EUROPE AND THE MIDDLE AGES

What were the major political and social features of the Middle Ages?
What were the Middle Ages?

- The Middle Ages was a major period of transition for Europe
  - 476 AD – 1500’s

- Importance of era?
  - Roman rule ➔ chaotic change ("Dark Ages")
  - Massive social / political changes for Europe
  - The beginnings of modern Europe
The Middle Ages Timeline

“Early” Middle Ages (476-1000’s)

“High” Middle Ages (1000’s–1300’s)

“Late” Middle Ages (1300’s-1500’s)
What was Europe like before the Middle Ages?

- **CHAOS!!!!**
  - Roman Empire fell apart (476 AD)
  - Viking raiders
    - From northern Europe
    - Master sailors
  - Muslims (Ottomans)
    - Middle East / Africa
    - Goal: Conquest
End of Roman rule (476)
Divided Empire (476)
How was the Roman Empire cut in half?
With a pair of Caesars.
Chaos in the West (500’s-800’s)
What is “feudalism”?

- A government based on land control / military loyalty
  - “The 2 L’s”
  - 850 - 950 AD

- Land is divided by powerful rulers into “manors” (land grants)

- Owners of “manors” (lords) give loyalty / military service in return
The “Feudal” King
Partnership with the “lords” / Reward of land (“manors”)
What was a “manor”?  

- A manor or large estate was a self-sufficient community in medieval Europe  
- Centered on agriculture  
  - Developed other industries (blacksmithing, wood work, etc.)  
  - Self-sufficient
Manor Map

This is an example of typical medieval manor in southern England.

Printed by the University of North Carolina
An artist’s depiction of a medieval manor
How were people organized in the manor?

**King** = creates the law for the manor

**Lords** = Divide up the manor/ collect taxes

**Vassels** = Manage the day-to-day business of the manor

**Knights** = Enforce the laws / protect the manor

**Serfs** = Farmed the manor/ paid taxes
Why were the early days of history called the Dark Ages?

Because there were so many knights.
What was life like for a serf on a medieval manor?

- **Serfs**
  - unskilled laborers who were tied to the manor

- **HARSH!!!!**
  - Social classes were brutally enforced
    - Could not move / leave the manor
    - No personal freedoms
    - Long hours / little pay
A Vassel Overseeing Serfs in the Fields
Serfs Working the Land
Paying of Honors (Taxes) to the Kings
Serf Rebellions
Medieval Disease
What was the Black Death?

The Black Death was a deadly bacteria disease, which spread rapidly throughout Europe in the 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”
Where did the Black Death originate?

Many historians believe that the Black Death originated in Asia, specifically 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
Black Death Mass Graves
Black Death Mass Graves