

# Chapter 6

## MEDIEVAL EUROPE

### INTRODUCTION

Europeans in the medieval period (from about AD 500 to about AD 1500) lived very different lives from the people of Europe today. Part 1 of this chapter (sections 6.1–6.10) looks at medieval law, order, beliefs and values. Part 2 (sections 6.11–6.19) will help you understand more about the realities of daily life in medieval Europe and its importance to our world.

### INQUIRY questions

- What can we learn about societies and civilisations of the past?
- What have been the legacies of past societies and civilisations?

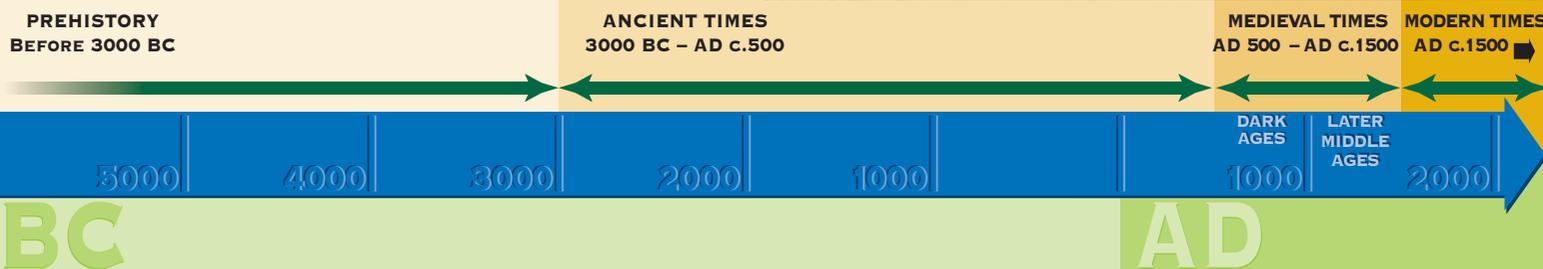
### OUTCOMES

A student:

- 4.1 describes and explains the nature of history, the main features of past societies and periods and their legacy
- 4.5 identifies the meaning, purpose and context of historical sources
- 4.8 locates, selects and organises relevant information from a number of sources, including ICT, to conduct basic historical research
- 4.10 selects and uses appropriate oral, written and other forms, including ICT, to communicate effectively about the past.



An illustration from a fifteenth-century manuscript showing the Tower of London in the foreground and the Thames River and other city buildings behind. The prisoner in the Tower is the French Duke of Orleans, writing poems that were published after his release.



Timeline showing the three periods into which historians divide history



## GLOSSARY

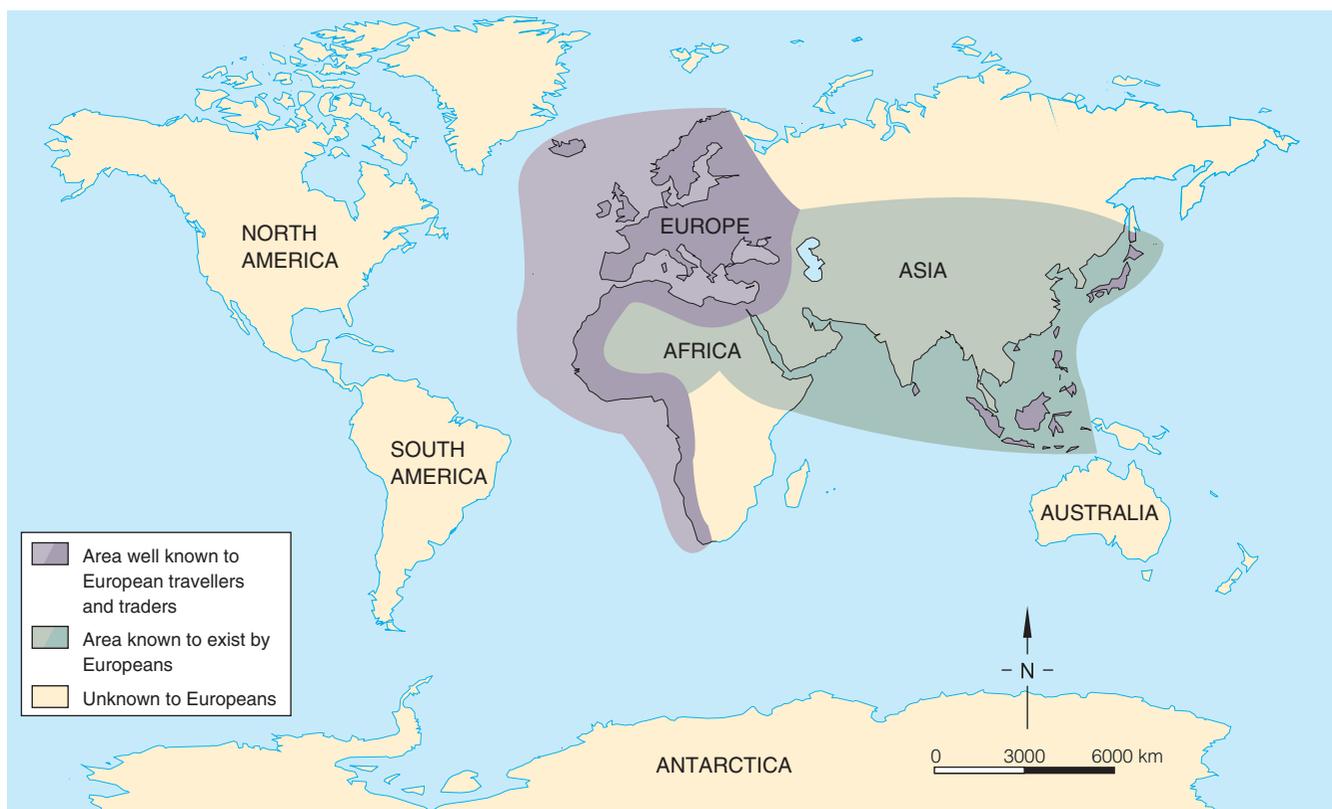
- alms:** anything given to the poor as charity
- apothecary:** a person who made a living by making and selling medicine and herbal remedies
- Beguines:** women who lived in a community serving God and society without taking formal religious vows
- buttress:** something which helps to make a building more stable
- charter:** an agreement which made a town free to make its own rules
- chivalry:** rules for the proper behaviour of a knight
- Christendom:** a word used to refer to the countries where Catholicism was the main religion
- clergy:** people who had taken formal vows to devote their lives to God
- demesne:** the farmland of the lord and lady of the manor
- donjon:** medieval word for a castle tower; also known as a 'keep'
- dowry:** money, goods or land which a woman brought to her husband upon marriage
- feudal system (feudalism):** the system for organising land use and control of society in medieval times
- frescoes:** paintings on a plaster wall or ceiling
- gargoyle:** a stone water spout, often with an ugly face, attached to a building to drain rainwater from its gutters
- glebe:** land from which a church gains an income in rent or crops
- Gothic:** style of medieval architecture featuring pointed arches and flying buttresses
- guild:** a craft or trade organisation which set work standards for its members and offered them protection
- heresy:** statement which goes against the teachings of the Catholic Church
- jousting:** armed combat between knights who fought according to set rules
- knight:** noble who provided military service to the king or a lord
- manuscripts:** books or documents which have been written by hand
- motte and bailey:** the earth mound and outer fenced-in courtyard of a motte and bailey castle
- page:** the first level of training for knighthood
- pottage:** a thick soup made from whatever vegetables were available. Sometimes meat or fish was added.
- Romanesque:** a style of architecture used in the Middle Ages
- sanctuary:** protection offered by the Church to those who confessed their crimes and promised to leave the country
- siege:** surrounding a castle or town in the attempt to starve the inhabitants into submission
- squire:** the second stage of training for knighthood
- subtlety:** special food dish designed to impress guests with its imaginative presentation
- tithe:** a tax equal to 10 per cent of a person's produce or income paid to the Church
- treason:** the crime of not being loyal to the monarch
- troubadours:** poets who provided their own musical accompaniment
- villains:** peasants under the control of the lord of the manor who had to provide him with certain services

# INTO THE WORLD OF MEDIEVAL EUROPE

You probably know something of the world of medieval Europe from films which are set in this period of time, such as *Robin Hood*, *Ivanhoe*, *First Knight*, *Dragonheart* and *Merlin*. Films like these help take us back to a time and a world very different from our own. They show a world peopled with **knights** in shining armour, ladies in distress, travelling minstrels, executioners, kings, monks and peasants. These films can show us what it was like to live in a castle, how uncomfortable life could be without the conveniences we are used to and how hard it was for many people to receive justice. Some of what films show us is both entertaining and accurate; some is fantasy.

The medieval period was a time of continuity, when many aspects of life remained the same for hundreds of years. The medieval era was also a time of change, when people began to think differently about existing values, attitudes, ways of living and the way society was organised.

## Source 6.1.1



A map highlighting the parts of the world known to medieval Europeans

## Source 6.1.2



Film-makers try to re-create the medieval world in their films.

The word 'medieval' comes from the Latin words *medium aevum*, which mean 'middle ages'. The world of medieval Europe emerged after the fall of the Roman Empire in the late fifth century AD. It was the period from about AD 500 to about AD 1500,

after which a new era emerged known as the Renaissance. Historians often subdivide this period into the early Middle Ages (or Dark Ages) and the later Middle Ages (see the timeline on page 156).

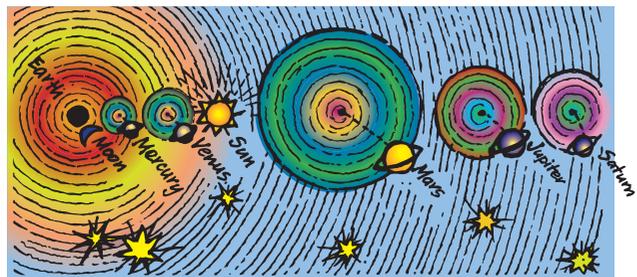
Historians often use the term 'Dark Ages' to indicate the destruction and lawlessness which followed the end of the Roman Empire. This term is not really accurate because during this time (c. AD 500–c.1100) there were many achievements that were far from dark. For example, the Frankish leader Charlemagne (c. AD 768–c.814) created law and order throughout his empire. He encouraged learning and the revival of Roman knowledge.

The world of medieval Europe was a pre-industrial, largely agricultural world, controlled mainly by small groups dominated by men. Leaders and priests taught people to accept their position in life. This meant acceptance of a world in which they had few rights and little freedom.

Medieval Europeans lived in a world of superstition and thought that witches caused problems such as illness, plague, drought, famine and crop failure. Most people believed that the Earth was flat and that if they travelled too far they would fall off the edge or meet up with weird creatures that were half human and half animal. The majority of medieval Europeans believed the Catholic Church's teaching that the Earth was the centre of the universe and that the sun, planets and stars revolved around it.

Life was short and difficult. People died young, not only because of lack of medical knowledge and effective treatments, but also because the medieval era was a time of constant warfare.

### Source 6.1.3



Sketches by a modern artist showing some medieval ideas about the world

## CULTURAL LEGACY

The medieval world is important because of the contributions its people made to the cultural heritage of the world we live in. We can still see our medieval heritage in the great cathedrals and castles that dominate the European landscape today, in the towns which still have walls around them, narrow, crooked and cobbled streets, medieval marketplaces and guild halls. The cultural heritage of the medieval world is evident in the tapestries, paintings, literature and illuminated manuscripts that our world has inherited from it.

In Sydney, there are signs of the influence of medieval architecture in buildings like the Great Hall at Sydney University, St Andrew's Cathedral in George Street and St Mary's Cathedral in College Street.

The medieval world is also important because many of the institutions which are a significant part of our life today had their beginnings in this period of time. These include banks, cities, parliaments, universities and our court system.

This chapter will help you understand more about medieval Europe and its importance to our own world.



### Using sources

1. What do film-makers need to think about to accurately re-create the medieval world? In source 6.1.2, what have they done to re-create the impression of another time?
2. When do you think the term 'medieval' was first used: about AD 500, AD 1000 or after AD 1400? Use the text and the timeline on page 156 to give reasons for your answer.
3. Use source 6.1.1 to name the following:
  - (a) the areas of the world which were known well to medieval Europeans
  - (b) other areas they were aware of
  - (c) areas which were unknown to them.
4. Which medieval ideas does source 6.1.3 illustrate?

### Researching and communicating

Work in pairs or small groups to do further research on medieval ideas about the world. You could look for information on ideas about religion, science, geography, medicine, women, education and so on.

Summarise your findings in a poster for display on the class noticeboard or show your group's findings to the class as a PowerPoint presentation.

# THE FEUDAL SYSTEM – A PLACE FOR EVERYONE

Creating law and order and making sure that a society's resources are used are important goals for the rulers of any society. In medieval Europe, the system for organising how land would be used and for controlling people was called the **feudal system** or **feudalism**. The leader Charlemagne introduced this system in the eighth century to help him control large areas of land in Gaul (France). Feudalism gradually spread throughout Europe.

Source 6.2.1 explains how the feudal system worked. This system of organisation and control helped countries become stronger and provided people with a sense of protection. It also placed many restrictions and controls on the ways people lived their lives.

## FEUDALISM IN ENGLAND

Feudalism was introduced into England by William of Normandy (later known as William the Conqueror). He became king after invading

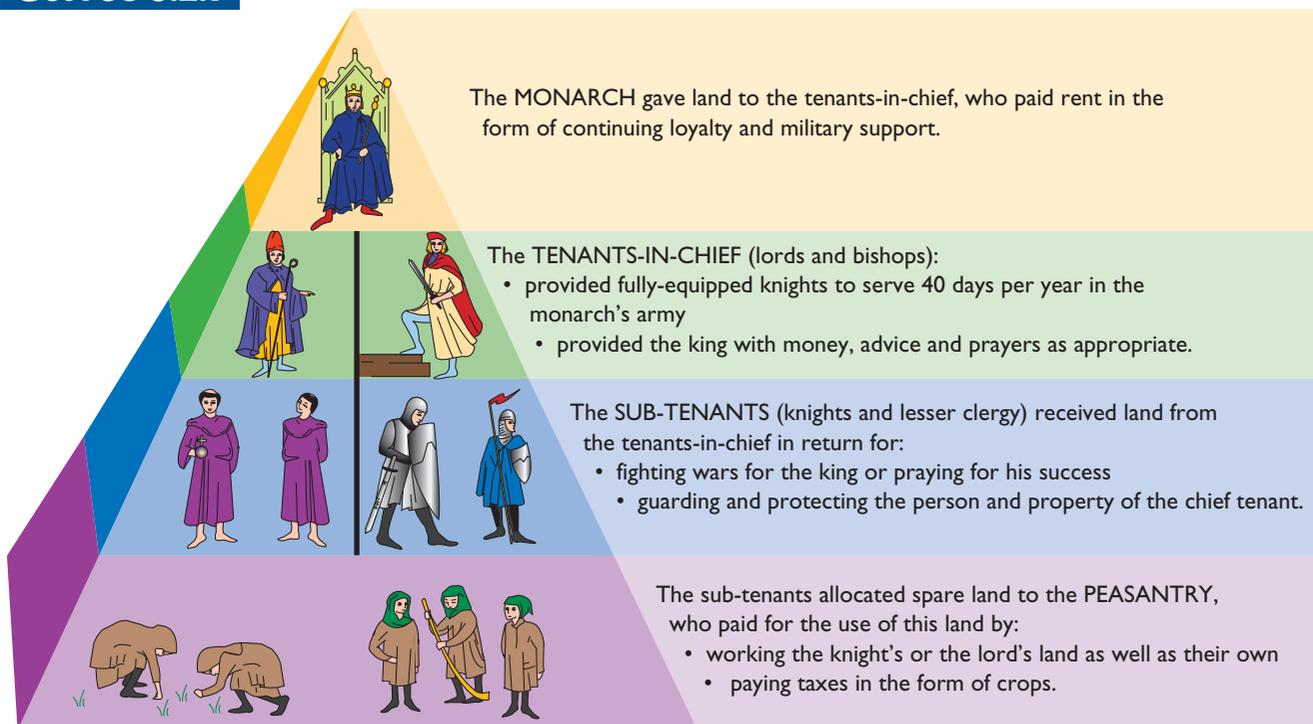
England and fighting a major battle to gain the throne in 1066. In keeping with the feudal system, William claimed all of England's land as his own and then divided it up to reward those who had been loyal to him and gain promises of their future support.

William's actions provide a good example of how invasion and a new system of government could change the lives of people already living in that country.

### RETROfile

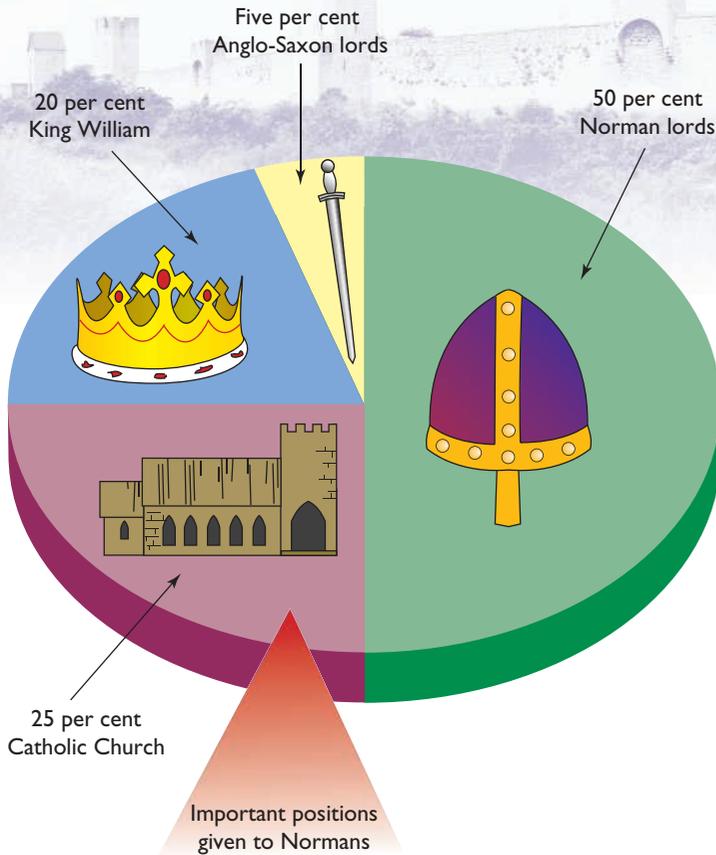
- William of Normandy's native language was French. After he became king of England, French became the official language of England for the next 300 years.
- William's invasion of England is often referred to as the Norman Conquest, as William came from Normandy in France.

### Source 6.2.1



A diagram showing the organisation of medieval society under feudalism

## Source 6.2.2



A diagram showing how William divided up England after he invaded in 1066

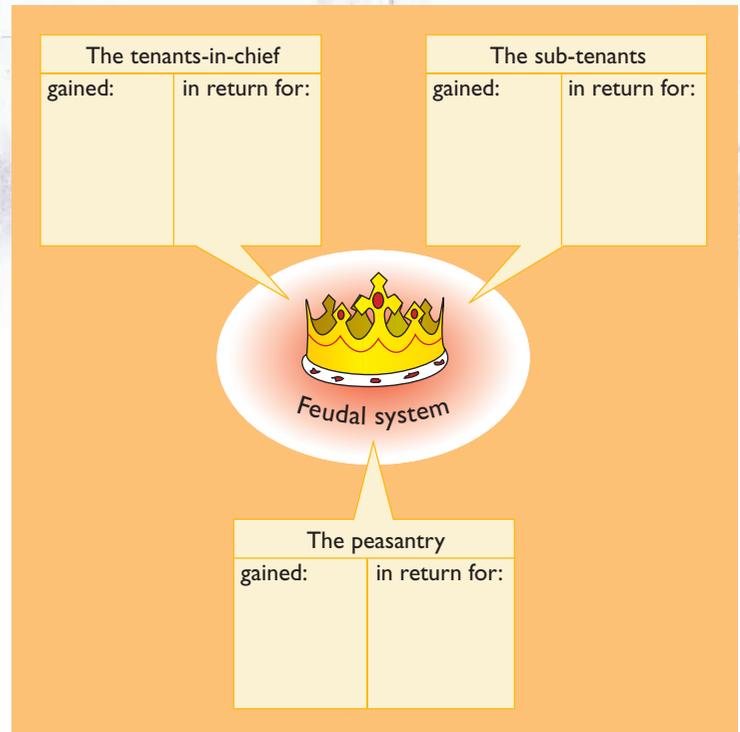
In the medieval period, the amount of land someone owned was the main sign of his or her power and influence. When feudalism was introduced, William's half-brother, Bishop Odo de Conteville, was granted 400 estates. He then divided many of these among other knights who had fought with William. Most of the Anglo-Saxon lords defeated by William's armies lost control of their land.

