

History Level 8

Chapter 4 — Europe and the Mediterranean, c. 600–1750 CE

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Continuity and change in ways of life and group roles

Curriculum focus — VC2HH8K19 (Victorian Curriculum 2.0 History, Levels 7 and 8). This section teaches the content description through the society set as the Chapter 4 default: **Medieval Europe** (elaboration set .E01–.E05). The other topic paths remain open as alternatives: the Ottoman Empire, the Vikings, Renaissance Italy, the Spanish and the Americas, and how the modern world emerged in Europe. Draws on, for question-bank and coverage linkage: .E01–.E22.

Teaching sequence

Key words for this section

History uses some big abstract words. This section fixes what each one means here, so every task can be answered on the same footing.

- **Continuity.** *Continuity* is what **stayed the same** across the years this section covers (roughly 1100 CE to 1400 CE) — for example, most people farming for a living, or the Church sitting at the centre of daily life.
- **Change.** *Change* is what **became different** — for example, a written limit appearing on a king's power in 1215, or surviving workers earning better pay after the Black Death.
- **Social group.** A *social group* is a set of people who shared the same position in society and therefore the same role and relationships: the nobility (great lords), the clergy (Church people), merchants and craftsmen in the towns, peasants in the countryside, and women, whose lives ran through every group.
- **Power.** The curriculum uses the word *power* but does not define it, and the word can mean different things. This section therefore treats *power* as **command of wealth, land and labour**. Every question in this section about who held power can be answered by asking: who controlled the wealth, the land and the workers?
- **Primary source / secondary source.** A *primary source* comes from the time being studied — a charter, a record, a building, a copied book. A *secondary source* is a later account that studies and explains the past — for example, a modern historian's book.
- **Serf.** A *serf* was a peasant who was **not free**: bound to the lord's land, unable to leave or marry without the lord's leave. Many medieval peasants were serfs in 1100; far fewer were by 1400.
- **Tithe.** A *tithe* was **one tenth** of a year's produce, paid by every parish to the Church. It was the Church's steady income, and it came from ordinary people's work.
- **Illuminated manuscript.** An *illuminated manuscript* is a book **copied and decorated by hand**, with painted letters and gold leaf. The people who copied books were called *scribes*.

1. The world this section studies: medieval Europe, c.1100

The sub-strand this chapter belongs to runs from about 600 CE to 1750 CE. This section looks closely at the heart of that span — roughly **1100 to 1400** — in **medieval Europe**, the period often called the Middle Ages.

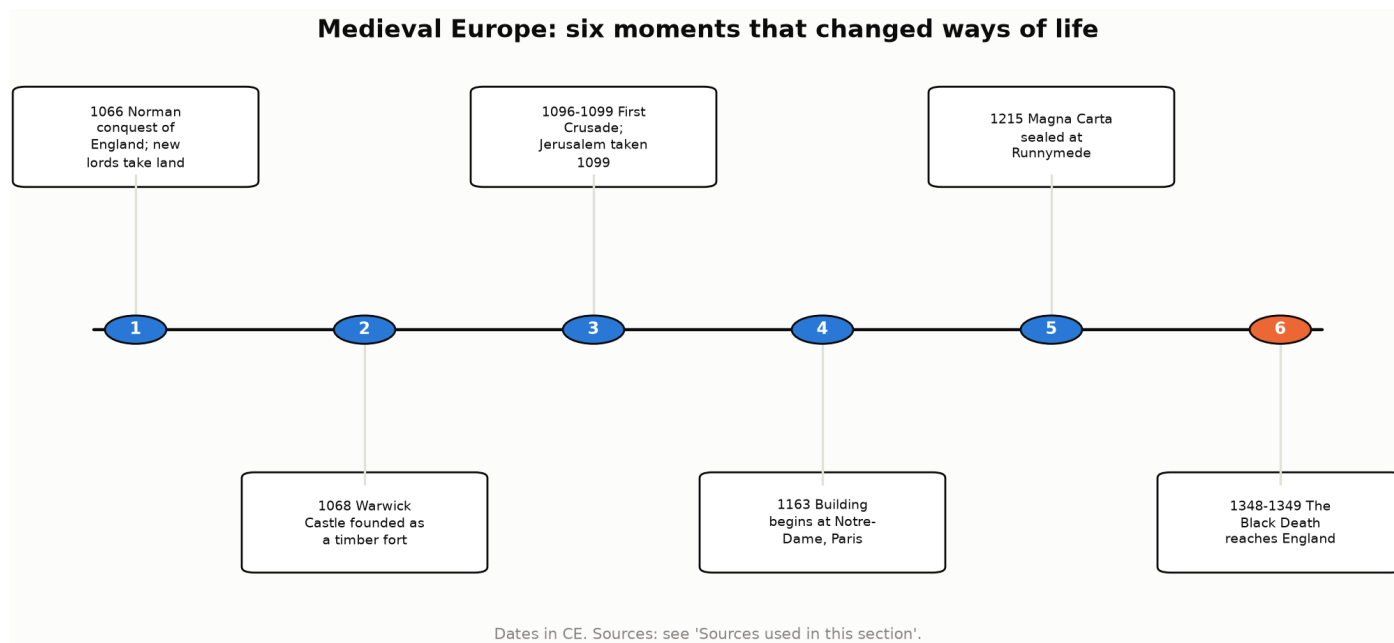
Who lived there, and in what groups?

- **Kings and great lords** ruled land and people. Lords held their land from the king and owed him service; the mounted soldiers who fought for them were rewarded with land too.
- **The clergy** — bishops, priests, monks and nuns — ran the Church, and the Church touched every life: baptism, marriage, burial, feast days and the weekly round.
- **Merchants and craftsmen** lived in the towns, buying and selling, and making things such as cloth, tools and glass.
- **Peasants** were by far the largest group. Most people in medieval Europe were peasant farmers. Many were serfs, bound to the lord's land.
- **Women** belonged to every group — noble, peasant, merchant, religious — and in every group their role was shaped by who held power over them: usually a father, a husband, a lord or the Church.

Three facts about roles and relationships carry through the whole section:

1. **Most people farmed.** Nine people in ten lived by the soil.
2. **Rank was mostly fixed at birth.** A peasant's child was a peasant; a lord's child a lord. That is a strong *continuity*.
3. **The Church sat at the centre.** It was the greatest landholder in Europe and kept learning alive, and it had its own courts and laws.

Six moments in this section's timeline changed that way of life. Watch for them as you read: each one shifted the roles and relationships of the groups above.



Timeline of medieval Europe from 1066 to 1349 showing six moments: 1066, the Norman conquest of England and new lords take land; 1068, Warwick Castle founded as a timber fort; 1096 to 1099, the First Crusade, with Jerusalem taken in 1099; 1163, building begins at Notre-Dame in Paris; 1215, Magna Carta sealed at Runnymede; and 1348 to 1349, the Black Death reaches England

2. Castles and churches: power you can see

Buildings are sources. Two great buildings show who held power in medieval Europe — and in what form.

Warwick Castle, England. After the Norman conquest of **1066**, the new king, **William the Conqueror**, ordered forts built across England to hold down his new kingdom. Warwick began in **1068** as a timber fort on a raised earth mound; over the following centuries it was rebuilt in stone, with high walls, towers, a gatehouse, a moat and a strong keep. A castle like this says: a lord controlled land and workers, and ruled the district around him.

Notre-Dame Cathedral, Paris. Building began in **1163** under **Bishop Maurice de Sully**. Its tall arched stone ceilings, huge windows, flying buttresses (stone supports on the outside of the walls) and great round rose windows were the newest building science of the age. A cathedral like this says: the Church commanded enough wealth, land and labour to raise the biggest buildings of the age.

Reading buildings as sources: Warwick Castle and Notre-Dame Cathedral

Warwick Castle (England)

Notre-Dame Cathedral (Paris)

What it is

A lord's fortress on the River Avon, founded in 1068 by William the Conqueror; rebuilt in stone over later centuries

A cathedral - a bishop's chief church - in Paris; building began in 1163 under Bishop Maurice de Sully

Key features

High walls, towers, a gatehouse, a moat and a strong keep

Tall vaulted ceilings, huge windows, flying buttresses (stone supports), and great round rose windows

Who paid

A lord, from the rents and dues of his lands

The Church, from tithes, gifts and its own lands

Whose labour built it

Diggers, carters, stone-cutters and carpenters set to work by the lord

Stone-cutters, carpenters, glaziers and labourers, paid for over many decades

What it shows us

Lords controlled land, wealth and workers' labour; a castle guarded land and ruled the district around it

The Church held enough wealth, land and labour to raise the largest buildings of the age

A castle and a cathedral are both arguments in stone about who held wealth, land and labour.

Comparison table of Warwick Castle and Notre-Dame Cathedral: what each building is, its key features, who paid for it, whose labour built it, and what it shows us about who controlled wealth, land and labour

The Church's power took three forms — wealth, land and labour — and each one shaped the way of life of every social group:

The Church's power in medieval Europe: wealth, land and labour

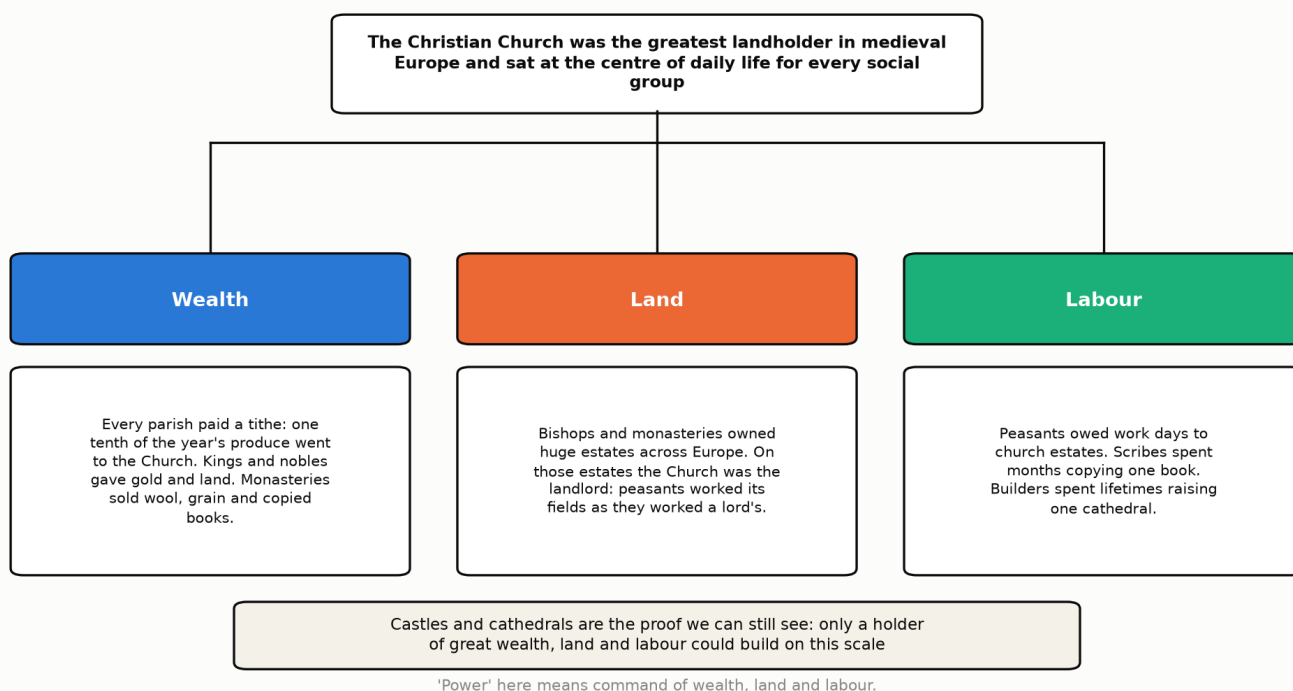


Diagram of the Church's power in medieval Europe in three forms: wealth, from tithes, gifts and the sale of wool, grain and copied books; land, from the huge estates owned by bishops and monasteries, where peasants worked the Church's fields as they worked a lord's; and labour, from peasants' work days, scribes copying books for months and builders raising one cathedral over lifetimes

Read the two figures together and the continuity-and-change picture appears. **Continuity:** for the whole period, lords and the Church controlled the wealth, the land and the labour, and ordinary people worked for both. **Change:** the *scale* of what that power could build grew — from the timber fort of 1068 to stone castles, and from small parish churches to cathedrals like Notre-Dame.

3. Illuminated manuscripts: keeping knowledge alive

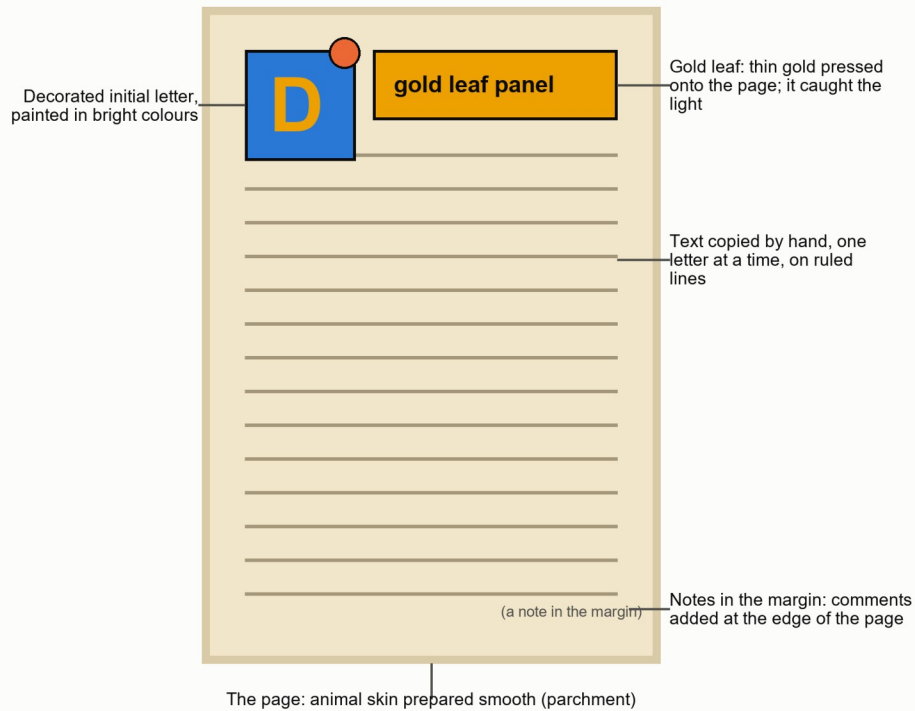
Before printing, every book in Europe was copied by hand, one letter at a time. Most copying was done by scribes in monasteries — communities of monks living under a religious rule. A single book could take months. The finest books were *illuminated*: decorated with painted letters and with gold leaf, thin gold pressed onto the page so that it caught the light.

