

Life in Feudal Europe



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- Main Idea (Objective):



- Knights followed a code of Chivalry and lived in Castles, while peasants lived in simple houses and worked long hard hours all year long.

Life in Feudal Europe

Lecture Focus (Essential Question):



Have you heard the phrase “Knight in shining armor”? Throughout this lesson we will see how these words apply to a knight’s attitude, clothing and manners.

Life in Feudal Europe

- During the Middle Ages, nobles were the most powerful people in Europe.



- Great lords had much more wealth and land than ordinary Knights.

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- Despite the difference in wealth, their belief in the Feudal System united Lords and Knights in defending their society.

Life in Feudal Europe

- Knights followed certain rules called a **Code of Chivalry**.



- A knight was expected to obey his lord, to be brave, to show respect to women of noble birth, to honor the church and to help ordinary people.

How did Nobles Live?

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- A knight was also expected to be honest and to fight fairly against his enemies.



- The **Code of Chivalry** became the guide to good behavior for all Knights.

How did Nobles Live?



- In fact many of today's ideas about manners come from the Code of Chivalry.

How did Nobles Live?

- When Noblemen went to war, their wives or daughters ran the manors.



- This was no small job due to the fact that some manors had hundreds of officials and servants.

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- Keeping track of the household's accounts took considerable skill.



- The lady of the manor also had to oversee the storing of food and other supplies needed to run the household.

How did Nobles Live?

- The center of the manor was a castle.



- At first castles were built of wood, later however they began to be constructed out of stone.

How did Nobles Live?



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- A castle had three basic parts.



- The first was a raised man made or natural hill called a **Motte**

How did Nobles Live?



- The second was the **Baily**, which was an enclosed courtyard next to the **Motte**...High stone walls sometimes encircled both the **Baily** and the **Motte**.

How did Nobles Live?



- The third part was the **Keep**, or central building of the castle was built on the Motte.

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- The Keep was built with multiple stories.



- The basement housed store rooms for tools and food because it generally had a cooler temperature.

How did Nobles Live?



How did Nobles Live?



- On the ground level were kitchens and stables and just above the ground level was the great hall.

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- The great hall served as a dining area for household members as well as a greeting center during the times of court and when the Lord received visitors.

How did Nobles Live?

- Smaller rooms were often built off of the great hall.



- These rooms included chapels, toilets and bedrooms.

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How did Nobles Live?



How did Nobles Live?

- During the later Middle Ages, nobles began to acquire more wealth, not just in the realm of money...they also obtained fancy jewelry, clothing and exotic items from other countries.



- This increased wealth led nobles to build more elaborate castles with thicker walls, more towers, finer furniture and richer decorations.

How did Nobles Live?

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Questions:

- 1) What were the main points of the Knights Code of Chivalry?
- 2) What was the role of women in the Medieval Manor System?
- 3) What are the three parts of a Castle and what are these functions?
- 4) What was the Great Hall used for in Medieval Castles?

How did Nobles Live?

Questions:

1) What were the main points of the Knights Code of Chivalry?

- **Knights would obey his lord, be brave, show respect to women of noble birth, to honor the church and to help ordinary people.**

2) What was the role of women in the Medieval Manor System?

- **They would take care of the Manor when their husbands were away, keep track of household accounts, food storage and manage supplies.**

3) What are the three parts of a Castle and what are these functions?

- **The Motte or high hill, Baily or large defensive courtyard and a keep or main building**

4) What was the Great Hall used for in Medieval Castles?

- **It's a dinning area for household members as well as a greeting center during the times of court and when visitors arrived**

How did Nobles Live?

- The homes of peasants were much simpler in comparison to the castles of the nobles.



- They lived in wood frame cottages plastered with clay and their roofs thatched with straw.

What was Peasant Life Like?

- The houses of poorer peasants had a single room.



- Better cottages had a main room for cooking and eating...and even had a completely separate room for sleeping.

What was Peasant Life Like?

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- Peasants worked year round.



- They harvested grain in August and September and prepared ground water for growing crops in October.

What was Peasant Life Like?

- Throughout November peasants slaughtered livestock and salted the meat to keep it fresh for winter.



- In February and March they plowed the land for planting oats, barley, peas and beans.

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- In the early summer months peasants weeded the fields, sheared the sheep and tended small vegetable gardens.

What was Peasant Life Like?

- Peasants took a break from work and went to Church on **Feast Days**.



- They celebrated more than 50 feast days each year, the most important of which were Christmas and Easter.

What was Peasant Life Like?



- On feast days and at Sunday worship, the village priest taught peasants the basic elements of the Christian belief.

What was Peasant Life Like?

- Peasant women worked in the fields and raised children at the same time. .



- They also gathered and prepared their families food.

What was Peasant Life Like?

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- Each day they mixed bread dough and baked it in community ovens...bread was a basic staple of the medieval diet.



- Peasant bread was dark and heavy.

What was Peasant Life Like?

- Peasants ate their bread with vegetables, milk, nuts and fruits.



- Often times they added eggs or meat to their bread and accompany it with ale.

What was Peasant Life Like?

Questions:

- 1) How were peasant houses different than the castles of nobles and lords?
- 2) What were Feast Days?
- 3) What did peasant women do?
- 4) What was the staple of medieval peasant's diets?

What was Peasant Life Like?

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- **Questions:**
- 1) How were peasant houses different then the castles of nobles and lords?
 - **They were simple wooden cottages with one room, some may have had a separate room for sleeping and cooking**
- 2) What were Feast Days?
 - **50 days out of the year peasants had a break from work and the village priest would teach them about the church**
- 3) What did peasant women do?
 - **Worked in the fields, raised children and prepared meals**
- 4) What was the staple of medieval peasant's diets?
 - **Bread that was dark and heavy, made with vegetables, milk, nuts, meat, eggs and fruits**

What was Peasant Life Like?



Time Traveler Time: Family Names

- Many Family names came into use during the Middle Ages.



- For example, a man who thatched cottage roofs for a living came to be known as “**Thatcher**”.

Time Traveler Time: Family Names

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- Other common European last names that represent occupations are Miller, Smith, Baker, Mason, Cooper, Barber, Carter and Cook.

Time Traveler Time: Family Names



- A number of European family names also come from important wool and cloth trade such as Shepherd, Fuller, Shearer, Weaver and Dyer.

Time Traveler Time: Family Names



History Mystery Time Part II: Middle Ages

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- How do you think we know about peasant life in the Middle Ages?

History Mystery Time Part II: Middle Ages

- Some works of art provided amazing insights into daily life at the time the art was created.



- One of the best visual sources of information about Medieval Life is the famous illuminated manuscript, the *Tres Riches Heures* (Book of Hours), of the French noble the Duke de Berry.

History Mystery Time Part II: Middle Ages

- The Book of Hours was a prayer book that was meant to help Christians say the proper prayers at the proper time.



- John the Duke de Berry's book was made by a family of brothers named Limbourg, from northern France in the early 1400's.

History Mystery Time Part II: Middle Ages

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- The book shows highly detailed scenes of everyday life on a manor, as well as scenes from the lives of saints.

History Mystery Time Part II: Middle Ages

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- **Writing / Art Activity:**
- Think about the manner in which Medieval Castles were constructed. They were made a certain way and most rooms served a definitive purpose.
 - I would like you to design your own castle and surrounding area.
- Once completed I would like you to write a paragraph on why you designed your castle the way that you did.

What was Peasant Life Like?