

Medieval Names and Terms

The following list contains descriptions and definitions of various names and terms related to the Middle Ages. Carefully read the definitions, then answer the matching questions.

- (1) armor - pieces of iron worn by a knight for protection in battle
- (2) bishop - a Church official who oversaw the work of priests within their district
- (3) cardinal - a high official of the Catholic Church who was appointed by the Pope; when a Pope died, a new leader of the Church was chosen by a meeting of cardinals
- (4) castle - where the lord and his knights lived; usually built on cliffs or hilltops to make it easier to defend against attack
- (5) Catholic Church - people of the Middle Ages believed it represented God's rules and teachings; religion was so important during medieval times that the period was known as the "Age of Faith"
- (6) chivalry - qualities of a good knight, including bravery, politeness, respect for women, protection of the weak, and fairness to the enemy
- (7) clergyman - an official of the Church, such as a priest, bishop, or cardinal
- (8) Crusades - expeditions sent by the Pope to capture the Holy Land from Muslim Turks; the empire of the Turks included Palestine, where Christ was born; several Crusades between 1096 and 1272 failed to win the Holy Land, but succeeded in increasing trade between Europe and the East
- (9) Dark Ages - a period of several hundred years during the early Middle Ages when fear and confusion spread among the people of Western Europe; the threat of attack led many people to become serfs who worked for lords on manors in exchange for protection; trade, education, and the growth of towns declined during the Dark Ages
- (10) estate - a large piece of land owned by a lord during the Middle Ages; same as a manor
- (11) excommunication - the act of removing a person from membership in the Church because of wrongful actions or beliefs; it was thought that an excommunicated person would not be allowed into heaven
- (12) feudalism or feudal system - arrangement between lord, vassal, and serf for ownership of land, military service, and protection during the Middle Ages
- (13) fief - land given by a lord to a vassal in return for military and other services
- (14) friar - holy man who travelled from place to place helping the poor and needy while teaching the ways of God
- (15) heresy - a serious crime of the Middle Ages in which a person held beliefs that the Church felt were wrong; heretics were excommunicated
- (16) Inquisition - a court set up by the Roman Catholic Church to investigate heresy and punish heretics
- (17) jesters - clowns who appeared before a lord and tried to make him laugh with humorous words and actions
- (18) joust - a contest between knights on horseback; armed with lances, the knights charged at each other in an attempt to knock their opponent off his horse
- (19) king - a person who rules a country; during the early Middle Ages, the influence of kings decreased as the power of lords increased; by the end of the Middle Ages, kings became powerful rulers of new nation-states
- (20) knight - a man of honor who held a high military rank; only men who were trained in warfare and who showed good personal qualities were chosen by lords to be knights; the code of chivalry was to be followed at all times

- (21) lord - a well-to-do noble who owned an estate; a lord usually lived in a castle, gave land to vassals in return for military service, and used serfs to farm his land
- (22) manor - a large piece of land owned by a lord during the Middle Ages; also called an estate
- (23) Medieval Period - began with the fall of the Roman Empire in the West in 476 and ended with the beginning of the modern period in the 1400's; main characteristics of the Medieval Period were the growth of feudalism and the strong influence of the Roman Catholic Church
- (24) Middle Ages - same as Medieval Period
- (25) minstrels - singers and musicians who entertained lords during the Middle Ages; they played harps, guitars, and flutes
- (26) moat - a deep, wide, water-filled ditch that surrounded a castle and helped protect it from attack; people coming and going from the castle used a drawbridge to cross the moat
- (27) monastery - building where monks lived; the head of the monastery was called an "abbot"
- (28) monk - a man who gave up all his property and dedicated his life to serving God; monks stayed in monasteries where they prayed, worked hard, and lived quiet, serious lives; they copied old Greek and Roman manuscripts, helped the poor and needy, and converted people to Christianity
- (29) nobility - a class of rich people; nobles or lords
- (30) peasants - poor people who worked on manors; also called serfs
- (31) Pope - the head of the Roman Catholic Church; chosen at a meeting of cardinals
- (32) priest - a clergyman of the Christian church; in medieval times, almost every manor had a priest
- (33) serfs - poor people who worked for lords during the Middle Ages; they worked long hours, were poorly fed and clothed, and were not allowed to leave the manor
- (34) tournament - a contest or joust between two knights or two groups of knights; tournaments attracted large crowds
- (35) troubadours - wandering minstrels who wrote poems that usually expressed love for a beautiful lady of noble birth; they also wrote about warfare and battle heroes
- (36) vassal - a noble who was given land by a lord in return for military and other service to the lord

Matching Questions

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| 1. _____ knight | a. a peasant who worked on a manor |
| 2. _____ serf | b. a noble who lived on an estate or in a castle |
| 3. _____ lord | c. was given land in return for military service |
| 4. _____ monk | d. dedicated his life to serving God at a monastery |
| 5. _____ vassal | e. a warrior of the Middle Ages |