



# World History Studies Weekly



See Primary-Source  
Related Media...

SCAN IMAGE WITH SMARTPHONE, OR VISIT:  
[s-w.co/WH6-21](http://s-w.co/WH6-21)

## To War or Work?

When the Roman Empire fell in A.D. 476, Europe entered into what historians call the Middle Ages, or medieval times. Historians say the Middle Ages covered a long period—from A.D. 476 to 1500. What was it like to live during this time? It depends in which time of the 1,000-year period you lived. It also depended on where you lived during the Middle Ages—France, Germany, Holland or other areas of Europe. From 768 to 814, the strong Frankish leader Charlemagne ruled. However, after he died, stability and order ended and wars and bloodshed returned. It was a time when many people feared thieving tribes and warring kingdoms and sought protection from wealthier landowners. Now, if a stranger came knocking at your door asking if they could move in, your family would probably say no. But, those with castles and large estates with fields that needed tending often said yes—but there was a catch. In exchange for living on the property and protection, the poorer people had to work. This system of protection in exchange for work was called feudalism.

Things evolved during the early period of feudalism, which lasted for hundreds of years. Few people ventured away from the manors, or large estates, so trading decreased. Manors were self-sufficient, meaning people found all that they needed at the estates. Millers ground wheat into flour, clergy held church services, craftsmen, bakers, tailors and others all worked at the manors. Towns became less important because they had fewer businesses, and money wasn't needed as much. People

bartered, or exchanged one thing for another, to get needed goods and services. Because people didn't trade or travel much, there was less culture contact. They shared fewer ideas and learned less and less.

Europeans actually forgot many of the Greek and Roman ideas. Under feudalism people lost value in something very important—personal freedom.

### Who's the Boss?

A class system existed in the Middle Ages. People were not equal. It wasn't really what you did that people valued, but who you were. The kings and lords, who owned lots of land but didn't have enough money to protect their possessions, gave land called fiefs to their servants called vassals. In exchange, these vassals promised loyalty and labor when the king or lord required it. The warriors trained to protect and fight were called knights. Vassals in turn leased land to other vassals or knights. Craftspeople with skills, like millers, tailors and blacksmiths, were next in importance. Poor farmers who worked the land in exchange for protection were the peasants. It was a very hard life working day and night. Peasants had to give part of what they grew to the lord. Although some peasants were free, most were not.

Serfs were not free to leave the manor without permission. If the property was sold, the serfs remained, as they were considered property.

However, some people did venture out

during medieval times. Traveling entertainers called minstrels often performed in exchange for meals, a place to stay and maybe some clean clothes. More important than their singing, juggling and dancing was their news of the outside world (and gossip) that minstrels brought to the different castles they visited.







When you think of the Middle Ages, do you think of castles and knights? Do you ever wonder what was it like to live in the Middle Ages? What happened if you got sick? What foods did you eat? What clothing would you wear? Let's dive into learning about this fascinating period.



# Knights Unite!

## Castles

When you imagine castles, you might picture sturdy, beautiful places in which kings and queens lived comfortably. In the Middle Ages, however, castles were far from comfortable. Dating back about 1,200 years, castles were originally wooden buildings with wooden fences. Invaders could easily burn down these wooden castles. Stone proved to be more durable.

Early castles were cold and damp. To make castles a bit cozier, people hung beautiful tapestries on the walls in the great halls and lit fires. Castles could be very smoky because they didn't have chimneys to release the smoke from the fires.

Castles were forts, or places for protection. They had several lines of defense to keep out invading groups of people. First, a castle was usually built on a rocky hill so that tunneling into the castle was very difficult. Being on a hill had strategic importance, too. Castle guards could more easily see invaders coming in the distance. High walls surrounded the main building of a castle. On the tops of the walls were walkways that guards used as they defended the castle. A walkway atop a castle wall was called a battlement. Sometimes guards tricked invaders into thinking a castle had more defenders than it actually had. They made dummies stuffed with straw and propped them up on the battlements.

A ditch of water called a moat (motte) surrounded the castle.

To get inside the castle, someone would lower a drawbridge over the moat to allow that visitor to enter. A huge iron gate with pointed tips called a portcullis would next guard the castle entryway. Beyond this gate was a ceiling with holes. People called these murder holes because guards would throw rocks, boiling water, manure and other things down at invaders who managed to get through the portcullis. The highest point and main building of a castle was the donjon, or castle keep. The donjon had long narrow slits, called arrow loops, built into its walls. The people inside the keep could shoot arrows from crossbows through these openings. And did you ever wonder why castle stairways were circular?

Did you know they usually turned to the right? This was a defensive tactic, too. A right-handed attacker going up the stairs didn't have as much space to brandish (wave) his sword as a defender coming down the stairway would have.