## Activities

### Check your understanding

- What two names are used for the medieval system of organising society?
  - Who introduced this system into Europe and England?
  - In what centuries did each of these events occur?
  - What were the advantages of this system?
- Complete the following mind map to create your own summary of the feudal system. The key headings are given. Use words and pictures to fill in the details.

### Mind map for activity 2



- What did most groups have in common under the feudal system?

### Using sources

- Use source 6.2.1 to explain how the feudal system helped a king like William to:
  - increase his wealth
  - increase his military strength.
- Using the information in the text and sources 6.2.1 and 6.2.2, complete the following table. Write one sentence in each space to show how the introduction of feudalism in England affected each of the groups. Decide for yourself how each group probably felt about William.

| Group                      | Gains | Losses | Attitude to William |
|----------------------------|-------|--------|---------------------|
| The Church                 |       |        |                     |
| William's Norman followers |       |        |                     |
| The Anglo-Saxons           |       |        |                     |

- What complaints would you make if you were a peasant living under feudalism and who would you complain to? Give reasons for your answer.

### Researching and communicating

Use the 'W' questions (who? what? when? where? why? and how?) to help you find out more about either the Emperor Charlemagne or William the Conqueror. Record your information in a 10–15 line paragraph that provides a brief summary of his life and achievements.

# CASTLES FOR PROTECTION AND CONTROL

## MOTTE AND BAILEY CASTLES

The earliest castles were built in the ninth and tenth centuries for protection and as a place for housing soldiers. These were earth and timber huts surrounded by a ditch. In the eleventh and twelfth centuries, **motte and bailey** castles were popular. These were also made of earth and timber. They consisted of an earth mound (motte) between five and 10 metres high with a wooden tower on top of it. The motte was surrounded by a courtyard (bailey) and a ditch called a moat.

Motte and bailey castles decayed over time. The wood rotted due to the damp weather and fire was a constant problem.

## STONE CASTLES

Stone castles first appeared in the tenth century. At this time, they mainly consisted of a large tower called a **donjon** (or keep), with walls about three metres thick. From the mid thirteenth century onwards, castles had one and sometimes two outer walls and a much taller inner wall and tower. These were known as concentric castles.

Castle builders wanted to create structures which would:

- provide a residence for a monarch or for a chief-tenant
- protect and maintain the power and property of the owner against enemy attack
- be able to withstand a **siege**
- act as a military base (garrison) from which an army could control the surrounding countryside.

Castle builders thought carefully about where to locate their castles. They liked sites that made it easier for a lord to control and defend the castle and the land around it. So even though it was easier to build on a nice level site with good access, castle builders also chose sites on clifftops, on islands and in other 'hard to get to' areas. At the same time, they made sure that the site allowed a good view of the areas around it. As well as thinking about control and defence, castle builders made sure that the lord would have important resources easily available to him.

These resources included:

- towns from whose people the lord could demand taxes
- ready supplies of fresh water and building materials
- workers to build the castle
- roads or rivers for transport.

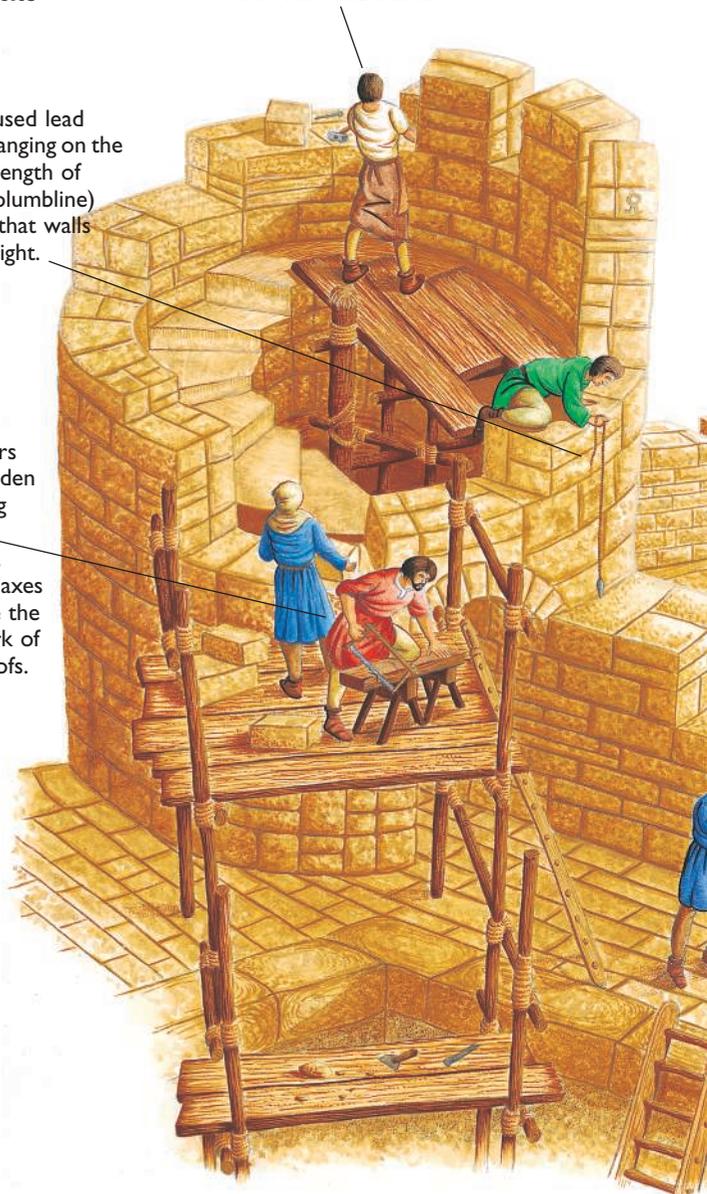
### Source 6.3.1

An artist's impression of workers and their roles on a castle building site

Rough masons built the walls, spiral staircases and towers. They used tools such as crowbars and chisels.

Builders used lead weights hanging on the end of a length of string (a plumbline) to check that walls were straight.

Carpenters built wooden scaffolding using hammers, saws and axes and made the framework of tower roofs.



# A

## ctivities



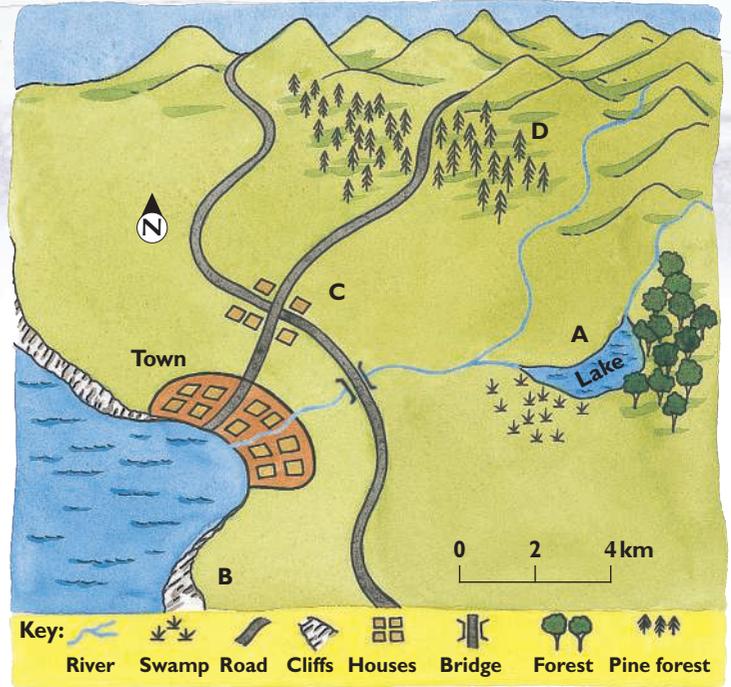
### Check your understanding

1. Create a timeline to show the main stages in the development of castles from the 800s to the 1200s.
2. Give two reasons to explain why stone castles became more popular than motte and bailey castles.
3. Imagine you are living in France in the late tenth century. Write instructions to guide the builder in choosing an appropriate site and building materials for your castle.

### Using sources

1. Use source 6.3.1 to answer the following questions.
  - (a) List the main tools and equipment used and the purpose of these.
  - (b) Plan an order of work for the building site.
  - (c) Identify the OHS (occupational health and safety) risks that this site would pose for workers.
2. Working in pairs, use the text to decide where on source 6.3.2 would be the best location (A, B, C or D) to build a castle.

### Source 6.3.2

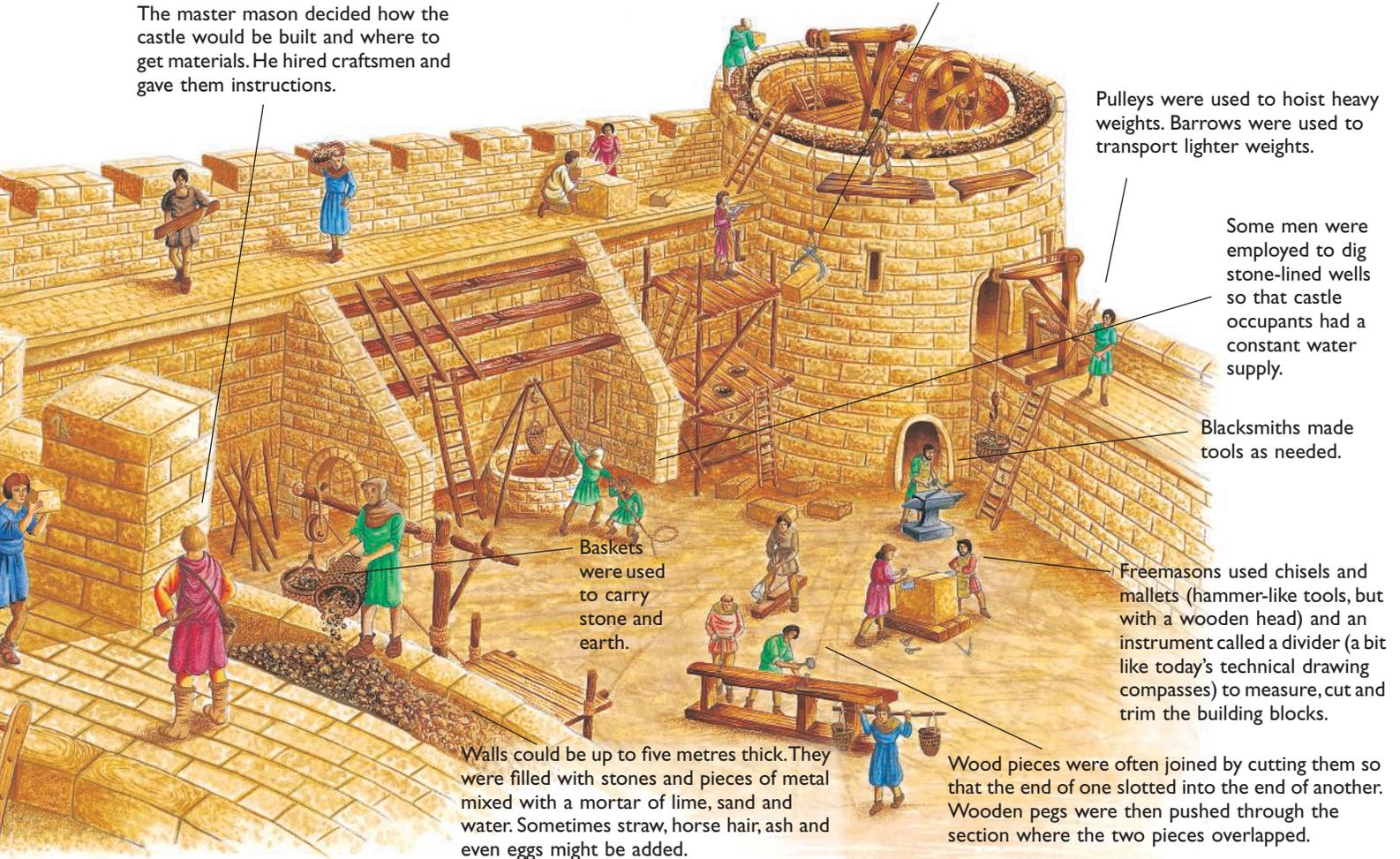


Map showing four possible sites for a castle

### Worksheets

- 6.1 Label the parts of the castle
- 6.2 Build a castle

The master mason decided how the castle would be built and where to get materials. He hired craftsmen and gave them instructions.



Workers used lewises (scissor-like tools) to lift heavy stone blocks.

Pulleys were used to hoist heavy weights. Barrows were used to transport lighter weights.

Some men were employed to dig stone-lined wells so that castle occupants had a constant water supply.

Blacksmiths made tools as needed.

Freemasons used chisels and mallets (hammer-like tools, but with a wooden head) and an instrument called a divider (a bit like today's technical drawing compasses) to measure, cut and trim the building blocks.

Baskets were used to carry stone and earth.

Walls could be up to five metres thick. They were filled with stones and pieces of metal mixed with a mortar of lime, sand and water. Sometimes straw, horse hair, ash and even eggs might be added.

Wood pieces were often joined by cutting them so that the end of one slotted into the end of another. Wooden pegs were then pushed through the section where the two pieces overlapped.

# DEFENDING THE CASTLE UNDER SIEGE

Many people in medieval Europe experienced warfare. A common experience of warfare was laying siege to a castle or town. Gaining control of a castle was an important way for a king or a lord to extend his power, influence and territory and to defeat his enemies.

To lay siege to a castle, an army surrounded it with soldiers, trapping its inhabitants inside. Sieges lasted for months or even years, during which time the people inside the castle employed all possible means to defend themselves. In most cases, starvation and disease forced the castle's inhabitants to surrender. If these methods failed, the next step was to try to capture the castle by force. Many machines and strategies were used to force a surrender.

## Source 6.4.1

A twenty-first-century artist's impression of the attack and defence of a castle

Battlements lined the top of castle walls. A merlon provided defenders with protection. Weapons were fired or tossed through the crenels, or through special slits in the wall called loopholes.

An archer skilled at using a longbow could quickly fire a number of arrows some 300 metres.

The gatehouse was heavily defended. If attackers got in, defenders could shower them with rocks, red-hot sand or boiling water through a hole in the ceiling (called a murderhole). A heavy metal portcullis protected the gatehouse entrance.

A castle was often surrounded by a ditch, sometimes filled with sharpened stakes or water. The drawbridge over the ditch or moat could be drawn up under attack.

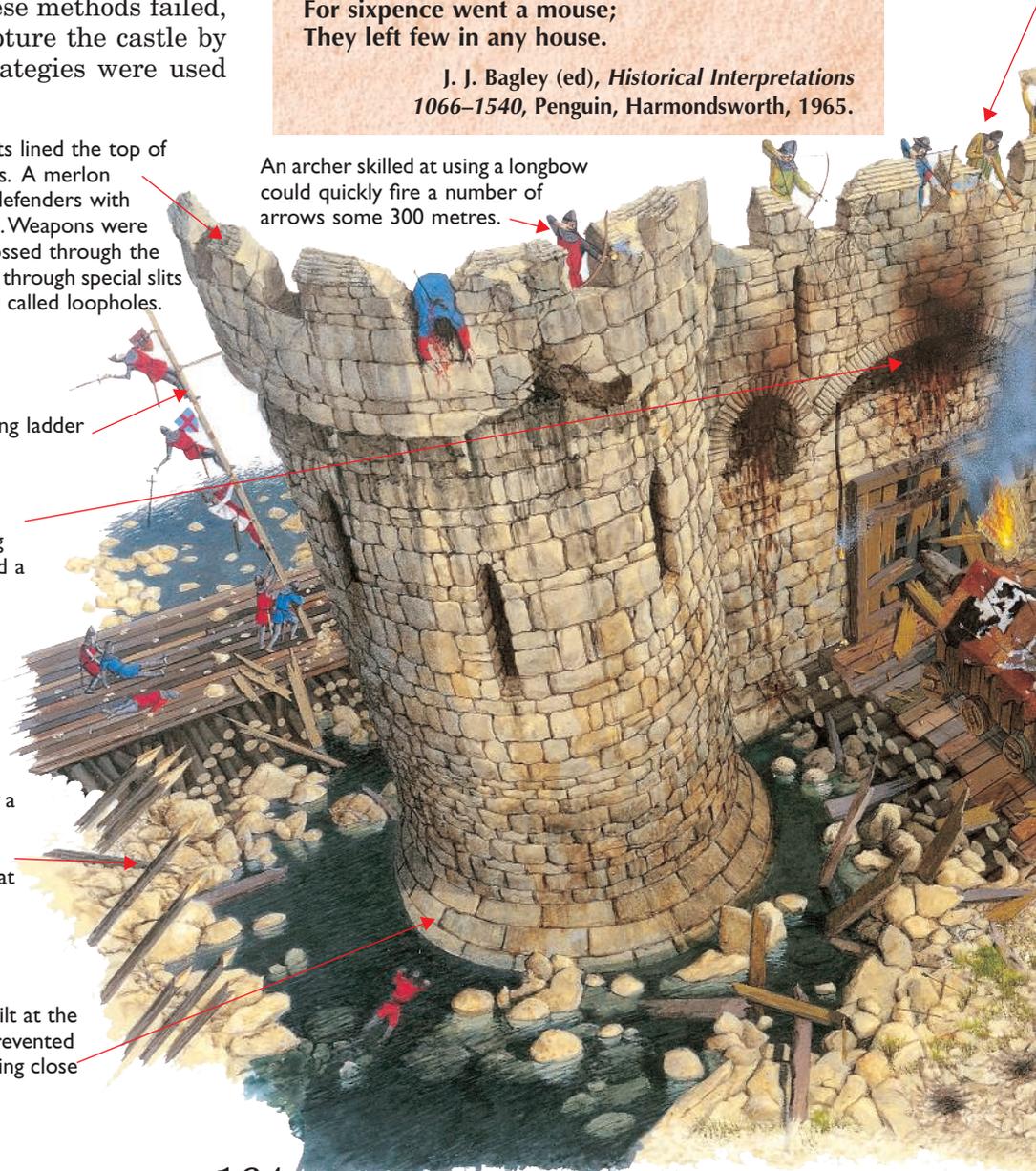
Sometimes batters were built at the base of castle walls. They prevented the battering ram from getting close to the wall.

## Source 6.4.2

*Hungry*, a poem about conditions during a siege

**Hungry**  
They ate the dogs, they ate the cats,  
They ate mice, horses and rats,  
For a horse's quarter, lean or fat,  
A hundred shillings it was at.  
A horse's head for half a pound;  
A dog for the same money round;  
For thirty pence went a rat.  
For two nobles went a cat.  
For sixpence went a mouse;  
They left few in any house.