Two famous surviving manuscripts show the tradition at its best:

- The **Lindisfarne Gospels**, made around **715–720** at the island monastery of Lindisfarne in Northumbria, and now held in the British Library.
- The **Book of Kells**, made around **800**, and now held in the library of Trinity College Dublin.

Both are older than this section's 1100–1400 window — and that is exactly the point. The same copying tradition ran straight through the Middle Ages, and it is how the writings of ancient Greece, Rome and the Arab world survived at all: scribes copied and re-copied them, century after century. Manuscripts are therefore a **cultural** story with two sides — **continuity** (books still copied by hand, mostly in monasteries, mostly in Latin) and **change** (more schools and universities grew up from the 1100s, and with them more books, teachers and readers).

The parts of an illuminated manuscript



A model page drawn for this section. 'Illuminated' means decorated with paint and gold. Writing such a book took months.

Model page of an illuminated manuscript drawn for this section, showing its parts: a decorated initial letter painted in bright colours, a gold leaf panel, text copied by hand one letter at a time on ruled lines, a note in the margin, and the page itself, animal skin prepared smooth, called parchment

4. The Crusades: contact and conflict

In **1095** at Clermont, **Pope Urban II** called Christians of Europe to take the holy places of the east, including Jerusalem, which were then ruled by Muslim states. The **First Crusade (1096–1099)** ended with Jerusalem taken in **1099**. Crusading went on for two more centuries — the last crusader foothold on the eastern Mediterranean coast fell in **1291**.

The Crusades were a collision between two worlds, and their consequences ran in every direction:

- **Armies and harm.** Cities were taken by force and many people were killed, including civilians. The fighting left a long memory of mistrust on both sides that has not fully faded.
- **Goods.** Contact opened and widened trade. Spices, sugar, silk and glass moved west, and the Italian port cities of **Venice, Genoa and Pisa** carried people and goods by ship and grew rich.
- **Ideas.** Knowledge moved in both directions — mathematics, medicine and star knowledge from the Islamic world, and European ideas travelling east.

The Crusades: contact and conflict between Europe and the Islamic world

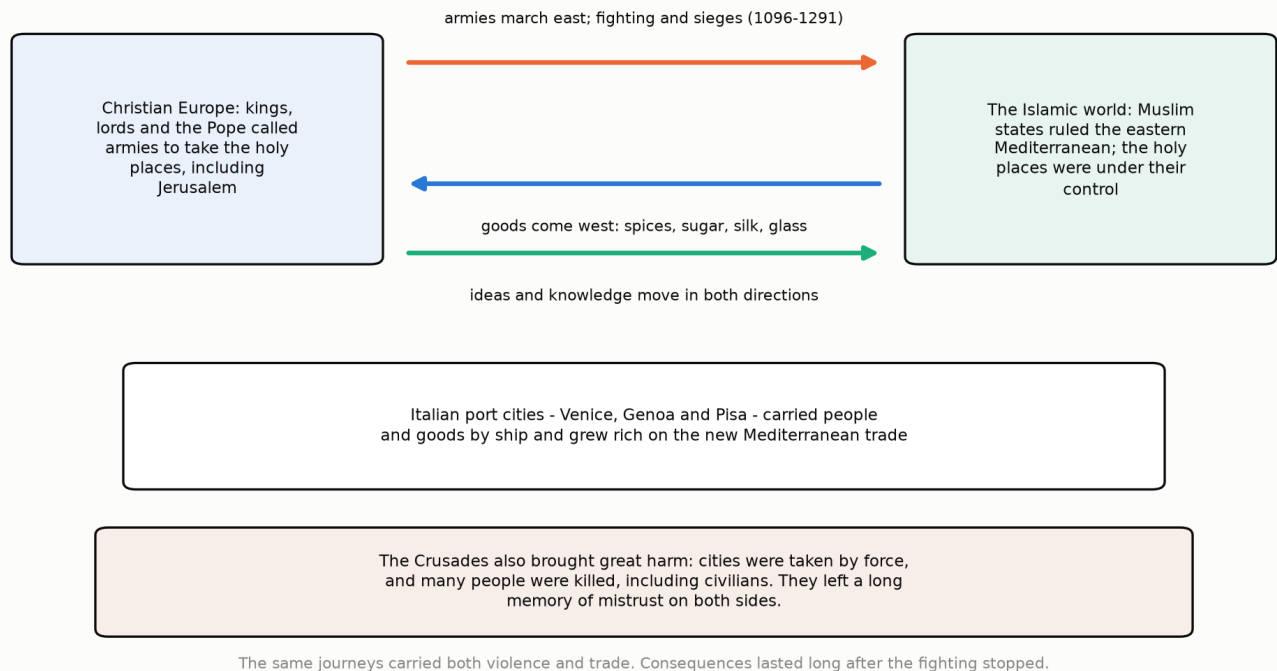


Diagram of contact and conflict between Christian Europe and the Islamic world during the Crusades: armies march east, with fighting and sieges from 1096 to 1291; goods come west, such as spices, sugar, silk and glass; ideas and knowledge move in both directions; the Italian port cities of Venice, Genoa and Pisa grow rich on the new Mediterranean trade; and a harm panel notes that cities were taken by force and many people were killed, leaving a long memory of mistrust on both sides

The Crusades also teach **perspective**. In European sources the First Crusade is a holy journey and a triumph; from the Islamic world it appears as an invasion from the sea. The same events, two different tellings — and a full account holds both, without pretending the harm was not real. In **roles and relationships**, the Crusades strengthened two groups in particular: merchants and port cities, who grew rich on the new trade, and the Church, which showed it could move armies as well as beliefs.

5. Magna Carta: a written limit on the king

By 1215, **King John** of England had lost lands in France, quarrelled with the Church, and raised money hard from his barons. In June **1215** the barons forced him to meet them at **Runnymede**, and the king set his seal to a charter — **Magna Carta**, “the Great Charter”. For the first time in England, a king’s will was bound by written law.

The charter is famous as a single document, but its meaning is clearest group by group:

Magna Carta (1215): what changed for each social group		
Group	What Magna Carta did for them	Result
Nobility (barons)	The king could not raise certain taxes without their agreement; disputes were to be settled by law, not the king's will.	Gained the most
The Church and religious orders	Clause 1: 'the English Church shall be free', with its rights and liberties kept whole.	Protected
Merchants	Clause 41: merchants could enter, leave and trade in England safely, free of unfair tolls (except in wartime).	Protected
Free men, including workers and craftsmen	Clause 39: no free man to be arrested or punished except by lawful judgement; Clause 40: justice not to be sold or delayed.	Protected, if free
Women (widows)	Clauses 7-8: a widow could keep her property and could not be forced to remarry.	Some new rights
Peasants who were not free (many were serfs)	The charter's protections mostly ran to 'free men'. Serfs were bound to their lord's land, so most peasants gained little in 1215.	Mostly left out

Clause numbers refer to the 1215 charter. The charter protected free people most; it left most peasants, and many women, outside its main promises.

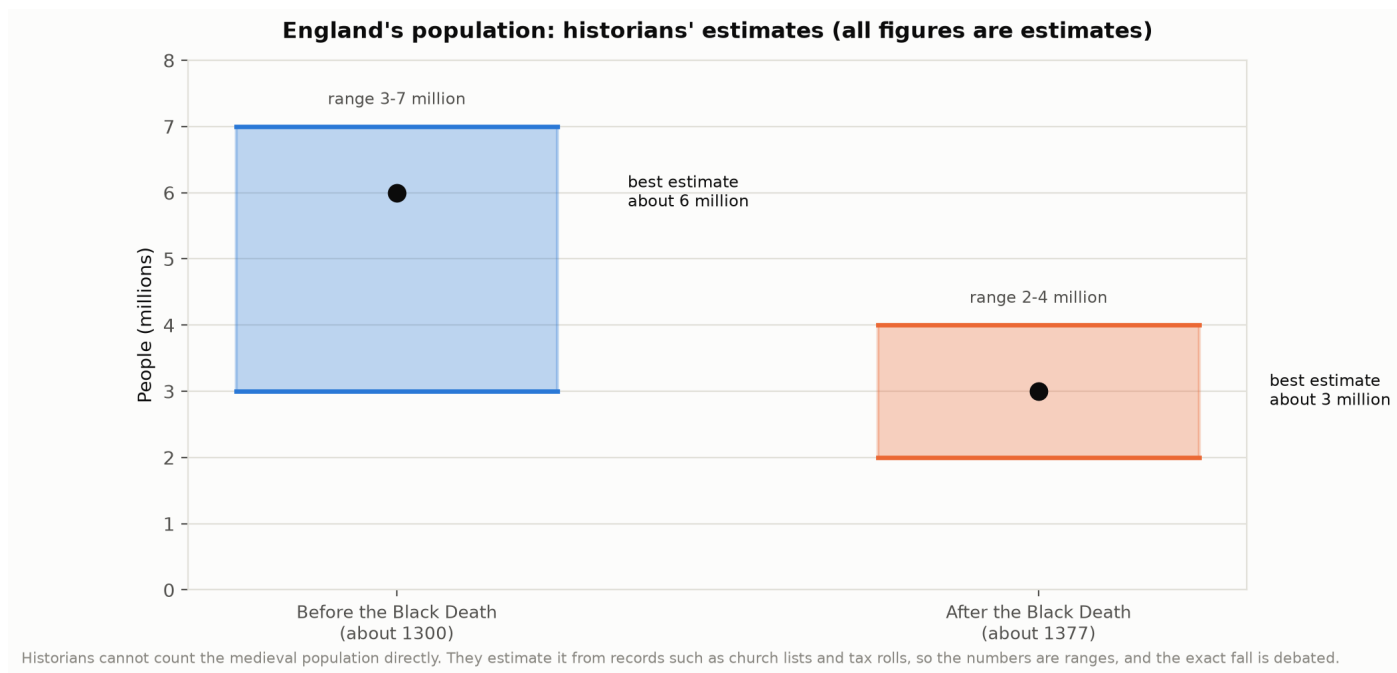
Table of what Magna Carta (1215) changed for each social group: the nobility gained the most, because the king could not raise certain taxes without their agreement; the Church and religious orders were protected by clause 1; merchants were protected by clause 41; free men, including workers and craftsmen, were protected by clauses 39 and 40; widows gained some new rights under clauses 7 and 8; and peasants who were not free, many of them serfs, were mostly left out

Read the table for continuity and change. **Continuity:** the king stayed king, the nobility stayed on top of the lay ladder, and most peasants stayed outside the charter's promises. **Change:** political relationships now had a **written** limit — a king who broke his own charter could be held to it. That idea, more than any single clause, is the charter's gift to the centuries after.

6. The Black Death: when half the people died

In **June 1348** a seaman reached **Weymouth** on England's south coast, on a ship from Gascony. With him came the sickness Europeans called the Great Pestilence and we call the **Black Death**. It swept England through 1348 and 1349, and between 1346 and the early 1350s it killed a huge share of the people of Europe.

How huge? Here we meet the statistics problem of medieval history. There was no census. Historians estimate the population from records that survive — parish registers, church lists of priests, tax rolls — and those records are patchy, so the numbers are ranges, and the exact fall is genuinely debated.



Range chart of historians' estimates for England's population: before the Black Death, around 1300, a range of 3 to 7 million with a best estimate of about 6 million; after the Black Death, around 1377, a range of 2 to 4 million with a best estimate of about 3 million; the chart notes that all figures are estimates made from records such as church lists and tax rolls

Whichever end of the range you take, the consequence was the same in kind: **far fewer people were left to work, pray, buy and farm**, and the fall in population reached into every part of life.

