THE BLACK DEATH AND ITS EFFECTS ON EUROPE

What was the Black Death and how did it effect European society during the Middle Ages?
What is an epidemic?

- An “epidemic” is rapidly spreading and extremely infectious disease that targets a specific area
  - Effects many people all at once
What was the Black Death?

- The Black Death was a deadly bacteria disease, which spread rapidly throughout Europe
  - 1300’s & 1400’s

- Also known as the Black Plague or the Bubonic Plague

- Attacks the immune system
  - Swollen glands
  - Breaking blood vessels
  - Fever
  - Death
Physical Effects of the Black Death
“The Blisters” - The “Rosies”
How was the Black Death transmitted from person to person?

- The Black Death was transferred through two (2) ways:
  1. Direct contact with infected fleas
  2. Through airborne elements from infected humans

- Believed to have been carried by rats on sailing vessels to European cities
Flea drinks rat blood that carries the bacteria → Bacteria multiply in flea’s gut → Gut clogged with bacteria → Flea bites human, regurgitates blood into open wound → Human is infected
Where did the Black Death originate?

- Many historians believe that the Black Death originated in Asia:
  - Central Asia

- The Black Death spread rapidly for a number of reasons:
  - Trade routes (land & sea)
  - Armies
  - Early biological warfare
European Trade Routes (1300’s)
The European Crusades (1300-1400’s)
Early Biological Warfare in the Middle Ages
What efforts were done to try and stop the spread of the Black Death?

- Many misguided efforts to stop the plague:
  - Medical workers
  - Burning cloves / scents
  - Ringing bells
  - Blessed keepsakes

- Methods that did work:
  - Quarantines
  - “Pope’s torches”
  - The “cat burnings”
Plague Medical Workers
Plague Medical Workers
Cat Burnings in France (1400’s)
Anti-Semitism Rises...
The Brotherhood of Flagellates
Black Death Art
Black Death Art
How did the disease effect European society?

- Drop in population
  - 25-50 million people died (1/3rd)

- Feudalism continues to fall apart
  - Economies failed

- Loss of knowledge
  - No education

- Beginning to question the Church
  - Priests promises of false help