hastings is one of the most significant battles in medieval Europe. It took place at Hastings in the south of England on 14 October 1066. The forces of the newly crowned king of England, Harold Godwinson, and William, Duke of Normandy, fought for the English throne. Harold was killed, and William was crowned king. This marked an end to Anglo-Saxon rule and the start of Norman rule in England.

Norman rule changed England forever – there were changes to the government, the Church, language and everyday life.

There are a number of different primary and secondary sources that retell the events of the Norman invasion and the Battle of Hastings. Three of these are described here:

### 1 The Bayeux Tapestry

One of the best primary sources is a 70-metre embroidered cloth known as the Bayeux Tapestry. It is a valuable document for the study of medieval weapons, warfare, architecture and clothing. It tells a story that begins around 1064 and ends in October 1066, with the death of King Harold at the Battle of Hastings. The exact origin of the tapestry



is not known. One story claims that Matilda, William the Conqueror's wife, sewed the tapestry. Other accounts claim it was probably commissioned in the 1070s by Bishop Odo of Bayeux, half-brother of William the Conqueror.

### 2 The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle

Written between the 9th and 12th centuries, the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* is a collection of seven volumes written by Anglo-Saxon monks in England. The Chronicle is written in Old English (the language of the Anglo-Saxons). It recounts events and tells the story of England. A few brief descriptions of the Battle of Hastings appear in the Chronicle, but in some cases the entries were made several years after the battle took place.

#### Source 1

William came against him [Harold] by surprise before his army was drawn up in battle array [formation]. But the king [Harold] nevertheless fought hard against him [William] ... and there were heavy casualties on both sides.

Many English deserted from the line, and very few stood firm with him [Harold]: yet from the third hour of the day until evening he resisted his foes with the utmost courage ... But alas, after so many had fallen on both sides, Harold himself was slain [killed] as the evening shadows lengthened. King Harold was dead ... and many good men. God granted the victory to the [Normans] because of the sins of the English people.

An extract from the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, retelling the events leading up to the death of King Harold

**Source 2** A section of the Bayeux Tapestry depicting William and his Norman troops fighting the English army

### 3 The writings of William of Poitiers

William of Poitiers served as a knight in Normandy before becoming a priest. When William, the Duke of Normandy, became king of England in 1066, William of Poitiers was appointed his personal chaplain. In 1073, William wrote *The History of William the Conqueror*. The book contains the most detailed written account we have of the Battle of Hastings.

#### Source 3

[The Duke of Normandy] hastily built a fleet of three thousand ships. At length he brought this fleet to anchor at St Valery in Ponthieu [in France] where he filled it with mighty horses and most valiant men, with hauberks [armour] and helmets. Then when a favourable wind began to blow, he set sail, and crossing the sea he landed at Pevensey [in England] where he immediately built a castle with a strong rampart [defensive wall].

An extract from *The History of William the Conqueror* by William of Poitiers, retelling the events leading up to the Battle of Hastings

### skilldrill: Historical sources as evidence

## Drawing conclusions about the usefulness of sources

A useful source will add to your understanding of a historical period or event. The source needs to be relevant to your investigation and reliable. Ask yourself the following questions to determine the usefulness of a source:

- What type of source is it?
- Who wrote or created the source?
- Why was it written or created?
- Is it balanced or does it present only one point of view?
- Is it based on fact or opinion?
- Is there enough information and detail for the source to be of use to my inquiry?
- Does the information support and reinforce evidence from other sources?

### Apply the skill

Use the sources and information in this section to draw conclusions about their usefulness and reliability. When examining a range of different sources, it is often helpful to gather your information into a table or graphic organiser.

- 1 Copy the table below into your notebook and complete it using the information provided. Alternatively, create your own graphic organiser (such as a Venn diagram) to draw conclusions about the sources.

Source name	Source type (primary/secondary)	Key questions to determine the usefulness of each source
<b>Source 1:</b> The Bayeux Tapestry	Type of source:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Who created the source?</li> <li>• Why was it created?</li> <li>• Is it balanced or does it present only one point of view?</li> </ul>
<b>Source 2:</b> The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle	Type of source:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Who wrote the source?</li> <li>• Why was it written?</li> <li>• Is it balanced or does it present only one point of view?</li> </ul>
<b>Source 3:</b> The writings of William of Poitiers	Type of source:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Who wrote the source?</li> <li>• Why was it written?</li> <li>• Is it balanced or does it present only one point of view?</li> </ul>

- 2 In what ways are the three sources similar? In what ways are they different?
- 3 Based on your findings, which of the three sources provided do you think is the most reliable and useful? Give reasons for your answer.

### Extend your understanding

- 1 The complete Bayeux Tapestry is a rich source of information about the Battle of Hastings. Use the Internet to collect images of the full Bayeux Tapestry. Make a flow chart showing the major events in the Norman invasion of England (including the Battle of Hastings) using the images from the tapestry. Most sites that show the full tapestry will provide commentary about what is happening in each panel. Consider using the following format:



# 10.11 Developments in architecture, literature and music

The medieval period in Europe lasted for about 1000 years. Over this time, there were many important developments and achievements that affected the lives of people – some were cultural and social (such as developments in music, literature and the law, and the growth of towns), while others were technological (such as developments in architecture, weapons and warfare).

## Architecture

A lasting example of these developments in medieval Europe is its architecture. Most European towns and cities settled during the medieval period still have buildings that date back almost 1000 years. These buildings include churches, **monasteries**, manor houses, town halls, castles and cathedrals (see Source 1).

### Gothic style

A major development in medieval architecture was the Gothic style. It originated in France during the 12th century and was popular across Europe until the 16th century. Gothic architecture, with its use of pointed arches and large windows, ornate decorative patterns and tall spires, was commonly used when designing and building cathedrals (see Source 1). Large stained-glass windows in these cathedrals played an important role in retelling important religious messages. Images in the windows were used to convey biblical stories because many people could not read.

## Literature

Few people in medieval Europe could read or write. Those who could were often members of the clergy – mostly priests, monks and a few nuns. All documents were written by hand until very late in the medieval period. This was a time-consuming process, with books taking years to produce.

Medieval manuscripts contained laws or administrative information about a kingdom or a landholding. Some rulers also arranged for others to write accounts of their lives or those of their ancestors. It was rare for the common people to write anything, even diaries or letters. This fact greatly limits our knowledge of how the poor lived in medieval Europe. Most medieval manuscripts related to religion, including copies of the Christian Bible and prayer books.



**Source 1** Completed around 1240, Notre Dame Cathedral in Paris is one of the most famous Gothic cathedrals in the world.

## Illuminated manuscripts

Some medieval manuscripts were ornate works of art, known as illuminated manuscripts. They featured highly detailed illustrations decorated with gold and silver, often depicting scenes related to the text.

Illuminated manuscripts were significant historical documents. For a start, they were very valuable. Many materials and skilled craftspeople were needed to make them. They were generally written on parchment or on vellum (a material made from the skin of sheep, goats or calves). Paints were made from plants, ground-up semi-precious stones, charcoal and spices to give them bright and vibrant colours. Sometimes even earwax and urine were used to create colours. Gold and silver were also painted onto manuscripts.

### The invention of the printing press

When the printing press was invented in Germany by Johannes Gutenberg around 1450, it revolutionised reading and writing across Europe. Books became quicker and cheaper to produce, which made them more readily available to common people. This increased the number of people who could read and write, and also meant that the Church no longer had control over the types of books that people could read.

## Music

Music played an important role in medieval life. It marked the end of harvests, provided entertainment for people at all levels of society, and was an important part of religious life.

Although most popular music from medieval times has been lost, traces of tunes to which peasants sang and danced can be found in modern folk and traditional music. Most sources of evidence for medieval music survive from more formal settings, such as church services and coronations.

**Source 2** A stringed medieval instrument called a dulcimer



**Source 3** A page from an illuminated manuscript created in the 15th century, which records the New Testament gospel of John

## Check your learning 10.11

### Remember and understand

- 1 What are two features common to the Gothic style?
- 2 In what areas of medieval life was music important?

### Apply and analyse

- 3 Why was the invention of the printing press a significant development in the lives of medieval people? How did it change the course of history?
- 4 Consider what you have learned about illuminated manuscripts.
  - a Explain what an illuminated manuscript is.
  - b List some of the materials used when creating illuminated manuscripts.
  - c Why might such documents be thought of as significant?

### Evaluate and create

- 5 Design your own Gothic cathedral either on paper or using computer software. Conduct further research to plan your design. Include a floor plan (as seen from directly above) and a close-up sketch of two important features.



# 10.12 Developments in law and order

## Options

How different developments influenced life in medieval Europe is discussed in the context of the following topics:

- Developments in law and order
- Developments in military and defence systems
- Developments in towns, cities and commerce.

Choose only ONE of these topics for study.

Throughout the medieval period in Europe, laws were extremely harsh and punishments were even harsher. Those in charge of law (such as kings and the nobility) believed that peasants and common people would only behave properly if they feared what would happen to them if they broke the law. Even the most minor offences had serious punishments.

Under feudalism, different courts dealt with different types of offences. Minor matters, such as a woman gossiping and nagging her husband, were heard by village courts. If found guilty, a woman like this (known as a scold) would be forced to wear a 'scold's bridle' (see Source 2). More serious matters, like a peasant's son being educated without the lord's permission, were heard by manor courts. If found guilty, a peasant might be fined or put in the stocks.

