

Grade 8 PASS: Unit 5 Using Information Resources

In this test, you are asked to look at some reference materials and then use the materials to answer some questions.

Research Topic: The Middle Ages

Suppose you wanted to write a report about the Middle Ages. You want to learn more about this time in history. Six different sources of information about the Middle Ages are given in this section of the test. The information sources are listed below.

Skim all of the resources to become familiar with the information they contain. Remember that these are reference sources, so you do not need to read every word in each source. Once you have skimmed the sources, answer the questions that follow.

Use the information sources to help you answer the questions. As you work through the questions, go back and read the sections that will give you the information you need.

Click on the links below to review each resource first. You will need to scroll from left to right and up and down in order to see all of each resource.

1. Article from a Magazine, “A Name Fit for a King”
2. Time Line of the Middle Ages
3. Glossary from a Book, *The Middle Ages in England*
4. Bibliography from a Book, *Life in Medieval Times*
5. Index from a Textbook, *Through the Ages: Topics in European History*
6. Web Page from [waybackwhen.org](http://www.waybackwhen.org)
7. The Feudal System, from a Book about Medieval History

1. Article from a Magazine, “A Name Fit for a King”

A Name Fit for a King

The Purpose of Nicknames

Nicknames often used to show affection, and can be used to show someone’s place in a family or in another group. A nickname such as “Sugar” is affectionate, while a nickname such as “Junior” or “Baby” describes how a person fits into a family. Nicknames may also come from one’s manner or habits or appearance. A child with red hair might be called “Red” or “Rusty,” and a tall person might have the nickname “Stretch.” Other nicknames are just shortened versions of names.

Some nicknames are fine for children, but are left behind as children grow up. What if you ended up getting stuck with a nickname you didn’t like? How would you like to be known by that nickname forever? Some European monarchs of the Middle Ages were blessed or cursed with nicknames that followed them into the history books.

Unfortunately, Some Royal Nicknames Last Forever

There is the trio of unfortunate Charleses, who were known as Charles II the Bald (Emperor of the West), Charles III the Fat (Holy Roman Emperor), and Charles III the Simple (King of west Francia). Charles II the Bald was the son of the religious Louis I the Pious, and the father of poor Louis II the Stammerer. Edward the Martyr was even more unfortunate, having received his nickname after his untimely death. The most likely suspect was Edward the Martyr’s stepmother, who probably wanted to help Edward’s half-brother, Ethelred the Unready, take the throne and become King of England. Edward the Martyr’s death made him even more popular, and subjects even believed that their former King Edward had been a saint. Poor Ethelred the Unready, who was always suspected to have helped his stepmother in the plot against Edward the Martyr, ended up in trouble and was deserted by his officers when he went to fight the Danes.

One king who should have had a nickname but didn’t was King John of England. His nickname could have been John the Sneaky. John was the youngest son of Eleanor of Aquitaine and Henry II. His brother, Richard I the Lionheart (now there’s someone with a good nickname), was King Richard of England. John plotted to steal his older brother’s throne, but plot was uncovered and John was stripped of his lands and sent into exile. Richard I the Lionheart later died in battle and John ended up on the throne in the end. (This is the same John who was forced to sign the Magna Carta.)

Royal Nicknames that Are Worth Keeping

Richard I the Lionheart was not the only king with a good nickname. There was also King John II the Good (not to be confused with John the Sneaky). King John the Good was King of France. When fighting in the Hundred Years’ War, King John II the Good was imprisoned by Edward the Black Prince (you don’t have to be a king to get a nickname) in the Hundred Years’ War, but was later ransomed for 3 million gold crowns and much of the southwestern land of France. The amount of the ransom was so high that France could not raise the money to keep their king, and John was returned to England and prison.

1. Article from a Magazine, “A Name Fit for a King”

Charles V the Wise was another royal ruler with a good nickname. King Charles the Wise was the son of King John II the Good. King Charles' accomplishments included establishing a tax system, as well as creating a French army and navy. He also founded a library at the Louvre. The greatest accomplishment of King Charles the Wise was his success in the Hundred Years' War, during which he managed to take back much of the land that had been lost to England in earlier times.