J. J. Bagley (ed), *Historical Interpretations 1066–1540*, Penguin, Harmondsworth, 1965.



# Activities



## Check your understanding

Read the text and the labels in source 6.4.1 then complete a table like the following to list methods of defence and attack during a siege.

| Attack methods | Defence methods |
|----------------|-----------------|
|                |                 |
|                |                 |

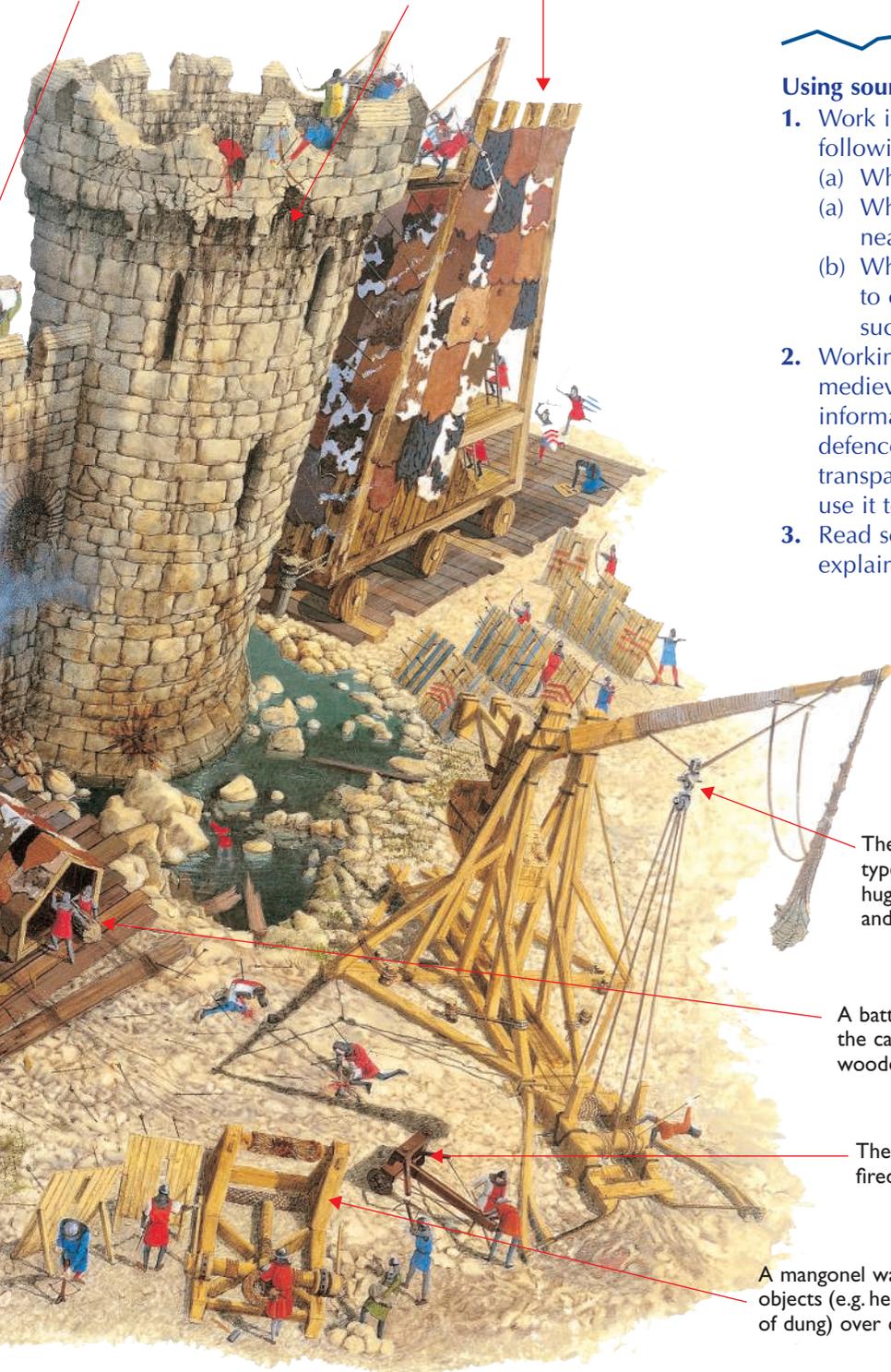
## Using sources

- Work in pairs, using source 6.4.1 to answer the following questions:
  - What were most of the siege weapons made of?
  - Why would most of them have been made nearby?
  - Which weapons would have needed someone to create a diversion before they could be used successfully?
- Working in pairs or small groups, find a picture of a medieval castle. Use source 6.4.1 and the information in the text to write a plan for the castle's defence. Copy your picture onto an overhead transparency so that one member of your group can use it to explain your plan to the class.
- Read source 6.4.2 carefully and work in pairs to explain its meaning.

Attackers used belfries and scaling ladders to try to get over the castle walls. Defenders often used forked sticks to push attackers off the ladders.

The force behind a bolt from a crossbow was so powerful that it could penetrate armour and cause horrific injuries.

Missiles could be dropped on attackers through machicolations.



Attackers could dig a wooden-lined tunnel under the castle walls. When the tunnel supports were burned, the tunnel and the wall above collapsed.

The trebuchet, introduced from the Arab world, was a type of counterweighted catapult. It was used to hurl huge rocks weighing up to 90 kg against castle walls, and to toss rotting animal bodies over the walls.

A battering ram was used to try to break down the castle gate. Attackers were protected by a wooden cover draped with wet animal skins.

The ballista was a giant crossbow that fired flaming bolts over castle walls.

A mangonel was a catapult used to hurl objects (e.g. heads, smaller rocks or piles of dung) over castle walls.

# THE KNIGHT IN SHINING ARMOUR

The medieval era was a time of constant warfare. Lords and their armies fought one another within their own countries; they fought for their kings in battle against other countries; and sometimes they joined forces to try and replace their king with a new monarch. The most significant person on the battlefield was the knight in his armour.

## Source 6.5.1

A modern photograph showing the battle armour of a knight and his horse



Knights were warriors on horseback, who fought for their king, their lord or, in some cases, for whoever would pay for their services. The early knights could be 'lowly born' men, who were rewarded for bravery and skill in battle. By the thirteenth century, only men of noble birth were admitted to the knighthood and, even then, only after years of training in military skills, service to others and Christian teachings.

Training for knighthood began at the age of seven when a young boy left his own family to learn the skills of a **page**. He studied under the supervision of the noblewomen of another household and learned to be polite, to serve God, to read and write, and to ride and hunt for wild game. At 14 years of age he could become a **squire**. Through service to a knight, he would learn to look after armour, weaponry and horses and continue his training in military skills, social graces and cultural pursuits. By the age of about 21, the young man was eligible for knighthood and expected to live his life according to the rules known as the code of **chivalry**.

The chivalrous knight was:

- loyal to the Catholic Church
- dedicated to helping those who were weak and easily exploited
- brave in battle
- willing to fight to protect women.

## Source 6.5.2

A description of an ideal knight from a twelfth century French poem by Girart

He is brave and courtly and skilful, and noble and of good family and eloquent, handsomely experienced in hunting and falconry; he knows how to play chess and backgammon, gaming and dicing. And his wealth was never denied to any, but each has as much as he wants . . . He has never been slow to perform honourable deeds. He dearly loves God and the Trinity . . . he has honoured the poor and lowly; and he judges each according to his worth.

Girart, in H. Middleton, *The Age of Chivalry*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1988.

Knights could not always live up to these high ideals.

## Source 6.5.3

A different type of knight

. . . He drank himself into a stupor with considerable regularity. His castle was usually filled with prostitutes. If he got annoyed with his opponent during a chess game, he was inclined to brain him with one of the massive pieces of the day. If his wife annoyed him, he beat her savagely. When a servant was slow to bring his wine, he threw a javelin at him to speed his steps.

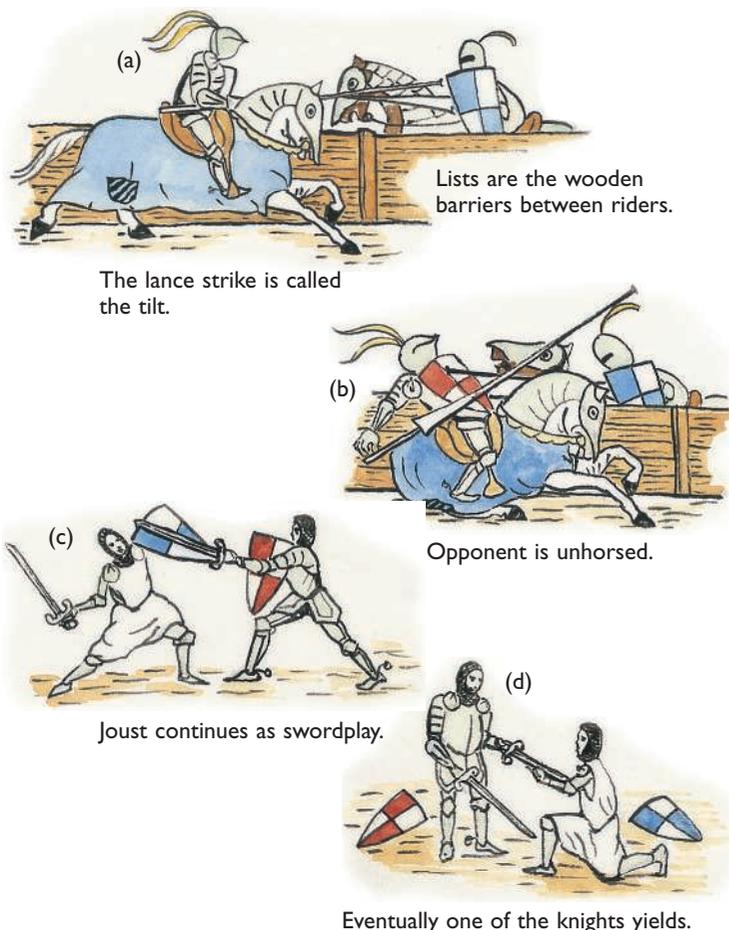
S. Painter, *A History of the Middle Ages 284–1500*, Macmillan, London, 1976.

## AT THE TOURNAMENT

When not in battle, knights practised their skills. They did this individually in exercises called 'tilting the quintain' or in organised tournaments.

Tournaments developed from the custom of teams of knights **jousting** or competing against one another on a local field. These often violent events were called *mêlées*. Over time, people began to develop strict rules and greater organisation for this type of activity and to call its new form ‘tournaments’. Tournaments attracted large audiences that enjoyed the excitement of seeing who would be the hero of the day.

### Source 6.5.4



Modern artist's impression of the stages of an organised tournament

## HERALDRY AND COATS OF ARMS

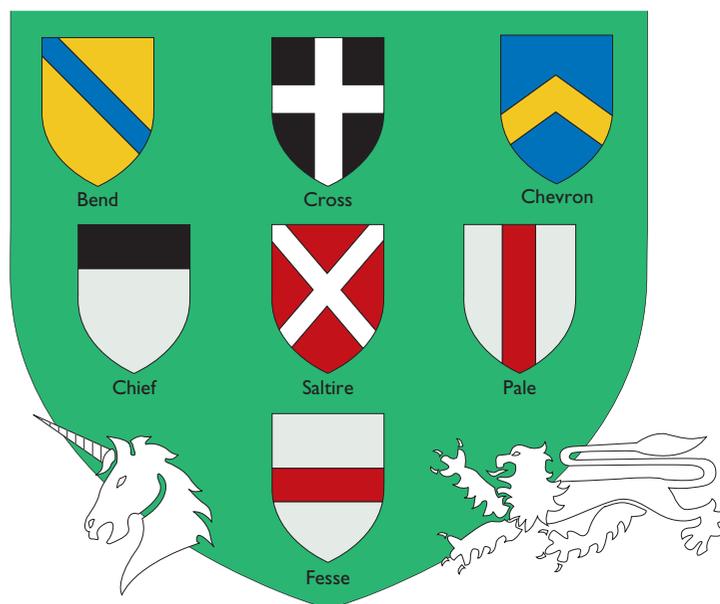
People could identify knights by their ‘coats of arms’ — the symbols on their shields, their surcoats (worn over the armour) and the garments their horses wore. A knight's coat of arms followed the rules of heraldry. These rules require a design to use up to five colours and two metals. The design must use metals to separate the colours and colours to separate the metals.

### Source 6.5.5

|               |        |                |        |
|---------------|--------|----------------|--------|
| <i>Or</i>     | Gold   | <i>Sable</i>   | Black  |
| <i>Argent</i> | Silver | <i>Vert</i>    | Green  |
| <i>Gules</i>  | Red    | <i>Purpure</i> | Purple |
| <i>Azure</i>  | Blue   |                |        |

Table showing the metals and colours used in heraldry

### Source 6.5.6



Examples of heraldic designs (charges) and symbols (devices)

## Activities

### Check your understanding

1. What is the meaning of the word ‘knight’?
2. (a) Who could become a knight?  
(b) What were the main stages in becoming a knight?
3. How did knights practise their skills when not in battle?

### Using sources

1. Rewrite source 6.5.2 in your own words.
2. In what ways has the knight described in source 6.5.3 broken the code of chivalry?
3. List examples of chivalry from films you know.

### Researching and communicating

1. Do some research on medieval and modern ceremonies of knighthood. Choose one of these to enact in class.
2. To read more about medieval tournament rules, go to [www.jaconline.com.au/retroactive/retroactive1](http://www.jaconline.com.au/retroactive/retroactive1) and click on the Tournaments weblink.

### Worksheets

- 6.3 Design your own coat of arms

# CHRISTENDOM AND THE INFLUENCE OF THE CHURCH

Religion was a very important part of life for most medieval Europeans. Hardly anyone knew anything about science and only a few went to school. People looked to their religious leaders, the **clergy**, to help explain their world.

For more than 300 years after the death of Jesus Christ (c. AD 33), European leaders banned his religion, Christianity. They often executed the followers who tried to spread his teachings. The Roman Emperor Constantine lifted the ban in the early 300s. By the 1100s, the Christian religion, Catholicism, had spread to become the most powerful and influential religion in Western Europe. Its followers thought that their religion was the only true religion and that it was their duty to spread Christ's teachings. Many tried to use force to convert 'non-believers' to Christianity.

The Church influenced everybody's life. People had simple beliefs: those who followed God's teachings would go to heaven and those who did not would go to hell. People showed that they honoured God by going to Mass on Sundays and not working on this day. They supported their church leaders by paying them the **tithe**: a tax of 10 per cent of the crops they grew.

The Catholic Church became very wealthy and often very influential in government, law-making and law enforcement. To gain favour with God, many wealthy nobles left land, property and money to the Church, which became richer than most kings. The Church controlled about one-third of the land in Europe, and had its own courts and laws (called canon law). The Catholic countries of Europe were called **Christendom**.

## A RELIGIOUS LIFE

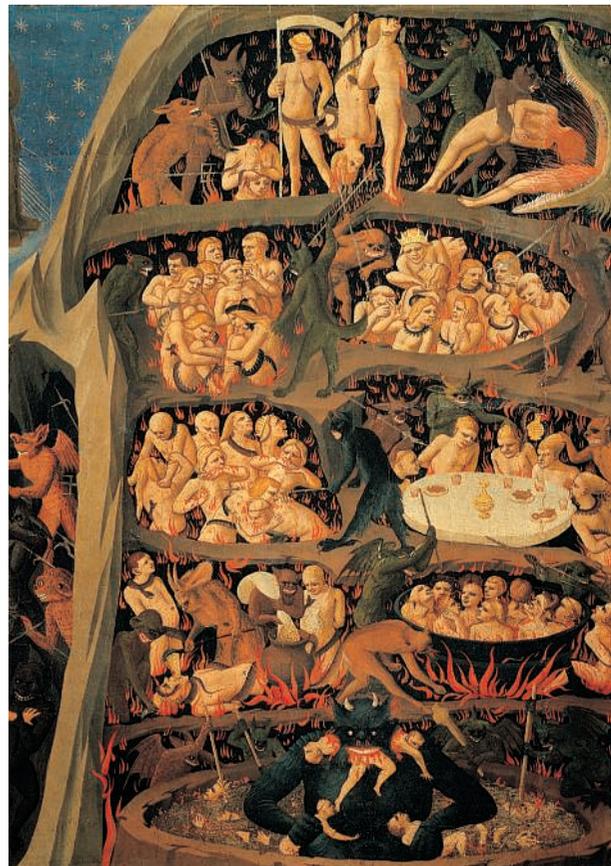
The head of the Catholic Church then, as now, was the Pope, who lived in Rome. People accepted him as God's representative on Earth and were even willing to fight other nations if he ordered it. Kings asked the Pope to approve many of their decisions rather than taking the risk of the Pope ordering people to act against them.

Cardinals and then archbishops and bishops were next in the Church hierarchy. These people often gave advice to their kings and played influential roles in government.

Next in importance were the abbots and abbesses. They controlled the monasteries and convents where those who wanted to dedicate their lives to God came to live and work as members of a religious order away from society. They made promises of poverty, chastity and obedience and spent their days in prayer, religious discussions and activities such as caring for the sick, tending vegetable and herb gardens and creating illuminated **manuscripts**.

Priests and friars were at the lowest level of the Church and had most contact with ordinary people. Priests taught their local communities about God and the Catholic religion. Although poorly educated, they influenced what people believed through the stories they told to explain

### Source 6.6.1

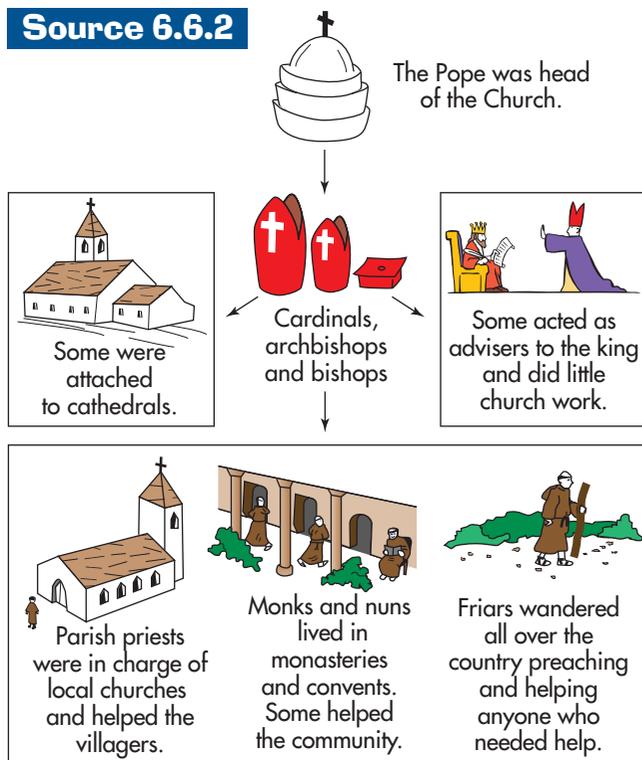


Detail from Fra Angelico, *The Last Judgement*, 1432–35. This painting depicts the horrors which would be suffered in hell by those who did not follow the Church's teachings.

the Bible and the religious pictures and statues that decorated the village church. The clergy spoke and wrote in Latin, and people relied on the information the priests gave them because most people did not have the opportunities to read, write or learn about these things for themselves. Friars also dedicated their lives to God. They lived among ordinary people, helping the poor and relying on others to provide them with food and a place to sleep.

Sunday was officially a day of rest and devotion to God. People also celebrated other 'holy days' throughout the year. On these days away from work, people remembered saints and celebrated their lives through festivals, games and feasts.

### Source 6.6.2



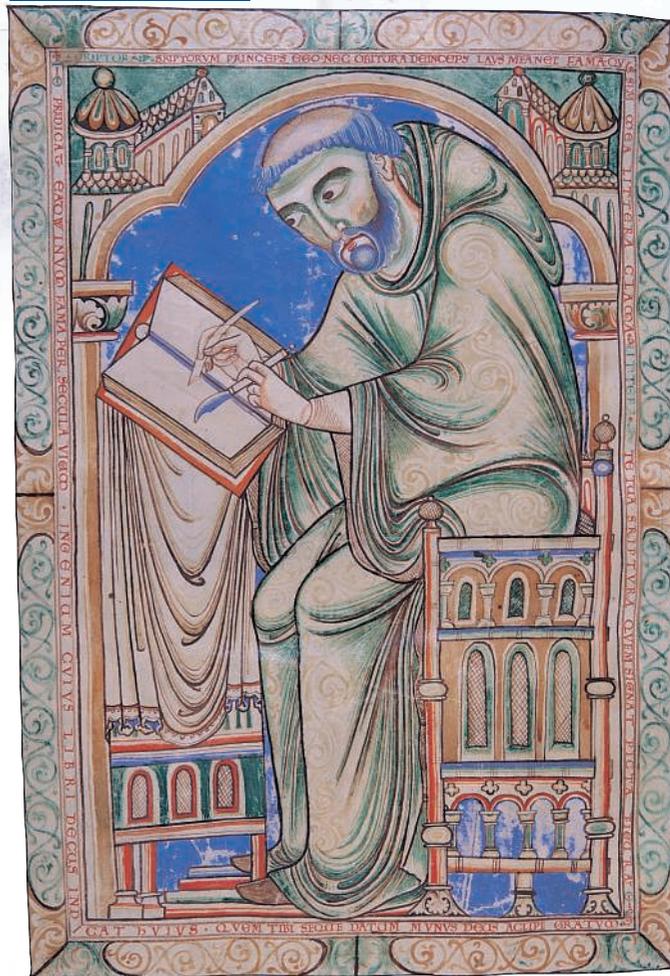
A diagram showing the organisation of the Church and the duties of the clergy within it

## Activities

### Check your understanding

1. What religion did most medieval Europeans follow?
2. List three signs of the Catholic Church's wealth and influence over people's lives.
3. Explain what the term 'Christendom' refers to.
4. What language did the Catholic clergy use to communicate with one another? Think of one advantage and one disadvantage of this.
5. What modern word comes from 'holy days'?