Despite all these defenses, invaders could still overrun a castle. One of the ways an invader could successfully get past castle defenses was to shimmy up the sewer system through the toilet in the water closet. Yuk! With the invention of gunpowder, people stopped building castles as fortresses for

## How did they decide guilt or innocence in the Middle Ages?



The idea of trial by jury that originated in ancient Greece died out in Europe during the Middle Ages. Instead, if you did something wrong, people used one of three methods to determine your guilt or innocence. Trial by oath involved an accused person gathering several people to act as witnesses and swear the accused was innocent of all charges. Do you think you could find a number of people to swear you were innocent of a crime? Do you think people might be willing to lie for someone who was really guilty? Do you think a wealthy person could buy witnesses? Another method used was trial by ordeal. This really was torture! For example, someone might force you to hold a hot coal or pluck a hot stone from boiling water. If the burn went away in three days, you were innocent of the crime. A third method was trial by battle, which involved fighting your accuser. What if you were small and skinny and your accuser was large and muscular? Just like today, stealing and murder were crimes. However, you might find some crimes of the Middle Ages surprising. It was a crime

to beg, tell a lie, practice witchcraft, go fishing on a holy day, move a landmark or travel without permission. If you were accused of a crime, which of these would you have selected as your trial and why?





protection. Can you think why? Well, powerful guns like cannons could destroy the stone walls of a castle, letting invaders inside with ease.

## Becoming a Knight

Knights were the protectors of manors. They were usually educated and well mannered. It took 14 years of training to become a knight. A young noble boy of 7 would begin his training with a knight. Called a page, the young boy learned how to read and write, recited poetry, practiced good manners and learned how to fight and ride a horse. A page also learned falconry, the art of training falcons, which was a popular pastime for knights. Often, a page accompanied his knight into battle, taking care of the horses and watching how to fight like a knight. Pages could not yet fight in battle.

At the age of 14, the young teen became a squire. A squire served his master, the knight, by shining his armor until it was spotless and by bringing the knight's food to the dinner table. The squire continued to learn from his knight but could now participate in battle. Squires learned chivalry, the knights' code of honor. Chivalry was a way of behavior for knights. For example, a knight would never fight another knight before his opponent had put on his armor. Chivalry involved showing bravery, fairness, honesty and kindness. The code also involved protecting and respecting all women.

Upon turning 21, a squire entered into knighthood with a dubbing ceremony. In the ceremony, the lord of a manor would dub (touch) the shoulders of the young man with the flat of a sword blade. Someone then shaved a round spot onto the head of the new knight, which represented the knight's love for God. The manor lord then introduced the new knight to the people.

For entertainment, knights showed off their horse-riding skills in tournaments called jousts. They used long wooden poles called lances to try to knock an opponent off his horse. Both knights wore full armor during jousts and galloped toward each other along a track. Knights also demonstrated skills such as piercing a ring with their lance while in full gallop. Many people looked positively toward knights because of their bravery and skills.

## Armor

Imagine wearing full metal armor that weighed close to 55 pounds. Then add a helmet weighing 11 pounds. Called an "iron cocoon," armor was very difficult to wear—especially before cotton padding was introduced. Underneath the armor, knights first put on a leather tunic shirt. Then they wore a suit of mail, a kind of chain-linked undershirt. A knight also wore metal gloves called gauntlets to protect his hands. To protect his feet, a knight wore wooden shoes called sabatons. In front of his throat, a knight wore a metal piece called a gorget for protection. A gorget was also called the bevor. Knights could not see very well while wearing a helmet, but they could lift the helmet's visor to get some fresh air and see better. Now, imagine trying to mount a horse while wearing full armor! That's when pages and squires came in to help a knight. Knights who didn't die in battle may have died from heat exhaustion or from falling off their horses in their heavy armor.

# World Biography

## Clothes Told Your Status

Rules, rules, rules. Do you have rules about what you can and cannot wear at school or at home? Well, in the Middle Ages, people liked to know where you stood in society. So people made rules about clothing, shoes and hats that helped them identify their equals. They called these rules Sumptuary Laws. The laws dictated the color of clothing, types of fur, height of a hat, shoe length and even the number of buttons each person of a social class could wear. If you were poor, you could only wear drab-colored clothing like grays, browns and blacks. Only those in power wore purple. Usually, poor people went barefoot or tied rags or leather around their feet. The poor also wore beaver, lamb or fox furs, but only the wealthy or noble people wore gray or white squirrel fur. Do you like wearing hats? Women liked wearing hennins, cone- or heart-shaped hats up to 2 feet tall with flowing veils or linen attached. People also called them steeple hats. Higher-class women wore 3-foot high hennins, if they could fit through doorways.