The most serious charges were dealt with in Church courts (for charges such as **heresy** and witchcraft) and the King's court (for charges of **treason**). Confessions for such crimes were often obtained under torture (with the use of thumbscrews and other devices). If found guilty, people could be executed by being burned or skinned alive. Traitors were frequently executed by being hanged, drawn and quartered. This involved first hanging a person, cutting him down while still alive, then pulling out his intestines while he watched, and finally attaching each of his hands and legs to a horse and having the horses pull him apart.

**Source 1** This painting from 1471 shows an ordeal by fire. The woman is trying to prove her dead husband's innocence of a crime against the king by holding a red-hot iron bar in one hand and her husband's head in the other.



**Source 2** A medieval engraving of a woman wearing a 'scold's bridle' being paraded through the streets by her husband. While wearing the mask it was impossible to speak. Some scold's bridles had bells on top to draw even more attention to the woman wearing it, increasing her humiliation.

## Trial by ordeal

The legal system of early medieval Europe required accused persons to prove their innocence. They did this by swearing an oath before God. Sometimes the oath of the accused was tested using trial by ordeal. There were two types of ordeal:

- ordeal by fire – The accused held a red-hot iron for some time, put an arm in a fire or walked across burning coals. If, after three days, the burn was not healing, they were seen to be guilty (see Source 1).
- ordeal by water – The accused placed an arm in boiling water, with the same test as above. They also could be bound and tossed into a river. If the body floated, they were seen to be guilty.

## Trial by combat

Another trial commonly used for members of upper classes was trial by combat, where the accused fought the accuser. Sometimes a champion (such as a strong knight) fought on behalf of a weaker party. The winner (or whoever they represented) was innocent – God was believed to ensure this. Guilty people were punished or killed. They might have ears or hands cut off, or worse.

## Changes to the medieval justice system

In 1154, Henry II became king of England. The various types of courts continued to exist during his reign, but Henry also wanted all his subjects to have access to royal justice. So he and his court (the king's court) travelled around the land, hearing cases. At this time, judges also began recording court decisions.

Over the centuries, this initiative continued to be refined. It set the basis for today's common law, as practised in England and in Australia – where judges' decisions, and the penalties for them, are based on similar examples from the past. Another initiative of Henry II was trial by jury. It, too, continues to this day as a key part of the Western justice system.

## The Magna Carta

By the early 13th century, John was king of England. He was unpopular because he raised taxes, fought a series of unsuccessful wars and upset the Pope. The Pope was so angry that he banned religious services in English churches.

The nobles decided to act. They negotiated with King John, forcing him to sign a charter (legal agreement) known as the **Magna Carta**. The Magna Carta marked a significant legal development in England because it required the monarch to be subject to the will of others, not just God. No longer could he rule exactly as he saw fit. This is seen as one of the first steps towards the development of legal and political rights for 'the people' and the start of modern democracy.

The Magna Carta also abolished trial by ordeal. No more could people be condemned, tortured or killed on the grounds of suspicion or rumour.



**Source 3** An artist's impression of King John of England reluctantly signing the Magna Carta

## Check your learning 10.12

### Remember and understand

- 1 What were some of the different courts in medieval Europe? What sort of cases were heard in each court?
- 2 How was the medieval practice of trial by ordeal changed by the Magna Carta?

### Apply and analyse

- 3 The words 'Magna Carta' mean 'Great Charter' in Latin. Do you agree that it was 'great'? Discuss in pairs and present your ideas to the class.
- 4 Do you think that trial by ordeal was fair? Give reasons for your view.

# 10.13 Developments in military and defence systems

Warfare was one of the chief ways a medieval kingdom in Europe could become powerful (either by fighting to expand its territory or by defending itself against invaders). The focus was often on capturing the enemy's stronghold, usually a castle. Castles were typically built in places that were easier to defend – on top of a cliff or hill, on an island, or jutting out into a lake.

## Castle fortresses

In times of peace, castles were home to important rulers or wealthy feudal lords and their families, servants and vassals. At these times, only a small group of soldiers was needed to guard the castle. In times of war, however, castles became hives of military activity as the ruler or lord called on his supporters to defend the castle by supplying him with foot soldiers, armour, weapons and often horses.

## Knights and soldiers

In medieval Europe, knights were obliged to fight for their lord in times of war as well as recruit others to fight for him. Some recruits were professional soldiers, men of the upper social class. They might be the younger sons of noble families, wanting to improve their standing through military service. Such soldiers were often called men-at-arms. Other fighting recruits were commoners or peasants. These men usually came straight from the fields or towns to fight. They often had no formal training and fought as foot soldiers because they could not afford horses. Their weapons and armour were much simpler than those of knights and men-at-arms.

## Military training

To stay fit and trained for war, knights fought jousts. Often these were public spectacles. Heavily armoured knights charged each other on horseback holding wooden lances ahead of them. Sometimes a long



**Source 1** An illustration from a medieval manuscript showing a joust between Jean Chalons, an Englishman, and Loys de Beul of France in 1446



**Source 2** This modern-day re-enactment of a medieval tournament shows two knights on horseback jousting.

wooden fence, called a tilt, separated the charging horses. The idea was to knock an opponent off his horse.

Larger contests between hundreds of knights on horseback and soldiers on foot were also held during the medieval period. These events, known as tournaments, were mock battles similar in principle to military training exercises today. By the 13th century, tournaments had become colourful spectacles (like carnivals) that created great excitement among medieval communities.

## keyconcept: Continuity and change

### Changing castle design

Over the medieval period, certain elements of castle designs changed and developed, improving on weak features and strengthening those that worked. Three castle designs evolved over the medieval period in Europe:

#### Motte-and-bailey castles

Early fortresses were called motte-and-bailey castles. The motte was a raised area (such as a hill) on which a wooden fortress was built. Below it was an open area called the bailey, where barns, workshops and stables were located. Both the bailey and motte were encircled by a gated timber palisade (fence-like barrier, made of logs), a ditch (sometimes filled with water) and an earth bank.



**Source 3** A motte-and-bailey castle

#### Stone castles with keeps

By the late 10th century, stone structures (called keeps) were starting to replace the wooden fortress in the motte-and-bailey design. These keeps, usually rectangular and up to four storeys high, were fitted out to withstand a siege. Thick stone walls replaced the palisade and a wide moat replaced the ditch. Access to the castle was via a drawbridge.



**Source 4** A stone castle with a keep

#### Concentric castles

Two hundred years later, the concentric castle emerged. It was based on designs Crusaders had seen in the Holy Land. This stone and/or brick castle had two outer walls (with battlements) to provide an extra barrier against attack. The outermost wall was often curved. The wall closest to the centre was the highest. There was a greatly reinforced gatehouse, but no keep.

For more information on the key concept of continuity and change, refer to page xx of 'The history toolkit'.