### Source 6.6.3



This twelfth-century picture by Eadwine the Scribe shows how books were produced before the invention of the printing press.

### Using sources

1. Why did priests use pictures like the one shown in source 6.6.1? What message would people have gained from it? Give reasons for your answer.
2. Look at source 6.6.2. Which members of the clergy had:
  - (a) most power
  - (b) most contact with ordinary people?
 Give reasons for your answers.
3. What does source 6.6.3 tell you about the time and effort it took to produce a book in the Middle Ages?

### Researching and communicating

1. Work in small groups to create a play to teach people about one of the stories from the Bible.
2. Gather pictures which show different medieval manuscripts. Allocate a letter from the alphabet to each member of your class, then draw, colour and decorate your letter in medieval style. Combine everyone's letters into an alphabet wall chart for your classroom.

# CATHEDRALS TO HONOUR GOD

People feared that the world would end in the year AD 1000. Ordinary life continued, but they were determined to be ready for this final Judgement Day. There was a frenzy of church building and restoration throughout Europe. Builders and architects aimed to glorify God by creating buildings that were massive in size and stunning in decoration. Most cathedrals were at least 100 metres long with roofs as high as 47 metres. Their spires were even higher; for example, the spire at Strasbourg Cathedral was 142 metres high. These were amazing technological achievements, especially considering that they were built without the use of cranes, concrete, steel or electricity.

## THE GOTHIC STYLE

The churches of the early Middle Ages had been dark and gloomy. This was because they had very few windows and needed huge pillars and thick walls to hold up the round-arched roofs that were typical of their **Romanesque**-style architecture. From about the 1100s, the new **Gothic** style of architecture became popular, especially for the many cathedrals being built to accommodate Europe's growing population, which almost doubled from the tenth to the fourteenth centuries.

### Source 6.7.1



Lincoln Cathedral, largely built between 1075 and 1300, was the first major Gothic building in England.

Photographs showing the exteriors of two famous Gothic cathedrals of Europe



Milan Cathedral, built c.1385–1485

The benefit of the Gothic style was that the design allowed the roof to be supported by **buttresses** from outside. As the walls did not have to support the weight of the roof, they could be thinner and include more and much larger windows. Tall, narrow windows with pointed arches allowed more light into the cathedrals and, like the cathedral spires outside, encouraged people to look upwards towards the heavens.

### Source 6.7.2



Photograph showing the flying buttresses of Notre Dame, Paris

### Source 6.7.3



A photograph of one of the stained-glass windows from the cathedral of Notre Dame de Chartres, France

Some cathedrals have as many as 200 windows, each made up of hundreds of pieces of coloured glass arranged to form religious pictures.

Stone carvings are another feature of Gothic cathedrals. They can be seen in decorative carvings, in huge stone figures inside and outside the cathedral, and in **gargoyles**, the ugly-looking stone faces whose mouths acted as a spout for rainwater as it drained off the gutters of the cathedral roof.

Cathedral building was a massive task for the craftspeople who undertook it and a huge commitment for the local townspeople as well. The famous cathedral of Notre Dame de Chartres (Our Lady of Chartres) in France was largely rebuilt after a fire in 1194 reusing some of the undamaged sections of an older church. Most of the building work was finished by about 1220. Generations of the same families helped build it. The people of Chartres helped by carting stone blocks from the quarry 11 kilometres away and donating money for the cathedral's magnificent stained glass windows.

### Source 6.7.4



Picture from a medieval manuscript showing the work of stonemasons. In fourteenth-century England, the daily wage for a master mason was equivalent to the price of two chickens.

## Activities

### Check your understanding

1. Name four features of Romanesque architecture.
2. Name three features of Gothic architecture that helped make the interiors of cathedrals lighter.
3. What are gargoyles and what purpose do they serve?
4. Name two other uses of stone carvings in Gothic architecture.
5. List all the different kinds of expertise that would be needed to build a Gothic cathedral.

### Using sources

1. What features of Gothic architecture can be seen in each of the pictures in source 6.7.1?
2. Find a picture of a flying buttress similar to that shown in source 6.7.2 and note the cathedral it belongs to.
3. List as many similarities and differences as you can between the techniques of medieval builders (shown in source 6.7.4) and those of builders today.

### Researching

To explore some examples of medieval cathedrals and churches and their stained glass windows, go to [www.jaconline.com.au/retroactive/retroactive1](http://www.jaconline.com.au/retroactive/retroactive1) and click on the Medieval Stained Glass weblinks.

### Worksheets

- 6.4 Create a stained glass window

# LAW, ORDER AND CRIME CONTROL

Crimes in the medieval world ranged from minor offences like stealing firewood from the lord's forest or nagging one's husband, to more serious crimes like murder, **treason** or witchcraft.

## WITCHCRAFT

Witchcraft was a very serious charge. People believed that witches were the devil's followers on Earth, and that they used their special powers to bring suffering and unhappiness into the world. People blamed witches for all kinds of natural disasters — famine, plague, drought, the failure of a harvest or even the stillbirth of a baby. Sometimes people accused others of witchcraft because of jealousy or a desire for revenge. Whatever the reason, it was not hard to find 'evidence' to convict someone.

### Source 6.8.1



Manuscript picture showing the medieval idea of witchcraft. The people in the foreground are shown worshipping the devil in the form of a black goat.

## THE CHURCH'S LAW

The Catholic Church used its own courts and its own law (canon law) to try to control people's behaviour. People would be fined or even whipped if they worked on Sundays and holy days. The most serious crime against the Church was the crime of **heresy**, the offence of criticising the Church's teachings. Church courts also heard cases involving fights between husbands and wives.

## CRIME CONTROL

Before police forces, if someone was seen breaking the law the lord expected the villagers to raise the 'hue and cry' and chase after the wrongdoer until he or she was caught. If the prisoner escaped, the villagers would be punished.

Some towns tried to limit the number of crimes by imposing a curfew to keep people off the streets at night. This meant that people had to be in their homes by about 8.00 p.m. or 9.00 p.m. or risk being arrested. Another way of encouraging people to see that the law was obeyed was to organise them into groups called 'tithings'. Each tithing consisted of 10 males over the age of 12 who were responsible for making one another keep the law. If any member broke the law, the others had to take him to court and pay his fine.

One way of discouraging crime is to show people what will happen if they break the law. In the Middle Ages, convicted criminals were punished in public. Iron cages or gibbets displayed the bodies of executed criminals. Severed heads were displayed on poles. These common sights served as a warning to others.

Torture was often used to gain a confession from people accused of serious crimes. Source 6.8.2 shows the main torture methods.

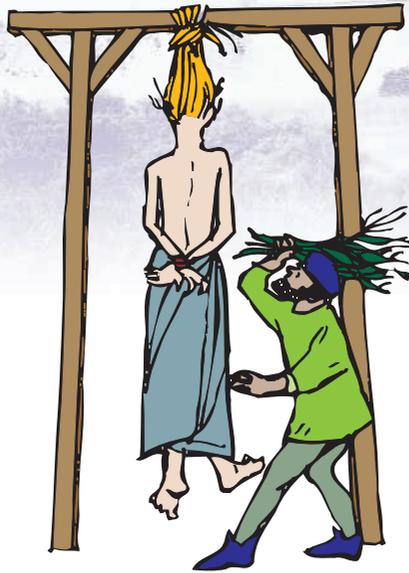
## GUILTY OR NOT GUILTY?

Before jury trials were introduced in the twelfth century, courts decided whether a person was innocent or guilty by using trials by compurgation (oath-swearing), combat or ordeal. In a

## Source 6.8.2



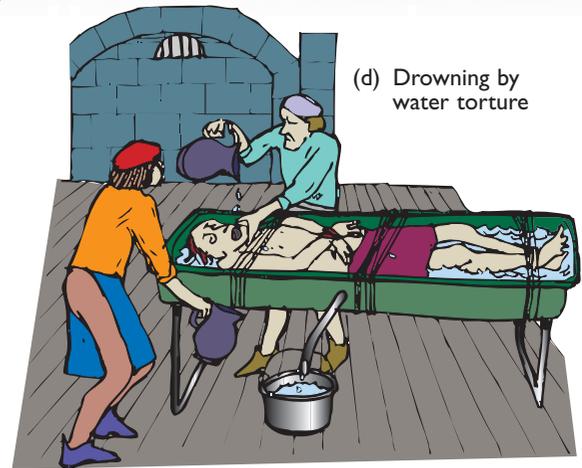
(a) Being stretched on the rack



(b) Being hung by the hair and flogged



(c) Suffering the thumbscrews



(d) Drowning by water torture

### An artist's impression of inside the torture chamber

trial by compurgation, 12 people had to recite a special oath to claim someone's innocence. Any mistakes would supposedly cause the oath to 'burst' and prove that the accused person was guilty.

Nobles used trial by combat to attempt to prove their innocence. In the beginning, the defendant and his accuser were expected to fight the battle personally. Soon everyone began to use an expert known as a 'champion' to fight the battle in their place. People believed that God would reward the innocent person with victory.

In trials by ordeal, people asked God for a sign of guilt or innocence. In an ordeal by water, the accused was thrown into the 'holy' waters of a river or lake with hands and feet tied together to see if they sank (a sign of innocence) or floated (a sign of guilt). In ordeals by fire, people either had to put their hand in a pot of boiling water, hold their arm over a fire or pick up a piece of red hot iron. If the burn had healed after three days, then this was thought to be a sign of innocence.

When Henry II, King of England, introduced the system of trial in the twelfth century, his travelling judges conducted courts with juries of 12 men chosen from among the local townsmen. The jury decided whether the accused was guilty or innocent and the judge imposed the sentence.

## Activities

### Check your understanding

1. List five activities which were considered 'criminal' in the Middle Ages. Which of these are still crimes in Australia today?
2. What kinds of things were blamed on witches? Why?
3. What were the main forms of trials before jury trials? In what ways is trial by combat similar to the way we organise trials today?
4. List the methods of crime control in the Middle Ages. Would they have worked? Give reasons.

### Using sources

1. Using source 6.8.1 and the information in the text, describe the clothing, activities and behaviour which medieval people associated with witchcraft.
2. Which form of torture from source 6.8.2 do you think was the most painful and why? What reasons might a guard have for inflicting torture on other human beings?

### Researching and communicating

Conduct a witch trial. As preparation, decide on:

- (a) the wording of the charge
- (b) what evidence each of the witnesses is going to give
- (c) the form of trial.



# MAKING THE PUNISHMENT FIT THE CRIME

Punishments were meant to fit the 'crime'. For example, women who nagged their husbands were tied to a ducking stool and ducked three times into the river while villagers watched on in amusement. Women who were found guilty of gossiping had to wear the scold's bridle. A baker who had cheated his or her customers might have been dragged through the streets on a sledge with a loaf of bread tied around the neck. A peasant who had stolen firewood from the lord's forest or whose animals had damaged someone else's crops would most likely either pay

a fine or perform extra work. Other punishments for minor crime were more humiliating. These included putting someone in the pillory or the stocks, where onlookers could throw rotten food or rubbish at the offender.

Some of the harsher punishments for stealing or cheating included whipping or some form of mutilation, such as cutting off a hand, an ear or the tongue. Sometimes a person's eyes were burnt out with a red hot poker.

The punishment for witchcraft was being burnt alive, as it was believed that burning

## Source 6.9.1



(a) Paying a fine



(b) Doing extra work



(c) The stocks



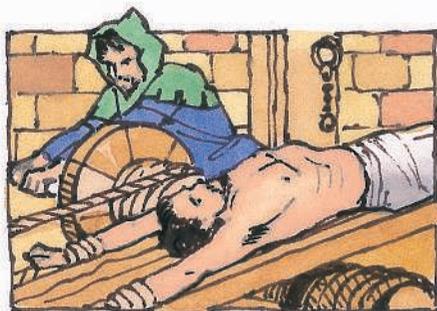
(d) Being put into a pen with a wild dog



(e) The scold's bridle



(f) The ducking stool



(g) Stretching



(h) Beheading



(i) Hanging

Common punishments for crimes during the medieval period

would cleanse the soul. A last minute confession entitled the ‘witch’ to be strangled before feeling the flames. The penalty for murder or treason was public execution, usually by hanging or beheading. One particularly gruesome way of killing someone was to brick them up behind a wall until they starved to death.

The most feared form of execution was that suffered by the Scottish rebel William Wallace (see pages 176–7), who was hung, drawn and quartered on the orders of the English king Edward I. Source 6.9.2 describes the first time this sentence was imposed during Edward’s reign.

## Source 6.9.2

An extract describing the sentence which a judge imposed on a defeated Welsh prince, Davydd ap Gruffydd, in 1283

‘Davydd ap Gruffydd ... For the crime of murder, you are to be hanged. But you are to be cut down whilst you still live.’

Davydd stiffened, staring at the judge in disbelief. The murmurings grew louder; no one had been expecting this. De Vaux paused until it again grew quiet. ‘For the crime of sacrilege, you are to be disembowelled alive, and your entrails burned before your eyes. Then, for the crime of plotting the King’s death, you are to be beheaded and your body hacked into four quarters, which shall be sent to cities throughout the realm, to be put on public display so that people may know what befalls traitors and rebels.’

From Sharon Penman’s novel, *The Reckoning*, London, Penguin Books, 1992, pp. 552–3.

## RETROfile

Going to war against the king was not a crime in England until Edward I made it one. By the end of Edward’s reign, at least 20 of Edward’s enemies had been hung, drawn and quartered.

## AVOIDING PUNISHMENT

Women had a unique method of avoiding punishment. A woman who became pregnant could postpone her punishment until the birth of the child.

Both men and women could avoid punishment by claiming **sanctuary** (protection) from the Church. To do this the accused person had to stay on Church property for 40 days, admit to

their wrongdoings and promise to ‘abjure the realm’ (leave the country forever). Then the person had to leave the country as quickly as possible without money and, as a sign of their guilt, wear sackcloth and carry a white cross. While this process was being carried out, the fugitive remained under Church control and could not be arrested.

## RETROfile

- As a sign of their good intentions, people who had to wait for a boat so that they could ‘abjure the realm’ were expected to spend part of each day waist deep in the sea.
- One Englishwoman, Matilda Hereward, succeeded in putting off her execution for 18 months before her hanging in 1303. During this time, she began five separate pregnancies.



## Check your understanding

1. What were the main forms of punishment used in the Middle Ages? Work in pairs to rank them from the harshest to the least harsh. Give reasons for the first and last of your choices.
2. Complete the following table to show the differences in how medieval ‘crimes’ were punished compared to today’s punishment. (You could ask your parents for help with this.)

| Medieval crime | Medieval punishment | Punishment today |
|----------------|---------------------|------------------|
|                |                     |                  |

3. Why do you think many punishments took place before an audience?
4. What do you think were the advantages and disadvantages of claiming sanctuary in order to avoid punishment?

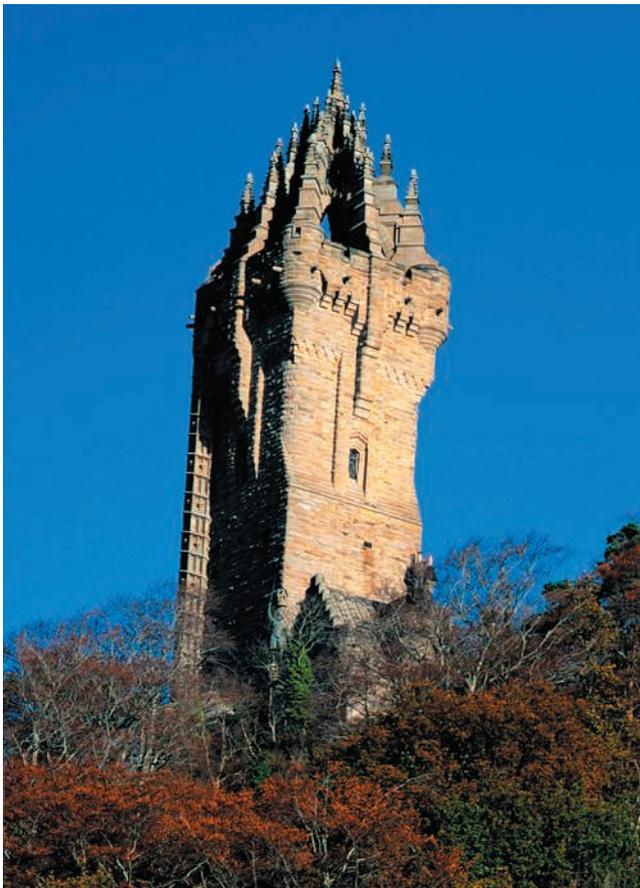
## Using sources

1. Using the ideas in source 6.9.1 and information in the text, devise a suitable punishment for:
  - (a) a brewer who has sold bad ale to her customers
  - (b) someone who has stolen fresh water from the water-seller.
2. Why did Edward I impose such horrific penalties on men like William Wallace?

# BRAVE OF HEART: WILLIAM WALLACE OF ELDERSLIE

The 67-metre-high National Wallace Monument is the dominant feature of the Scottish countryside around the town of Stirling. It was built to honour Scotland's national hero, William Wallace, the main character in the 1995 movie *Braveheart*. Like the twentieth-century leader Gandhi (discussed on pages 200–1), William Wallace wanted to free his people from rule by foreign invaders.

## Source 6.10.1



Photograph of the National Wallace Monument near Stirling, Scotland

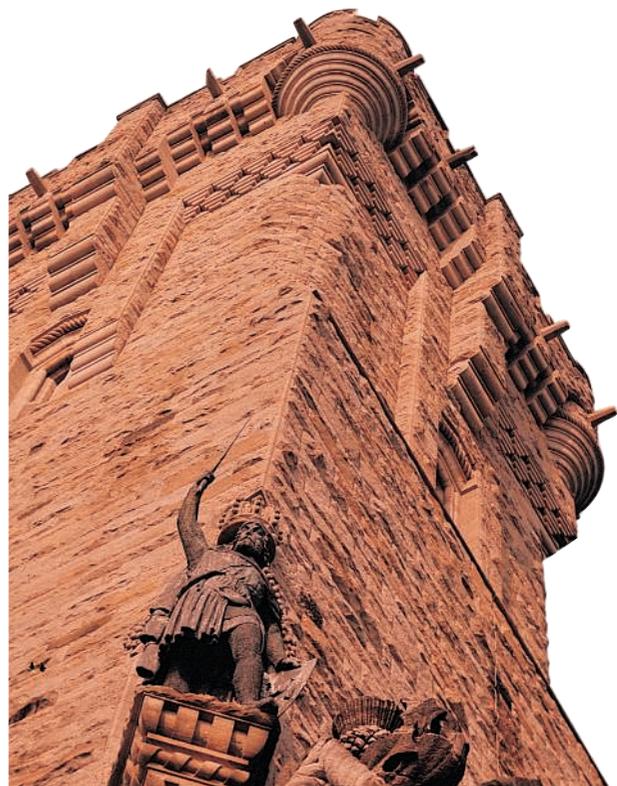
## BACKGROUND

When Scotland's king, Alexander III, died in 1286 he was succeeded by his four-year-old niece, Margaret. Six guardians were to rule in her name until she grew up. When she died in 1290, the Scottish nobles called on the English king,

Edward I (1238–1307) to decide between the two main contenders for the throne, John Balliol and Robert Bruce. It took two years for the English courts to decide and Edward used this time to extend his own power into Scotland. He persuaded the Scottish nobles to allow English soldiers to occupy Scotland's most important castles, supposedly to preserve law and order.

In 1292, Balliol became John I of Scotland. By this time Scotland was virtually under English control. In 1296, John lost his throne in an attempt to win back Scottish independence. Edward I (known as Longshanks) believed that he could further extend English rule into Scotland, just as he had already done in Wales. He forced the major Scottish landowners to swear loyalty to him by signing what was known as the 'Ragman's Roll'. Over the next few years, a young Scot named William Wallace led a rebellion against Longshanks' attempts to rule Scotland.