You could also judge a person's place in medieval society by the shoes they wore. The longer the tip of the shoe or taller the height of the shoe's sole, the more important you were. Eventually, some people wore shoes called crackowes, or poulaines. Tips of these shoes were up to 24 inches long. People often tripped wearing such long shoes, and walking up stairs was almost impossible. To help themselves walk while wearing these shoes, people tied chains from the tips of their fingers to the tips of their shoes. This helped them lift their feet as they walked. Very important women often wore another type of shoe, the chopine, which had up to 2-foot high soles. (Imagine walking on stilts.) Women needed support from their servants or from walking canes to walk without toppling over. Women may have been foolish to wear chopines, but they looked "important." Eventually, people ignored the Sumptuary Laws and wore what they wished.



# Europe

The European continent has a varied geography. It is a land with no deserts but many peninsulas. There is the Iberian Peninsula, where we find Spain and Portugal, the Jutland Peninsula, where we find Denmark and the Scandinavian Peninsula, where we see Sweden, Norway and Finland. There are also the Balkan and Italian peninsulas. Look on a map and locate countries on these peninsulas. Can you also locate two European volcanoes—Mount Etna and Mount Vesuvius? (Hint: look in the boot!)

Europe also has many mountain ranges. The highest mountains in western Europe are the Alps, and the highest in all of Europe are the Caucasus Mountains. In which country can you find the Ural Mountains? Also, locate the Pyrenees and Apennine mountains. European mountains were a barrier that kept groups of people apart. This separation led people to form many different cultures and languages.

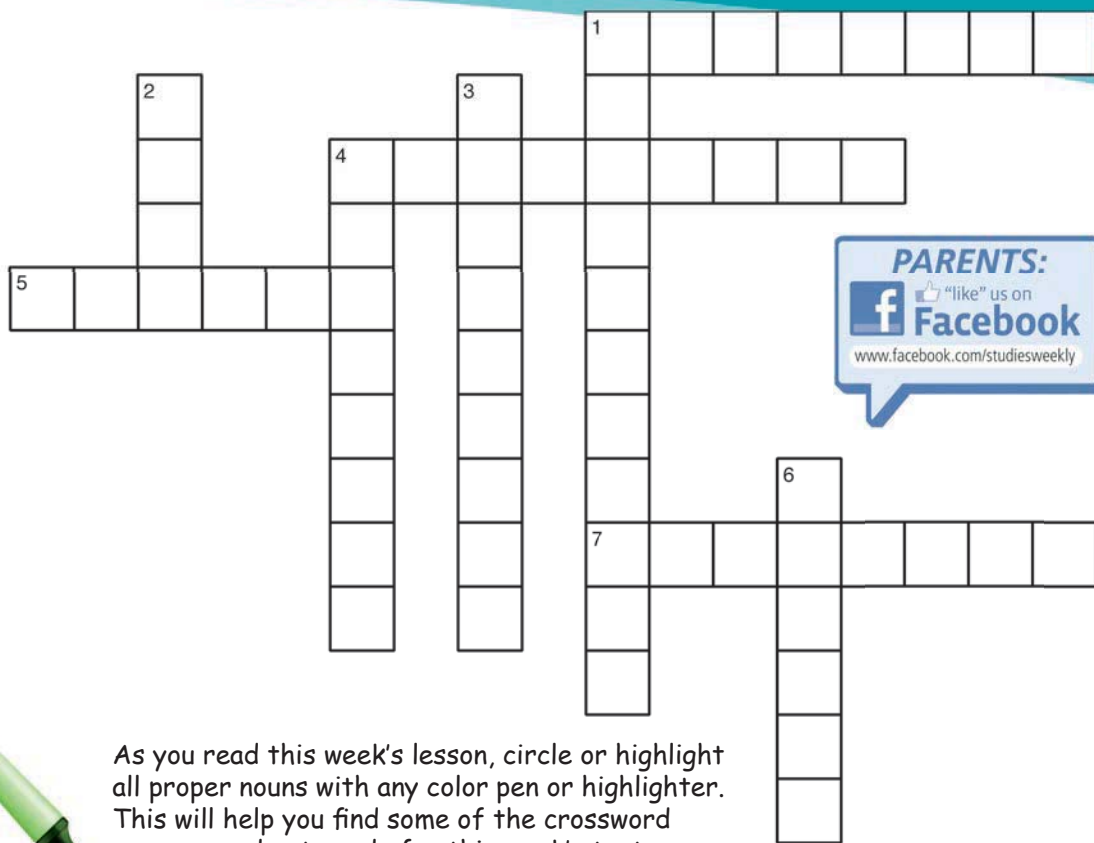
European rivers include the Seine, Rhine, Po and Danube. Look at a map and locate these four rivers. Many European rivers curve numerous times, are very shallow and just don't flow toward many major European cities. The Gulf Stream, a water current in the Atlantic Ocean, brings warmer air to much of Europe. This gives Europe a milder climate than other areas of the world at the same latitude.