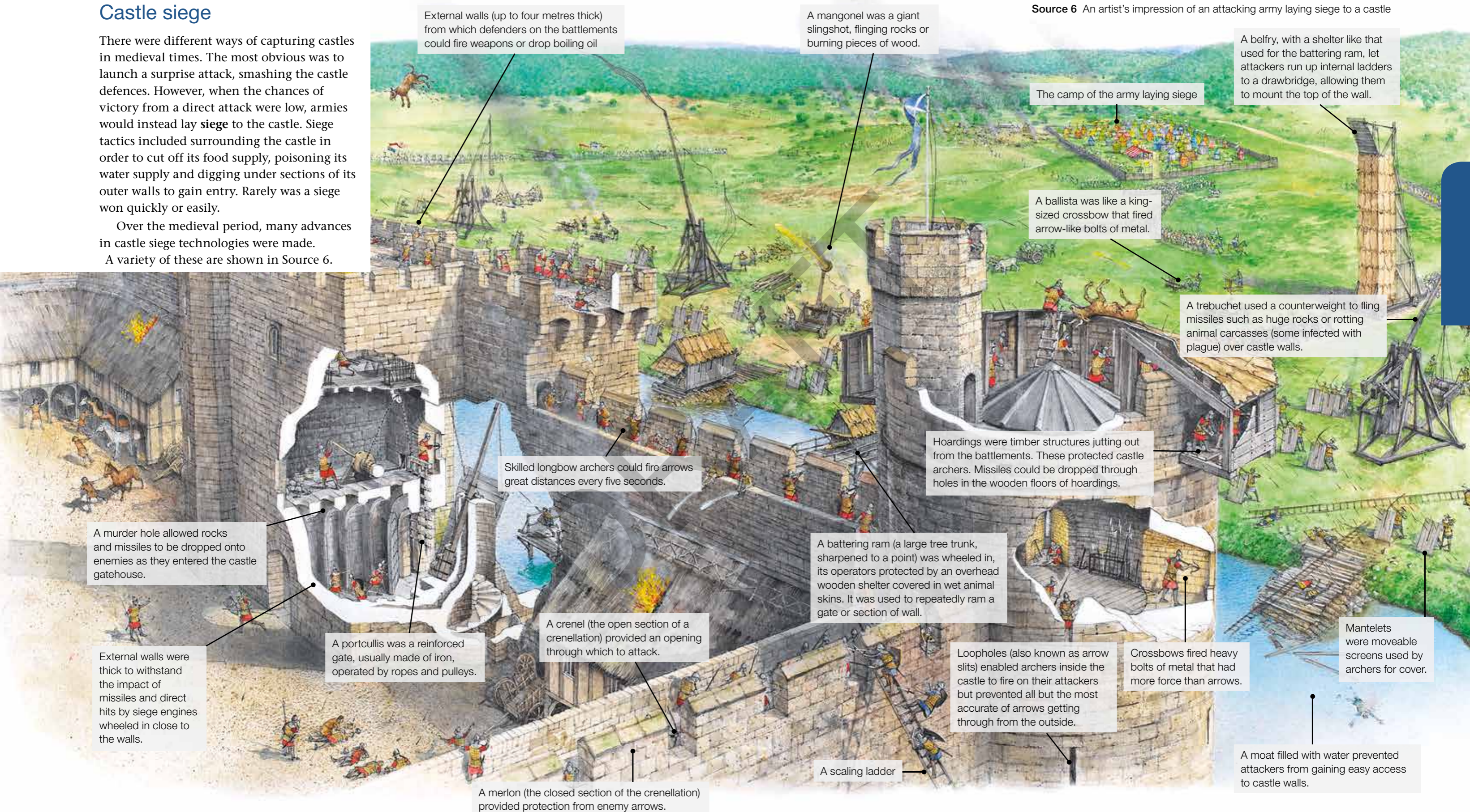
**Source 5** A concentric castle

## Castle siege

There were different ways of capturing castles in medieval times. The most obvious was to launch a surprise attack, smashing the castle defences. However, when the chances of victory from a direct attack were low, armies would instead lay **siege** to the castle. Siege tactics included surrounding the castle in order to cut off its food supply, poisoning its water supply and digging under sections of its outer walls to gain entry. Rarely was a siege won quickly or easily.

Over the medieval period, many advances in castle siege technologies were made. A variety of these are shown in Source 6.

Source 6 An artist's impression of an attacking army laying siege to a castle



External walls (up to four metres thick) from which defenders on the battlements could fire weapons or drop boiling oil

A mangonel was a giant slingshot, flinging rocks or burning pieces of wood.

A belfry, with a shelter like that used for the battering ram, let attackers run up internal ladders to a drawbridge, allowing them to mount the top of the wall.

The camp of the army laying siege

A ballista was like a king-sized crossbow that fired arrow-like bolts of metal.

A trebuchet used a counterweight to fling missiles such as huge rocks or rotting animal carcasses (some infected with plague) over castle walls.

Hoardings were timber structures jutting out from the battlements. These protected castle archers. Missiles could be dropped through holes in the wooden floors of hoardings.

Skilled longbow archers could fire arrows great distances every five seconds.

A battering ram (a large tree trunk, sharpened to a point) was wheeled in, its operators protected by an overhead wooden shelter covered in wet animal skins. It was used to repeatedly ram a gate or section of wall.

A murder hole allowed rocks and missiles to be dropped onto enemies as they entered the castle gatehouse.

Mantelets were moveable screens used by archers for cover.

External walls were thick to withstand the impact of missiles and direct hits by siege engines wheeled in close to the walls.

A portcullis was a reinforced gate, usually made of iron, operated by ropes and pulleys.

A crenel (the open section of a crenellation) provided an opening through which to attack.

Loopholes (also known as arrow slits) enabled archers inside the castle to fire on their attackers but prevented all but the most accurate of arrows getting through from the outside.

Crossbows fired heavy bolts of metal that had more force than arrows.

A moat filled with water prevented attackers from gaining easy access to castle walls.

A scaling ladder

A merlon (the closed section of the crenellation) provided protection from enemy arrows.

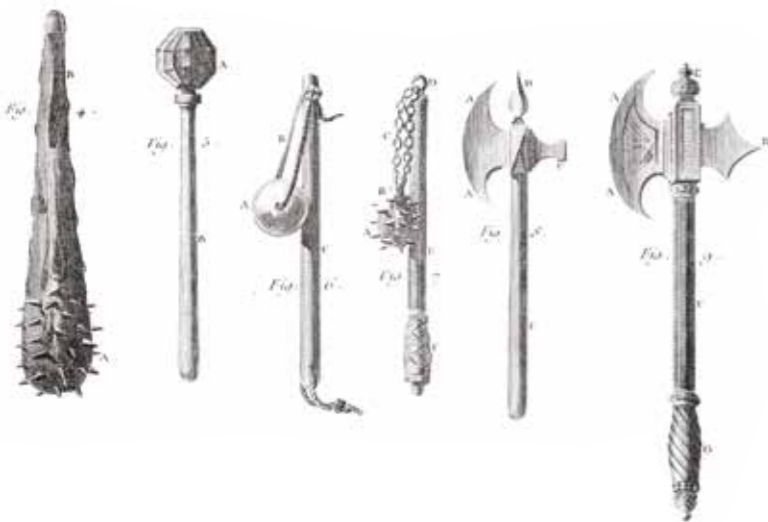
## Developments in medieval warfare

Until about the 12th century, armour was made of chain mail (small hoops of iron linked together), which was fashioned into a knee-length tunic. From about 1300 onwards, however, metal plate armour became more common (see Source 7). Over the years, its design changed further so it eventually protected the whole body. Full-body armour made shields less necessary.

When using a shield, the fighter had only one hand for his sword, so early swords were lighter and made for one-handed use. As armour changed, and shields became less common, the design of swords also changed – they became larger and heavier for two-handed use. The aim of these weapons was not so much to cut as to bash. Two free hands meant that other weapons such as the mace (an iron club), morning star (a spiked club like a mace), flail (a metal ball, often spiked, attached to a chain and handle) and battleaxe could be more easily used (see Source 8).

The bow and arrow was also a popular weapon during the medieval period. Archers were an important force used in medieval battles because their arrows were easily able to pierce through armour. There were two main types of bow – the longbow and the crossbow. The longbow was a bow drawn by hand which released an arrow. A skilled archer could shoot arrows very quickly, releasing arrows every few seconds that would travel over long distances. The crossbow was a bow fixed across a wooden stock with a groove for the arrow. The crossbow required less skill to use as it had a mechanism for drawing and releasing the arrow.

**Source 7** The type of full-body armour worn by a man-at-arms in Italy in the late 1300s



**Source 8** An illustration of a range of medieval weapons, including a spiked club (left), mace (second from left), flails (third and fourth from left) and battleaxes (fifth and sixth from left).



**Source 9** A 15th-century illustration depicting the siege of the French walled city of Orléans in 1429 during the Hundred Years War. It shows the English forces using cannon fire to attack the city walls.

## Gunpowder

Gunpowder reached Europe from China during the 13th or 14th centuries, where it was first developed 400 to 500 years earlier. Gunpowder was another factor that helped to end Europe's feudal system. It did so by changing how wars were fought.

It was first used effectively during the Hundred Years War between France and England (see Source 7). Now castle walls could be more easily broken down using weapons fired with gunpowder. By the 15th century, different forms of cannon were becoming commonplace.

The use of firearms in warfare gradually reduced the importance of knights on horseback. Early firearms increased the distance between fighting armies. They also meant that all soldiers in battle now required armour. This made it more expensive to equip an army. Kings, rather than nobles, had to take responsibility for this increased cost. As a result, the importance of knighthood began to diminish. In place of knights, new types of professional soldiers emerged who led new types of troops.

## Check your learning 10.13

### Remember and understand

- 1 Name three locations where a castle might commonly be built for security.
- 2 What two main purposes did castles serve in feudal Europe?

### Apply and analyse

- 3 Explain briefly how both castle design and armour design changed over time. Where relevant, explain what aspects of each continued (even if in another form).
- 4 Study Source 6.
  - a List three ways of defending a castle under attack.
  - b List three tactics or items an attacking army might use to force the surrender of a castle.

### Evaluate and create

- 5 Draw a flow chart to show some of the ways gunpowder changed medieval warfare, both in the short and long term.

# 10.14 Developments in towns, cities and commerce

During the early part of the medieval period, societies and economies of Europe were based around agriculture and land ownership. These various kingdoms were largely divided into feudal estates and manors, owned by nobles and farmed by peasants. For centuries, this system was successful because these peasants needed the protection of these nobles and their knights against attacks from barbarians; however, from about 900 CE on, these attacks began to ease. This meant that common people no longer needed the protection from their lords and the system of feudalism began to weaken. Slowly, people began moving and living in towns.

Over the next few centuries, a number of other events further weakened feudalism and fuelled the growth of towns. The Crusades, in particular, played an important role. Before heading off to fight, some lords sold their estates; others never returned at all. Those who did return brought new ideas, new customs and new products to trade. As trade increased, so too did the number of towns. Over time, many of these towns grew into cities. By 1200,



**Source 1** The medieval city of Fribourg, in Switzerland. Many of its medieval buildings still remain, including St Nicholas Cathedral.

there were about 600 cities in Europe, three times as many as there had been 50 years earlier. Many cities also had cathedrals, so they attracted Christian pilgrims as well as merchants.

## Types of towns

Across Europe, a number of different types of town began to pop up. Many grew up around castles or manor houses that had been established for hundreds of years, while others were newly settled close to ports, rivers and roads that were important for trade and transport. As trade increased, so did the size and populations of these towns. To begin with, the populations of these towns across Europe were largely made up of people who had left manor estates. Many of the peasants that resettled there went on to earn a living as skilled craftspeople, labourers or merchants.