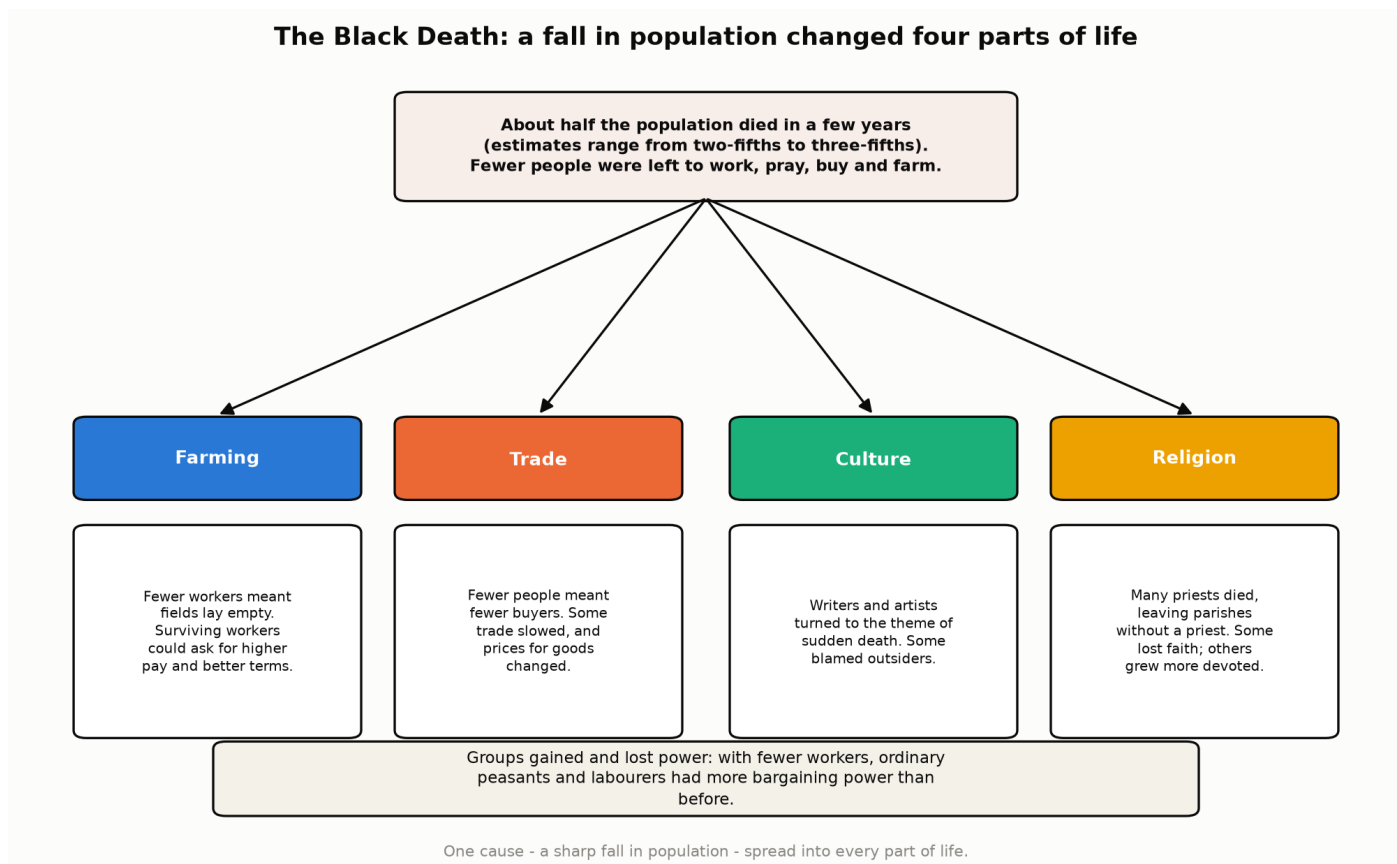


Diagram showing how the Black Death's fall in population changed four parts of life: farming, where empty fields and labour shortages let surviving workers ask for higher pay and better terms; trade, where fewer buyers slowed some trade and changed prices; culture, where writers and artists turned to the theme of sudden death and some blamed outsiders; and religion, where many priests died leaving parishes without a priest, some lost faith and others grew more devoted; a final panel notes that ordinary peasants and labourers gained bargaining power

The last panel is the key to **roles and relationships**. Before 1348, with many workers and little land to go around, lords could set the terms. After 1349, with land going begging and workers scarce, an ordinary peasant with strong arms could ask for pay — and often get it. The greatest disaster in living memory became, for the survivors, a shift in power between the groups of medieval society.

7. Pulling it together: continuity and change across five areas

Every part of this section now lines up in one table — the five areas named in the content description, each with its continuity and its change.

Continuity and change in medieval Europe, c.1100-c.1400		
Area of life	What stayed the same (continuity)	What changed
Social	Most people stayed peasant farmers; rank was mostly fixed at birth; the Church stayed at the centre of daily life	After the Black Death, surviving workers could bargain for better pay and terms; towns slowly drew in new people
Cultural	Christian belief shaped feasts, art and learning; books were still copied by hand	New building styles spread (great cathedrals); more schools and universities grew; after 1348, art turned to the theme of death
Environmental	Seasons, soil and climate kept ruling the harvest	Rising numbers pressed hard on the land until 1300; after the plague, with fewer people, some fields went back to grass
Economic	Farming stayed the base of wealth; lords kept collecting rents and work dues	Trade grew (Italian ports, English wool); money mattered more; after the plague, labour shortages pushed pay up
Political	Kings stayed at the top of the ladder; the Church kept its own courts and power	Written limits appeared on a king's power - above all Magna Carta (1215) - and kings began to consult their leading subjects before taxing them

Read across: in every area of life, some things held steady while others moved. That mix is what historians mean by continuity and change.

Table of continuity and change in medieval Europe, c.1100 to c.1400, across the five areas of life: social, cultural, environmental, economic and political, with one column for what stayed the same and one for what changed in each area

Two closing thoughts to carry into the tasks. First, continuity and change are not a list of separate facts — they run together: the same Church that kept learning alive in 1100 was still at the centre of life in 1400, yet its parishes were changed by the plague. Second, the content description's last words matter: *the roles and relationships of the different groups*. Every figure in this section can be read as an answer to one question — **who controlled the wealth, the land and the labour, and how did that change?** — from the castle and the cathedral to the charter and the plague.

Source studies — worked readings

Source study 1 (primary source): Magna Carta, clause by clause

A charter is a primary source of a special kind: it is not a story someone chose to tell, it is a **deal written down**, and its wording shows exactly who mattered to the people who wrote it. The reading below is this section's own rendering, made from the Latin of a surviving 1215 original.

The source. Four originals of the 1215 Magna Carta survive — two at the British Library (one of them British Library Cotton MS Augustus II.106), one at Lincoln Castle and one at Salisbury Cathedral. From the charter they carry, five clauses:

Clause 1. First, that the English Church shall be free, and shall have its rights and freedoms kept whole.

Clauses 7–8. That a widow, after her husband’s death, shall have her property at once and without payment, and shall not be forced to marry again against her will.

Clause 39. That no free man shall be arrested, or imprisoned, or punished, except by the lawful judgement of his equals, or by the law of the land.

Clause 40. To no one will we sell, to no one will we deny or delay, right or justice.

Clause 41. That all merchants may enter and leave England safely, and may trade without unfair tolls (charges for using roads and markets), except in time of war.

Worked reading — what the source gives us.

1. Read the clauses as a map of social groups: the **Church** (clause 1), **widows** (clauses 7–8), **free men** (clauses 39–40) and **merchants** (clause 41). The charter protects exactly the groups whose support the king needed — or whose property he had threatened.
2. Clause 39 is the hinge of the whole document. “No **free man**” — the protection is real, and it is limited. It is a rule about the relationship between the king and the free people of the realm.
3. Clause 40 turns justice from a favour the king sells into a thing he must not sell. That is a change in the political relationship between rulers and ruled.

Worked reading — what we must question. Who is missing? The serfs — most peasants in England in 1215 — do not appear. A widow’s rights help widows of property, not the landless. So the charter is strong evidence for the **perspective** of its makers: great lords negotiating with a king. It is a deal between the most powerful people of the realm — which is precisely why later centuries, reading it in a new way, could turn it into a symbol of liberty for all. That later life is a legacy question; Section 4E returns to it.

Source study 2 (secondary source interpretation): how many people did the Black Death kill?

Here the question turns to a **secondary** debate — modern historians reading the same patchy records and reaching different numbers. The debate matters for this section, because the size of the fall decides how big every consequence was.

The high reading. The fullest study of the records, Ole J. Benedictow’s *The Black Death 1346–1350: The Complete History* (2004), puts the death share of Europe’s population at about **sixty in a hundred**, and higher — up to eighty — in the worst-hit places. His case: the church and tax records that survive understate the dead, because they miss the poor and the whole households that disappeared; where local registers can be checked closely, the death shares are appalling.

The lower reading. Other historians urge caution. A computation made by the papal court in the 1340s put the dead at about **one third** of Europe’s people; Philip Daileader’s reading of the evidence settles near **forty-five to fifty in a hundred**; and a 2022 study of fossil pollen from across Europe found that the plague was immensely destructive in some regions and far lighter in others. Their case: patchy records exaggerate the dramatic, and a single average number hides huge regional differences.

Steelman each side. Presenting a position in its strongest honest form is a rule of good historical argument — you will meet this again in Section 4E.

- **Strongest high case:** the best local records — parish lists where every death was entered, manor rolls where every tenant was named — show death shares of half and more; records that miss the poor miss them in the same direction everywhere, so the true figure sits above the naive count.
- **Strongest lower case:** the records are not a census but a survival lottery; the pollen evidence shows whole regions where farming went on almost undisturbed; and a single Europe-wide number pretends to a precision the sources cannot carry.

What both sides agree on: the Black Death was the greatest disaster in European living memory, and it killed a very large share of the population — no serious reading puts it below two-fifths. The disagreement is about **scale and method**: how far patchy records can be trusted, and whether one number can stand for a whole continent. That is what makes this a genuine **interpretation** question — it is decided by weighing how the evidence was made, not by picking the number you like. Section 4E returns to historians' Black Death debates as a question of interpretations and legacies; here the point is the skill — reading a range, and saying honestly what the statistics can and cannot prove.

Practice tasks

Scaffolded

Q1. Use the timeline in part 1. (a) Put these in order: the Black Death reaches England; the First Crusade sets out; Warwick Castle is founded; Magna Carta is sealed; building begins at Notre-Dame. (b) Which two of the six moments show the Church's reach beyond worship — moving armies or binding a king? Name the moment and the group it strengthened or limited.

Q2. Use the Warwick-and-Notre-Dame table in part 2. (a) Who paid for each building? (b) Whose labour built each one? (c) In one sentence: what do the two buildings, side by side, tell us about who controlled wealth, land and labour in medieval Europe?

Q3. Use the Church-power diagram in part 2. Name one example of the Church's power over (a) **wealth**, (b) **land**, (c) **labour**. (d) Which of the three came directly from ordinary people's work, every year, whether they were rich or poor?

Q4. Use part 3. (a) Why were books rare and precious in medieval Europe? Give two reasons. (b) Name the two real manuscripts in part 3 and where each one is kept today. (c) What older knowledge survived because scribes kept copying?

Q5. Use the Crusades diagram in part 4. (a) Name two goods that moved west and one thing besides goods that moved in both directions. (b) Which group in Europe grew rich on the new trade, and in which cities? (c) Give one harm named in the diagram.

Q6. Use the Magna Carta groups table and Source study 1. (a) Which group gained the most, and which group was mostly left out? (b) Explain "protected, if free" for the workers and craftsmen row. (c) Which clause protects a widow's property, and which clauses protect a free man's justice?

Un scaffolded

Q7. "For most people in medieval Europe, the way of life changed little between 1100 and 1400." Using at least two areas of life from the part 7 table, give one reason to support this claim and one reason to qualify it (to say what *did* change for ordinary people).

Q8. Explain two consequences of the Black Death — choose two from farming, trade, culture and religion — and then explain, in your own words, why the fall in population gave surviving workers more bargaining power than they had before 1348.

Q9. A historian says: "Magna Carta changed the roles and relationships of the different groups in England." Using the groups table and Source study 1, write one paragraph for and one paragraph against this claim. You may reach either conclusion; marks go to the reasoning and the evidence, not to the side you choose.

Q10. Extended response. "Between 1100 and 1400, the biggest changes in everyday life in medieval Europe came from outside forces — conquest, crusade and plague — not from choices people made." Using one primary source and one secondary source from this section, and at least three of the six timeline moments, write two to three paragraphs arguing for, against or between these positions. Build your case on continuity **and** change, and on the roles and relationships of at least two social groups. (The extended-response skills of Chapters 6 and 7 apply: source handling, evidence, and reasoned judgement.)

Answers

Q1. (a) Warwick Castle founded (1068); the First Crusade sets out (1096); building begins at Notre-Dame (1163); Magna Carta sealed (1215); the Black Death reaches England (1348). (b) The First Crusade — the Church showed it could move armies across a continent; and Magna Carta — the barons and the Church bound a king by written law, limiting the king's group and strengthening the idea that law stands above the king's will.

Q2. (a) Warwick: a lord, from the rents and dues of his lands. Notre-Dame: the Church, from tithes, gifts and its own lands. (b) Warwick: diggers, carters, stone-cutters and carpenters set to work by the lord. Notre-Dame: stone-cutters, carpenters, glaziers and labourers, paid over many decades. (c) Example: both buildings are arguments in stone — only a holder of great wealth, land and labour, whether lord or Church, could build on this scale.

Q3. (a) Wealth: tithes from every parish, gifts of gold and land from kings and nobles, and money from selling wool, grain and copied books. (b) Land: huge estates owned by bishops and monasteries across Europe. (c) Labour: peasants' work days on church estates; scribes' months of copying; builders' lifetimes on one cathedral. (d) The tithe — one tenth of the year's produce, paid by ordinary people every year.

Q4. (a) Every book was copied by hand, one letter at a time, and the finest were illuminated with paint and gold — a single book could take months; the materials (parchment, paint, gold) were costly too. (b) The Lindisfarne Gospels, British Library; the Book of Kells, Trinity College Dublin. (c) The writings of ancient Greece, Rome and the Arab world.

Q5. (a) Goods west: any two of spices, sugar, silk, glass; both directions: ideas and knowledge. (b) Merchants, above all in the Italian port cities of Venice, Genoa and Pisa. (c) Any one of: cities taken by force; many people killed, including civilians; a long memory of mistrust on both sides.

Q6. (a) Gained the most: the nobility (barons). Mostly left out: peasants who were not free, many of them serfs. (b) Clauses 39–40 protect “free men”; a worker or craftsman who was free got the protection of lawful judgement and justice not sold or delayed — but a serf, bound to the lord's land, did not. (c) Widows' property: clauses 7–8; a free man's justice: clauses 39 and 40.

Q7. Suggested support: in social life, most people stayed peasant farmers and rank was mostly fixed at birth; culturally, Christian belief kept shaping feasts, art and learning, and books were still copied by hand; economically, farming stayed the base of wealth. Suggested qualification: after the Black Death surviving workers could bargain for better pay and terms, serfdom weakened, towns drew in new people, and written limits appeared on kings' power — so for ordinary people some real things changed, even inside a mostly continuous way of life.

Q8. Example: farming — fields lay empty for lack of workers, and surviving workers could ask for higher pay and better terms; religion — many priests died, leaving parishes without a priest, and some people lost faith while others grew more devoted. Bargaining power: before 1348 workers were many and land was scarce, so lords set the terms; after it, workers were scarce and land went begging, so a worker could move to a better offer — scarcity turned labour into something lords had to pay for.

Q9. Suggested points — *for*: the charter wrote new relationships into law — the king could not raise certain taxes without the barons' agreement, free men gained protection from arrest except by lawful judgement, widows gained property rights, merchants gained safe trade; that is a real change in the roles and relationships of those groups. *Against*: the charter's promises ran mostly to the powerful and the free — serfs, most peasants, and many women stayed outside them; the king stayed king and the nobility stayed on top; within a few years the charter's limits were contested again. A strong paragraph on each side, with clauses named, earns the mark whichever conclusion is reached.