# World Geography





Name \_\_\_\_\_



As you read this week's lesson, circle or highlight all proper nouns with any color pen or highlighter. This will help you find some of the crossword answers and get ready for this week's test.

**ACROSS**

- 1. this showed a Medieval person's status.
- 4. the system in which people worked in exchange for protection
- 5. a servant of a king or lord
- 7. a metal glove

**DOWN**

- 1. strong Frankish ruler during the Middle Ages
- 2. often provided by minstrels
- 3. invention that ended the building of castles
- 4. a popular pastime for knights
- 6. a protector of a manor

# Feudal Society

With all the armor and helmets, it was difficult to recognize a knight in battle. Was he a friend or foe? Eventually, knights put symbols on their armor, shields and banners. These symbols represented their "side" in a battle. Knights placed them on their surcoat, the outer clothing of their armor, and called the symbols their "coat of arms." These symbols passed from generation to generation. The science of designing coats of arms is heraldry. Use this blank coat of arms as a guide to design your personal coat of arms. This chart will help you design your coat of arms.

## Activity



### Animals

Lion, Bear, Boar, Eagle, Horse, Dragon

### Colors

**Yellow or Gold:** Generosity  
**White or Silver:** Peace and

Sincerity

**Black:** Constancy (sometimes Grief)

**Blue:** Loyalty and Truthfulness

**Red:** Military Fortitude and Generosity

**Green:** Hope and Joy (sometimes Loyalty)

**Purple:** Royalty, Sovereignty and Justice

### Heraldic Symbols

**Axe:** Dutiful

**Crosses:** Christian Sentiments

**Crown:** Authority

**Fire:** Zeal

**Fleur-de-lis (Iris flower):** Purity (associated with France)

**Hand:** Faith, Sincerity and Justice

**Heart:** Sincerity

**Horns and Antlers:** Fortitude

**Lightning:** Decisiveness

**Moon:** Serenity

**Star:** Nobility

**Sun:** Glory

**Sword:** Warlike

# American Civics

www.studiesweekly.com

## Francis Hopkinson and the American Flag

If you asked 100 people who designed the first American flag, 99 of them would probably say Betsy Ross, right? Many people would be surprised to learn that there are dissenting opinions about that.

The U.S. Postal Service issued this stamp [right] in 2000 with this passage printed on the back:



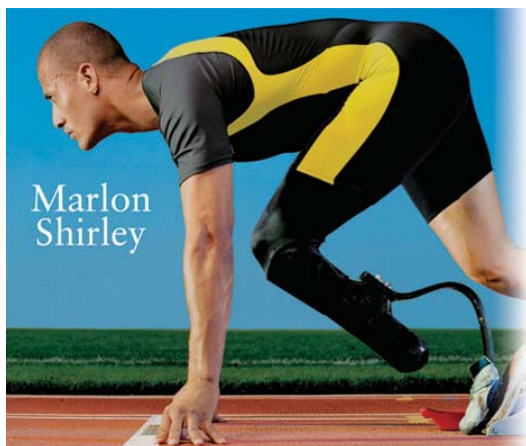
### Francis Hopkinson Flag 1777

*Continental Congress member Francis Hopkinson designed the first Stars and Stripes. His stars may have formed rows or a ring; the exact design is not known. In a resolution of June 14, 1777, they were said to represent "a new constellation."*

There has been an ongoing debate about who made the first flag. Did George Washington really ask Betsy Ross to make a flag from his design? There are no written records confirming it, so many historians believe this is a legend. However, Betsy Ross' family has always insisted that the story is true. They do have papers showing that Betsy was paid to make flags for the new country for the rest of her life.

Francis Hopkinson's defenders can't prove his claims either. He was a delegate from New Jersey who signed the Declaration of Independence. He sent a bill to Congress asking for payment for designing the first flag and other projects. After a long debate, a Congressional committee refused payment but never claimed that the designs were not his.

America was founded on the freedom of its citizens to disagree with the government and with each other. Neither side in the flag debate has found absolute proof. The discussion will certainly continue, showing that the all-American values of debate and dissent are alive and well. What issues in your community are a source of debate and dissent?



Marlon Shirley

Lost leg, not heart.

**OVERCOMING**

Pass It On.

VALUES.COM THE FOUNDATION FOR A BETTER LIFE