## New markets, new goods and booming commerce

Not all those who drifted from feudal manors settled immediately in towns. Some chose to travel around as wandering 'salesmen'. The goods they offered for sale were often cheap and basic, but the best profits came from selling goods like spices, oils and perfumes from faraway places. The risks of sourcing these goods, though, were high – pirates, harsh landscapes, extreme weather and attacks by wild animals claimed the lives of many merchants and traders. Despite the dangers, some merchants made huge profits and returned to settle in towns in order to establish thriving businesses.

## The growth of businesses and guilds

Merchants in medieval Europe mainly sold their goods in marketplaces and at huge open-air fairs held each year. Buyers flocked to these displays and purchases were often made in bulk and taken away the same day on carts.

Over time though, permanent shops and businesses were built and those who worked in the same craft or specialist occupation (such as butchers or carpenters) started banding together to form organisations known as **guilds**. Guilds were similar to modern-day unions and professional organisations in one. They were particularly common in large Italian cities where trade was the main industry. Guild members met regularly to discuss quality standards, conditions of work, fair pay and prices, and to set up apprenticeships for young workers.

## The growth of moneylending and banking

As commerce and trade continued to grow in towns and cities, the need for moneylending, banks and financial record-keeping became more common across Europe. The beginnings of these practices originated long before medieval times, but after the Crusades they became more formalised. Merchants in the Holy Land had been acting as moneylenders for generations, so many of these practices were brought back to Europe by the Crusaders in the 12th and 13th centuries. Loans enabled more goods to be purchased and traded, boosting town economies. Some merchant families became so wealthy they even lent money to kings and royal families. Many also invested in the construction of large public buildings, palaces and works of art in their towns and cities.

## The independence of towns

As time passed, the growing numbers of large towns and the wealth of the people living there brought about the desire for another change. Townspeople wanted more independence from feudal restrictions and more rights. As mentioned, many towns across Europe during the medieval period were settled on land 'owned' by nobles and feudal lords. Many of these lords continued to expect payment for the use of this land, even after the feudal system had weakened – the only change was that they now demanded payment in money rather than crops. Many townspeople came to resent this. They started to present petitions to these lords demanding release from old feudal arrangements and a set of rights. In return for large payments, some towns were given what they asked for and town **charters** were drawn in writing to set out what had been agreed by the lord and the townspeople.



**Source 2** A 15th-century artist's impression of a covered medieval European marketplace

### Rights outlined in many town charters

- The ability to trade freely
- Freedom to enter and leave the town freely
- The right to establish town laws independently
- The ability to hold trials in town courts, rather than the lord's manor court

**Source 3** Some of the rights sought by townspeople and included in town charters

### Check your learning 10.14

#### Remember and understand

- 1 What changes caused the growth of towns across medieval Europe?
- 2 How did some of these early towns form, and where?
- 3 Where could people living in towns buy the goods merchants brought back from distant lands?

#### Apply and analyse

- 4 Explain how and why the practice of moneylending came to be adopted in medieval Europe. Where did this practice originate and how did it become common in Europe?

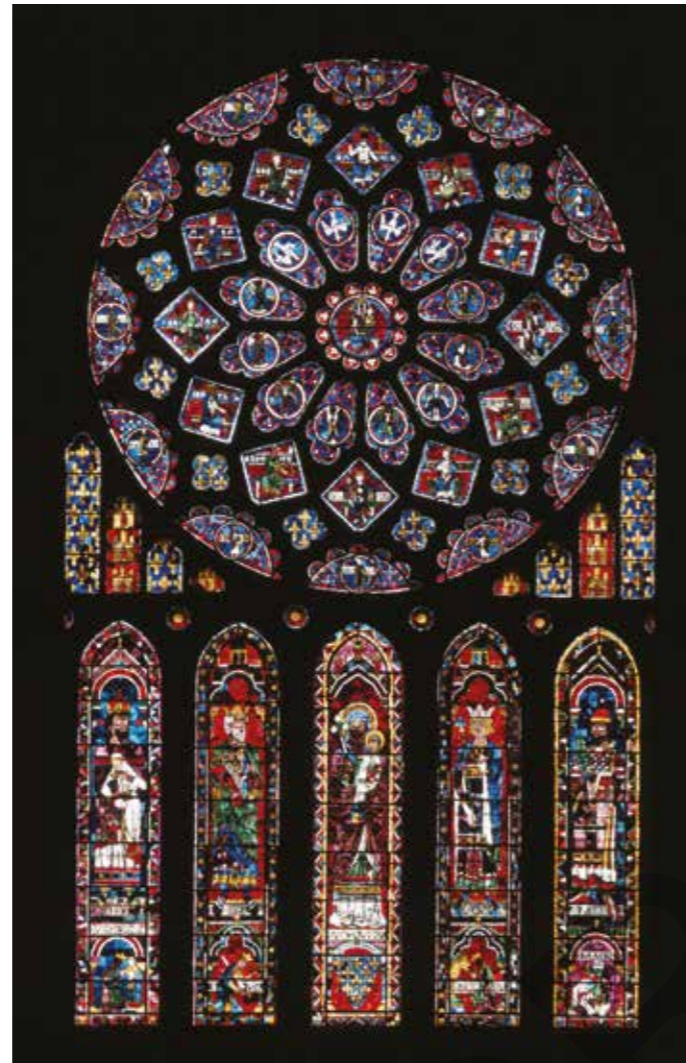
10C rich task

# Medieval architecture and the influence of the Church

The Catholic Church played a key role in the daily lives of almost everyone in medieval Europe. Most medieval Europeans were Christians and lived according to the teachings of the Church.



Source 1 The interior of Chartres Cathedral in France



Source 2 The north rose window at Chartres Cathedral in France

Until the 15th century, monks were usually the only people in society who could read and write. In order to form their own opinions and beliefs, common people had to rely on what they were told by village priests, what they heard and saw in religious plays, and what they saw in religious artworks such as stained-glass windows and paintings. Scenes in stained-glass windows retold lessons and stories from the Bible, as well as recounting important historical events. In this way, stained-glass windows played an important part in educating people and ordering society by maintaining the power of the Church and the king.

Chartres Cathedral just south of the French capital, Paris, is an excellent example of a Gothic cathedral. It was built between 1194 and 1250 and features 176 stained-glass windows.



Source 3 A detail of the north rose window at Chartres Cathedral

**skilldrill:** Historical sources as evidence

## Identifying the origin and purpose of primary sources

Stained-glass windows can be very useful primary resources. Unlike the windows in everyday buildings and houses, the stained-glass windows in medieval churches and cathedrals across Europe were created for specific reasons. In order to understand these reasons, historians need to ask a number of questions. Analysing sources by asking 'who', 'what', 'when' and 'why' questions will help you identify the origin and purpose of the sources. Use the following table to help guide your investigation.

**Identifying the origin and purpose of primary and secondary sources**

<b>Is it a primary or secondary source?</b>	Was the source created at the time you are studying or afterwards?
<b>Who created the source?</b>	Is the creator's personal perspective obvious in the source? Is the creator a member of a particular group, religion or organisation?
<b>When was the source created?</b>	How old is the source? Is it an eyewitness account or was it written/created by someone at a later date? Is the source complete?
<b>Why was the source created?</b>	Was it designed to entertain, persuade or argue a point of view? Did the creator have anything to gain personally from the source? What other events may have been happening at the time and might have influenced the creator or source?

**Apply the skill**

- 1 Work individually or in pairs to complete an investigation into the origin and purpose of one of the stained-glass windows at the Chartres Cathedral in France. Use the sources in this section to help you begin an Internet search.
- 2 Once you have chosen the window you would like to investigate, conduct a further search to gather the information you will need to answer the questions in the table. You may not be able to answer every question, but try to answer as many as you can.
- 3 When you have completed your table, share your results with other students in your class. Compare the origin and purpose of the different windows you have researched. Which factors are similar and which are different?

**Extend your understanding**

- 1 Make a table comparing the size and appearance of Chartres Cathedral with the average peasant's home (see Source 1 on page XX). Describe how a peasant might have felt when viewing the windows in the cathedral.
- 2 Examine the position of the windows and how they were lit, to explain why they gave the viewer a sense of 'godliness' – awe and wonder.
- 3 Many of the windows make strong links between the Church and the king. Identify what those links are. You will need to look for symbols belonging to the royal family.
- 4 Explain how links between the Church and the king in the Chartres windows may have helped to maintain power over the peasants. In your explanation, refer to:
  - the emotional reaction peasants would have had to the windows
  - the way the feudal system functioned
  - the benefits for the Church and nobility of these things being linked in the minds of the peasants.

# 10.15 The Black Death

The Black Death was a plague **pandemic** that broke out in parts of Asia, Africa and Europe between the early 1330s and 1350s.

A pandemic is an infectious disease that spreads through human populations across a large region, or even worldwide, in a short period of time. This particular pandemic did not become known as the Black Death until many years later. It was given this name because of the black lumps, or **buboes**, that appeared on the victim's skin.

## Causes of the Black Death

There had been outbreaks of the plague in previous centuries, but the outbreak that occurred in the 14th century was far more deadly than previous ones. By the time it ran its course, it is estimated that more than a third of the population in Europe had died from it.