Q10. Marks go to the handling of sources and the reasoning. A strong response uses, for example, Magna Carta (primary) to show a political change made by people's choices — barons forcing a king to written law — and the mortality debate (secondary) to show an outside force — plague — shifting the bargaining power of workers; it tracks continuity as well as change (most people farming, the Church at the centre), and it names at least two groups (for example peasants and the nobility, or merchants and widows) whose roles and relationships moved or held steady across the timeline moments chosen.

Fully-worked solutions

Each solution below shows the working — where the evidence lives and the moves that turn it into an answer. Compare with the Answers above.

Q1. Step 1: read the dates off the timeline pins — 1068, 1096, 1163, 1215, 1348. Step 2: order them — Warwick, First Crusade, Notre-Dame, Magna Carta, Black Death. Step 3: for (b), ask which moments show the Church acting beyond worship — the Crusade call (Urban II moving armies) and 1215 (clause 1 protects the Church, and the charter binds the king).

Q2. Step 1: take the “Who paid” and “Whose labour built it” rows, one building at a time. Step 2: copy the payer and the workers for each. Step 3: for (c), read the bottom row of the table — both buildings prove command of wealth, land and labour, one for the lords and one for the Church.

Q3. Step 1: work panel by panel — Wealth, Land, Labour — and lift one example from each. Step 2: for (d), ask which flow came from ordinary people every year — the tithe, one tenth of the year’s produce, paid by every parish.

Q4. Step 1: two reasons for rarity — hand copying (months per book) and costly materials (parchment, paint, gold). Step 2: lift the two named manuscripts with their keeping places. Step 3: the preserved knowledge — Greek, Roman and Arab writings, kept alive by copying.

Q5. Step 1: read the arrows — goods west (spices, sugar, silk, glass), ideas both ways. Step 2: the trade winners row — merchants of Venice, Genoa and Pisa. Step 3: the harm panel — cities taken by force, civilians killed, a long memory of mistrust.

Q6. Step 1: top row and bottom row of the table give (a). Step 2: for (b), match the “free men” row to clauses 39–40, then note the serf row — the protection stops at freedom. Step 3: for (c), read the clause numbers off the widows’ row (7–8) and the free men’s row (39, 40).

Q7. Step 1: pick two areas from the part 7 table and copy their continuity cells as support. Step 2: qualify with the change cells that touch ordinary people — better pay and terms after the plague, weaker serfdom, towns drawing in new people. Step 3: check the answer states both halves — “changed little” *and* “yet these things changed”.

Q8. Step 1: choose two areas from the Black Death effects diagram and copy the consequence in your own words. Step 2: for bargaining power, set the two sides of 1348 against each other — many workers and scarce land before; scarce workers and begging land after. Step 3: name the mechanism in one sentence — scarcity made labour something lords had to pay for.

Q9. Step 1: for-paragraph — list the changed relationships with their clauses (barons and taxes; free men and lawful judgement; widows and property; merchants and safe trade). Step 2: against-paragraph — list who was untouched (serfs, most peasants, many women) and what stayed (king still king, nobility on top). Step 3: check each paragraph uses at least two named pieces of evidence; the mark goes to the reasoning.

Q10. Step 1: choose the primary source (Magna Carta clauses) and the secondary source (the mortality debate) and say what each is. Step 2: sort the six timeline moments into outside forces (conquest 1066, crusade 1096, plague 1348) and human choices (Warwick and Notre-Dame as planned building, Magna Carta as a forced agreement). Step 3: write for, against or between — but track continuity as well as change, and name two groups whose roles and relationships moved or held steady; finish with a reasoned judgement, not a list.

Where this section leads

Section 4B takes the same society and asks what caused its turning points and how they fed continuity and change — including the feudal order and the migrations that shaped the period’s beginning. The charter’s later life, and the historians’ Black Death debates met in Source study 2, return in Section 4E as questions of interpretations and legacies; the plague-era records and the lords’ answers to the labour shortage are the lived experience of Section 4C. The extended-response skills practised in Q10 are set formally in the skills chapters (6 and 7), where the chapter’s evidence-based extended response is assessed.

Sources used in this section

Primary sources

- Magna Carta (1215), clauses 1, 7–8, 39, 40 and 41; the readings in this section are the section’s own rendering made from the Latin of the surviving 1215 originals. Four originals survive: two at the British Library (including Cotton MS Augustus II.106), one at Lincoln Castle and one at Salisbury Cathedral; holding information verified against the British Library’s catalogue description of the 1215 charter, retrieved 2026-08-25.
- Warwick Castle and Notre-Dame Cathedral as physical primary sources (part 2): founding and building facts (Warwick founded 1068 as a timber fort under William the Conqueror; Notre-Dame begun 1163 under Bishop Maurice de Sully) verified against the Wikipedia articles “Warwick Castle” and “Notre-Dame de Paris”, retrieved 2026-08-25.
- The Lindisfarne Gospels (British Library, Cotton MS Nero D.IV, c.715–720) and the Book of Kells (Trinity College Dublin, c.800), named in part 3 as surviving illuminated manuscripts; holding and dating verified against the Wikipedia articles “Lindisfarne Gospels” and “Book of Kells”, retrieved 2026-08-25.

Secondary sources

- Benedictow, O. J., *The Black Death 1346–1350: The Complete History* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2004) — the high reading of the mortality evidence (about sixty in a hundred, higher in the worst-hit places).
- Daileader, P., *The Late Middle Ages* (The Great Courses, Chantilly VA: The Teaching Company, 2007) — the lower-to-middle reading (about forty-five to fifty in a hundred) and the papal computation of about one third.
- The 2022 fossil-pollen study of regional variation in Black Death mortality, as reported in the Wikipedia article “Black Death”, retrieved 2026-08-25 — some regions immensely destroyed, others far lighter touched.
- Wikipedia articles “Magna Carta”, “First Crusade”, “Crusades” and “Black Death”, retrieved 2026-08-25 — dates and events of the timeline (Runnymede, 15 June 1215; First Crusade 1096–1099; Jerusalem taken 15 July 1099; the last crusader foothold falling 1291; the Black Death reaching England June 1348 at Weymouth), and the population ranges used in part 6.

Causes and consequences of one big turning point

Curriculum focus — teacher block

Owning content description — VC2HH8K20 (Historical Knowledge and Understanding, Europe and the Mediterranean, c. 600–1750 CE).

Elaboration linkage (D7 — linkage only, not a teaching order; ids verbatim from the VCAA export, final ids over substantive elaborations):

- **Medieval Europe (default path, D9):** .E01 causes and effects of major developments — the migration era (Germanic, Hun and Slavic peoples moving into central and western Europe), Charlemagne’s rule, the Norman takeover of England (1066), the First Crusade, plague; .E02 the Church’s impact on western European politics and social institutions, kingship included; .E03 what caused the feudal order to form, and its effects on European societies. This section is authored end-to-end on **the coronation of Charlemagne (Christmas Day 800 CE)** as the significant event and turning point, with the migrations as its long causes and the feudal order as its long consequence, per the chapter note (“Germanic migrations, Charlemagne, the feudal order (4B)”). The other named developments of .E01 (Norman invasion 1066, first Crusade 1096–99, plague) appear as dated bookends and comparison points, not as case studies.
- **Alternative paths (join key, remain available to a teacher or a D9 sign-off swap):** .E04–.E07 Ottoman Empire (sieges of Bursa and Nicaea, Crusades vs the Ottomans); .E08–.E12 Vikings (adoption of Christianity, longboats, trade, the decline of Viking power); .E13–.E17 Renaissance Italy (Black Death and Constantinople’s fall as triggers); .E18–.E21 Spanish and the Americas (conquest, Columbian exchange, long-term consequences for the Indigenous peoples of the Americas — in scope per D3/§2A, but that content belongs to the Spanish-and-the-Americas topic and is not taught under the default); .E22–.E23 emergence of the modern world (movable type and Bible translation; the Reformation and the Enlightenment). Each alternative reuses this section’s structure: long causes → turning point → consequences → continuity/change sort → primary close study → interpretation debate.

Achievement standard coverage: this section serves the standard’s sentences on ordering historical narratives chronologically — events, ideas, developments — to explain patterns of continuity and change along with what caused them and what followed, and on recognising and explaining those patterns in the societies studied, picking out the significant individuals, events, ideas and developments that helped produce continuity and change. The Einhard close study serves the sentences on explaining primary and secondary sources in terms of their features, content and context, and on interpreting the information sources give by analysing how accurate and valuable it is as evidence; the coronation debate serves the sentence on the contested character of pre-modern and early societies’ histories, and on using that knowledge to spot and analyse the different interpretations and debates historians offer. The rate/scale vocabulary of 7A (VC2HH8S07) and the trigger/long-cause vocabulary of 7B (VC2HH8S08) are applied here, not re-taught.

First Nations disposition (§2A): none — no elaboration of VC2HH8K20 is excluded. Note for auditors: .E21 names the Indigenous peoples of the Americas; that content is **not** Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander content (D3), and remains in scope for the Spanish-and-the-Americas topic. They are not taught in this section because the Medieval Europe default is authored; that is a D9 topic choice, not a §2A exclusion.

Cross-references: 4A (the medieval way of life these events changed), 4C (rulers and ruled: plague-era laws and the Statute of Labourers), 4D (Charlemagne as a significant individual), 4E (interpretations and legacies), 1D (the 600–1750 global timeline into which 800 and the Reformation feed), 6B (sequencing and dating), 7A (continuity and change: rate and scale), 7B (triggers vs long causes, ranking causes). No section assumes a specific Level 7 sequence (D1).

Key subject terms defined at first use (D2 exemption 2): cause, consequence, turning point, continuity, change, migration, kingdom, empire, emperor, pope, anointing, coronation, acclamation, dynasty, feudal order / feudalism, vassal, fief, knight, manor, serf, tithe, primary source, secondary source (the last two re-established in one sentence, owned by 6C). Contested-term handling per `CONTESTED_TERMS.md`: “turning point” and “feudalism” are presented as historians’ labels that are argued about, not facts of nature; the two readings of the 800 coronation are

steelmanned (Rule 5) and tested symmetrically (Rule 4); marking is on the quality of reasoning, not the conclusion reached (Rule 5, stated in the answer guide).

Teaching sequence (for the teacher). 1. Frame the CD: cause, consequence, turning point, continuity, change (What you will learn). 2. The long causes: the fall of the west (476) and the migrations (Key ideas Part 1; Figures 4b_timeline.png, 4b_migration_map.png). 3. The turning point: Charlemagne's coronation, 800 (Part 2; Figure 4b_turning_point.png) — causes flow in, consequences flow out. 4. The Church and kingship, .E02 (Part 3; Figure 4b_kingship.png). 5. The feudal order, .E03: causes and impacts (Part 4; Figures 4b_feudal_causes.png, 4b_feudal_duties.png). 6. Continuity and change sorted by rate and scale, 476–1066 (Part 5; Figure 4b_continuity_change.png) — the 7A skill applied. 7. Primary-source close study: Einhard, *Life of Charlemagne*, chapter 28 (Figures 4b_einhard_card.png, 4b_einhard_extract.png). 8. Secondary-source interpretation: the historians' debate over who planned the coronation (Figure 4b_coronation_debate.png; McKitterick 2008 against the traditional reading), then the sources table (Figure 4b_sources_table.png), scaffolded practice Q1–Q6, unscaffolded Q7–Q10.

Common misconceptions to address: that 476 or 800 changed everything overnight (the biggest changes — Christianity spreading, kingship becoming sacred, the feudal order — were slow; the famous dates are quick breaks, not the whole story); that the crown “just happened” to Charlemagne (a crown and a rehearsed crowd do not appear by accident — hence the real debate); that “feudalism” was a designed system with fixed rules (it is a later label historians argue about; Bloch 1939–40 shaped the word); that “medieval” means no change (the continuity/change sort shows both at once); that the Church and the state were two separate players (they were woven together — each made the other stronger).

What you will learn in this section

Between the fall of Rome in the west (476 CE) and the Norman invasion of England (1066 CE), Europe was remade. New peoples moved in and built new kingdoms. One king — **Charlemagne** — was crowned emperor in Rome on Christmas Day 800, and long after his empire split, a new way of organising society grew out of its ruins: the **feudal order**. In this section you will study one significant event — the coronation of 800 — and learn to trace its **causes** backwards and its **consequences** forwards, and to sort what **continued** and what **changed**.

Some words we will use, defined as we meet them:

- **cause** — what makes something happen. **Consequence** — what happens as a result. One event's consequence is often the next event's cause.
- **turning point** — an event after which the story changes direction and stays changed. Historians argue about which events deserve the label — that argument is part of the skill.
- **continuity** — what stays the same across time. **Change** — what becomes different. Both are always happening at once, at different speeds.
- **migration** — the movement of a people from one homeland to another.
- **kingdom** — a land ruled by a king or queen. **Empire** — a rule over many lands and peoples. **Emperor** — a ruler above kings.
- **pope** — the head of the western (Latin) Church, bishop of Rome.
- **anointing** — a church rite in which holy oil is poured on a ruler's head to show that their power is given by God. **Coronation** — the ceremony of crowning a ruler. **Acclamation** — the formal shouting of praise and loyalty by a crowd.
- **feudal order** — the way much of medieval Europe came to be organised: local lords with castles and mounted fighters, and peasants working the land for them in return for protection. **Feudalism** is the later label historians give it — and they argue about the label, as you will see.
- **vassal** — a man who swore loyalty to a lord and owed him service, often as a mounted fighter. **Fief** — the land or rights a lord gave a vassal to live on. **Manor** — a lord's estate, with its village and fields. **Serf** — a peasant bound to the land, not free to leave, but not a slave. **Mounted fighters** — trained fighting men on horseback, kept ready by the lords (the period word for them appears in the figures; our prose stays with plain language). **Tithe** — the tenth of a year's produce owed to the Church.

We will also keep using words you have met in other sections: **source**, **evidence**, **primary source** (made at the time, by someone there or close to it), **secondary source** (made later by someone who was not there), **chronology**, **interpretation** and **significance**.