Nicknames: Terms of Endearment, Name-calling, or Early Media Campaigns

When is a nickname more than a nickname? Perhaps these historical nicknames were actually early media campaigns. Today we have political commercials and public debates on television. These nicknames may have had similar political purposes. A king like Charles the Wise could be considered wise because everyone called him so. People may have feared Edward the Black Prince just as much for his name and reputation as for his bravery in battle. Even as far back as the Middle Ages, names were used as image-makers and image-breakers. Do you think Edward the Martyr would have been so popular if his nickname had been Edward the Sorry?

2. Time Line of the Middle Ages

Important Events of the Middle Ages

The medieval period, which consists of the approximately 1000 years following the fall of the Roman Empire, is called the Middle Ages. The Middle Ages can be further divided into three periods, known as Early Middle Ages, High Middle Ages, and Late Middle Ages. The two greatest influences of the Middle Ages were the feudal system and the Christian Church.

410 A.D. The fall of the Roman Empire to the invading Visigoths, considered the end of Ancient Civilization	EARLY MIDDLE AGES	
	HIGH MIDDLE AGES	1066 A.D. The Norman Conquest of England—England invaded by Normandy
1096 A.D. Launch of the first Christian Crusades to take back the Holy Lands		
		1099 A.D. Crusaders invade Jerusalem and establish a Christian kingdom
1215 A.D. King John of England signs the Magna Carta		
		1236 A.D. Mongols invade Europe
1271 A.D. Explorer Marco Polo sets off for China and the East		
		1291 A.D. Christian kingdom in Jerusalem is overthrown
1337 A.D. Hundred Years' War begins between France and England (ends 1453)		
	1347 A.D. The Plague strikes in Europe (lasts until 1350); over a third of the population dies	
1381 A.D. English Peasants Revolt (also known as “Tyler’s Rebellion”)—angered by the Poll Tax of 1380, peasants throng to London, where they commit acts of violence and arson until King Richard II promises to abolish the feudal system (these promises were broken and the feudal system continued until 1660 in England)		

2. Time Line of the Middle Ages

		1396 A.D. Revival of interest in ancient Greek and Roman civilizations in Italian universities gives rise to the Renaissance
1415 A.D. Explorers from Portugal sail the Atlantic Ocean	LATE MIDDLE AGES	
		1453 A.D. Constantinople conquered by Turks
1454 A.D. Printing press invented		

3. Glossary from a Book, *The Middle Ages in England*

agrarian: relating to land or farming

Anglo-Saxons: the name of the English people before the Norman Conquest

bailey: the outside wall of a castle

castle: often built like a fort, a castle was the home of a feudal noble

chivalry: the code of behavior for knights

courtly love: medieval ideals about love that launched a literary tradition

Crusades: military missions undertaken by Christian nobles and soldiers in the Middle Ages to gain control of the Holy Land

feudal system: land-based system in which land is let or rented by kings to noblemen, who in turn have serfs who work the land. The feudal system was legally abolished in England in 1660, but lasted until the 1800s in other European countries.

guilds: medieval associations of skilled workers, artisans, or craftsmen that established work standards and helped protect its members; guilds became important in local government

Holy Land: Palestine

Hundred Years' War: fighting between the French and English that occurred from 1337 to 1453. Both sides claimed lands that made up the Capetian kingdom in France.

knight: a soldier who served a feudal nobleman. Knights received a special education, first serving as pages in a noble household. In battle, knights rode on horseback, unlike common soldiers.

litter: a bed or couch, on a stretcher and closed off with curtains, that was carried by people or horses

Magna Carta: meaning "great charter," the Magna Carta was a document guaranteeing English rights that was signed by King John on June 15, 1215

magistrates: county judges

manor: a feudal estate and its lands

peasant: farming people of a low social rank; in medieval times, peasants were serfs of a feudal noble