**Source 1** Medieval artist's impression of merchants conducting their trade. It was medieval traders, many say, who were responsible for spreading the pandemic.



The Black Death is now believed to have been a combination of three types of plague – **bubonic plague**, pneumonic plague and septicemic plague. Bubonic plague is transmitted by infected fleas carried by rats. Rats were very common in the dirty, crowded conditions of medieval Europe. When the rat carrying the flea died from the plague, the flea would jump onto a person to feed from their blood. The person bitten by the flea would then be infected. Bubonic plague was the most common form of plague.

Pneumonic plague was the second most common form of plague. It attacked a person's respiratory system and was spread through the air by a victim's cough. It was far more contagious and deadly than the bubonic plague.

Septicemic plague was the rarest and deadliest form of the Black Death. It was also spread by infected fleas, but moves directly into the bloodstream and becomes life threatening even before buboes have had time to form on the skin. Septicemic plague killed almost 100 per cent of victims.

Medieval societies were significantly changed by the Black Death. Town populations were devastated, trade virtually stopped and many manor lands and businesses were ruined. Family and social relationships were also ruined, for both the rich and the poor.

## Symptoms of the Black Death

For most sufferers, the first sign of the Black Death was large bulges or lumps that appeared on the skin, usually in the groin, in the armpits or on the neck. These lumps were known as buboes, and initially appeared as a red colour, before turning purple, and then finally black. These buboes would spread all over the body. The victim would also get a fever and headaches. Over the next few days, the victim would lose motor control, so that they could not speak or walk properly. They would suffer much pain and vomiting, and become delirious.

The average time of death from the first symptom was between three and seven days. It is believed that between 50 and 75 per cent of those who caught the disease died.

**Source 2** This detail, called 'Suffering man', from a painting by Matthias Grünewald (c. 1480–1528) provides evidence of why this terrible disease caused such fear and horror.



**Source 3** *Yersinia pestis* bacteria – the bacteria that lived in the stomach of fleas and that caused the bubonic plague



**Source 4** The black rat helped spread the bubonic plague throughout medieval Asia, Africa and Europe.

## Check your learning 10.16

### Remember and understand

- 1 What is a pandemic?
- 2 What were the three types of plague that became known as the Black Death?
- 3 Why did the disease become known as the Black Death?

### Evaluate and create

- 4 Conduct some research into the bacterium *Yersinia pestis*. Find out:
  - a who discovered it as the real cause of the Black Death, and when
  - b who discovered the first effective treatment for the Black Death, and when.
 Write a short report to show your findings.

# 10.16 The spread of the Black Death

From around 1330 to 1351, the Black Death swept through Asia, Europe, north Africa and the Middle East, killing an estimated 100 million people.

## Origins of the Black Death

Most scientists and historians believe that an especially lethal strain of the plague broke out in China in the early 1330s, following a devastating famine. This area was then known as the Yuan Empire (covering most of present-day China and Mongolia), which had been under Mongol rule since 1279. Some think that the disease was first carried westwards by Mongols travelling along the **Silk Road**.

In 1346, the **pandemic** eventually reached a trading city on the Black Sea called Kaffa that was controlled by Genoan (Italian) merchants (see Source 2). At that time, Muslim Turks (called **Tatars**) were attacking Kaffa. The attacking forces of Tartars were

infected with the plague. A 14th-century Italian writer, Gabriele de' Mussi, described how the Tatars 'ordered dead corpses [of their men] to be placed in **catapults** and lobbed [thrown] into the city in the hope that the intolerable stench would kill everyone inside. What seemed like mountains of dead were thrown'. The Tatar attack began to break down as the disease spread rapidly among their troops, killing all but a few. The Genoan merchants in Kaffa took the opportunity to flee to their boats.

The Genoans, however, were now also carrying the disease. On the way home, they infected those they came in contact with, including merchants in Constantinople (who, in turn, carried the plague further east). When the ships reached their home port back in Italy, crowds flocked to greet them. These survivors unknowingly introduced the disease to their homeland via their own infection and the rats on board (who jumped to land).



**Source 2** The tower of a 14th–19th century Genoese fortress in Kaffa (modern-day Feodosiya in Ukraine)

## The rapid spread of the Black Death

### The spread across Europe

Once the Black Death had moved westwards from Asia, it raced through Europe (see Source 1). By the end of 1347, most Mediterranean islands were infected. Many Mediterranean seaports were also infected. By 1348, the Black Death was in Marseilles and, then, other cities in the south of France. From there, it moved into Spain and further into Italy.

Later in 1348 the plague was carried across to England by sea. In 1349, the plague spread across the rest of the British Isles and then across the North Sea into Norway. It also continued its spread across mainland Europe, reaching Germany. By 1350 the plague had further spread into eastern Europe, Russia and the rest of Scandinavia. By 1352 the plague was widespread across Europe.

### The spread into Egypt and north Africa

Europe was not the only area devastated by the Black Death. By 1347, it reached Alexandria in north Africa, carried by infected travellers on ships. An Arab writer described the arrival there of a slave ship that had set out to sea from Constantinople with over 330 people on board. By the time it arrived in Alexandria, there were only three survivors.

By early 1348, up to 1000 people were dying per day in Alexandria. In fact, Alexandria's population did not return to what it was before the plague until hundreds of years later.

In other villages of the Nile delta, the death rate was so high that towns were abandoned, fishing almost stopped and law courts were closed. In the town of Bilbeis, for example, bodies were reported to be piled up in mosques and shops. Roads were littered with rotting corpses, which were eaten by dogs and rats.

The southward spread of the plague from Alexandria saw it travel up the Nile Valley (again, mostly through infected boat passengers). About 200 000 people died in Cairo alone – 37 per cent of the city's population. By February 1349, the Black Death had reached Aswan, 1000 kilometres south of Cairo.

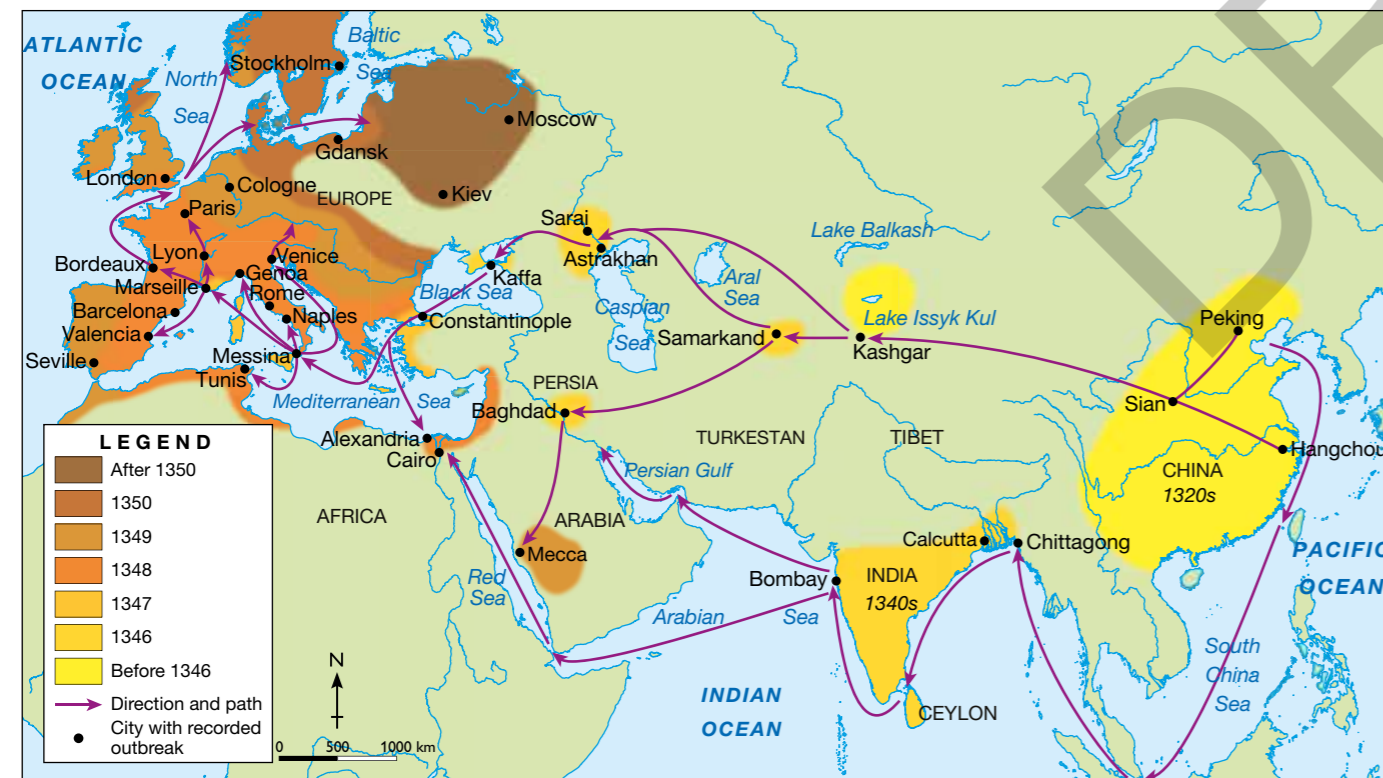
To the west of Egypt, the plague's advance followed the north African coastline. It reached Tunis in April 1348 – most likely through trading links with Sicily. From there it pushed into today's Algeria and Morocco. Interestingly, **nomadic** Arabs (who lived in tents, moving from place to place) were not struck down by the plague.