## Source 6.10.2



Photograph of the statue of William Wallace overlooking the battlefield from his monument near Stirling

## WILLIAM WALLACE'S WAR AGAINST ENGLISH RULE

In 1296, William Wallace had already been living as a Robin Hood-style outlaw for five years. This resulted from his slaying of an Englishman who had killed his father and his involvement in a number of other incidents which had caused English deaths. William Wallace quickly gained a reputation as a Scottish hero and soon had a band of about 50 followers. They used fighting tactics we now call guerilla warfare — annoying enemies by surprise raids on their headquarters or supply posts.

The turning point in his rise from local to national hero was Wallace's raid on the home of the English Sheriff of Lanark, who had killed Marion, the young woman whom Wallace loved. Wallace killed the Sheriff, burned the Sheriff's fortress and became a target for English revenge. Wallace gained support from people of all walks of life in Scotland. At about 185 centimetres in height, he was 30 centimetres taller than the average man of his time and must have appeared to many as a superhuman figure.

## VICTORY AT STIRLING BRIDGE

In July 1297, Edward I sent 50 000 soldiers to invade Scotland. Following the capture of the Scottish army in their camp near Irvine, the Scottish nobles promised their good behaviour to the English king. William Wallace led his troops north and joined with another Scottish leader, Andrew Murray, to recapture all Scottish territory north of the River Forth. Meanwhile the English, unaware of these events, marched to Stirling Castle, which they controlled. The castle was important because of its location near the one bridge which divided the Scottish Highlands from lowland Scotland.

On 11 September 1297, the English troops began crossing the narrow wooden bridge at Stirling. They believed that the Scots on the other side would not dare challenge them. They continued even after receiving the message from Wallace: 'Tell your people that we have not come here to gain peace, but are prepared for battle, to avenge and deliver our country'.

Wallace waited until half the English had crossed the bridge and then gave the order to charge. The river split the English army in two; 10 000 soldiers died that day, either from wounds or by drowning when the bridge collapsed. The remainder fled back over the border

to England. William, now praised as the Guardian of Scotland, received a knighthood and was described as 'the hammer and scourge of the English'.

## BETRAYAL AND DEATH

In 1298, William Wallace and his troops lost against the English at the battle of Falkirk. One reason for the defeat was that one of the Scottish leaders refused to support him, an indication of the jealousy many of the Scottish nobles felt towards Wallace. War with England continued.

In July 1305, William Wallace was waiting outside Glasgow for a meeting with the claimant to the Scottish throne, Robert the Bruce (1274–1329). Wallace was betrayed by Scottish knights and captured by Edward I's troops. He was charged with treason and a number of other crimes against the English and suffered the horrific punishment of being hung, drawn and quartered. Following his execution in London, William Wallace's head was displayed on a pole on Westminster Bridge in London and the four quarters of his body were sent to Berwick, Newcastle, Perth and Stirling.

Robert the Bruce finally defeated the English army at Bannockburn in 1314.



### Check your understanding

1. Use the information in the text to construct a timeline to show key events in Scottish history in the period from 1286 to 1314.
2. Why was Wallace hunted by the English?
3. How did the river and the Stirling bridge help Wallace gain victory in 1297?
4. With the help of an atlas, draw a map of England and Scotland and mark on it the names of places which were significant in the conflict between William Wallace and his English enemies.

### Using sources

What do sources 6.10.1 and 6.10.2 tell us about how Scottish people feel about William Wallace?

### Researching and communicating

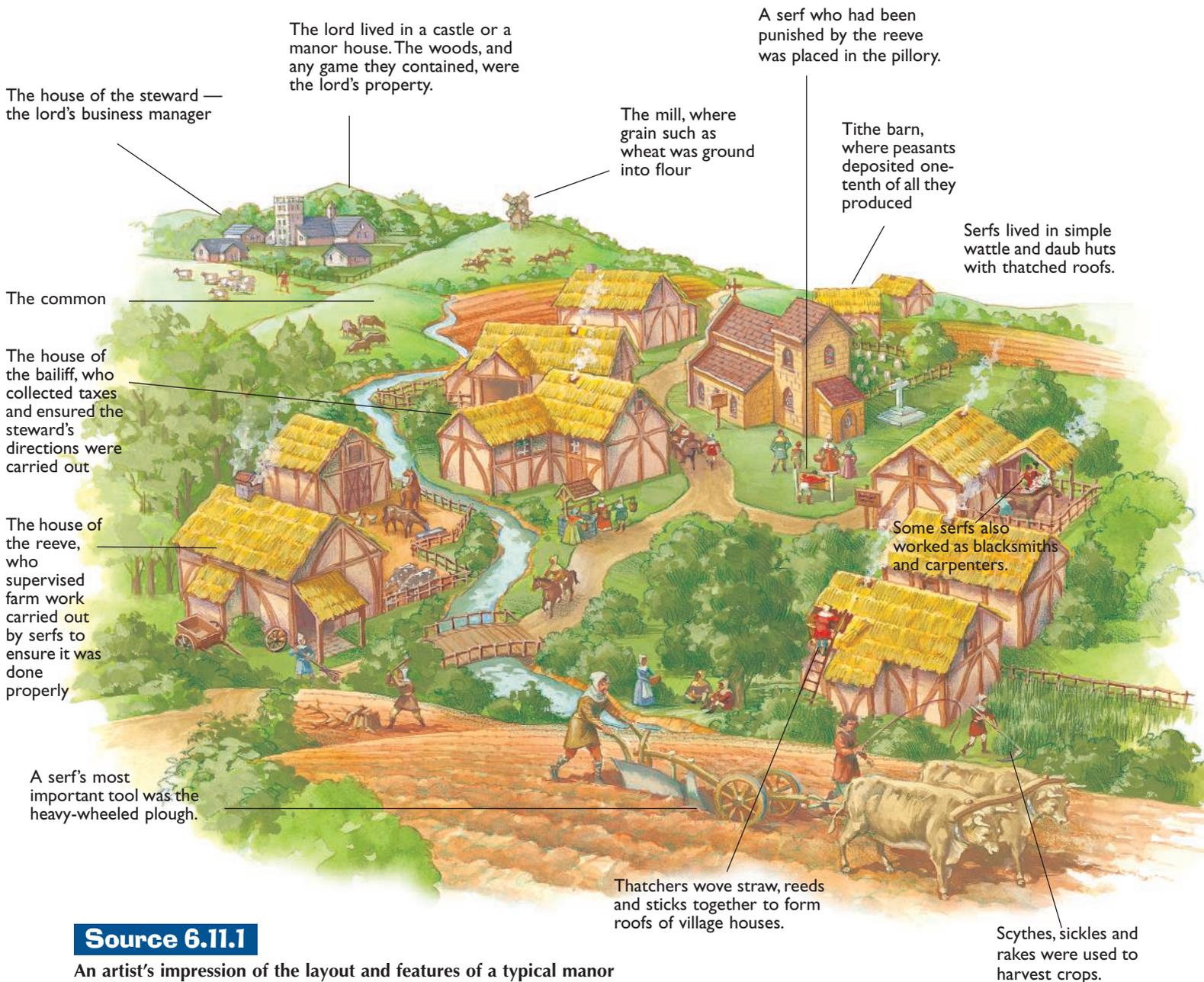
1. Find a copy of Robert Burns' famous 1793 poem *Scots Wha Hae*. What is its main message?
2. Look up the different meanings of the words 'hammer' and 'scourge'. Why was William Wallace called 'the hammer and scourge of the English'?

# LIVING AS A PEASANT

About 90 per cent of medieval Europeans were peasants, who lived under the control of a lord. They lived in the countryside and worked as farmers from childhood onwards. In their whole lives, many medieval Europeans may never have travelled further than the 16-kilometre walk to the nearest market town. If we had lived in medieval times, we would most likely have lived this way too.

## THE MANOR AND THE VILLAGE

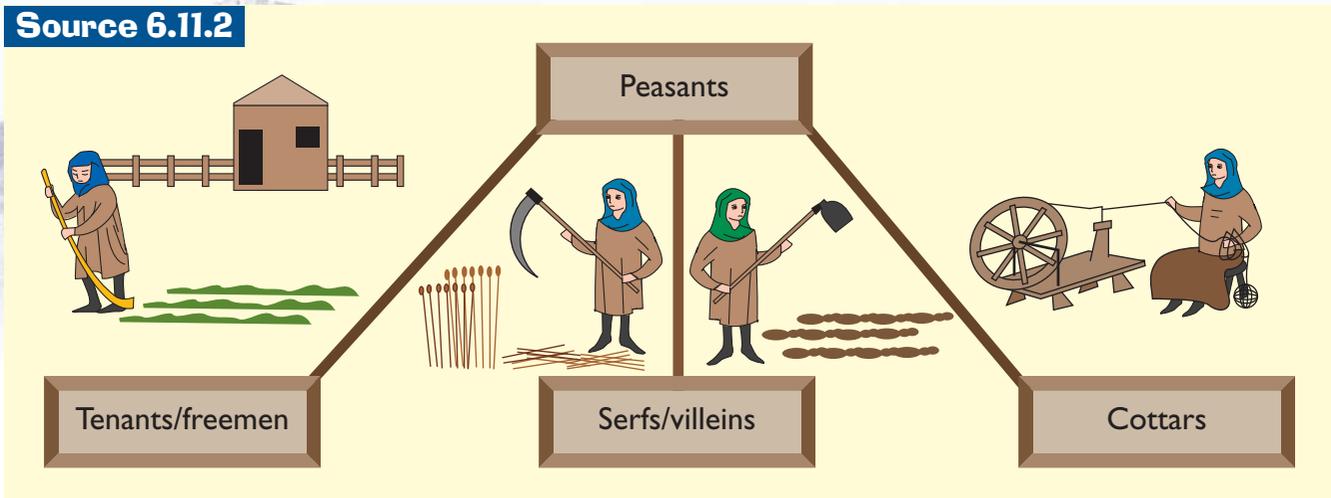
Peasants lived in villages of about 100 to 300 people, in houses located around the village green or along a pot-holed dirt road. Villages were usually located near a stream or river, which provided fresh water and a supply of fish. The villages and the land around them were called manors.



### Source 6.11.1

An artist's impression of the layout and features of a typical manor

## Source 6.11.2



A diagram showing the main groups of peasants living on the manor

Manors varied in size from about 900 to 3000 hectares and were owned or controlled by a lord (or lady). The lord's own farm area, which comprised about one-third of the total, was known as the **demesne**. The villagers farmed the rest of the land. Land which was too mountainous for farming was used for sheep and cattle rearing. In southern Europe, people took advantage of the warm climate by planting orchards and vineyards.

Every village had a 'common' which all villagers shared as grazing land for their animals. There was also a large manor house or castle, a church, a rectory, a mill and a tithe barn. The village also included the church land, known as the **glebe**, the lord's hunting forest, and fenced-in meadows where hay was grown.

The peasants lived in one- or two-roomed wooden huts with clay walls, unglazed window holes, dirt floors and thatched roofs. In winter they shared these lodgings with their animals. Each house had its own vegetable garden known as a 'toft'.

## HOW FARM WORK WAS ORGANISED

The manor was made up of a strictly organised community of workers. Some were tenants or freemen who had bought their freedom and paid rent and services for the land they used. The next group were serfs or **villeins**. These peasants were owned by the lord and worked three days a week on his land, as well as working on their own rented strips of land. This was known as 'week-work'. The other work they did for the lord was known as 'boon work', which meant five

days a week labour at harvest time. The third group of peasants were known as cottars. They had no land other than their cottage plot and survived by craftwork or by working for other peasants or for the lord of the manor.

## THE LORD'S POWER OVER THE PEASANTS

The lord of the manor had great power over the peasants who lived there. Villeins had to ask his permission before they could leave the village, get married, sell their animals, or have their children taught to read and write. Peasants had to pay a tax to the lord to use the lord's mill to make flour, the lord's oven to bake bread and the lord's brewery to make beer. Additional taxes had to be paid when sons were born or daughters were married. When the peasant died, the lord would usually claim a death duty in the form of the peasant's second-best animal.



### Check your understanding

1. Copy, label and colour the diagram of the manor in source 6.11.1. Write 10–15 lines to explain what it shows about the peasants' world. What do you think the tithe barn was used for?
2. Using the text and source 6.11.2, create a mind map to show the three different types of peasants and the main facts about each.
3. Which group of peasants would you have preferred to belong to? Give reasons for your answer.

# FARM WORK AND FARM TECHNOLOGY

The village farming land was organised on an open field system. This meant that farming land was not separated by fences, walls or hedges. The villagers divided the land into three fields. Each year one of the fields was left fallow (without a crop) to allow it to recover its fertility. The unfarmed land was used to graze cattle, which also provided it with a natural fertiliser. The two fields that were farmed were divided into 10-metre wide strips, which were separated from one another by raised unploughed land or ditches. Crops were rotated so that different nutrients were taken from the soil each year.

## Source 6.12.1



Medieval calendar depicting the 'labours of the months': the agricultural tasks appropriate to each month. These calendars began to appear in the ninth and tenth centuries.

Farming decisions were made at public meetings by whole communities, not by individuals. The land in each field was divided into strips. At this meeting, the land was distributed so each peasant had a share of good and poor land. Everyone had to plant the same crop in the two fields which were in use.

## LIFE ON THE FARM

Farm work was overseen by the reeve, an official chosen by the whole village. The reeve's task was to ensure that everyone started work early and put in a good day's work. The reeve also had to consult with the lord's representative to work out what services the villagers had to provide. He carried a white stick as a sign of his responsibilities.

Working hours were organised around the hours of daylight. In summer, work started at about 4.30 am and finished at about 7 pm. In winter, work started at about 6.30 am and finished at about 4 pm. Except for holidays, peasants worked a six-day week, with Sunday being a day of prayer and rest. The working year was organised on a seasonal cycle of planting, growing, harvesting and repair work.

## FARMING TECHNOLOGY

Farming technology was simple by twentieth century standards and farming always involved hard physical labour. Peasants used a billhook to keep the hedges in order and oxen to pull the plough. Soil which had not been broken up by the plough had to be broken up by hand using a harrow (a tool with metal spikes), which was also used to cover the seeds.

Sowing and planting seed and weeding were done by hand. Scythes (a curved blade on a long handle), sickles and rakes were used at harvest time. Peasants then had to use flails (a swinging stick with a long handle) to carry out the work of 'threshing' — separating the grains from the husks. 'Winnowing' — throwing the grain into the air to separate it from the unwanted chaff — was another manual task.

### Source 6.12.2

An overview of the peasants' annual farming activities

| Month            | Farming activity  |
|------------------|---|
| January          | Planting vegetables in the toft; collecting firewood  |
| February         | Ploughing   |
| March            | Sowing seed; harrowing; ploughing the fallow fields to stop weeds growing; removing weeds; pruning the vines  |
| April            | Gathering medicinal herbs and flowers   |
| May              | —   |
| June             | Shearing sheep; the hay harvest — making hay and storing it in the loft   |
| July             | Ploughing the fallow field; gathering hemp and flax and drying it ready for spinning  |
| August–September | Harvest time — the men cutting the crop with the scythe and the women tying it into sheaves; carting the crop away for storage in the lord's barn or the lofts of peasant houses; cutting ears of wheat high up with the sickle, using the straw left at the foot to feed the livestock; winnowing; allowing cultivated hemp and flax to ret (to soak it so it will soften by partial rotting) in the rivers; the grape harvest — treading grapes to make wine; ploughing |
| October          | Sowing the winter corn crop   |
| November         | —   |
| December         | Killing animals to be salted and smoked for the winter time; repairing tools and harnesses  |

### Source 6.12.3

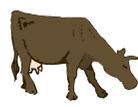


Farming scenes from the *Luttrell Psalter*, a book of psalms made between 1320 and 1340. These paintings decorated the margins of the book.

## Activities

### Check your understanding

1. Why was the 'open field' system given this name?
2. Copy the table below. Using the information provided, complete the table to show an example of how the three-field system of crop rotation worked.

| Year | Field 1   | Field 2   | Field 3   |
|------|---|---|---|
| 1285 | Wheat<br> | Fallow — animals grazing<br> | Barley<br> |
| 1286 |   |   |   |
| 1287 |   |   |   |

3. Who was the reeve and what were his duties?
4. List the different farming tools that have been mentioned in the text. Find out what they were used for and what they looked like, then draw them.

### Using sources

1. Where in source 6.12.1 can you see a sickle and a scythe? What are they being used for?
2. Work in pairs to match as many descriptions as possible in source 6.12.2 with the pictures shown in source 6.12.1. What differences do you notice and what might be the reasons for these?
3. Use sources 6.12.1 and 6.12.2 to answer the following.
  - (a) Why would many peasants have preferred the winter months? What complaints might they also have had about this period?
  - (b) Some villeins paid the lord a fine instead of providing labour services. How would this have helped them?
4. Use the information in the text to create suitable captions for the pictures in source 6.12.3.

# A MAN'S WORLD AND A WOMAN'S PLACE IN IT

Medieval women had few opportunities to be involved in making decisions about their own lives or the world around them. The Catholic Church taught that women were inferior to men and that their most important task was to be obedient daughters or wives and good mothers.

## MARRIAGE AND BABIES

Women usually had an arranged marriage at about 14 years of age. A noblewoman married someone who would add to her family's wealth and influence. A peasant woman married another peasant. The law treated women as the property of their husbands.

Early medieval marriages often consisted of only an agreement between the two families and the decision that the couple would live together. Gradually, the Catholic Church encouraged couples to make a public commitment by having a church ceremony in which the priest gave a blessing. The girl's family was expected to provide her husband with a **dowry** which could be in the form of money, land, animals, clothing or household goods, depending on what they could afford. Church courts did not allow divorce although they sometimes allowed couples to legally separate.

Women often had more than 10 children because there was no reliable form of contraception available to them and because the Church taught them that it was their duty to have children, preferably sons. Despite the restrictions on their lives, women found ways to contribute and take on responsibilities in important political, religious, economic and social roles in medieval society.

## THE LADY OF THE MANOR

The lady of the manor often had to take charge while her husband was absent fighting enemies or serving the king. Apart from running her husband's large household and looking after the sick, the noblewoman would make sure that the estate was in good repair and running efficiently. If necessary, she would organise the defence of her husband's property against his enemies.

### Source 6.13.1



An image of womanhood from a medieval manuscript in the Bodleian Library, Oxford

## THE NUN IN THE CONVENT

A young woman entered the convent to devote her life to God and live away from the rest of society. As well as completing seven prayer services between 2 am and 8 pm each day, nuns spent about five hours each day in farm work, cooking, providing care for the sick, carpentry, looking after the convent's finances and teaching the children of wealthy families.

Usually only noblewomen became nuns. A poor family could not afford the dowry that the convent required and would not want to lose their daughter as a worker. Male relatives sometimes forced wealthy noblewomen to enter a convent, then took control of the money or lands the women had inherited.

Apart from entering a convent, those who wanted to devote their lives to God and helping others could join communities of **Beguines**. These groups, which also included wealthy women, allowed women to assist people in need while still having the freedom to take part in town life. Beguines relied on donations and often lived in houses grouped together.

## THE PEASANT WOMAN

The peasant woman contributed in a number of ways to the family's income and survival. As well as housework and child-rearing, she had to take care of the family's vegetable patch, look after the animals which produced the family's food, make cloth for the family's clothes (or to sell for extra money) by spinning and weaving, and help with the farm work.

## WOMEN IN THE TOWNS

Unmarried girls often went searching for work in the towns. Here, they could learn a trade by undergoing a seven-year apprenticeship. Women might work selling food, fabrics or clothing or work in female-dominated trades such as embroidery, silk-making, spinning and brewing. Women in towns also worked as **apothecaries** (chemists), blacksmiths, bookbinders, butchers, goldsmiths, ironmongers or makers of armour. However, men often refused to let women join the craft **guilds** which would give them acceptance within a particular trade.

### RETROfile

- The word 'spinster', used to describe unmarried women, came about because many unmarried women earned a living by spinning yarn.
- Welsh law *did* allow divorce and a woman could divorce a man for having bad breath!

### Source 6.13.2



A farming scene from the margin decorations of the *Luttrell Psalter*, a fourteenth-century book of psalms

## Activities

### Check your understanding

1. What was the role which medieval society expected females to follow?
2. List two restrictions on their independence.
3. In what ways might the life of a nun or Beguine have given women greater freedom than they would have had otherwise?
4. Why might some nuns have been unwilling to take their duties seriously?
5. What work did women do that showed they had many skills beyond those of motherhood?