3. Glossary from a Book, *The Middle Ages in England*

pease pudding: a pudding of cooked, pureed peas, mixed with eggs

pilgrim: a person who undertakes a long journey to a place that is sacred

pilgrimage: a journey to a shrine or another place that is sacred

pottage: a thick soup or stew of vegetables

sheriff: an abbreviated form of the words “shire reeve,” a sheriff was a government official in England during the time of the Anglo-Saxons

shire: an English county

shrine: a place or a thing that is considered sacred

siege: a military campaign to attack a castle and cut off the receipt of supplies to the residents

Silk Road: ancient route for traders to China

stocks: a restraints in a wooden frame, used to punish criminals, that tied down the criminals’ legs and wrists. Stocks were frequently kept in a public area so that crowds could jeer at and mock those being punished.

sumptuary laws: laws passed in order to keep ordinary women from dressing in the luxurious and revealing fashions of the nobility

taper: a wax candle shaped like a tall, thin cylinder

tapestry: a woven wall-hanging with designs or a picture

tenant: a person that rents a house or land

tournaments: competitions of knights for spectators

vassal: in the feudal system, a vassal is a man who swears loyalty to a king or lord and who receives land in exchange for serving the king or lord in battle

Visigoths: the Goths of the West, who invaded Italy in 410 A.D. and conquered the Roman Empire

Wheel of Fortune: a medieval idea that a person’s luck depended on fate; life was a turning wheel, so a person might be on top one day and on the bottom the next

4. Bibliography from a Book, *Life in Medieval Times*

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5. Index from a Textbook, *Through the Ages: Topics in European History*

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6. Web Page from [waybackwhen.org](http://www.waybackwhen.org)

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Daily Life Way Back When—Medieval Times

DAILY MEDIEVAL LIFE

It's no wonder that people in medieval times were strong believers in the power of fate! If you were born during the Middle Ages, every detail of your daily life was determined by the accident of your birth. If you were fortunate enough to have been "to the manor born," that is, born into a noble family, you were surrounded by servants, luxury, and ease. If, on the other hand, you were one of the less fortunate populace, born in a humble cottage, you wore rough clothes, ate coarse food, and worked hard from dawn until dusk.

Here's a glimpse of daily life in the Middle Ages for the nobility and the common people:

MEDIEVAL LIFE IN EUROPE

	Nobility	Common People
<u>TYPICAL FOOD</u>	roasts, stews, fish, eggs, bread, cheese	pottage, oatmeal pudding, boiled meat (such as rabbit that you might have poached with a trap)
<u>TYPICAL CLOTHES</u>	for men: silk chemise (undershirt with long sleeves) and hose (long stockings), fur-trimmed velvet doublet (tunic with padded shoulders and oversized sleeves), wide-brimmed hat for women: silk and velvet gown, trimmed with fur and richly embroidered, elaborate hat with veil	for men: linen chemise, woolen hose with laces, jerkin (sleeveless jacket) for women: simple woolen or linen dress, apron, kerchief (scarf to cover the head), woolen stockings
<u>TYPICAL WORK</u>	manage the lands of the manor, govern the peasants, go to war, go on Crusades	farmer (peasant), servant, blacksmith, carpenter

6. Web Page from [waybackwhen.org](http://www.waybackwhen.org)

LEISURE ACTIVITIES	enjoy the antics of jesters and other entertainers; listen to musicians; sing and dance; play cards (1400s)	visit fairs and festivals on holidays; watch traveling shows of acrobats, sword-swallowers, and mummers; watch or play in sports, such as an early version of soccer, or watch boxing and wrestling competitions
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Food

You might think that the nursery rhyme about “4 and 20 blackbirds, baked in a pie” is nonsense, but a common practice at feasts was to bake live birds into a pie. The pie was put into the oven just long enough to cook the crust, but not long enough to hurt the birds. When the pie was “served” at the feast and the crust was cut open, the birds flew out to surprise and delight the guests.

Although the live birds were just for show, feasts were elaborate, consisting of many courses of roast meats, rich stews, and sweet desserts, such as milk puddings, and statues molded from marzipan.