### The spread into the Middle East

The Black Death spread to Yemen in the east by 1351. The king of Yemen, and his attendants and courtiers, carried the disease to their home country after their release from a Cairo prison.

Three years earlier, in April 1348, the plague had already reached Gaza. From there it spread to Palestine and Syria. Less than a year later, it had killed 50 000 people in Damascus – roughly half the population. Eventually, the whole of the Islamic world was affected, especially those living in towns or cities.

ORIGINS AND SPREAD OF THE BLACK DEATH



Source 1

Source: Oxford University Press

## Check your learning 10.16

### Remember and understand

- 1 Where was the initial outbreak of the Black Death believed to have occurred?
- 2 Describe the impact of the Black Death on Egypt during 1348 and 1349.

### Apply and analyse

- 3 Write a paragraph outlining the role that trade and trade routes played in the rapid spread of the Black Death.
- 4 Why do you think it is that nomadic Arabs were able to escape the Black Death?

### Evaluate and create

- 5 Create a timeline that lists key events in the spread of the pandemic from east to west. Include key dates for Asia, the Middle East, Africa and Europe.



# 10.17 Medicine at the time of the Black Death

Today we know far more about many health conditions and diseases than medieval people did. Those suffering from the Black Death in the 14th century had no idea why they were dying. They knew nothing about germs or bacteria. The cause – the bacterium *Yersinia pestis* (see Source 3 on page XX) – was not discovered until the late 1800s.

## Beliefs about the causes of the Black Death

When the Black Death broke out, some people looked to the skies for answers. In medieval times, astronomical events to do with the planets, the Sun and the Moon were often believed to trigger events on Earth. One such event occurred on 20 March 1345, when the planets of Jupiter, Saturn and Mars were aligned closely in the night sky. This unusual event was considered by certain people to have caused a toxic cloud to form over India. As this cloud drifted on, it was said to infect people below with the plague.

At this time, bad smells were also commonly considered to be the cause of disease. To counteract

the odours, people carried small bunches of flowers or parcels filled with fragrant herbs, spices or flowers. Green wood (such as from the rosemary plant) was burned in the home to give off a fragrant smoke. People were encouraged by doctors not to sleep on their backs because it was believed that bad smells could slip too easily up their nostrils.

## Medical care at the time of the Black Death

By today's standards, medieval medical care was very primitive. There were some university-trained doctors in Europe, but only the wealthiest people in society could afford to visit them. One of these doctors would diagnose the problem, prescribe a treatment and then possibly refer the patient to a surgeon. Poor people received medical attention from monks or nuns, or healers in their community. Often, healers were older women, respected for their knowledge of illness and herbal treatments.

### keyconcept: evidence

## Plague doctors

Plague doctors were specialist physicians hired by towns and cities to fight the Black Death, but they were not always well trained. Most could do little for victims, except separate them from people who had not yet contracted the plague and burn their clothing. They also prayed for them.

Source 1 provides evidence of how plague physicians typically dressed. Heavy floor-length coats extended up the back of the head. They also wore a hat, and a bird-like beak, which was filled with strong-smelling items such as mint, spices, garlic, flowers or vinegar. This, it was hoped, would protect them from contracting the plague and from coming into contact with its associated bad smells.

For more information on the key concept of evidence, refer to page XX of 'The history toolkit'.

**Source 1** A 19th-century illustration of a typical plague doctor. Earlier medieval plague doctors were similarly dressed.



## Medical treatments

Besides taking or using herbs, one of the most common medical treatments was **blood letting**. Blood letting was believed to cure illness and prevent diseases such as the Black Death by removing 'dirty' blood. Leeches were sometimes used to suck out blood, or a person's vein was cut and a set volume of blood was collected in a dish. Often this procedure was done in a barber's shop – and the person who did it was the barber.

Other medical procedures included forcing a patient to vomit, or bringing on severe sweating or diarrhoea. Some doctors treated the **buboes** of plague victims by cutting them open to release blood. Then a mixture made from crushed dried toads and dried human faeces was spread over the open, pus-filled wound.

## Surgeons

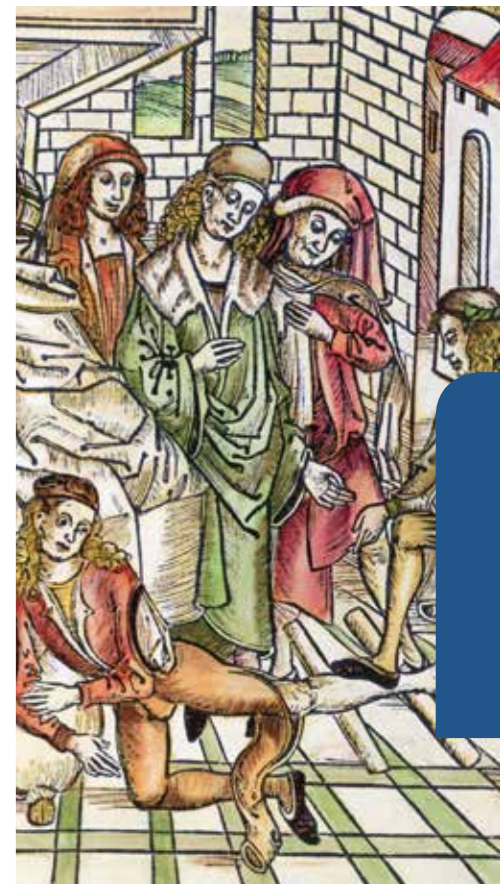
As discussed, there was a very limited understanding of human anatomy across medieval Europe and surgical treatments were very crude (see Source 3). In general, surgeons knew very little of what lay below the skin, despite the fact that some were university educated.

Medieval operating tools included saws, knives, hot irons and sharp instruments for blood letting. None of these were sterilised, and operations were often carried out in the open – even major procedures such as amputations. The success rates for major surgery were, unsurprisingly, very low.

Anaesthetics did not exist in medieval Europe, so the pain of surgery or other treatment had to be endured. Poor people might be given a piece of wood to bite on. More wealthy people were sometimes given a sedating drug like alcohol mixed with opium. Another sedative called 'dwale' was often used but it was deadly if given in the wrong amounts. Besides opium and dwale, lettuce juice, vinegar and the bile of a castrated wild pig were also used to relieve the pain of surgery.



**Source 2** A 15th-century illustration of blood letting



**Source 3** Artist's depiction of a medieval surgeon treating a broken leg; the pain of such treatments simply had to be endured.

## Check your learning 10.7

### Remember and understand

- 1 Medieval people did not know what caused the plague, but they did have some ideas. Describe two possible explanations put forward.
- 2 Who might the very wealthy go to see about a medical condition? Who might the very poor go to see? Why?
- 3 What types of tools did medieval surgeons use?

### Apply and analyse

- 4 Describe two different methods used by medieval surgeons to control pain during surgery. How effective do you think each might have been?

### Evaluate and create

- 5 Design and make a mask that meets the requirements of a medieval plague doctor. Share your creations with the class, explaining how you made them.

# 10.18 Seeking a cause or cure

Nobody in medieval times understood the real cause of the Black Death, but this did not stop them looking for reasons why this terrible disease was devastating their world. Many thought that it was a punishment sent from God for their sins. These people became more and more concerned with seeking religious salvation by confessing their sins and praying for forgiveness. Others started looking for someone to blame.

## Those seeking a cause

### Persecution of the Jews

Societies in medieval Europe were dominated by Christian beliefs, so the Jews formed only a small minority of the population. Despite their small numbers, they were often looked down upon because of the Christian belief that Jewish people were responsible for the crucifixion of Jesus Christ. With the spread of the Black Death, many people were



Source 1 A procession of flagellants, painted by the Spanish artist Goya between 1815 and 1819

looking for someone to blame for their suffering, and the Jews were a common target.

Massacres of Jews began in the spring and summer of 1348, starting in France. Persecution grew more intense after a Jewish doctor in Switzerland confessed to poisoning the drinking water, thus causing the Black Death. However, he was tortured to obtain his 'confession'. That month all Jews in the town of Basel (in today's Switzerland) were rounded up and burned alive.

Jewish persecution began in Germany in November 1348 and continued for the next nine months. Some Jews managed to escape to Poland where they were offered protection by King Casimir III. Many then moved on to Russia where large Jewish communities were established.

### The flagellants

The **flagellants** were groups of radical Christians who roamed through Europe, wearing red crosses on their clothing. Organised in groups of up to 300 people led by a master, flagellants would walk into towns and villages and form a circle to conduct their flagellation rituals. They were known as flagellants because they would flagellate, or whip, themselves believing that this would help them gain God's forgiveness for their sins.

Each person carried a heavy whip tipped with metal studs. After forming a circle, they would strip off the top half of their clothing and the master would walk around, whipping them. Then, they would whip themselves until they drew blood. As they did this, they would cry out to God to forgive them for their sins and to stop the Black Death.

The flagellants also believed that Jewish people were responsible for the Black Death, and encouraged attacks on the Jewish populations in the towns they visited.