Key ideas

Part 1: The world the migrations made, 476–800

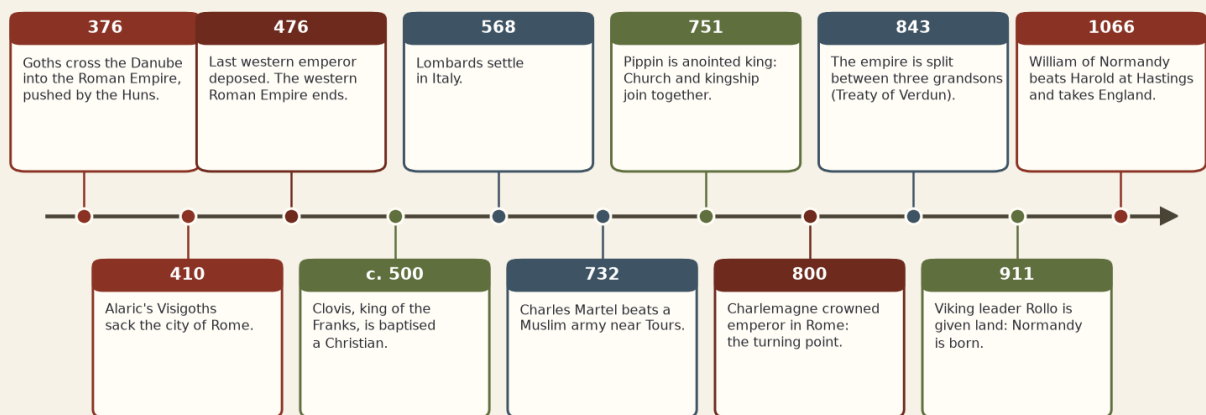
For centuries, the western half of the Roman Empire had held the lands around the Mediterranean and far beyond. But from the 300s CE, whole peoples were on the move. The **Huns**, horsemen from the steppes of Asia, pushed west and drove other peoples before them. **Goths** crossed the Danube into the empire, and in 410 one of their kings sacked Rome itself. **Vandals** crossed Gaul and Spain and built a kingdom in North Africa. **Franks** settled northern Gaul, **Angles and Saxons** crossed to Britain, **Lombards** moved into Italy in 568, and **Slavs** spread west and south into central Europe and the Balkans. These movements — the **migrations** — are the first long cause in our story.

In 476 CE the last western emperor, a teenager called Romulus Augustulus, was deposed — pushed off his throne — by the soldier Odoacer. No new emperor replaced him in the west. The empire's west had become kingdoms of the new peoples. Yet much continued: farming stayed the base of life, Latin stayed the language of law and learning, and the Christian Church — now woven into every kingdom — kept growing.

The Franks became the strongest of the new peoples. Two of their leaders built the power our turning point grows from: **Charles Martel**, who in 732 won the battle of Tours against an army from Muslim-ruled Spain, and his son **Pippin**, who in 751 was **anointed** king of the Franks by churchmen — the first Frankish king to take the crown with the Church's blessing. That join between Frankish power and the Church is the second long cause.

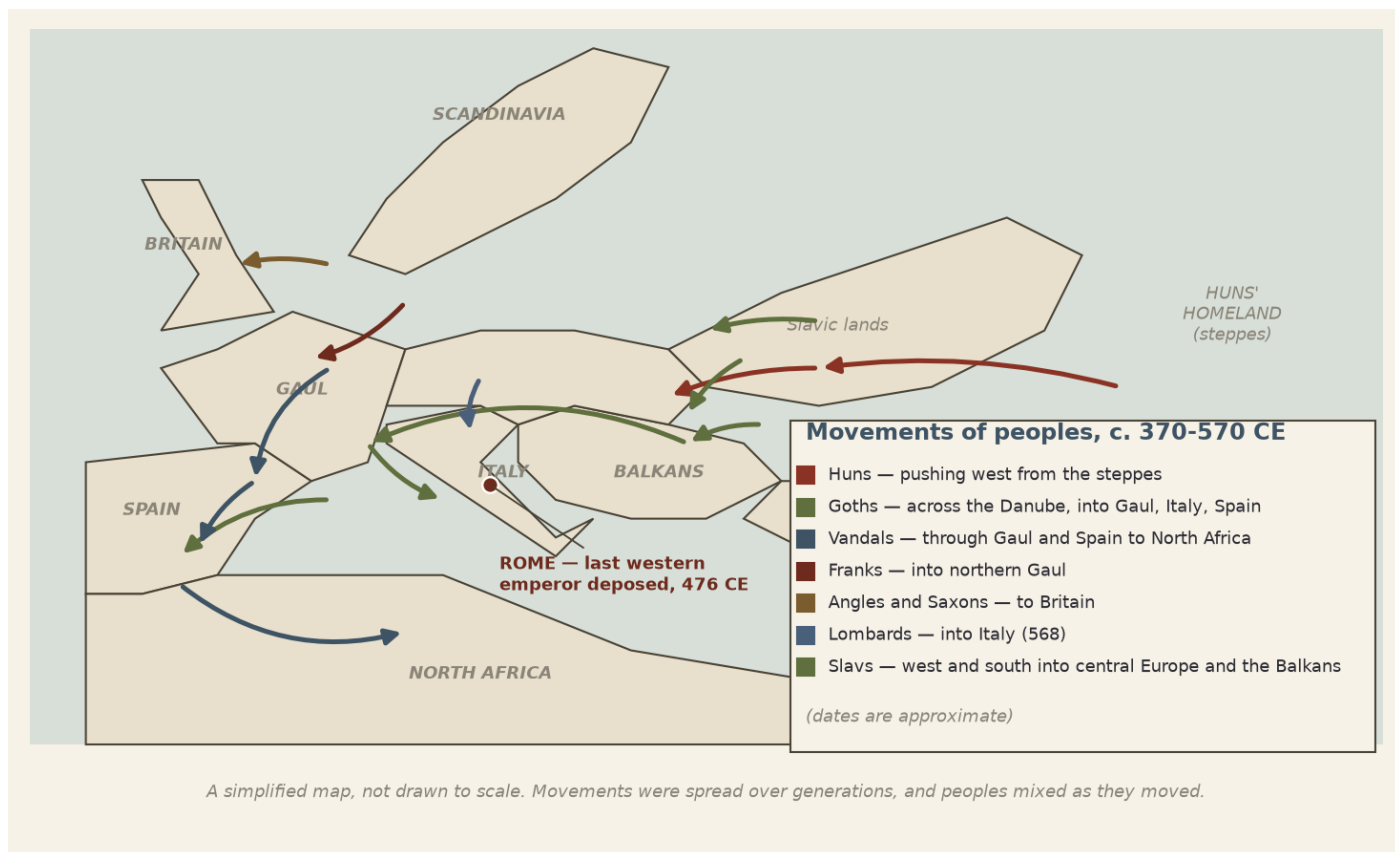
From Rome's fall to a new Europe: key dates, 376-1066 CE

Each marker is a cause, a turning point or a consequence — sort them as you read.



476 ended Roman rule in the west. 800 tried to build a new empire on its ruins. By 1066, the feudal order that grew from both was ruling most of western Europe.

Timeline of the period 476 to 1066 CE, marking the deposition of the last western emperor, the migrations, Pippin's anointing in 751, Charlemagne's coronation in 800, the split at Verdun in 843 and the Norman invasion of 1066



Simplified map of the movements of peoples into Europe between about 370 and 570 CE — Huns from the steppes, Goths across the Danube into Gaul, Italy and Spain, Vandals through Spain to North Africa, Franks into northern Gaul, Angles and Saxons to Britain, Lombards into Italy, and Slavs into central Europe and the Balkans — with the deposition of the last western emperor at Rome in 476 marked

Part 2: The turning point — Christmas Day, 800

Pippin's son **Charlemagne** ("Charles the Great") became king of the Franks in 768 and spent most of every year at war. By 800 he ruled the Franks, the Lombards in Italy and much of what is now Germany — the strongest ruler in the west since the Roman emperors.

At the same time, the **pope, Leo III**, was in trouble. Attacked in Rome in 799 by rivals who claimed he was unfit, he fled to Charlemagne for help. Charlemagne brought him back to Rome in late 800 to sit in judgement on the matter. Then, at mass on Christmas Day, as the king knelt at prayer in the church of Saint Peter, Leo placed a crown on his head, and the crowd gave the **acclamation** — the formal shout of praise — of an emperor of the Romans.

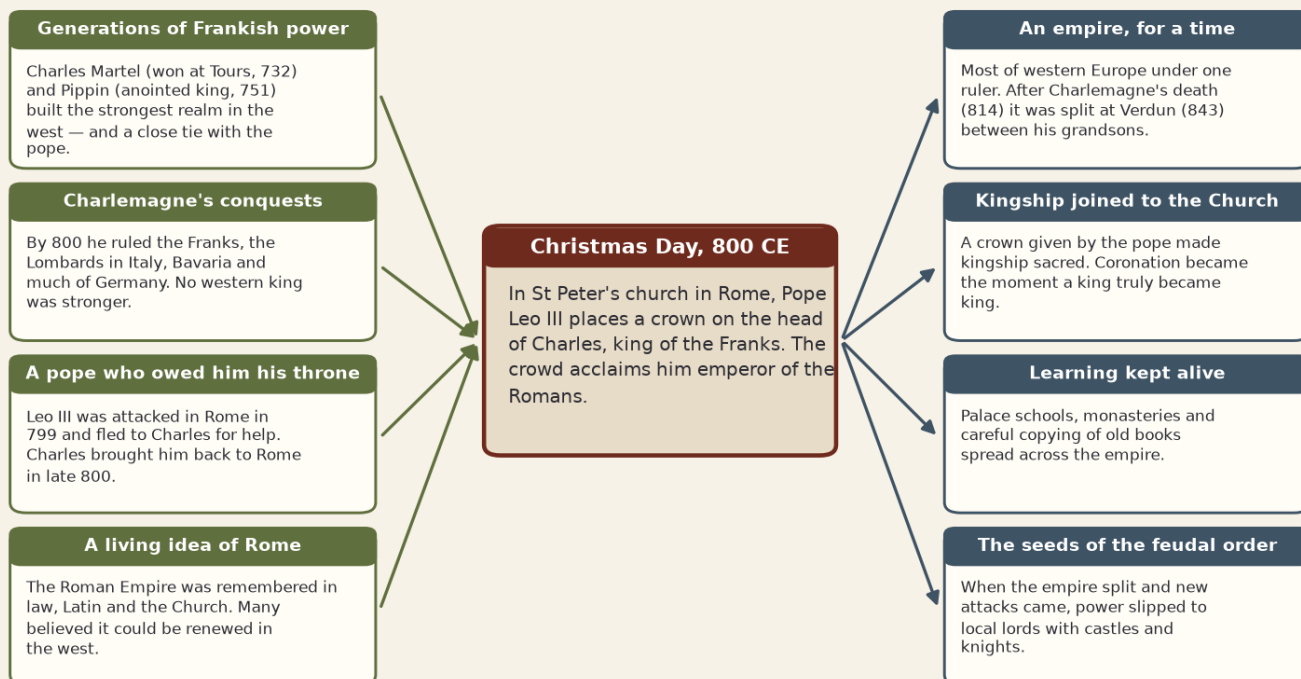
Why does 800 count as a **turning point**? Because the story changes direction and stays changed. Before it, the west had kings blessed by the Church but no emperor, and the old Roman title lived on only in the east, at Constantinople. After it, the west claimed the Roman idea again: rule joined to the Church, one man crowned above the kings. The causes flowed in from generations of Frankish power; the consequences flowed out for centuries. Figure 4b_turning_point.png maps both sides of the event.

Why 800 counts as a turning point

CAUSES

Causes flow in from the left; consequences flow out to the right.

CONSEQUENCES



A turning point is not just a big event. It is an event after which the story changes direction — and stays changed.

Causes and consequences diagram for the coronation of Charlemagne on Christmas Day 800 CE: four causes flow in — generations of Frankish power, Charlemagne's conquests, a pope who owed him his throne, and the living idea of Rome — and four consequences flow out — an empire for a time, kingship joined to the Church, learning kept alive, and the seeds of the feudal order

Not every consequence lasted. Charlemagne died in 814, and in 843 his grandsons split the empire between them at **Verdun**. But two consequences ran deep: from now on, a crown given by the Church made kingship something sacred; and when the empire split and new attacks came, power slid downwards to the local lords who would shape the feudal order.

Part 3: Church and kingship — the exchange that built an age

The coronation was the high point of a long exchange between the Church and rulers, and it is the development the curriculum's E02 asks you to describe.

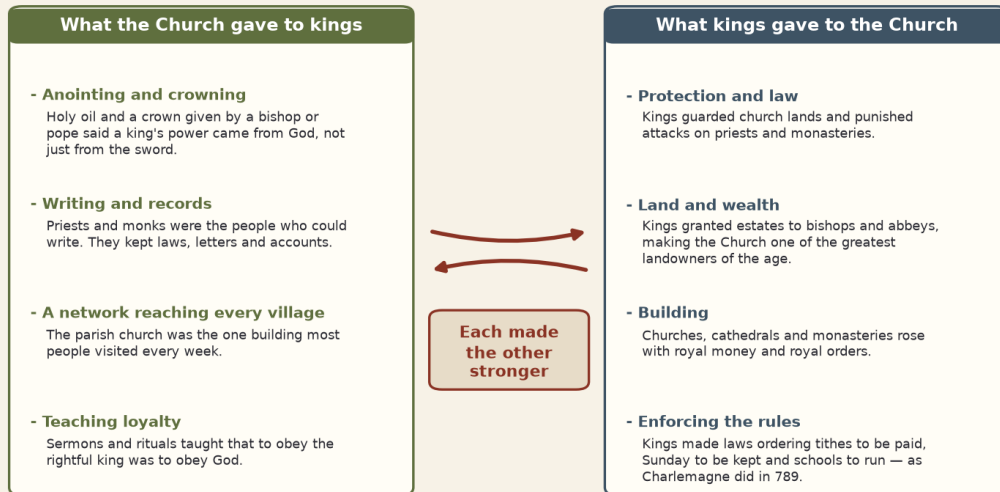
What the Church gave kings was powerful. **Anointing** and **coronation** said a king's power came from God, not just from the sword — obeying the king became a religious duty. Priests and monks were the people who could write, so they kept the laws, the letters and the accounts. And the parish church was the one building most people visited every week, so the Church could teach loyalty to the rightful ruler from the pulpit.