### Using sources

Use sources 6.13.1 and 6.13.2 to answer the following questions.

1. What type of women are shown?
2. What are they shown to be doing?
3. Why do you think these pictures were created?

### Researching and communicating

Research one of the following women of medieval Europe. Create either a poster, a desktop published document or a multimedia presentation advertising her achievements and her contribution to medieval society.

- Alix of Vergy
- Blanche of Castile
- Bridget of Sweden
- Christine de Pisan
- Eleanor of Aquitaine
- Emma of Normandy
- the abbess Heloise
- Hilda of Whitby
- Hildegard of Bingen
- Joan of Arc
- Margaret Beaufort
- Margaret Paston
- Margery Kempe
- Matilda of Normandy

# LIVING IN CASTLES

Castles had to be homes as well as buildings for protection and control. The lord, lady and their family lived there and so did their servants and soldiers. Other permanent or semi-permanent residents could include important prisoners who had been captured in battle and were being held for ransom.

The keep was the main building of the castle. It was three or four storeys high and its rooms were dark, large and often cold. Visitors came to the keep by crossing the drawbridge over the moat and then going through the portcullis into the bailey. This was a large courtyard with stables, animal pens and perhaps also garden areas.

The lowest level of the castle was below ground. This was where you would find the storerooms, the well that provided the castle's water supply and the dungeons. The guard rooms and soldiers' quarters were on the next level up and the chapel was often also on this level. The chapel usually had decorative carved stonework and **frescoes** — artworks painted directly onto the walls.

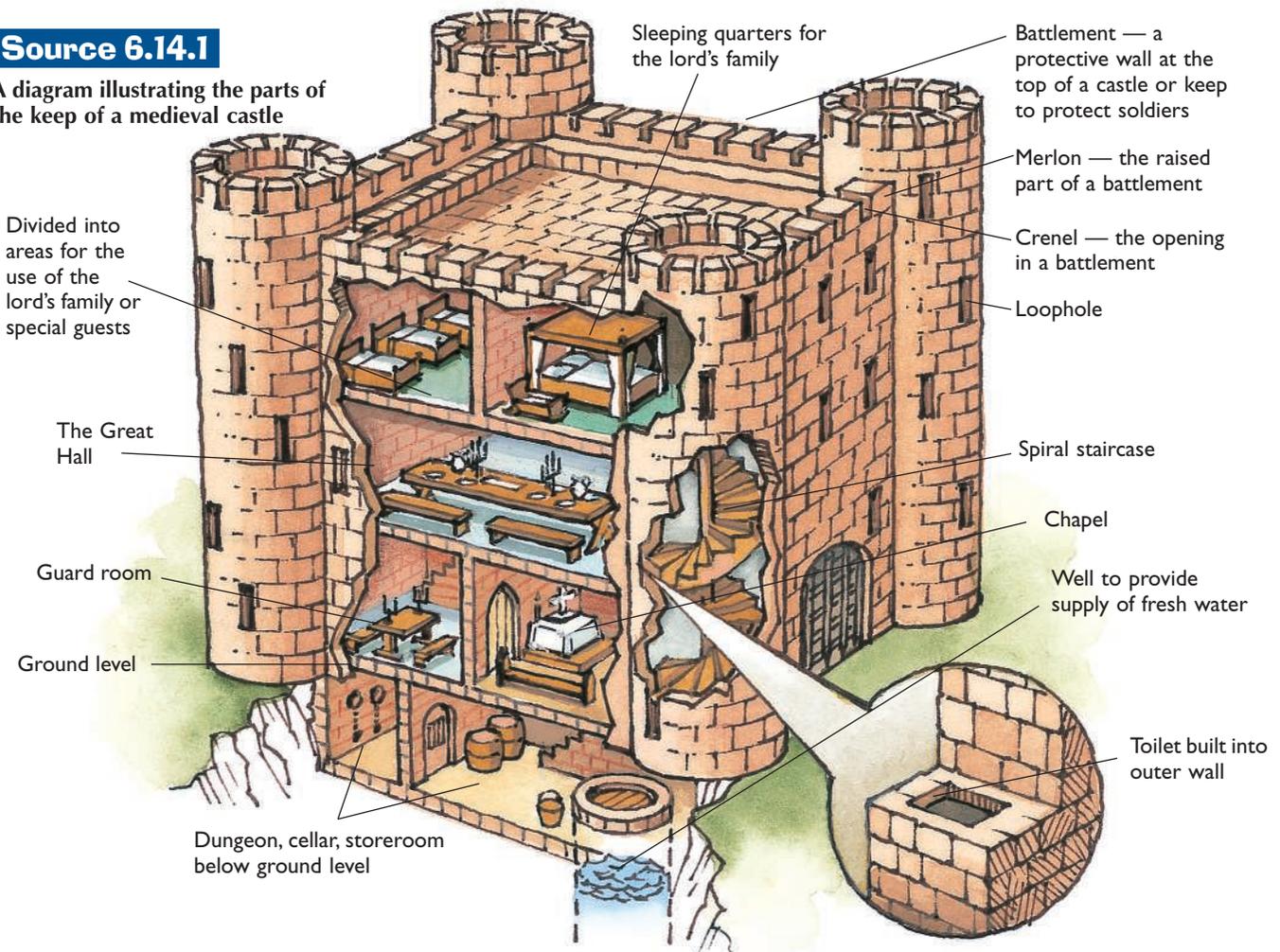
The Great Hall was on the next level. It took up most of the floor of the castle and was the main area where the castle community came together for banquets. The lord also used this area as a place to meet important guests, organise the running of his estate and administer the law. Soldiers and less important guests slept on the straw mattresses in the Great Hall.

The castle banquet was one of the most important events in the Great Hall. The lord, his lady and important guests sat at a special table across one end of the room. They looked out on the benches and trestle tables used by their less important guests. Minstrels and jesters provided entertainment. Dogs roamed freely, picking at the bones and food scraps that accumulated on the straw or rush-covered floors.

Castles were cold and draughty in winter. Open fires provided heat and plenty of smoke. There were no chimneys, and servants put coverings on the wall openings to try and keep in the warmth. To minimise the danger of accidental

## Source 6.14.1

A diagram illustrating the parts of the keep of a medieval castle

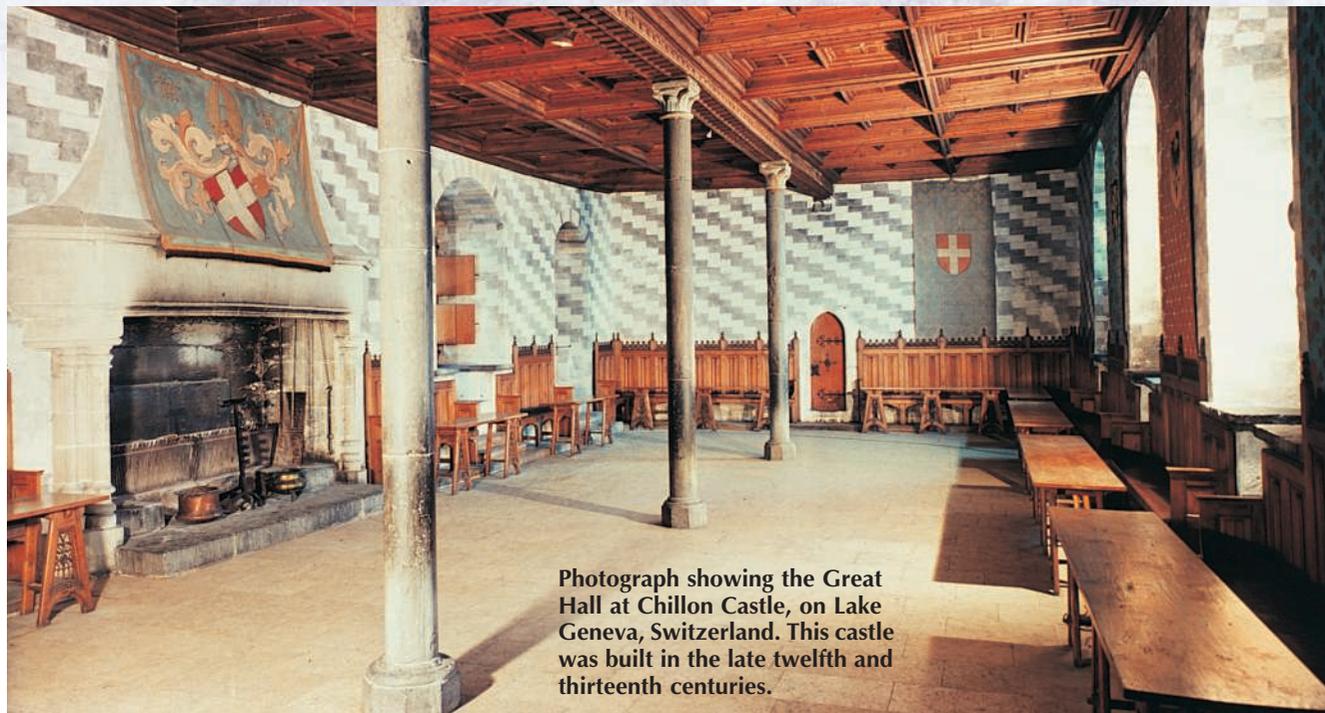


fires, castle architects often located kitchens in separate buildings linked by a passageway to the castle keep.

People climbed a spiral staircase to get from floor to floor. For the lord and lady this meant a

long walk to their private quarters on the top floor. The garderobe (castle toilet) was located in a small opening off the stairs. It was just a raised platform with a hole in it so that human waste products could fall into the moat below.

### Source 6.14.2



Photograph showing the Great Hall at Chillon Castle, on Lake Geneva, Switzerland. This castle was built in the late twelfth and thirteenth centuries.

## Activities

### Check your understanding

Copy the drawing in source 6.14.1 onto the centre of a sheet of A3 paper. Use it as the basis of a mind map to record information from the text and other sources about each of the main areas of the castle keep. Draw pictures to indicate some of the activities that would have taken place in each area.

### Using sources

Use source 6.14.2 to identify:

- features of this room which show its links with medieval times
- changes which you think have been made to this room since medieval times.

### Researching

People felt more secure if they lived around a castle and, as a result, towns began to grow from what had once been villages. Many townspeople who lived outside the castle walls had special skills which were needed for castle life. Find out the meanings of each of the crafts listed in column A and match it with the correct job description from column B.

#### Column A

Bottler  
Pantler  
Cooper  
Mason  
Spinster  
Farrier  
Bowyer  
Lorimer  
Biller  
Scullion  
Steward  
Cook  
Atilliator  
Chandler  
Gong farmer

#### Column B

Controlled the servants and acted as a deputy when the master was away  
In charge of the kitchen  
Made axes  
In charge of the buttery and drinks  
Washed the dishes and platters  
Repaired stonework  
In charge of pantry provisions  
Shoed the horses  
Made barrels for storage  
Made crossbows  
Cleaned out the cesspit  
Made bows  
Spun wool  
Made leather straps  
Made candles

Find out which of these crafts are still practised today.

### Worksheets

- Complete this castle crossword
- Secret castle mission

# FOOD AND FEASTING

People of the medieval world had nowhere near the variety of food available to them that we have. Everyone's diet reflected the food that was available in the local area and the success of the harvest.

People's eating habits were also restricted by the rules of the Church. Church rules decreed that people could not eat meat either on Fridays or during the Church seasons of Advent (just before Christmas) or Lent (just before Easter).

## EATING LIKE A PEASANT

When the harvest was good, ordinary people ate much the same foods at the same times of day year in and year out (see source 6.15.1).

### Source 6.15.1

Typical meals of the peasantry

| Time of the day | Food and drink  |
|-----------------|---|
| 5.00 am         | Bread and water or ale  |
| 11.00 am        | Bread, cheese, ale or water (and perhaps also an onion or herb) |
| 6.00 pm         | Bread, cheese, <b>pottage</b> and ale                           |

Peasants used easily obtainable herbs like basil, mint, parsley, rosemary, sage and thyme to make their food more tasty. In the winter time, they would salt or smoke whatever meat was available. This provided them with extra food for two or three months (until the meat became rotten). When the harvest was poor, people ate whatever they could — even dogs or cats.

## EATING LIKE A LORD

The nobility had the opportunity to eat a far greater variety of food than the peasantry (see source 6.15.2). Their forests, which were 'off-limits' to the peasants except for supplies of timber or firewood, provided an ample source of wild animals for meat. These included deer, squirrels, rabbits and wild boar. The lord also

had a constant supply of doves, peacocks and other forms of poultry on the lands around the manor house. The nobility didn't like eating vegetables because they thought these were a food for the lower class.

### Source 6.15.2

Typical meals of the nobility

| Time of the day | Food and drink                               |
|-----------------|--|
| 6.00 am         | Good quality bread (manchets), meat and wine |
| 10.00 am        | Six to 30 types of savoury and sweet dishes  |
| 6.00 pm         | A smaller number of meat and sweet dishes    |
| 9.00 pm         | Bread and wine                               |

The lord and lady of the household expected their servants to organise feasts which would impress guests. The food had to be delicious, served in an imaginative way and presented with a fanfare of trumpets. The meal began when the lord took a pinch of salt from the salt cellar placed near him. He began his meal after a servant had tasted it first, to check if it had been poisoned.

The highlight of each course was the arrival of a special dish called a **subtlety**. This might be a huge model of a castle, or something as spectacular, which had been created from moulded pastry or marzipan. Other foods included roasted quail, geese, swan, pigs and deer, wild boar cooked on the spit and pots of stew. A servant would collect leftover food into **alms** baskets and take it to the castle gate, where the poor would gather to wait for it.

Instead of plates, the nobility had all their food served onto thick slices of stale bread known as 'trenchers'. Guests sat on benches and ate with knives, spoons and their fingers. Expensive spices such as cinnamon, cloves, ginger and pepper were imported from Asia and used to give food flavour.

**Source 6.15.3**



A medieval banquet celebrating New Year. The picture comes from the famous calendar *Les Tres Riches Heures du Duc de Berry*, produced by the Limbourg brothers between 1413 and 1416.

**RETROfile**

At a feast in honour of the Holy Roman Emperor in 1365, the guests were served by knights on horseback who carried the plates of food on the points of their lances.

**A**ctivities 

**Check your understanding**

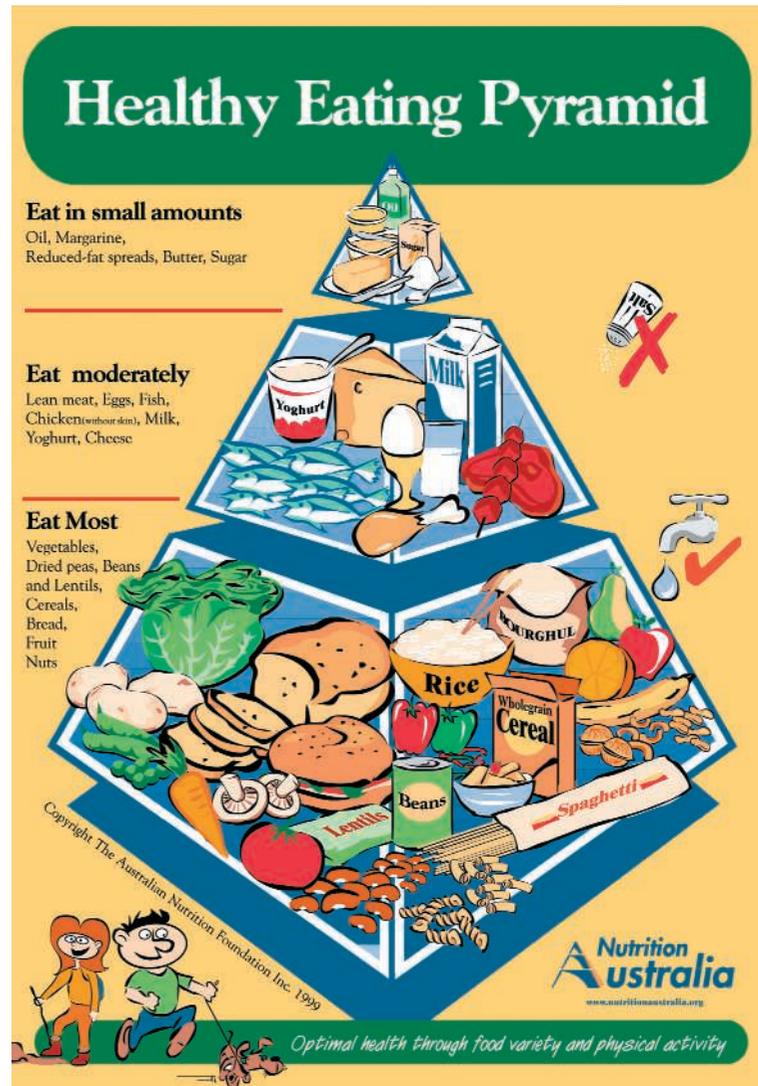
1. List two things which limited people's choice of food in the medieval era.
2. Why did the nobility have more choices of food available than the peasantry did?
3. Why did the peasantry flavour their food in different ways to those used by the nobility?
4. What differences would you expect to notice between eating customs and table manners in the medieval era and those of our own time?

5. How did peasants preserve their food?
6. What precaution did lords often take before eating?

**Using sources**

1. Compare the peasant's diet (source 6.15.1) and the noble's diet (source 6.15.2) to the following healthy eating pyramid, which is now used as a guide to healthy eating. Which group had the better eating habits? Give reasons for your answer.

**Source 6.15.4**



**Healthy eating pyramid**

2. Use source 6.15.3 to answer the following questions.
  - (a) What kinds of serving dishes and utensils can you see in this picture?
  - (a) How can we tell that the people in the picture belong to a wealthy household?
  - (b) What does the picture indicate about the eating habits of the nobility?

# GAMES AND LEISURE TIME

People in medieval society celebrated births, betrothals, marriages, religious festivals, farming festivals and festivals based on superstitions and traditions from earlier pagan (pre-Christian) times. When the Catholic Church realised that it could not completely wipe out pagan superstitions, it adapted the dates of its own festivals to coincide with those of the old pagan festivals.

## Source 6.16.1

| Original date | Pagan festival   | Christian festival  |
|---------------|--|---|
| 22–23 April   | Ceremonies to protect farm animals   | Festival of St George   |
| 21 March      | Sacred day of the Earth Goddess  | Lady Day (25 March); near the time of Christ's resurrection from the dead |
| 21–22 June    | Midsummer Eve  | St John's day (24 June)   |
| 1 November    | Ceremonies to keep the sun strong during the winter months                   | All Saints Day (1 November)   |
| Late December | Ancient Roman feast of Saturnalia; also the Feast of Yule in northern Europe | The celebration of the birth of Christ (25 December)                      |

Table showing how Christian festivals were made to coincide with the old pagan festivals

Gradually, the year's calendar was organised around the religious feasts of the Catholic Church. Work stopped to celebrate the important feasts of Palm Sunday, Easter and Christmas. These 'holidays' were really 'holy days', when people would attend church, watch plays based on stories from the Bible, and celebrate by joining in banquets, singing folk songs and dancing to pipe and drum music.

Travelling acrobats, stilt-dancers, **troubadours** and actors entertained people with outdoor performances in villages. Some musicians trained bears to dance and perform acrobatics in time to their music. Many enjoyed the popular, though cruel, spectator sports of bear-baiting and cockfighting.

## Source 6.16.2



Artist's impression of different types of village entertainment

## GAMES AND AMUSEMENTS

Nobles often played games and sports which kept them in training for war or other military activities. The main sports available to upper class males were the tournament (involving jousting and a mock battle known as a *mêlée*), hunting, hawking, the quintain, and a game which is known as royal tennis (or in French, *jeu de paume*). There was very little provision for female sport, although noblewomen did go hunting and hawking.

Men and women also enjoyed board games such as chess, Nine Men's Morris and Fox and Geese. Other forms of amusement were those associated with feasting, dancing and being entertained by minstrels, acrobats and jesters.

The nobles were reluctant to play the same games as the peasantry, and the peasants were restricted either by law or by finances from playing the games of the rich.

Men of the peasant classes played games involving little equipment and various forms of fighting. These included quarterstaff, wrestling, swordplay and shin-hacking. Another popular

**Source 6.16.3** *Children's Games*, 1560. Flemish artist Pieter Brueghel shows here games children played between periods of work.



game was an early form of football played with an unlimited number of players, no rules and virtually no restrictions on the tactics which could be used to gain hold of the ball.