Source 2 A section of a medieval painting called *Danse Macabre* (or *Dance of Death*)

### The sinners

Some people in medieval Europe became so depressed and disillusioned by what was happening during the Black Death that they gave up caring about religion entirely.

Without the strict moral guidance and teaching of the Church, some people began to show wild and careless behaviour. Spending all day drinking, laughing, singing and dancing took people's minds off their fear, and eased some of their pain. This mix of emotions (fear and celebration) is well captured in medieval artworks such as the *Danse Macabre*, or *Dance of Death* (see Source 2).

## Those seeking a cure

### The effect on medicine and public health

The failure of medieval medicine to cure or prevent the spread of the Black Death led to changes in medical practices immediately following the plague. Frustrated with diagnoses and treatments that revolved around astrology and superstition, doctors and scholars began focusing more on clinical medicine and seeking to increase their knowledge of the physical world. This approach led to an increase in autopsies and dissections of human corpses in a desire to learn more about anatomy. This in turn led to a greater understanding of the workings of the human body and new medical texts and treatments. Hospitals developed into places of treatment rather than being places where the sick were sent to die.

After the plague had passed, some towns and villages slowly began to set up local health boards to develop and enforce sanitation procedures. These remained very simple but included such moves as regulations to restrict the dumping of waste and the employment of street sweepers.

## Check your learning 10.18

### Remember and understand

- 1 Describe the rituals that the flagellants would perform when they entered towns and villages.
- 2 Why and how did Jewish people get persecuted during the time of the Black Death?

### Apply and analyse

- 3 Analyse Source 2. What evidence does the detail from this painting reveal about how medieval people were thinking at the time of the plague?

### Evaluate and create

- 4 Write or compose a chant or song that might have been suitable for flagellants to call out as they walked around whipping themselves.

# 10.19 Short-term impacts of the Black Death

Many of the immediate impacts of the Black Death on **society** were the result of death on a massive scale. People from all walks of life, all trades and professions were affected, as were all types of families.

## Depopulation

It is difficult to give an exact figure for the number of people who died from the Black Death. Many medieval authors made claims about the number of deaths that occurred in particular areas, but these sources have proven unreliable. Church records also provide us with details about births and deaths in their particular region, but these records also contain many gaps and inaccuracies, and are therefore also unreliable. Many of the **primary sources** that exist do not distinguish between deaths caused by the Black Death and deaths that occurred because of other factors, such as old age or other diseases.

The effects of the Black Death on Eastern societies are not understood as well as they are in Europe. It is believed that in China alone the population dropped from 125 million to 90 million. It is known that the plague spread into other regions of Asia besides



**Source 1** An illustration from the Toggenburg Bible (1411) showing a couple covered in buboes, symptoms of the Black Death

China, including the Khmer region and India. A writer from the period is reported as saying: 'India was depopulated; Tartary, Mesopotamia, Syria, Armenia were covered with dead bodies; the Kurds fled in vain to the mountains. In Caramaria and Caesaria [in modern-day Turkey] none were left alive.'

The most recent estimates suggest the following approximate number of deaths as a result of the Black Death:

- 33 to 40 per cent of the population of Europe, with higher rates of death in rural areas
- 35 million people in China
- one-third of populations in the Middle East
- 40 per cent of Egypt's population.

## The effect on towns

Rubbish and raw sewage in the streets of medieval towns was a common sight, even before the plague, but once the plague struck, this filthy situation became even worse. Abandoned houses were left dirty and untended, and muck in the streets piled up. There were few people to tend to the disrepair, even if they had wanted to. Tradesmen and craftsmen died along with cleaners, magistrates and officials.

## Impact on religion

Many monks, nuns and priests died as a result of the Black Death. Some others in the general population saw this as proof that the lifestyles of these religious people had displeased God. A few religious centres, such as monasteries, were accused of improper conduct and greed, rather than being places devoted to God. Some priests and other religious figures fled, abandoning their parishioners because they feared becoming infected. Those who replaced them were often poorly trained. Some did not even live in the parishes they were meant to oversee. This added to the disappointment and anger of many ordinary people toward the Church and weakened its position in society.

## Burial of the dead

People were dying so quickly, and in such large numbers, that there was no time for proper burials or religious ceremonies. In fact, some Christian priests began refusing to bury victims for fear of contracting the disease. Mass burials became common, with corpses shovelled into large pits and covered with earth.

**Source 2** This medieval painting shows nuns caring for the sick at the Hôtel-Dieu (Hospital of God) in Paris. Many nuns and monks contracted the plague by helping others.



## keyconcept: Evidence

### The Decameron

One of the most significant primary sources of evidence for an insight into how the Black Death affected societies in Europe is *The Decameron*. It was written by Giovanni Boccaccio in the 1350s. Although it was written as entertainment (it consists of a number of lively stories told by young people who flee Florence to escape the plague), it provides key information about life in plague-affected communities.

#### Source 11.31

Some thought that moderate living and the avoidance of all superfluity [excesses] would preserve them from the epidemic ... they shut themselves up in houses where there were no sick, eating the finest food and drinking the best wine very temperately [moderately], avoiding all excess, allowing no news or discussion of death and sickness ... others thought just the opposite. They thought the sure cure for the plague was to drink and be merry, to go about singing and

amusing themselves, satisfying every appetite they could, laughing and jesting [joking] ...

Many others adopted a course of life midway ... they did not shut themselves up, but went about, carrying flowers or scented herbs or perfumes in their hands, in the belief that it was an excellent thing to comfort the brain with such odours; for the whole air was infected with the smell of dead bodies, of sick persons and medicines.

... brother abandoned brother, and the uncle his nephew, and the sister her brother, and very often the wife her husband. What is even worse and nearly incredible is that fathers and mothers refused to see and tend their children.

A translated extract from *The Decameron* by Giovanni Boccaccio (1313–1375)

For more information on the key concept of evidence, refer to page XX of 'The history toolkit'.

## Check your learning 10.19

### Remember and understand

- 1 Why is it so difficult to give an exact figure for the number of deaths resulting from the Black Death?
- 2 Explain how the plague led to a loss of confidence in the Church for some medieval Christians.

### Evaluate and create

- 3 Carefully read Source 3. In dot points, summarise some of the major effects of the Black Death on people's lives in plague-affected communities as described in this source.

# 10.20 The end of the world...

This labelled illustration presents some of the short-term impacts of the Black Death on medieval society.

The Black Death caused a huge labour shortage in towns and on the farms. Many feudal manors were largely deserted, either because workers had died or run away. At the time many people believed it was the end of the world.

**Source 1** A modern artist's impression of the impact of the plague on a medieval town

The plague caused some people to question their beliefs. Many priests died too, causing some to think that the Church was powerless to stop this terrible epidemic.

There were so many dead bodies (in the streets and houses), they had to be buried in mass pits. Bodies were collected and put on carts that travelled the streets.

Some people adopted an 'eat, drink and be merry, for tomorrow we die' attitude, celebrating in drinking houses as they waited to die.

Believing the plague was God's punishment for wrongdoing, people known as flagellants began walking the streets whipping themselves in a bid to repent for their sins and ask forgiveness from God.

Doctors suggested unusual cures, such as telling people to sniff herbs or lemon leaves, or even their own faeces. Sometimes leeches were attached to the skin to remove blood believed to be causing an imbalance in the body.

People began to avoid others for fear of catching the disease; some ran away. Many victims were abandoned even by their own family and were left to suffer and die alone.

People did not know then about the health dangers associated with mice and rats, nor did they know that disease could be transferred by coughing and sneezing.

Plague doctors wore full-body cloaks, and masks with long beaks filled with sweet-smelling substances. Sick female patients began to allow male doctors to examine all parts of their bodies, which was not common before.

## Check your learning 10.20

Remember and understand

- 1 Using Source 1, identify five short-term impacts of the Black Death that have hit this medieval town.

# 10.21 Long-term impacts of the Black Death

It is often only with the passage of time that the long-term impacts of devastating events become clear, and the Black Death was no exception. The Black Death reduced the populations of towns, villages, cities and manors dramatically. In some cases the populations of whole towns were wiped out, leaving the countryside empty. Europe would not recover until the 1500s.

## Weakening of feudalism

The massive drop in population drastically affected trade, manufacturing, and the production of food from the land. Skilled labourers and craftsmen were now in short supply. Survivors who had been trained in different trades were highly valued by employers. They had more bargaining power and, hence, more social status.

### keyconcept: Cause and effect

## The Peasants' Revolt

The Peasants' Revolt took place in England in 1381. This revolt, which involved separate but related uprisings by peasants, eventually led to the end of feudalism in England.

The lower classes under feudalism were often badly treated. They lived in complete poverty and were enslaved to their lords. Despite their poverty, peasants in England at this time were required to pay taxes to support the King.

By then, the Black Death had severely reduced the population of England, but the King passed a law to ensure that workers could not ask for better employment terms (such as higher wages or freedom to travel). When some peasants refused to pay these taxes, they were fined or put in the stocks as punishment. But the discontent was felt in many places, and an uprising swelled across England. The leader of the revolt, Wat Tyler, was eventually killed by the mayor of London.

In time, this situation helped to break down the already weakened system of **feudalism**. Instead of providing their labour free in return for a lord's protection and support, knights and manor workers could now demand money for their services. In towns, workers could demand higher wages.