What kings gave the Church was just as real. Kings guarded church lands and punished attacks on priests and monasteries. They granted estates to bishops and abbey, making the Church one of the greatest landowners of the age. They made laws ordering the **tithe** to be paid and Sunday to be kept. Charlemagne's law of 789, the General Admonition, ordered every estate and monastery to run a school and every priest to teach — a king using the Church to reach every corner of his realm, and the Church using the king's law to spread itself.

Neither side was just using the other. Both believed the same thing: that good rule and right worship were one work. Each made the other stronger — and that join is a **cause** of the shape medieval Europe took, and a **continuity** that long outlived Charlemagne.

Church and kingship: an exchange that built medieval Europe

From 751 (Pippin's anointing) to 800 (Charlemagne's coronation) and far beyond.



Charlemagne's law of 789 (the General Admonition) ordered every estate and monastery to run a school and every priest to teach — kings using the Church to reach every corner of their realms.

Two-panel exchange diagram of what the Church gave to kings — anointing and crowning, writing and records, a network reaching every village, teaching loyalty — and what kings gave to the Church — protection and law, land and wealth, building, enforcing the rules — with the note that each made the other stronger

Part 4: The feudal order grows — causes and impacts

The **feudal order** was not planned by anyone. It grew, slowly, out of a chain of causes — and every step in the chain was the consequence of the one before it.

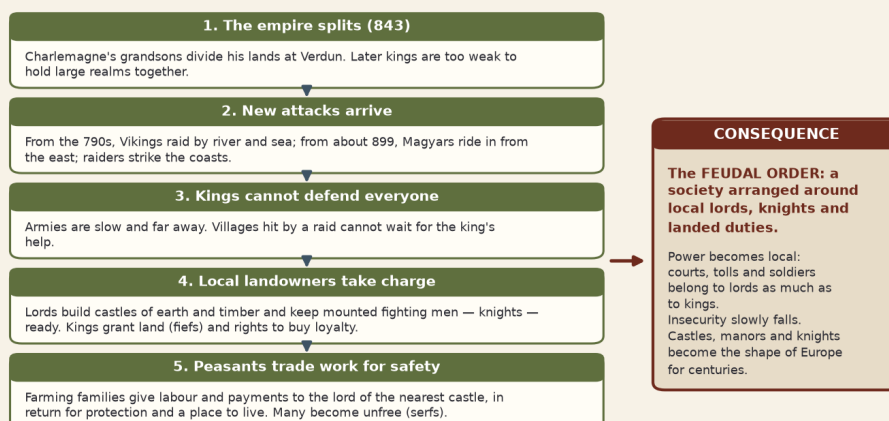
After 843 the empire was three weaker kingdoms. From the 790s, **Vikings** raided by river and sea; from about 899, **Magyars** rode in from the east. Kings could not be everywhere; armies moved slowly, and a raided village could not wait. So local landowners took charge: they built castles of earth and timber and kept trained mounted fighters ready. Kings, short of money, granted land (**fiefs**) and rights to these lords to buy their loyalty. Peasants, in return for protection and a place to live, gave the lord of the nearest castle their labour and payments; many lost the right to leave the land and became unfree — **serfs**. The consequence, by about the year 1000, was a society arranged around local lords, mounted fighters and landed duties: the feudal order.

Its impacts on European society were deep. Power became local: courts, tolls and soldiers belonged to lords as much as to kings. The landscape filled with castles, manors and parish churches. (The figures in this section use the period word for these fighters; the text here keeps to plain words.) Most people were born into their place in the order and stayed there — the great exception being the Church, where a clever person of low birth could sometimes rise. And the order's duties ran both ways at every level, as Figure 4b_feudal_duties.png shows.

One warning about the word itself: **feudalism** is a label historians invented centuries later to describe all this. The people of the year 1000 never woke up in “feudalism”. The great historian Marc Bloch, in *Feudal Society* (1939–40), shaped how the word is used — and historians still argue about how fast the order formed and whether the label hides as much as it shows. The label is a tool, not a fact of nature.

How the feudal order formed: a chain of causes

Each step is the consequence of the one before it — and the cause of the one after.



Historians disagree about how fast this change was — some see a sharp break around the year 1000, others a slow growth from Carolingian habits. Either way, the causes above are the ones they argue about.

Causal chain diagram of how the feudal order formed, in five steps — the empire splits in 843, new attacks arrive, kings cannot defend everyone, local landowners take charge, peasants trade work for safety — leading to the consequence: a society arranged around local lords, mounted fighters and landed duties

The feudal order as duties: who gave what, who got what

Writers around the year 1000 split society into three orders: those who pray, those who fight and those who work.

Group	Gave	Received
King and lords	Land as fiefs; justice in their courts; protection in war	Loyalty, advice and armed service from their vassals
Knights	Fighting on horseback; guarding the castle; keeping order	Land or a place in the lord's household; status
Those who pray (priests, monks, nuns)	Prayer for all; writing and records; schools; care for the sick and poor	Land and protection from kings and lords; tithes from the people
Peasants — most of them unfree (serfs)	Work on the lord's land; payments and a share of the harvest; tolls to use the mill and oven	Protection; a plot to farm; justice in the manor court

The order worked by duty, not by choice: most people were born into their place and stayed there. The great exception was the Church, where a clever person of low birth could sometimes rise.

Table of the feudal order as duties, showing for each group — king and lords, mounted fighters, those who pray, and peasants — what they gave and what they received in return

Part 5: Continuity and change, 476–1066

Now the sort — the skill you will use again in Section 7A. Look across the whole period, from the fall of the west to the **Norman invasion of England in 1066** (the Normans being descendants of Vikings settled in France, bringing the feudal order with them). Judge each change by its **rate** (quick or slow) and its **scale** (big or small) — judged, not assumed.

The quick breaks are the famous dates: 476, 800, 843, 1066. The slow changes are the big ones: Christianity spreading, kingship becoming sacred, the feudal order growing, Latin and farming holding steady underneath it all. A society can keep its farming, its faith and its language while the name of its ruler and the shape of its warfare change completely. That is what “continuity and change” means in practice: both at once, at different speeds.

Continuity and change, 476-1066: what stayed, what shifted, and how fast

Rate (quick or slow) and scale (big or small) are judged, not assumed — the skill you will use again in Section 7A.

WHAT CONTINUED	WHAT CHANGED
- Farming as the base of life (slow · big) Nine people in ten still worked the land, as they had under Rome. - Christianity (slow · big) It did not just survive the empire's fall — it spread, carried by kings, bishops and monks. - Latin (slow · big) Still the language of the Church, of law and of learning. - Towns and bishop seats (slow · medium) Smaller than in Roman times, but many kept going; from about 1000 they began to grow again. - Roman habits of rule (slow · medium) Written laws, councils and the idea of 'the empire' lived on in the new kingdoms.	- Rule: empire to kingdoms to lords (quick · big) 476 and 843 were quick breaks; the drift of power to local lords was slow. - Kingship (slow · big) From war-leader to anointed, crowned ruler set up by the Church — a sacred office. - Castles and knights (quick after 900 · big) Rare before about 900, common by 1066 — the landscape and warfare both changed. - Learning (slow · medium) Palace schools and monasteries copying books (from about 780) revived writing and teaching. - Borders and names (slow · medium) New peoples gave their names to new lands — France, England, Normandy, Lombardy.

Notice the pattern: the biggest changes of this period (religion, kingship, the feudal order) were slow ones, while the famous dates — 476, 800, 843, 1066 — are the quick breaks that opened or closed the door.

Two-panel diagram sorting what continued and what changed between 476 and 1066 CE — continuities such as farming, Christianity, Latin, towns and bishop seats, and Roman habits of rule; changes such as rule passing from one empire to many kingdoms to local lords, kingship becoming sacred, castles and mounted fighters, revived learning, and new borders and names — each judged by rate and scale

Primary source close study: Einhard, The Life of Charlemagne

Our fullest written portrait of Charlemagne was made by a man who knew him. **Einhard** was a Frankish scholar, born about 775, who served at Charlemagne's court and then at the court of his son, Louis the Pious. About a generation after Charlemagne's death in 814 — roughly 817 to 830 — Einhard wrote *The Life of Charlemagne*, a short biography in Latin, in 33 chapters. It is a **primary source** about the court it describes: Einhard was there. It is also the only source that tells the coronation story the way we tell it.

Source card: Einhard, The Life of Charlemagne

Primary source — our fullest written portrait of the man crowned in 800.

THE SOURCE

What it is:

A biography of Charlemagne — Vita Karoli Magni, 'The Life of Charles the Great' — in 33 short chapters.

Written by:

Einhard, a Frankish scholar born about 775. He served at Charlemagne's court, then at the court of his son, Louis the Pious.

When written:

About 817-830, roughly a generation after Charlemagne's death in 814.

Language:

Latin — the language of the Church and of government.

Kind of source:

PRIMARY — Einhard lived through the later part of Charlemagne's reign and saw court life for himself.

Why he wrote it:

To honour his old master and keep his memory alive — and to show his own skill as a writer.

USE IT WITH CARE

Strengths

- An insider's view of court life.
- Details of buildings, books and habits no other source keeps.

Limits

- Praise of a patron: Einhard owed Charlemagne his career.
- Written after Charlemagne's death, when memories served new masters.
- The coronation claim (chapter 28) is the only one we have from a court insider.

How to use it

Strong evidence for how Charlemagne wished to be remembered; weaker evidence for what he really thought.

Where it survives:

More than 100 medieval manuscript copies survive in European libraries — a sign it was read and copied for centuries.

Source card for Einhard's The Life of Charlemagne: what it is, who wrote it, when it was written, its language, its kind, why it was written, its strengths and limits, and where its manuscript copies survive today

Here is chapter 28, the coronation passage. The English is a fresh translation made for this section.

“On the most holy day of Christmas, when the king had come into the church of Saint Peter to celebrate mass and was kneeling at prayer, Pope Leo placed a crown on his head. Then all the Roman people acclaimed him: ‘To Charles Augustus, crowned by God, great and peace-giving emperor of the Romans, life and victory!’ After that, the pope honoured him in the way the ancient princes were honoured, and his old Roman title was dropped. From that day he was called emperor and augustus.

At first he was unwilling to accept this, for he said that he would not have entered the church that day, even though it was a great feast, if he had known beforehand of the pope's plan.”

— Einhard, *Life of Charlemagne*, chapter 28, translated from the Latin by the author for this section

Run your source questions over it:

- **Features and context:** a biography written at the Frankish court, within a generation of the events, by a man who served and admired Charlemagne.
- **What it shows:** the setting (Saint Peter's, Rome, Christmas Day 800), the act (the pope placing the crown), the crowd's **acclamation** copying the old Roman way of greeting an emperor, and the new title.
- **What it does not show:** any planning before the day. A crown does not appear by accident, and crowds do not shout unrehearsed lines by luck — yet Einhard's page is silent on all of that.
- **The claim to test:** that Charlemagne was surprised and unwilling. That claim comes only from Einhard, writing years later, about a man he loved. It may be true; it may be modesty making the hero look better. The evidence does not decide it — and that is exactly why historians still argue.

Einhard on the coronation — chapter 28 of *The Life of Charlemagne*

Translated from the Latin by the author for this section.

THE PASSAGE

On the most holy day of Christmas, when the king had come into the church of Saint Peter to celebrate mass and was kneeling at prayer, Pope Leo placed a crown on his head. Then all the Roman people acclaimed him:

"To Charles Augustus, crowned by God, great and peace-giving emperor of the Romans, life and victory!"
After that the pope adored him more than the custom of the ancient princes, and the name of patrician was dropped. From that day he was called emperor and augustus.

At first he was unwilling to accept this, for he said that he would not have entered the church that day, even though it was a great feast, if he had known beforehand of the pope's plan.

What it shows

The setting (St Peter's, Rome, Christmas Day 800), the act (the pope placing the crown), the crowd's acclamation, and the new title.

What it hides

Any planning before the day. A crown does not appear by accident, and acclamations are usually rehearsed.

The claim to test

Charles's surprise is reported only by Einhard, writing years later, about a man he served and admired.

A careful reader says

Use the passage for the ceremony and the title. Check the surprise story against what else we know — and say when you cannot.

The acclamation ("life and victory!") copies the old Roman way of greeting an emperor — a deliberate echo of Rome. Why did Einhard say Charles was surprised? Perhaps it was true; perhaps modesty made the hero look better. The evidence does not decide it — that is why historians still argue.

*Einhard's coronation passage from chapter 28 of *The Life of Charlemagne* in translation, with worked reading notes on what the passage shows, what it hides, the claim to test, and what a careful reader concludes*

Secondary source interpretation: who planned the coronation of 800?

About a generation after Einhard, the year-by-year court record of the Frankish kings tells the coronation more plainly, as if it were the natural end of the year's business. Much later still, historians turned the two accounts into a real debate — a **secondary source** question, because it is later writers interpreting the primary evidence.

The traditional reading takes Einhard at his word: the pope surprised a reluctant king, and the ceremony was the pope's idea alone. The stronger modern reading — put most fully by the historian **Rosamond McKitterick** in *Charlemagne: The Formation of a European Identity* (2008) — points the other way: Charlemagne's own titles and acts had been moving towards an imperial dignity for years, the crown was prepared, the acclamation was formal, and the pope owed the king everything. In this reading the ceremony was planned much closer together than Einhard admits, and Einhard's "surprise" is a story with a purpose: it keeps the great king above the deal-making.

Both readings are shown in their strongest form in Figure 4b_coronation_debate.png. Notice the shape of the skill: the evidence is thin, both cases are honest, and no diary of the day survives to settle it. Your job is to weigh each case, say which you find better supported — and say why. Marks go to the reasoning, not the side you pick.

A historians' debate: who planned the coronation of 800?

Two readings of the same thin evidence — each shown in its strongest form.

VIEW 1 — Charles did not know

The case:

Einhard, the court insider, says Charles would not have entered the church if he had known the pope's plan. The pope gained most: the man who could give an empire could claim to stand above kings.