## Activities

### Check your understanding

1. What types of events did people celebrate in medieval times?
2. Why do you think the Catholic Church created religious festivals to coincide with pagan ones?
3. What similarities are there between the ways people celebrated in medieval times and the ways they celebrate today?
4. What forms of medieval entertainment would be unacceptable nowadays and why?
5. Check the dictionary meanings of sports mentioned in this section. Which sport do you think you would have liked the most and why?

### Using sources

1. Use source 6.16.1 to identify which pagan feast came to be celebrated as the time of Christ's birth. Give one other example of a pagan feast which became a Christian one.
2. Write a suitable caption for each of the activities shown in source 6.16.2.
3. List five games you can recognise from source 6.16.3.
4. What similarities do you notice about the ways children amused themselves in Brueghel's painting and the ways they amuse themselves today?
5. Do you think Brueghel's painting is an artist's impression or an accurate snapshot? Explain your reasons.

### Researching and communicating

Choose one of the following research topics. Work in groups to create a large collage illustrating your topic. Add a verbal commentary to fully explain what your picture represents.

- Feasting in the great hall
- At the tournament
- At the hunt
- A peasant's wedding
- Bear-baiting
- Medieval board games

# CENTRES OF LEARNING

Most medieval Europeans were unable to read and write. Schools as we know them did not exist. As soon as they were old enough, children of peasant families went to work in the fields, while children of lower-class townsfolk helped in the family business. Opportunities for education were mainly limited to children of the upper and middle classes and to those who wanted to join the clergy.

A lord's son might be educated in a monastery school or as a page within another noble household. A lord's daughter might be sent to a convent for an education, but was usually educated at home under the guidance of a private tutor and female relatives. Sometimes monasteries provided classes for poorer children, and some churches established 'song schools' which trained choirboys and provided education in basic reading skills.

## Source 6.17.1



An extract from a medieval manuscript showing students and their teacher

The growth of towns and trade encouraged a demand for more educated people. Merchants, guilds and town councils donated money to

purchase books and employ teachers. The 'grammar schools' that they established provided their male pupils with a sound knowledge of written and spoken Latin. Latin was the common language among educated Europeans, as well as the language used in trade negotiations.

Pupils were all taught together in the same room regardless of age differences (from seven to about 14 years of age) or differences in their stage of learning. Education was expensive because of the high cost of manuscripts and homework was rare because students did not have textbooks or reference books. Teachers dictated notes to their students and students learned their lessons by heart.

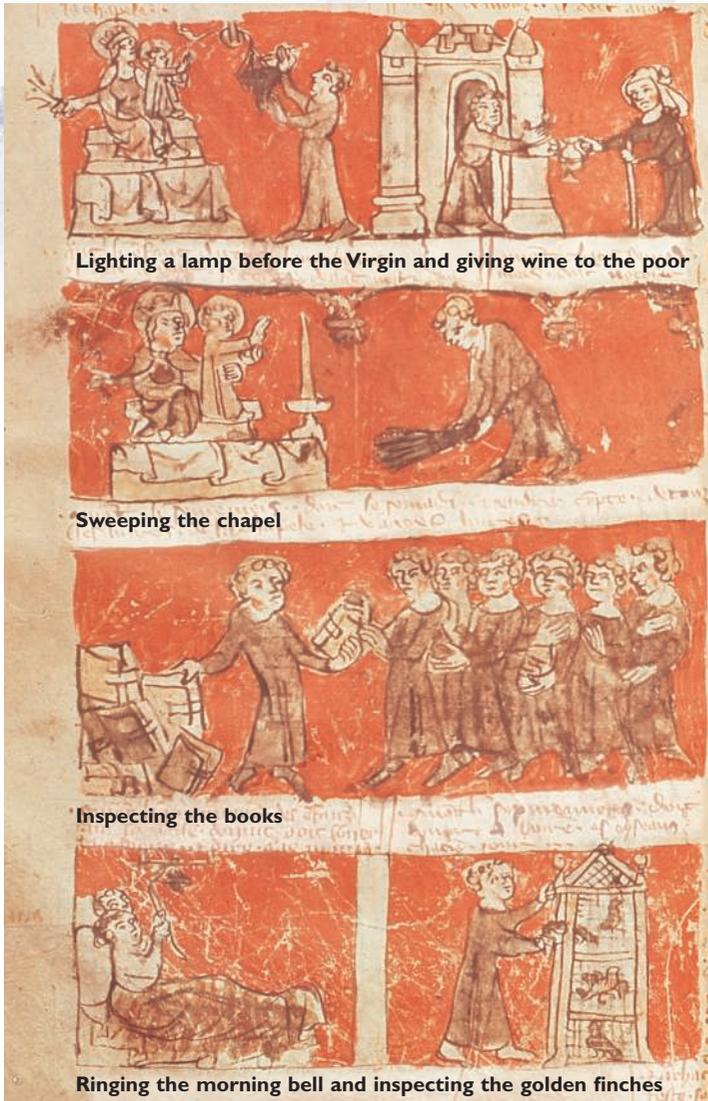
## GAINING ENTRY TO UNIVERSITY

Students were eligible for university once they were literate and able to understand basic Latin grammar (from 12 to 14 years of age). Students wishing to study law went to one of the Italian universities. Medical students attended either the medical school at Salerno (Italy) or the University of Montpellier (France). Salerno was a popular choice because students there could learn the superior knowledge of Greek and Arabic medicine. The universities of Paris and Oxford catered especially for students of religion or philosophy. All teaching was in Latin, making it easier for students to study in a number of different countries.

## GAINING A DEGREE

A Bachelor of Arts degree took between 18 months to two years to achieve. Students first studied the trivium (grammar, logic and rhetoric) and then the quadrivium (arithmetic, astronomy, geometry and music). Then came an oral examination, after which the successful student could continue studying for up to six more years to gain a Master of Arts degree. However, the hardships of university life meant it was rare for more than ten per cent of students to graduate in any year.

### Source 6.17.2



Lighting a lamp before the Virgin and giving wine to the poor

Sweeping the chapel

Inspecting the books

Ringing the morning bell and inspecting the golden finches

An illustration from a fourteenth-century manuscript from Paris showing aspects of a student's university life

## LEARNING WASN'T MEANT TO BE EASY

Lecturers read from books while students listened, talked or dozed off. Few lecturers encouraged discussion or questioning of the information they presented. Universities expected lecturers to uphold the teachings of the Catholic Church or risk being dismissed. Living conditions for students were difficult and uncomfortable, especially in winter when they were forbidden to have fires in their rooms even though there may have been no glass in the windows. Libraries kept their precious handwritten books safely chained in a chest or to a wall or table. Students could borrow books, but had to copy out their contents by hand.

### Source 6.17.3

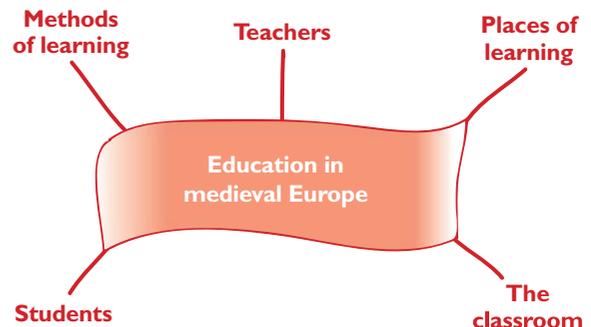
An extract from *Sic et Non* ('So and Not-so') by Peter Abelard, a twelfth-century teacher at the University of Paris, explaining his ideas about the purpose of education

All learning depends on the earnest and frequent asking of questions. We may not be very definite in our answers to some questions, but as Aristotle said, it is very useful to have doubts about the truth of something. For by doubting we come to enquiring, and by enquiring we find the truth, just as Jesus said: 'Seek and ye shall find, knock and it will be opened unto you'.

## Activities

### Check your understanding

1. Work in pairs to discuss and create a mind map showing the main features of education in medieval Europe. Use the headings and layout below as a guideline. Record your answers in visual form by replacing the words in red with pictures.



2. List two differences between university education in the Middle Ages and in Australia today.
3. Which hardship of student life do you think would have been the most difficult to bear? Give reasons for your answer.

### Using sources

1. What does source 6.17.1 show you about teaching and learning in the medieval era?
2. What does source 6.17.2 tell us about some of the duties of a medieval student?
3. (a) What does source 6.17.3 tell us about what Peter Abelard thought was the most important way of learning?  
(b) Why would he have been criticised by other teachers of his time?  
(c) How would people regard his ideas today?

### Worksheets

- 6.7 Complete this comparison table

# HEALTH, HYGIENE, DISEASE AND DEATH

## HEALTH AND HYGIENE

People in medieval Europe had different habits of personal hygiene to us. Peasants had baths only once or twice a year. Wealthy people might bathe more frequently as they had servants to heat and carry the water from the kitchen stove to the bathtub. The wealthy could also afford the public sweating-rooms found in large cities like Paris. These rooms had separate bathing areas for men and women and provided steam baths or, for a higher price, a wooden bathtub of water.

In medieval times there were no local councils to set rules and regulations about town planning or hygiene issues. There were no garbage collections or sewerage systems either. Rubbish and human waste were both thrown into the streets. During heavy rains mud and filth would flow in rivers and creeks, which were also the source of drinking water. Rats were a common problem and fleas were frequently found in people's clothing and bedding. The medieval world was therefore an environment in which diseases could thrive.

## LIFE EXPECTANCY AND MEDICAL KNOWLEDGE

People didn't live very long in the medieval era. There was no real understanding of the causes of disease. Two out of every 10 babies died in the first 12 months of life. Many children died before they were five years old. People who reached the age of 20 would probably live until they were 40. Wealthier people, who could afford trained doctors, might live up to 10 years longer.

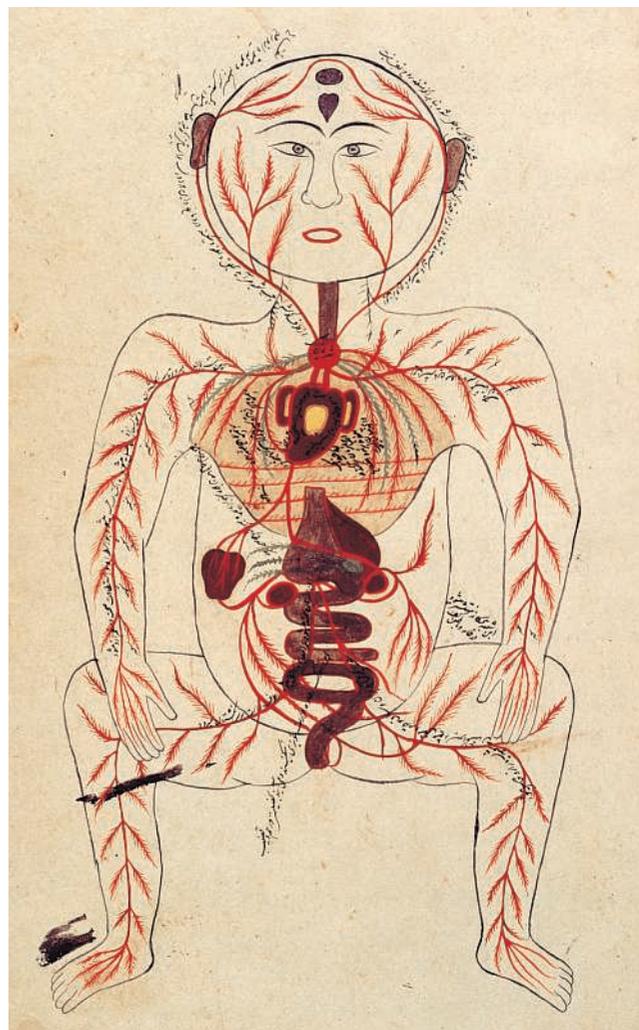
There were not many trained doctors in Europe during the Middle Ages, and medical knowledge was basic and usually ineffective. For example, in Paris in 1274 there were only eight doctors and about 40 people practising medicine without any official training. Ordinary people relied on the often helpful herbal cures of the village 'wise woman'.

Even those who were trained had very little knowledge about how the body worked and why people became ill. Religious faith discouraged the use of bodies for research, making it difficult for

greater knowledge about medicine to develop. In making a diagnosis, a doctor might consult medical books, astrological charts and urine samples. Some doctors believed disease was caused by bad smells or small worms. Others blamed bad luck or the position of the planets or stars. Another theory was that the patient had four 'humours' which had to be kept correctly balanced in order to stay healthy.

Despite their lack of accurate knowledge, doctors charged high fees, often because the ingredients for their 'cures' had to be imported from outside Europe.

### Source 6.18.1



A diagram from a medieval medical book

### Source 6.18.2

A twelfth-century opinion of doctors and their fees from John of Salisbury, a famous English scholar

Doctors have two favourite sayings, 'Do not work where there is no money' and 'Get your fee while the patient is in pain'. Truly, they think it beneath them to help the poor if they cannot pay.

## TREATING DISEASES

In medieval Europe, people looked to God to save them from diseases they did not yet know how to cure by any other means. People in our own time still express this idea when they say 'bless you' when someone sneezes.

Few people really understood either what disease was or how it spread from one person to another. People used leeches to suck the 'bad' blood from someone's veins and laughed at people who displayed symptoms of mental illness. They did not know about germs or how cleanliness, sanitation and sterilising medical equipment could prevent their spread. Patients who underwent operations risked death from both infection passed on through unsterilised medical instruments and the shock of the pain that had to be endured in a world without anaesthetics.

## THE BLACK DEATH

The bubonic plague, or 'Black Death', was one of the most disastrous events of the medieval period. Between 25 and 30 million Europeans died over the four years from 1347 to 1351.

During the thirteenth century, the population of Europe increased rapidly, but people were unable to increase food production at the same rate. Changes in weather conditions (known as the Little Ice Age) from the early fourteenth century caused poor harvests and sometimes famine. People became ill easily because they did not have enough food. Those who caught a serious illness had little chance of survival. At this time, 'the plague' broke out in Europe.

### How the plague spread

The plague began in China in the 1320s. It infected Europeans in 1347 as a result of the Mongol siege of the port of Caffa. Caffa was defended by merchants and sailors from the Italian town of Genoa. The Genoese were defeated, but were able to continue their trade.

They brought the plague with them when they returned to Europe. When it became known that the Genoese sailors were infected with the plague, their ships were greeted with burning arrows and refused entry into any Italian ports. The French, unaware of the danger, allowed the ships to berth at their port of Marseilles.

Over the next four years, the plague spread inland throughout most of the cities, towns and villages of western Europe. English soldiers on leave from the Hundred Years War carried the disease with them back to England in 1348.

### Source 6.18.3

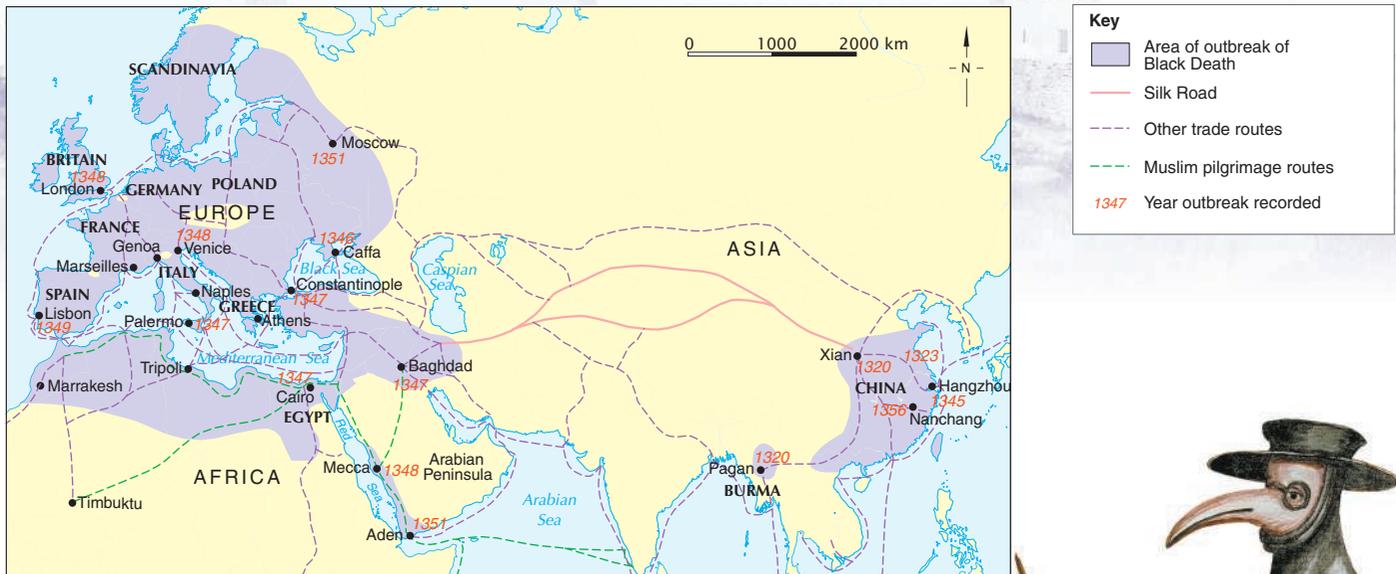


Caring for the sick and dying

### Symptoms and treatments

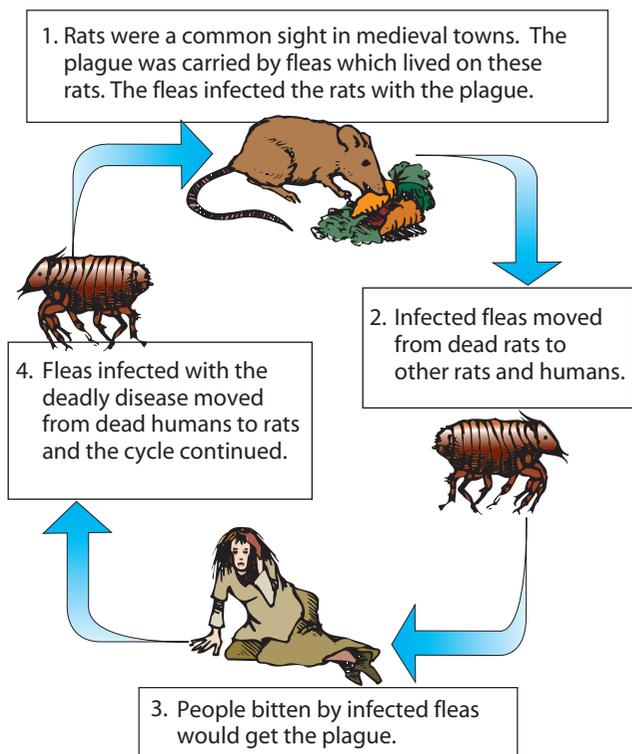
People at the time described a range of plague symptoms, including vomiting, coughing up blood, and the growth of large, painful, itchy blue-black tumours ('buboes') in the groin and armpits. These buboes gradually spread over the entire body and emitted blood, pus and horrible smells. The victim usually died within three to five days of the appearance of the initial symptoms.

## Source 6.18.4



A map showing the spread of the Black Death

## Source 6.18.5



The link between rats and the plague was confirmed 500 years after the major outbreak with the discovery of the bacteria *Yersinia pestis*, carried from rats to humans by fleas.

Doctors and apothecaries could not cure the plague because they did not really understand the cause of it. They used treatments which they used for most other illnesses. Many doctors believed that all disease resulted from bad

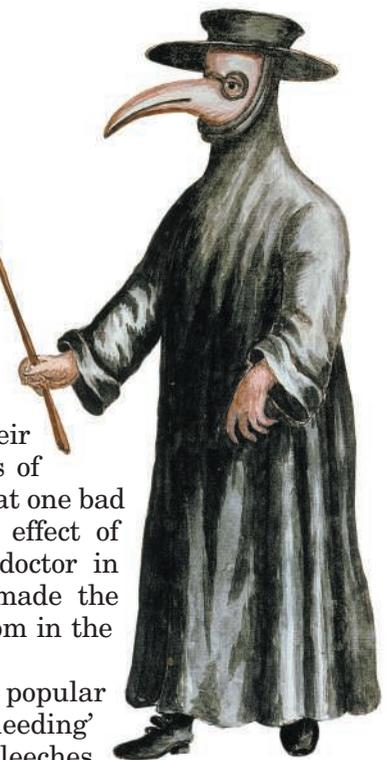
smells. They prescribed posies of herbs or pleasant-smelling crushed flowers, which the patient would sniff by means of a nosebag.