The wealth available to survivors of the Black Death is believed to have been at least five times more than it was before the plague struck. Spending increased in towns and cities, increasing the power and social position of surviving members of the middle class. Prices also began to increase in some areas.

## Peasant unrest

Concerned by the increase in wages being demanded (and paid), some rulers tried to introduce new laws to

Although the demands for better working and living conditions were not immediately met, the upper classes began to realise that they could not rule over the peasants in the same ways they had in the past. They also realised that large groups of workers could be a significant political force to reckon with, and that changes had to be made.

For more information on the key concept of cause and effect, refer to page XX of 'The history toolkit'.



**Source 1** An illustration of Wat Tyler being killed during the Peasants' Revolt

keep wages low. They also tried to stop the rising cost of food, then being forced up by black market trading and piracy.

In England, the Statute of Labourers was introduced in 1351. This law made it illegal for employers to increase workers' wages to attract new workers. It also made it illegal for workers to travel to other areas for better wages. This law upset many peasant workers. Indeed, it created some of the unrest that led to the Peasants' Revolt of 1381.

## Weakening of the Church

The fact that religious leaders were not able to limit the terrible effects of the plague, as well as the deaths of so many monks, nuns and priests, led to a lessening of many peoples' faith in the Church. In the aftermath of the Black Death, people began to question the influence and power that the Church had over society and to openly criticise some of its practices.

In time this would lead to a strengthening of power of the state over the Church and to movements such as the **Reformation** that would see the establishment of alternative Christian faiths.

## Foundations of the Renaissance

After the Black Death had passed, many wealthy survivors in Europe chose to invest in art or literature as a means of expressing their gratitude for being left alive. Some became **patrons** to young artists and students. They funded talented individuals to create paintings, build churches and other public buildings, and to write literature. Some encouraged scientific research, hoping that answers might one day be found to what caused the Black Death. These developments added to the cultural rebirth in Europe at the time. This would later become known as the **Renaissance** (which means 'rebirth' in French).



## The start of the slave trade

Another long-term effect of the Black Death was the start of the slave trade. The first Africans brought to Europe as slaves were captured by Portuguese captains Antão Gonçalves and Nuno Tristão in Cabo Branco (modern Mauritania) in 1441. Africans from the Sahara region began to be taken as slaves to boost Europe's greatly reduced labour force. From this point the Portuguese established a steady trade in African slaves. Just over 10 years later, the Spanish also entered the slave trade. Initially established to provide labour in Europe, as European nations began to establish colonies from the 16th century onwards the slave trade increased as labour was needed in these new lands.

### Check your learning 10.21

#### Remember and understand

- The Statute of Labourers was introduced in 1351.
  - How did it change conditions for workers in England?
  - What did this law have to do with the plague?
- How did some survivors of the plague help the spread of Renaissance thinking in Europe?
- How can the plague be seen as a factor that led to the start of the African slave trade?

#### Apply and analyse

- What evidence is there to suggest that the plague had a devastating effect on the population of India at the time?

#### Evaluate and create

- Write an essay of 500 words explaining what you believe was the most important change in the society of medieval Europe as a result of the repeated outbreaks of the 14th-century plague.
- In small groups, role-play for the class an interchange between survivors of the Black Death and either their former lord of the manor or their former employer in a medieval town. Your conversation will focus on how things have changed (for both parties concerned) and will reflect the values and knowledge of the times.

**Source 2** A detail from the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel in the Vatican City in Rome, painted by Michelangelo (1475-1564) – one of the more significant works of art from Renaissance Europe

10D rich task

# The consequences of population loss

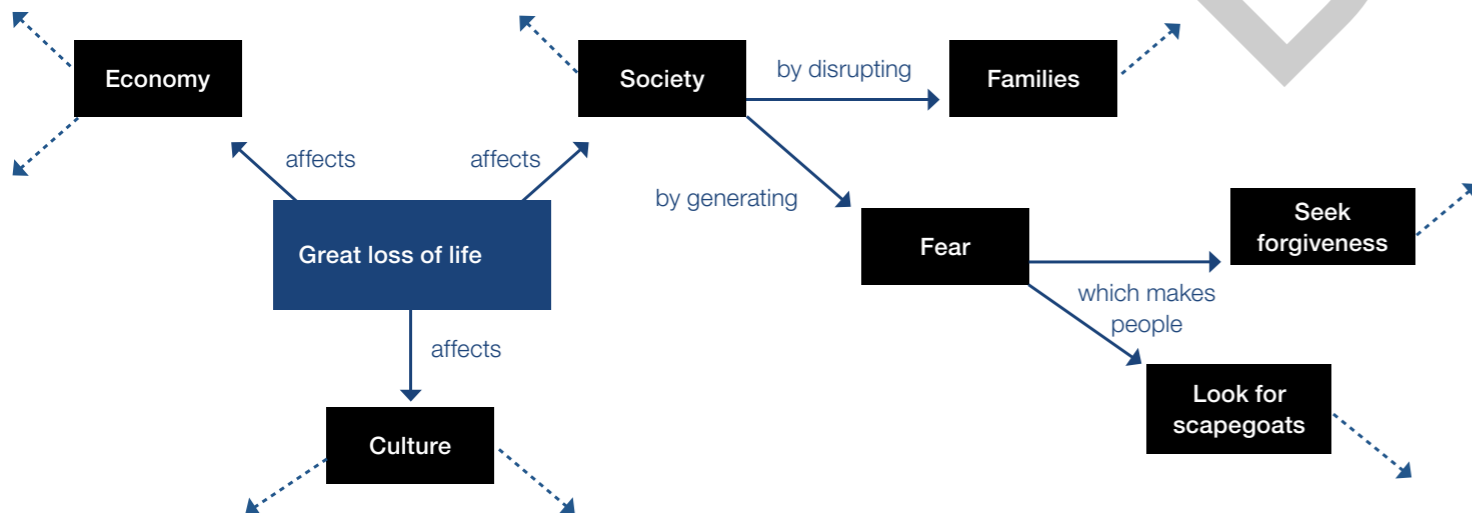
The Black Death had far-reaching effects around the world. One of the most obvious and immediate consequences was the massive loss of life, which affected all aspects of society, culture and the economy.

Source 1 shows one of the consequences of the plague. Of course, this was not the only response to the crisis; in fact the consequences were complex and far-reaching.

**Source 1**

It was thought that the people ... having seen the extermination of their neighbours and of all the nations of the world ... would become better, humble and virtuous and catholic, avoiding iniquities and sins and overflowing with love and charity for one another ... The opposite happened. Men, finding themselves few and rich by inheritances and successions of earthly things, forgetting the past as if it never was, gave themselves to more disordered and sordid behaviour than ever before.

Observations written in the 14th century by the chronicler Matteo Villani, son of a respected merchant family in Florence



**skilldrill:** Cause and effect

## Creating a concept map

Graphic organisers are very useful tools for historians because they can help to compare a range of sources and identify connections between events. One of the simplest and most effective ways to explore connections between events and the consequences of them is to create a concept map. Concept maps are very simple to create, but will help you organise your thoughts and more easily identify the causes and effects of different events. To create a concept map, follow these steps:

**Step 1** Identify the topic or event that you are interested in exploring.

**Step 2** In the centre of a large sheet of paper, write down this topic and draw a circle around it.

**Step 3** Brainstorm the main ideas that relate to the topic and write them around the central idea. Draw circles around each of these ideas and connect them to the main topic. Keep the concepts as concise as possible.

**Step 4** Continue to brainstorm more ideas, and connect them to relevant topics. More important ideas should be put nearer to the centre and less important ones closer to the edges. Identify the relationship between the

**Source 2** An example of a concept map

concept groups by using a range of different colours. You can also make different connections clear by using arrows or dotted lines.

**Step 5** After you have finished work on your concept map, look carefully at the way it is organised. Check to see that nothing is missing, and that each group of connected ideas is organised logically.

### Apply the skill

**1** Copy the concept map that has been started for you in Source 1. Complete it in your notebook, or on a computer using a mind-mapping or drawing program.

As you create your map:

- think of all the logical consequences of each idea
- draw arrows to a new concept bubble, and put words on the arrow that make a sentence (e.g. Great loss of life – affects – society – by creating – fear)
- draw arrows between concepts on different parts of the map if you see a link
- use colours to categorise your concept bubbles into sensible groupings once you finish
- create a key to explain what the colours mean.

To generate ideas, you will need to use your own knowledge and information from this chapter. Make the concept map as big as you can, then compare it with a classmate to see what further ideas you can add. Your final map will give you a clearer picture of the many consequences brought about by population loss.



**Source 3** A painting of life on a manor soon after the plague ended

## Extend your understanding

The consequences of such a large proportion of the population dying were profound.

**1** Imagine you are a medieval peasant who has survived the Black Death. Many in your village were not so lucky. The churchyard is full of new graves, houses are empty, and hungry animals roam the roads and fields. No-one is working, and the crops need to be harvested or will soon begin to rot. For the first time, you see how important you and your work are. Without your labour and farming knowledge, the lord and his family will not have food to eat.

Prepare a speech to deliver to your lord, requesting better conditions and pay. Consider the following:

- what you will ask for and why
- the evidence you will use to convince your lord to agree
- the tone you will use – for example, will you choose to present your demands reasonably or use threats to get what you want?