Evidence used:

- Einhard's own words, chapter 28 (see the extract).
- Charles's reported anger afterwards — a real ruler does not accept a crown from another's hand without protest.

Why it may not hold:

Einhard wrote years later, for the dead man's family. Modesty made the hero look better; blame fell on the pope instead of the king.

VIEW 2 — it was planned together

The case:

A crown does not appear by accident, and crowds do not shout rehearsed lines by luck. Leo owed Charles his throne (attacked in 799, restored in 800) and paid his debt in a ceremony both had reason to want.

Evidence used:

- The prepared crown and formal acclamation.
- Charles's own titles and acts pointing that way for years; the historian Rosamond McKitterick (2008) reads the imperial title as long in the making.

Why it may not hold:

None of this proves Charles knew the exact plan for that day. Careful planning by the pope's people is possible without the king being told.

How to judge it:

No diary of the day survives, so the evidence cannot settle it. Weigh each case, say which you find better supported — and say why. Marks go to the reasoning, not the side you pick.

Two-panel historians' debate diagram on who planned the coronation of 800: View 1, that Charles did not know, with its case, evidence and weaknesses; View 2, that it was planned together, with its case, evidence and weaknesses; and a note that judgement follows the better-supported reasoning

The same habits — check the source, name what it can and cannot show, weigh the interpretations — apply to every source in this section. The table below sorts them.

Sources for this section — primary and secondary

Every item is real and citable. The full references are in the teacher's sources list.

Source	Kind	What it shows	Where today
Royal Frankish Annals — court record of the Frankish kings, written up to 829	Primary	Year-by-year events, including the coronation of 800	Medieval manuscripts in European libraries (e.g. Vienna, Paris, Munich)
Einhard, The Life of Charlemagne — biography, about 817-830	Primary	Court life, buildings, books — and the coronation story (ch. 28)	Over 100 medieval manuscript copies in European libraries
Silver coins (deniers) of Charlemagne, struck from about 793	Primary	The king's name and title, and the towns where coins were struck	Examples in the British Museum, London, and the national library of France, Paris
Palatine Chapel, Aachen — built from the 790s, with columns brought from Rome	Primary	Charlemagne's building and his reach into the Roman past	Still standing: the heart of Aachen Cathedral, Germany (UNESCO world heritage site, listed 1978)
Rosamond McKitterick, Charlemagne: The Formation of a European Identity (2008)	Secondary	The making of Charlemagne's rule, and the coronation debate	Book, Cambridge University Press
Marc Bloch, Feudal Society (1939-40)	Secondary	The classic study that shaped how the word 'feudalism' is used	Book, first published in French

Primary sources were made at, or close to, the time studied. Secondary sources are later studies of the past. Both are used in this section.

Table of the main sources used in this section, primary and secondary — the Frankish court record, Einhard's Life of Charlemagne, Charlemagne's silver coins, the Palatine Chapel at Aachen, McKitterick's 2008 study and Bloch's Feudal Society — with what each shows and where it can be found today

Practice tasks (with help)

Q1. Using Figure 4b_timeline.png, put these five events in order from first to last and give the date of each: (a) Charlemagne is crowned emperor in Rome; (b) the last western emperor is deposed; (c) Pippin is anointed king of the Franks; (d) the empire is split at Verdun between Charlemagne's grandsons; (e) Charles Martel wins the battle of Tours.

Q2. Figure 4b_migration_map.png shows the movements of peoples, c. 370–570 CE. Match each people to where they settled: (a) Vandals; (b) Franks; (c) Angles and Saxons; (d) Lombards; (e) Slavs. Choices: northern Gaul; Britain; Italy; North Africa; central Europe and the Balkans.

Q3. Figure 4b_turning_point.png sorts the coronation of 800 into causes and consequences. Sort these four statements to the correct side: (a) Leo III was attacked in Rome in 799 and fled to Charles for help; (b) a crown given by the pope made kingship sacred; (c) Charles Martel and Pippin built the strongest realm in the west; (d) after 814 the empire was split and power slid to local lords. Then add one cause and one consequence of your own from Parts 1–4.

Q4. Read the Einhard passage in Figure 4b_einhard_extract.png. Name (a) one thing the passage **shows** that we can check against other evidence, and (b) one thing it **hides**. Explain, in one or two sentences, why a source written by a friend of its subject needs extra checking.

Q5. Figure 4b_kingship.png shows the exchange between Church and kings. Sort these four actions to the correct side: (a) granting estates to bishops and abbey; (b) keeping laws, letters and accounts; (c) ordering the tithe to be paid and Sunday to be kept; (d) teaching that to obey the rightful king is to obey God.

Q6. Figure 4b_feudal_duties.png shows who gave what and got what. Answer for (a) the mounted fighters and (b) the peasants: what did each group give, and what did each receive? Then say, in one sentence, which group had the worse bargain, and give your reason.

Tasks to try on your own

Q7. “The coronation of 800 was a turning point.” Test the claim like a historian. Use the test from Part 2 — the story changes direction and stays changed — and the rate and scale ideas from Figure 4b_continuity_change.png. Give two ways the claim is strong and one way it is weak (think about what happened after 814 and 843). End with your own reasoned judgement.

Q8. Using the chain in Figure 4b_feudal_causes.png, write one paragraph of 5–7 sentences explaining how the split of the empire in 843 led, step by step, to the feudal order. Every sentence must use a cause–consequence link word (because, so, as a result, therefore, led to).

Q9. Look at Figure 4b_coronation_debate.png. For each view, give the strongest piece of evidence a supporter would use. Then write two or three sentences of your own: which view do you find better supported, or why does neither view tell the whole story? You are marked on the reasoning, not on which side you land on.

Q10. Choose ONE of the other named developments from the curriculum’s list for this section — the Norman invasion of England (1066) or the first Crusade (1096–99). In two short paragraphs, name two of its long causes and two of its consequences, and say one thing that continued and one thing that changed because of it. Use what this section taught about rate and scale, and say where you would look for a primary source about it.

Answer guide (for the teacher)

Q1. (b) 476 CE → (e) 732 → (c) 751 → (a) 800 → (d) 843. Accept dates within a year where sources vary.

Q2. (a) Vandals — North Africa; (b) Franks — northern Gaul; (c) Angles and Saxons — Britain; (d) Lombards — Italy; (e) Slavs — central Europe and the Balkans.

Q3. Causes: (a), (c). Consequences: (b), (d). Accept any added cause drawn from Parts 1–4 (e.g. the living idea of Rome; the Church’s join with Frankish power) and any added consequence with a line of the section behind it (e.g. learning kept alive in palace schools and monasteries; the west claiming the Roman idea again).

Q4. (a) Accept: the setting (St Peter’s, Rome, Christmas Day 800); the pope placing the crown; the crowd’s acclamation; the new imperial title — all checkable against the Royal Frankish Annals and the coin titles. (b) Accept: any planning before the day; who arranged the crown and the crowd; the views of anyone opposed. The one-or-two-sentence explanation should reach the idea that a source close to its subject carries the subject’s side — praise of a patron, silences as well as facts — so it is checked against other evidence, not discarded (6D).

Q5. Kings gave the Church: (a), (c). The Church gave kings: (b), (d). Accept a reasoned note that (d) also served social order — the exchange ran both ways.

Q6. Knights gave fighting on horseback, guarding the castle and keeping order; they received land (a fief) or a place in the lord’s household, and status. Peasants gave work on the lord’s land, payments and a share of the harvest, and tolls to use the mill and oven; they received protection, a plot to farm and justice in the manor court. The “worse bargain” sentence is marked on the reason given, not the choice made.

Q7. Mark on: two ways the claim is strong (e.g. the west claimed the Roman idea again; kingship joined to the Church and stayed joined; coronation became the moment a king truly became king) and one way it is weak (e.g. the empire split within a generation of his death; real power slid to local lords, so the “one ruler” consequence did not last). A full-mark answer judges with rate and scale: quick break at the top, slow change underneath. Different judgements with sound reasoning meet the standard (CONTESTED_TERMS.md Rule 5).

Q8. Mark on: each of the five steps present in order (843 split → attacks → kings cannot defend everyone → local lords with castles and knights → peasants trade work for safety) and a cause–consequence link word in every sentence. The paragraph may note that historians argue about the speed of the change.

Q9. Mark on: the strength of each side’s evidence (View 1: Einhard’s own words, Charles’s reported anger afterwards; View 2: the prepared crown and formal acclamation, Leo’s debt to Charles, Charles’s own titles moving that way for years per McKitterick 2008) and the student’s own judgement with reasons. Do not mark the conclusion itself; two opposed judgements can both be full marks.

Q10. Accept any answer with two real long causes and two real consequences of the chosen development, a continuity and a change named with rate or scale, and a sensible primary-source suggestion (1066: the Bayeux-era accounts and the Bayeux Tapestry’s near-contemporary images; the first Crusade: chronicles and letters of 1096–99). The point is transfer: the same cause/consequence and continuity/change framework applies to any significant development.

Sources used in this section

Every source examined or quoted here is a real, citable artifact (D4). Verified 25 August 2026.

- **Einhard, *Vita Karoli Magni* (The Life of Charlemagne)** — biography composed
 - c. 817–830 by a Frankish courtier who served Charlemagne and Louis the Pious; over 100 medieval manuscript copies survive in European libraries. Chapter 28 quoted above in my own translation from the Latin. Subject of Figures 4b_einhard_card.png and 4b_einhard_extract.png.
- **Royal Frankish Annals (Annales regni Francorum)** — official court record of the Frankish kings, written up to 829; the entry for 800 describes the coronation. Cited in the secondary-interpretation discussion and in the sources table, Figure 4b_sources_table.png; manuscripts in European libraries (e.g. Vienna, Paris, Munich).
- **Silver coins (deniers) of Charlemagne** — struck from about 793, carrying the king’s name and title and the mint towns; examples in the British Museum, London, and the Bibliothèque nationale de France, Paris. Cited in Figure 4b_sources_table.png.
- **The Palatine Chapel at Aachen** — built from the 790s and dedicated 805, with columns brought from Rome and Ravenna; still standing as the heart of Aachen Cathedral, Germany (UNESCO world heritage site, listed 1978). Cited in Figure 4b_sources_table.png.
- **The General Admonition (Admonitio generalis) of 789** — Charlemagne’s law ordering schools and teaching; cited in Part 3 and in Figure 4b_kingship.png, described in the author’s own words.
- **Rosamond McKitterick, *Charlemagne: The Formation of a European Identity*** — Cambridge University Press, 2008; the “planned coronation” reading summarised in the author’s own words. Subject of Figures 4b_coronation_debate.png and 4b_sources_table.png.
- **Marc Bloch, *Feudal Society*** — first published in French 1939–40; the classic study that shaped the word “feudalism”, cited in Part 4 and in Figure 4b_sources_table.png.
- All dates follow the BCE/CE conventions taught in section 6B. No Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander content appears in this section; the Indigenous peoples of the Americas named in .E21 belong to the Spanish-and-the-Americas topic and are not taught here (D3, D9).

Rulers and ruled: power, authority and lived experience

Curriculum focus — teacher block

Owning content description — VC2HH8K21 (Historical Knowledge and Understanding, Europe and the Mediterranean, c. 600–1750 CE).

Elaboration linkage (D7 — linkage only, not a teaching order; ids verbatim from the VCAA export, final ids over substantive elaborations only; topic-label rows carry no ids):

- **Medieval Europe (default path, D9):** .E01 what the Black Death did to daily life, told through primary witnesses (Matteo Villani, Boccaccio, Fordun, Ibn Khaldun); .E02 why punishments differed between groups — trial by combat: a privilege of rank; the ducking stool used against women; punishment staged as a deterrent; .E03 how rulers answered the lower classes’ post-plague demands, with the Statute of Labourers (Edward III) as the key source. This section is authored end-to-end on the default path per the chapter note (“plague-era diaries and the Statute of Labourers (4C)”). Accuracy note on .E01’s wording: VCAA calls Villani’s work a “diary”; it is strictly a chronicle (a year-by-year account), as is Fordun’s work — the section teaches both the diary form (day-by-day personal record) and the chronicle form, and names which is which.
- **Alternative paths (join key, remain available to a teacher or a D9 sign-off swap):** .E04–.E08 Ottoman Empire (the millet system; the role of palace eunuchs, e.g. Beshir Agha (1700s); Ottoman tolerance of Christians and Jews); .E09–.E12 Vikings (the attacks on Lindisfarne 793 and Iona 795 and the monks’ written accounts behind the Vikings’ reputation; Ireland’s heroic Iron Age society in the early medieval period, its transformation by Christianity, Viking influence and the Anglo-Norman conquest; the remains of Dublin and Jorvik); .E13–.E15 Renaissance Italy (levels of political involvement in the city-states — guilds in Florence, the Libro d’Oro in Venice; how rulers in Florence, Venice, Naples or the Papal States dealt with one another); .E16–.E18 Spanish and the Americas (Cortés and the Aztecs, the siege of Tenochtitlan 1521; the Spanish impact on the Indigenous peoples of the Americas — in scope per D3/§2A, but that content belongs to the Spanish-and-the-Americas topic and is not taught under the default); .E19–.E21 emergence of the modern world (absolutism in decline; parliaments developing; new nationalist ideas; political power gained by the bourgeoisie and by peasant classes as cities grew and urbanisation rose). Each alternative reuses this section’s structure: define the contested terms → the rulers’ and the ruled’s experiences → primary close study → historians’ debate.

Achievement standard coverage: this section serves the standard’s sentences on identifying and explaining individuals’ and groups’ perspectives from sources, primary and secondary alike, and on reading those sources to understand what the societies studied believed and valued (its core); on explaining primary and secondary sources in terms of their features, content and context, with historical questions applied when inferences are drawn; on interpreting the information sources give by analysing how accurate and valuable it is as evidence; and on the contested character of pre-modern and early societies’ histories, that knowledge used to spot and analyse the differing interpretations and debates historians offer (the statute debate). The 6E perspective skill (reading less audible voices — labourers, women, rebels — from sources written by the rulers’ side) and the 7B cause/consequence framework are applied here, not re-taught.