Some doctors advised their patients to inhale the smells of human waste in the belief that one bad smell would counteract the effect of another. The most famous doctor in Europe, Guy de Chauliac, made the Pope sit in a smoke-filled room in the hope of avoiding the plague.

Doctors also used the popular medieval treatment of 'bleeding' the patient. They attached leeches to key veins, chosen according to guidance from astrology. Doctors also cut into the buboes to remove what was thought to be the 'bad' blood within them. Then they covered the cuts with a herbal ointment. Nothing worked. Despite covering their noses with cloths soaked in vinegar while treating plague victims, many doctors died before their patients.

### Coping with the plague years

The wealthy obtained a temporary escape from the plague by moving away from an infected area. People who believed that the plague was God's way of punishing their swearing and gambling took to prayer and pilgrimages to holy places.



## Source 6.18.6

Seventeenth-century illustration of a doctor wearing a mask thought to protect him from plague

The most famous group hoping to please God, and so avoid the plague, was the Flagellants. They travelled from town to town, whipping themselves with strips of leather tipped with iron spikes. The Pope eventually banned the movement and many Flagellants were executed.

## Source 6.18.7



A fifteenth-century illustration of the Flagellants, from the Constance Chronicles

People also depicted the plague in plays and nursery rhymes. The *danse macabre* was a play performed throughout Europe. The actors dressed as skeletons representing people from all classes and danced a dance of death.

### Death and burial

During the plague years, there was often neither the time nor the people to carry out the rituals linked with death and dying. About 40 per cent of priests died. Others ran away. There was no-one to hear a final confession, ring the death bell, or conduct a proper funeral service.

People boarded up the houses of plague victims, and painted a red cross on them. No-one was allowed out until the nightly corpse collection took place. Criminals or poor people earned money by doing this work. Towns sometimes left bodies to rot in the streets, or buried them so hastily that they were easy prey for animals.

### The changing world

The Black Death had a dramatic effect on life in medieval Europe. About one-third of the European population died from the plague.

In some districts there were few landlords or labourers left to look after the farms. The shortage of workers also meant that survivors

could bargain for better wages. The feudal economy was beginning to change.

The plague also affected people's attitudes towards the wealthy and powerful. People lost their respect for both the Church and doctors, because neither could control the crisis. Poor people became angry when the rich abandoned the towns and manors to look after their own safety. In England, this anger built on other grievances, and eventually erupted in the Peasants' Revolt of 1381. Jewish people also became a target of people's anger, and thousands were tortured or massacred throughout Europe.

The Plague left Europe in 1351, but returned at least once a decade for the next 150 years.



### Check your understanding

1. List the habits of medieval life that made disease a common problem.
2. What two signs are there of the Church's influence in medieval medicine?
3. List three reasons why it would have been difficult to obtain good medical advice in the Middle Ages.

### Using sources

1. Compare source 6.18.1 with a modern diagram of a human body. What can you learn from this about medieval doctors' knowledge of the body?
2. What two opinions about doctors does John of Salisbury's comment indicate? (See source 6.18.2.)
3. What does source 6.18.3 show us about conditions in a medieval place for the sick?

### Researching and communicating

1. Find out more about the four humours that were supposed to keep the body in balance. Create a poster to illustrate these beliefs.
2. What do our local councils do to prevent the problems which led to disease in medieval times?
3. What protection do governments provide today to ensure that all Australians can get medical care?
4. Many people claim the nursery rhyme 'Ring a ring o' rosies' is about the plague. To find out more about this theory, go to [www.jaconline.com.au/retroactive/retroactive1](http://www.jaconline.com.au/retroactive/retroactive1) and click on the Plague Nursery Rhyme weblink. Then click on the Ring o' Rosies Myth weblink. Why does this second author claim that the story can't be true?
5. To learn more about the bacteria that cause bubonic plague, go to [www.jaconline.com.au/retroactive/retroactive1](http://www.jaconline.com.au/retroactive/retroactive1) and click on the *Yersinia Pestis* weblink.

### Worksheets

- 6.8 Compare medieval and 21st-century medical knowledge
- 6.9 Create the journal of a plague doctor

# TOWNS AND TRADE: MOVING TOWARDS A NEW WORLD

As the years passed, some medieval villages began to grow into towns and some towns into cities. People felt more secure if they lived around a large monastery or castle. Few towns had more than 2000 inhabitants and cities such as Florence and Paris still had populations of only about 200 000 people. Trade (exchanging or buying food and other items) took place more easily in settlements located at a harbour, a crossroads or at the junction of two rivers.

## INSIDE A MEDIEVAL TOWN

Medieval towns were usually surrounded by thick walls so that the people who lived there could be protected from any enemies. People came into the town through one of the gates in its walls and rode or walked along its narrow, cobbled and winding streets.

The centre of the town was the most important area. It contained the church or cathedral, the marketplace and important business and administrative buildings. This was also where the fine stone houses of wealthy merchants were located, as well as the timber dwellings of those who were moderately successful. The poor lived in cramped and overcrowded timber cottages nearer the town walls.

Most towns held small markets two or three times each week in a large square. Farmers from the surrounding countryside sold what the townsfolk could not provide for themselves. People bought goods in large quantities — whole cheeses, sacks of grain, large containers of butter and cartloads of firewood. Stall holders encouraged people to buy other, less essential items, such as ale, candles, pottery, shoes, knives and clothes. Because so few people could read, shop signs had pictures to show what goods or services were available.

### Source 6.19.1



A painting showing the town of Chartres in France in 1568

Medieval towns were dirty and foul-smelling. Rubbish and human excrement were thrown into open drains, where animals and vermin fed off it before it flowed into the river. Scavengers were paid to remove rubbish, but could not keep up with the problem. The English town of Lincoln had a reputation for being so filthy that by the mid-fourteenth century, foreign merchants were refusing to trade there.

## THE TOWN CHARTER

Townsppeople still owed labour and taxes to the local landowner until they either fought or paid him to grant the town a charter. The **charter** gave the townspeople freedom from the duties of the feudal system as well as a number of rights, such as the right to:

- hold a market, control prices and ensure honest trading
- make and administer laws
- elect a mayor and town council and form their own trade guilds.

### Source 6.19.2



Medieval picture depicting the religious blessing which marked the opening of the June Fair at St-Denis, near Paris

## RETROfile

If serfs ran away from the countryside to the town and managed to escape capture for a year and a day, they would be granted their freedom.

## INTERNATIONAL TRADE

Cities were linked by merchants who traded widely throughout Europe and the Middle East. Cloth was a common trading item, including finely woven Flemish wools and beautiful silks, and velvets and brocades from northern Italy. Trade also took place at fairs that were held once or twice a year and lasted for a fortnight. Instead of money, merchants used bills of exchange, which would be guaranteed by one of the newly emerging Italian banks.

## FLORENTINE BANKING

The Peruzzi, Medici and other merchant banking families of Florence had agents in every major city who organised loans (at high interest rates). The loans were disguised in various ways so as not to appear to go against the Church's ban on money lending. The florin, a gold coin decorated with the lily symbol of Florence, was acceptable currency throughout Europe because of its consistent weight and quality.

## Activities

### Check your understanding

1. List two reasons why villages grew into towns.
2. What types of places were well suited for the location of a town?
3. Create a table with two columns and record the advantages and disadvantages of medieval town life.

### Using sources

1. List the four features of medieval towns that you can recognise from the painting of Chartres in source 6.19.1.
2. What do the 'shop' signs in source 6.19.2 show you about the goods people could buy at the St-Denis fair? What other goods can you see that were probably also for sale?
3. What does source 6.19.2 indicate about the people who went to the St-Denis fair and the way they carried out their business?

# Check & Challenge

## USING HISTORICAL TERMS

1. Match the following heads and tails to check your understanding of historical terms used in this chapter.

| Heads     | Tails                                   |
|-----------|---|
| A Beguine | 1. Used to break up soil                |
| B Guilds  | 2. Devoted her life to helping others   |
| C Plough  | 3. Beginning of training for knighthood |
| D Markets | 4. Protected work standards             |
| E Page    | 5. Shopping area                        |

2. Copy the following table, then complete it by inserting the following terms in the columns to show where you would expect to find them. You should be able to explain the reasons for your choices.  
 alms basket, apothecary, Beguine, buttress, cottar, donjon, gargoyle, manchet, spire, subtlety, trencher, villein

| Building | Castle feast | At work |
|----------|--------------|---------|
|          |              |         |
|          |              |         |
|          |              |         |
|          |              |         |

## CHECK THE FACTS

1. State whether the following statements are true or false.
- Medieval towns were surrounded by thick walls.
  - Ordinary people relied on the village 'wise woman' for their medical needs.
  - Fridays were the only days that you could eat meat.
  - A florin was a form of money.
  - The bubonic plague was caused by bad smells.
2. Write your own statements to complete the following list of facts and opinions. Ask the student next to you to identify whether each statement is a fact or an opinion.
- Medieval people were ignorant.
  - Medieval peasants led miserable lives.
  - \_\_\_\_\_
  - \_\_\_\_\_
  - \_\_\_\_\_

## CIVICS AND CITIZENSHIP

1. Write a paragraph explaining:
- why it would have been difficult to prove your innocence in the medieval period
  - how this is different from the situation in our courts today.
2. Nowadays, there are usually four aims associated with punishment:
- to warn others about the consequences of crime
  - to make the criminal pay for the crime
  - to reform the criminal so that he or she can live within society's laws
  - to protect the community.
- Which of these aims were also important in medieval times?
  - What other aims did medieval punishment have?
  - Which of the aims of punishment today was not as important in the Middle Ages?
  - What does this information tell us about how attitudes to punishment have changed between medieval times and our own era?

## UNDERSTANDING LIFE IN MEDIEVAL TOWNS

1. Copy and complete the following table showing the effect of town life on each of the following groups or aspects of the medieval world.

| Effect of town life on:          | Increase | Decrease |
|----------------------------------|----------|----------|
| The influence of the Church      |          |          |
| The Lord's power                 |          |          |
| Ideas about the world            |          |          |
| Opportunities                    |          |          |
| The control of the feudal system |          |          |
| Work skills                      |          |          |

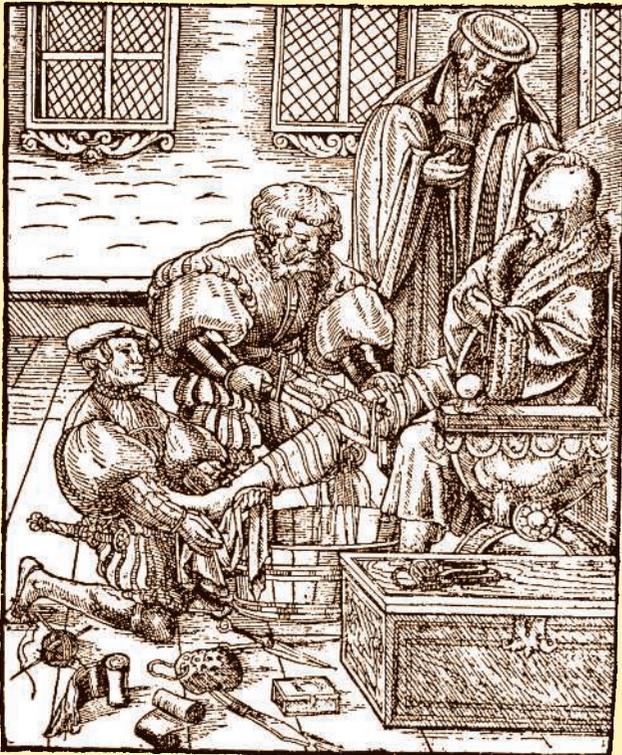
2. In about 15 lines, explain why it would be difficult for someone born in the late twentieth century to cope with life in a medieval town.

## INVESTIGATE FURTHER

### Working individually

1. Design and make shop signs appropriate to each of the following trades. Check their meanings in a dictionary before you begin.
  - (a) Tailor
  - (b) Stonemason
  - (c) Barber
2. Pieter Brueghel the Elder (1525–69) and Pieter Brueghel the Younger (1564–1638) lived in the early modern world, yet their paintings record many characteristics which were typical of life in the medieval period. Choose one of their paintings of peasant life. Describe the parts of the painting that help us gain a better understanding of the medieval world. To see some of their paintings, go to [www.jaconline.com.au/retroactive/retroactive1](http://www.jaconline.com.au/retroactive/retroactive1) and click on the Brueghel the Elder and Brueghel the Younger weblinks.
3. Find out more about medical knowledge in the medieval era and use your research to compile a small 'textbook' suitable for students at a medieval university.

### Source 6.20.1



A fifteenth-century illustration of an amputation. Amputations were common in the fifteenth-century, as people knew little about the human body.

4. Research the story of the French girl, Jehanne d'Arc (Joan of Arc, or Jeanne d'Arc). Create a timeline to

show the main events in her life, from her birth in January 1412 until she was burned alive in 1431, only a few months after her nineteenth birthday. Make sure your timeline includes information which helps explain why her life ended so soon.

### Source 6.20.2



A photographic still from Luc Besson's 1999 film *Joan of Arc: The Messenger*. It shows Joan leading the charge against enemy forces.

5. Search for aspects of the medieval world which can still be experienced in our own times. You can do this through reading, watching movies, visiting museums and art galleries and, when and if you can, travelling to see for yourself the castles, cathedrals and town remnants of another time.

### Work in pairs

6. Enact the part of a tour guide showing people around one of the famous universities or colleges of medieval Europe, for example the Sorbonne in Paris, the University of Prague and New College at Oxford University. Create a commentary for tourists, including information about when the university was established, its buildings and architects, and the facilities it offers to students. Include an interview with a student talking about his experiences.

### Class photography project

7. Divide class members into some of the following groups: clergy, criminals, entertainers, knights, nobility, royalty, shopkeepers, soldiers, villeins.

Dress and make props suitable to the group, including typical aspects of this group's way of life. Arrange for each group to be photographed in five typical poses to record 'images of medieval life'. Decide on an appropriate way to publicise the photographs and add written explanations of what each photograph represents.

# MOHANDAS K. GANDHI: A TWENTIETH-CENTURY FREEDOM FIGHTER

## RETROlink

The fight of indigenous (native) peoples against foreign invaders of their land did not begin or end with people like the thirteenth century Scottish hero, William Wallace. On January 30 1948, people around the world mourned the death of the Indian freedom fighter, Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi. Gandhi was shot dead at close range while on his way to his daily prayer meeting. Like William Wallace, Gandhi's life has also been made the subject of a movie.

Mohandas K. Gandhi was born at Porbandar in India in 1869 and brought up within the Hindu religion. After completing his early education in India, Gandhi went to England where he qualified as a barrister in the late 1880s. After this, he worked in South Africa for about 20 years on behalf of an Indian company. It was there that he really came to experience and understand racial discrimination under British rule. In one famous incident, Gandhi was thrown off a first-class carriage in a train even though he had a valid ticket for the journey. It was in South Africa that Gandhi began the campaign of passive resistance that was the main tactic in his fight against all kinds of oppression.

## THE BRITISH IN INDIA

When Gandhi returned to India in 1915, he was determined to improve conditions for Indian people within their own country. By this time, India had been ruled by Britain for about 150 years and was known as 'the brightest jewel in His Majesty's crown'. British merchants exploited India's natural resources, took advantage of its cheap labour and made huge profits while the majority of Indians lived in poverty. At the same time, the central control imposed by British law and government did help to create a degree of unity among people who otherwise might have remained separated by their religious, cultural and social differences.

## GANDHI AS LEADER

Gandhi began a long campaign to convince the British to grant India its independence. From 1920 to 1934 he continued this struggle in his position as a leader in the Indian National Congress. He became a powerful force in Indian politics after the Amritsar massacre on 13 April 1919. British law denied Indians the right to hold public meetings. When a British officer, General Dyer, learned that Indians were meeting at the Sikh Holy Shrine in Amritsar, he took 50 soldiers

## Source 6.21.1



This famous photograph captures a significant moment in Indian history when Gandhi defied the British and picked up salt from Dandi Beach on 6 April 1930.

into the enclosed area and had them fire on the crowd until they ran out of ammunition. Three hundred and seventy-nine unarmed Indians were killed and 1200 lay wounded. This incident, combined with Dyer's claim that British authority was greater than 'Gandhi's soul force', increased support for Gandhi.

One of Gandhi's most famous campaigns occurred in 1930 when he walked more than 300 kilometres to the sea to show how Indians could gather their own salt, rather than pay taxes on salt bought from the British (see source 6.21.1). The British imprisoned him for this and for other acts of defiance in the years that followed.

Gandhi was a spiritual leader as much as a political leader and for this the Indian people gave him the title 'Mahatma', meaning 'great soul'. His campaign, which was based on non-violence, had four basic ideas:

- *satyagraha* — passive (non-violent) resistance to British authority
- *hartal* — avoiding the use of British products
- *swaraj* — Indian self-rule
- *resistance* to industrialisation and Western influences.

## Source 6.21.2

A famous quote from Gandhi

**An eye for an eye makes the whole world blind.**

Gandhi was known for his effective use of non-violent resistance as a political weapon and for the simplicity of his lifestyle. He lived much of his life in the country, and came to wear only simple, homespun, Indian cotton garments and to travel in third-class train carriages. When India achieved independence in 1947, it was partly because of the example of wisdom, tolerance and commitment which the Mahatma had shown to the whole world.

When Gandhi was assassinated in 1948, Jawaharlal Nehru, the Prime Minister of India at the time, spoke on radio to the people of India (see source 6.21.3).

## Source 6.21.3

An extract from Prime Minister Nehru's radio message to the Indian people on 30 January 1948

**Friends and comrades, the light has gone out of our lives and there is darkness everywhere.**



## Check your understanding

1. Create a timeline to show the main events of Gandhi's life.
2. List one advantage and one disadvantage of British rule in India.
3. What were the main ideas underlying Gandhi's campaign to win self-rule for India?
4. What was the main difference between Gandhi's ideas and those of William Wallace (see pages 176–7)?

## Using sources

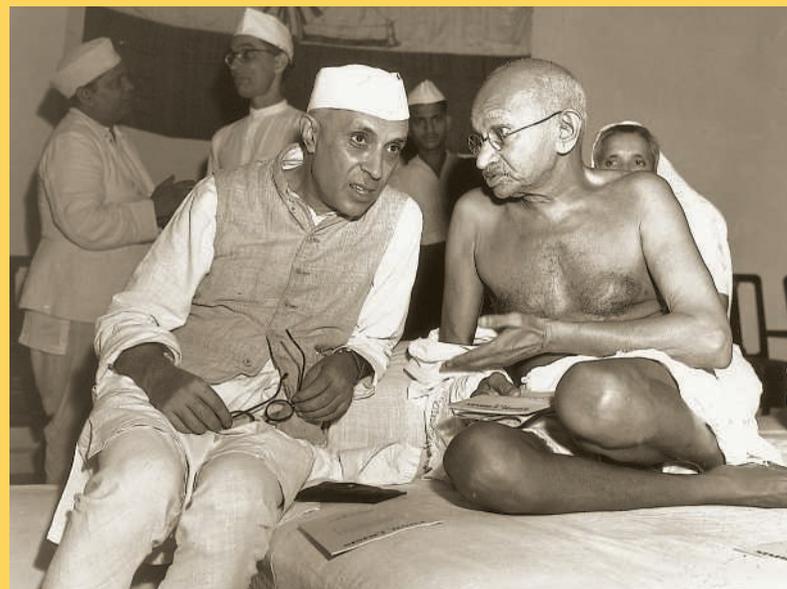
1. What do sources 6.21.1 and 6.21.2 indicate about Gandhi's beliefs and lifestyle?
2. What does the information in the text and in source 6.21.3 indicate about how Gandhi's death affected the people of India?

## Researching and communicating

**Group work.** Work in groups of 3–5 to create a written, visual or audio report of Gandhi's death. You will need to undertake some further research. Your report should include:

- (a) information about how he came to die
- (b) the significant events of his life
- (c) information about his lifestyle and beliefs
- (d) comments from people who knew him
- (e) your view of why he was an important figure in twentieth century world history.

## Source 6.21.4



Gandhi talking with Nehru, who was Prime Minister at the time of Gandhi's assassination