Because modern hygiene practices were in the distant future, drinking milk and water would have been a risky proposition in the Middle Ages. No one knew of the benefits of pasteurization or even just boiling. As a result, no one drank the bacteria-laden milk or the water that was most likely contaminated by garbage or even sewage. Instead, peasants drank a diluted version of ale, a beverage made from fermented grains, while people of noble birth tended to drink wine, often sweetened with sugar and spices.

Clothes

Some of the fashions of the Middle Ages might appear strange today, such as the elaborate hats worn by nobles, both men and women. One fad of noblewomen was to shave their eyebrows and upper hairline so that their foreheads appeared very large and smooth. Men had their own strange fashions—some noblemen wore shoes with such long, pointed toes that they needed to use chains to attach the toes of the shoes to their legs to keep from tripping. Clothes for the fashion-conscious nobles were extremely tight, heavy, and uncomfortable. The bodices on ladies’ dresses were stiff and tight, and men laced their doublets very tightly in order to make their waists seem smaller.

Work

No one ever said life in medieval times was easy. A peasant’s work was never over. Peasants who labored in the fields spent as many as 100 days a year farming for their lords before they could take care of their own crops. The lords and knights employed people to manage their farms and lands.

Even for the nobility, life had its hardships. Lords and knights risked their lives in battle, and were sometimes captured and held for ransom. There was a great deal of political intrigue, and noblemen had to be watchful and protective of their lands. Noblemen also had to make laws and govern their people.

6. Web Page from [waybackwhen.org](http://www.waybackwhen.org)

Education

There were few books in the Middle Ages. Parchment made from sheepskin was used until the 1300s, when paper was developed. The printing press was invented in the mid-1400s. Until then, books were copied by hand. Few people knew how to read and write, and those were generally men and women of the church or people of the noble classes. (An interesting aside: Islamic countries made greater advances in science and other fields of knowledge than the European countries during the Middle Ages.)

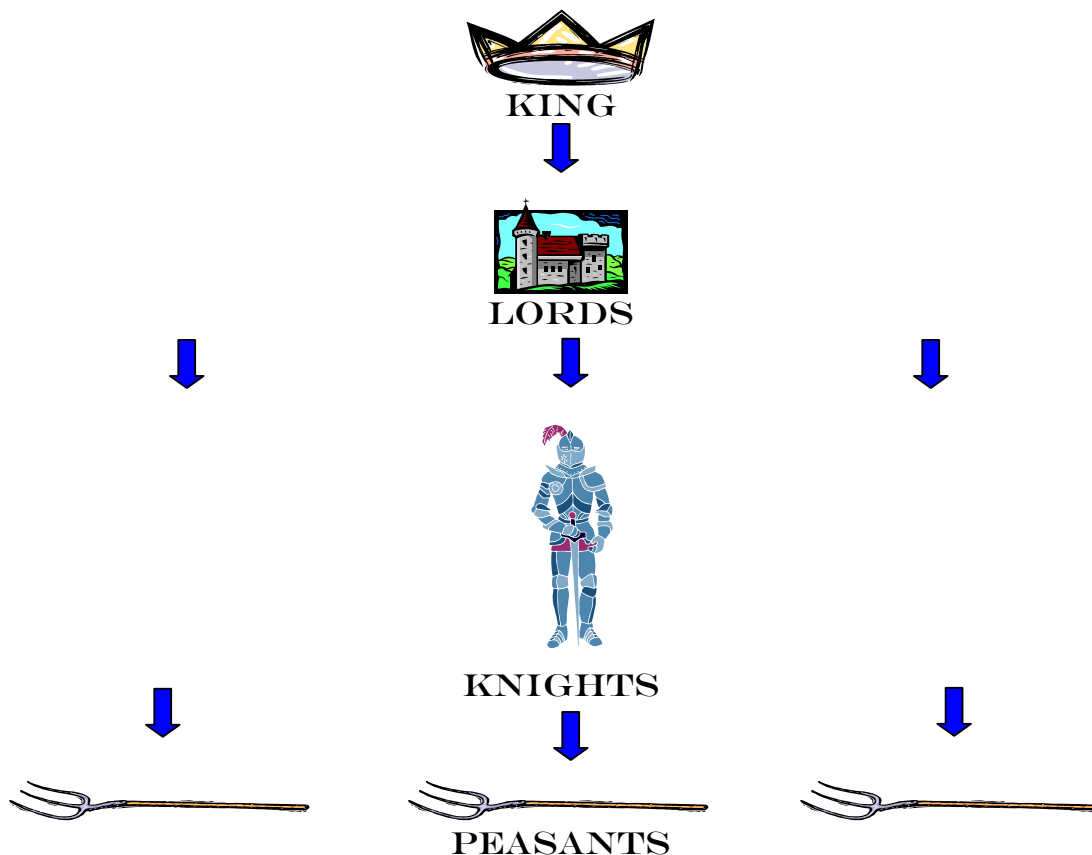
Children were raised in a specific manner to prepare them for their station in life: children of skilled craftsmen were apprenticed at a young age, while sons of the nobility were often sent to become pages for other noblemen as part of the preparation for becoming a knight. Girls of the peasant classes labored in the fields with their mothers or worked as servants to the nobility, while the daughters of noblemen might have been taught by nuns, and would learn to read and to do math in order to enable them to manage the large household of a manor as adults. They would also learn fine arts, such as music, dancing, and embroidery.

Marriage

In one respect, at least, the lower classes had an advantage. Marriages between common people were more likely to be marriages of love. For the nobility, marriage was frequently a matter of political strategy. Marriages were arranged in order to create alliances between families or to gain land, wealth, or power. Girls might marry at the age of 12, and boys, at the age of 14.

7. The Feudal System, from a Book about Medieval History

THE FEUDAL SYSTEM



The government and society of the Middle Ages formed a pyramid, with the king at the top, followed by the nobility and the leaders of the Christian church. At the bottom of the pyramid were the peasants, who made up the vast majority of the population, along with merchants, craftsmen, and people who were very poor and unable to work.

King: All of the land in a country was owned by the king. The king would distribute gifts of lands to lords to reward the noblemen for supporting the king and helping to defend the country. These gifts of land are known as “fiefs.” In addition to leading his country, the king was also considered the head of the Christian church.

Church: The Christian church was very important in the Middle Ages. Holidays were mostly of a religious nature, and celebrated important days of the Christian calendar, such as Easter, Christmas, and days that were designated as saints’ days. Although most people in medieval Europe were Christian, some people followed other faiths, such as Judaism and Islam. In the northeast, there were also groups of people who followed ancient pagan religions.

7. The Feudal System, from a Book about Medieval History

Lords of the Manor: Like the king, the noblemen needed help to defend their lands and to come to the king's defense. The lords raised armies of knights and soldiers. The noblemen then rewarded loyal knights with gifts of lands. The lords depended on peasants to farm their lands. In exchange for working the nobleman's lands, peasants would be allowed to farm small plots for themselves and their families, or they would pay rent to the nobleman. The lords governed the peasants who lived on their land. They were able to impose laws of their own as they saw fit, and some made laws that prevented peasants from leaving the lord's estate without permission.

Knights: Knights also depended on peasants to work their land or received rent from the peasants who lived on their land. Knights were sons of noblemen who had been raised and educated for battle. Beginning in the 1100s, the code of chivalry, inspired by religious beliefs, poetry, and heroic legends, governed the conduct of knights. Chivalry dictated that knights behave with courtesy, nobility, and honor.

Peasants: Also known as serfs, the peasants served the noblemen and knights by farming the land. Peasants, who had few rights, lived at the mercy of the nobleman whom they served. There was also a smaller population that consisted of craftsmen, such as weavers, cobblers, carpenters, and blacksmiths, and merchants. Merchants sold goods, such as silks and spices, imported from the East. Craftsmen formed guilds in order to make rules about trade and business in their communities. The guilds set standards for their workers. They also trained apprentice workers and helped take care of workers when they became ill or were unable to work.