First Nations disposition (§2A): none — no elaboration of VC2HH8K21 is excluded. Note for auditors: .E18 names the Indigenous peoples of the Americas; that content is **not** Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander content (D3), and remains in scope for the Spanish-and-the-Americas topic. They are not taught in this section because the Medieval Europe default is authored; that is a D9 topic choice, not a §2A exclusion.

Cross-references: 4A (the medieval way of life and the Black Death’s wider continuity and change), 4B (the feudal order and its causes — the social order this section’s rulers and ruled live inside), 4D (the Catholic Church’s social services), 4E (historians’ Black Death debates — the mortality-number debate lives there, not here), 1D (the 600–1750 global timeline), 1E (pre-modern social hierarchies), 6C/6D (source features, value and verification), 6E (perspectives from sources, less audible voices), 7B (causes and consequences). No section assumes a specific Level 7 sequence (D1).

Key subject terms defined at first use (D2 exemption 2): power, authority, interaction, ruler, ruled, perspective, experience, chronicler, diary, statute, ordinance, parliament, justice (of a court), labourer, wage, serf, serfdom, poll

tax, rebellion, trial by combat, ducking stool, deterrent, pestilence (period word for plague), gibbet. Contested-term handling per CONTESTED_TERMS.md: **power** and **authority** are used by the curriculum without definition — Rule 1 applies: both are defined at first use with attribution (Max Weber, *Economy and Society*, 1922, in plain student language) and every question is answerable on those definitions alone; the definitions are flagged as one choice among others. The historians’ debate over the Statute of Labourers steelmans both readings (Rule 5) symmetrically (Rule 4); marking is on the quality of reasoning, not the conclusion reached (Rule 5, stated in the answer guide).

Ladder note (D2): “knight” (ranked Yr10) and “pillory” (ranked Yr11) sit above the Yr8 ceiling. As in 4B, the period words may appear inside figures (which the gate does not reach); the student-facing prose uses “mounted fighters” and plain descriptions of the frame, with the figure flagged accordingly.

Teaching sequence (for the teacher). 1. Frame the CD and define the contested terms: power, authority, interaction, perspective, experience (What you will learn; Figure 4c_power_authority.png). 2. Who ruled and who was ruled: the medieval social order (Part 1; Figure 4c_rulers_ruled.png). 3. The Black Death arrives, 1347–1350, and daily life through four witnesses, .E01 (Part 2; Figures 4c_plague_timeline.png, 4c_four_witnesses.png, 4c_boccaccio_extract.png). 4. The rulers’ answer: the labour laws 1349–1361, .E03 (Part 3; Figure 4c_plague_timeline.png again) — then the primary close study: the Statute of Labourers 1351 (Figures 4c_statute_card.png, 4c_statute_extract.png). 5. The ruled’s answer: demands, refusals, and the rebellion of 1381 (Part 4; Figure 4c_revolt_1381.png). 6. Different punishments for different people, .E02 (Part 5; Figures 4c_punishments.png, 4c_duel_1386.png). 7. Consolidation: what changed and what continued (Part 6). 8. Secondary-source interpretation: did the rulers win — two readings of the statute (Figure 4c_debate_statute.png), the sources table (Figure 4c_sources_table.png), scaffolded practice Q1–Q6, unscaffolded Q7–Q10.

Common misconceptions to address: that the Black Death only killed and changed nothing else (it remade the balance between rulers and ruled within a generation); that the Statute of Labourers at once failed or at once worked (both readings have real evidence — that is the debate); that medieval law treated everyone the same (punishment differed by rank and by sex, by design); that the rebels of 1381 wanted to overthrow the king (they claimed loyalty to the king and attacked his laws and officials — authority accepted, its use contested); that “power” and “authority” mean the same thing (the definitions in Part 1 keep them apart all section long).

What you will learn in this section

In June 1348 a disease new to England came ashore at Weymouth in Dorset. Within two years it had killed perhaps half the people of the country. The survivors found a world turned upside down: with so few hands left to work, workers could ask for more pay than ever before — and kings and lords passed laws to stop them. In this section you will study the **experiences** of rulers and ruled in medieval Europe through the Black Death and its aftermath (1348–1381), and the **interactions between power and authority** that followed: the laws rulers made to hold their place, the demands the ruled pushed back with, the punishments each side faced, and the rebellion of 1381.

Some words we will use, defined as we meet them:

- **power** — being able to make things happen, even when other people resist.
- **authority** — rule that people accept as rightful; power that is seen as proper, so that people obey without being forced. Both words are used in different ways by different writers; this section uses these senses throughout, taken from the sociologist Max Weber’s *Economy and Society* (1922), put into plain words.
- **interaction** — the ways two sides act on each other: what rulers did to the ruled, and what the ruled did back.
- **ruler** — one who commands: kings, lords, judges, bishops. **Ruled** — those commanded: most of the population.
- **perspective** — the view of events from one person’s or group’s place in the world: what they saw, wanted and feared. **Experience** — what actually happened to them, and how it felt to live through it.
- **chronicle** — a written account of events set out year by year. **Chronicler** — the person who wrote it. **Diary** — a day-by-day personal record. The plague writers we meet are mostly chroniclers.
- **statute** — a law made by a king in parliament. **Ordinance** — an order made by the king and his council between parliaments, quicker but weaker. **Parliament** — the assembly of lords, churchmen and representatives that made statutes with the king.

- **labourer** — a person who works for pay, especially with their hands. **Wage** — the pay for work.
- **serf** — a peasant bound to the lord's land and owing work and payments, not free to leave. **Serfdom** — the state of being a serf.
- **poll tax** — a fixed tax paid by each person, rich or poor alike.
- **rebellion** — a rising against those in authority, usually by force.
- **trial by combat** — a form of trial in which the two sides fought, and victory was taken as God's judgement.
- **ducking stool** — a chair on a lever that dunked a person into water, fixed by a town or manor as a punishment.
- **deterrent** — something that frightens people away from doing a thing.
- **pestilence** — the word people of the time used for the plague.

We will also keep using words you have met in other sections: **source**, **evidence**, **primary source** (made at the time, by someone there or close to it), **secondary source** (made later by someone who was not there), **chronology**, **perspective**, **interpretation** and **significance**.

Key ideas

Part 1: Power and authority — who ruled and who was ruled

Medieval Europe was a world of ranks. At the top sat the king; below him the great lords and bishops, each with lands, courts and armed men; below them the local lords of manors and the priests of the parishes; and at the bottom, the great mass of the people — peasants, many of them serfs, and the workers, small traders and servants of the towns. You have met this order and how it grew in Section 4B. Section 4C looks at the same order from a different angle: not how it was built, but how it felt to live inside it — on each side of the line between the rulers and the ruled.

Two ideas hold the whole section together. They are close cousins but not the same word, and historians keep them apart:

- **Power** is being able to make things happen, even against resistance. A lord's armed men, a king's prisons, a landlord's ability to turn a worker off the land — these are power.
- **Authority** is power that people accept as rightful. A crowned king, an anointed bishop, a judge on his bench: they are obeyed because their place is seen as proper, not only because they are strong. The sociologist Max Weber drew this line in *Economy and Society* (1922), and this section uses his senses of the two words, in plain form. Other writers use the words in other ways; the point is to pick your sense and stay with it.

The two do not always travel together. A ruler can have power without authority — a usurper obeyed out of fear. And a people can accept a ruler's authority while resisting his power — which is exactly what the English rebels of 1381 did, as you will see. Figure 4c_power_authority.png sets the two ideas out with medieval examples.

Power and authority: two close cousins, kept apart

This section uses the senses given by the sociologist Max Weber in *Economy and Society* (1922), put into plain words.

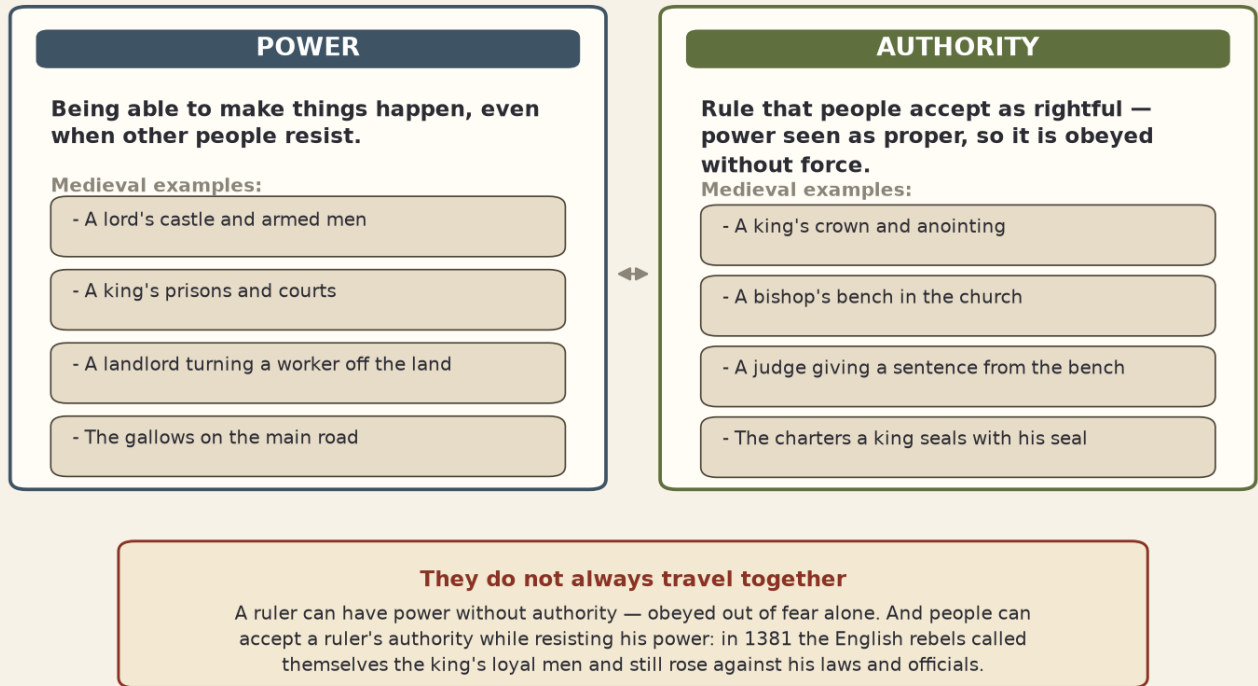


Diagram defining power and authority as this section uses them, with medieval examples: a king's crown and anointing and a judge's bench as authority; a castle, armed men and prisons as power; and the note that the two can come apart

What did each side want from the other? The rulers wanted work, payments, obedience and soldiers. The ruled wanted safety, justice, a plot of land to farm, and fair terms for their work. The exchange only held while both sides thought it fair enough to bear. The Black Death broke the bargain — and the history of the next forty years is the story of the two sides struggling over new terms. Figure 4c_rulers_ruled.png sets out who stood where.

Rulers and ruled in medieval Europe: what each side wanted

The social order of Section 4B, seen from the inside. The exchange held only while both sides thought it fair enough to bear.



The ruled had their own power too: scarce hands, needed skills, and — when pushed too far — the power of refusal and of rising.

Two-panel diagram of medieval society: on one side the rulers — king, lords and bishops, local lords and parish priests — with what each wanted from the ruled; on the other side the ruled — peasants and serfs, town workers, small traders and servants — with what each wanted from the rulers; and the note that the exchange held only while both sides thought it fair

Part 2: The Black Death arrives — daily life through four witnesses

The **Black Death** was the worst disease disaster in medieval history. It came from central Asia along the trade routes, reached the Black Sea ports by 1346, and crossed into Europe in October 1347 when ships from the port of Caffa brought it to Messina in Sicily. It travelled fast, along the routes ships and carts already used: to Italy, to France, to England — landing at Weymouth in Dorset in the summer of 1348, reaching London by the autumn — and into Scotland in 1350. Historians estimate that between a third and half the people of England died; Section 4E looks at how they argue over the number.

Four writers saw it happen and wrote it down. Their accounts are our **primary sources** for the plague's impact on daily life (the curriculum's .E01), and they come from four different corners of the medieval world:

Four witnesses to the Black Death: what each wrote

Primary sources for daily life in the plague years (the curriculum's .E01) — from four corners of the medieval world.

Witness	Where they wrote	What they wrote	What their account adds
Giovanni Boccaccio (writer, b. 1313)	Florence, Italy	The Decameron, finished about 1353; its introduction describes the plague of 1348	The disease itself — swellings (buboes), dark marks, death within about three days — and fear breaking family ties: the sick left alone, even by parents
Matteo Villani (chronicler)	Florence, Italy	The Cronica, 1348-1363, continuing his brother Giovanni's history (Giovanni died of plague in 1348; Matteo in 1363)	The plague's blow to work and money: servants and workers demanding the highest wages, and survivors newly rich spending wildly
John of Fordun (priest and chronicler)	Scotland	The Chronicle of the Scottish Nation, written from the 1360s	The pestilence reaching Scotland in 1350 and carrying off a great part of the people — rich and poor alike
Ibn Khaldun (scholar, b. Tunis 1332)	Tunis, North Africa; later Cairo	The Muqaddimah, his introduction to history (1377); his own notes record the plague killing his parents in 1348-49	The widest lens: the plague as one of the few events that changed the whole shape of the world — 'the inhabited world was changed'

Read together, the four accounts show the same struggles everywhere: bodies not buried fast enough, towns emptied, fields with no hands to work them — and a sudden new power in the hands of the workers who survived.

Table of the four plague witnesses used in this section — Giovanni Boccaccio and Matteo Villani in Florence, John of Fordun in Scotland, and a Muslim scholar born in Tunis — with what each wrote, when, and what each account shows about daily life in the plague years

Giovanni Boccaccio was a writer of Florence. In the introduction to his book of a hundred tales (finished about 1353), he describes the plague that struck his city in 1348: the swellings in the groin and under the arm — called **buboes** — the dark marks on the skin, the fever, and death often within three days. Just as striking is what he says about people: doctors could not help, and the sick were left alone — “brother deserted brother”, he writes, and even parents would not visit their children. Fear broke the ordinary ties of daily life. Ten young people in his book flee the city to a country house and pass the time telling stories — which is where the hundred tales of the book come from.

Matteo Villani was a chronicler of the same city, who took up the history his brother Giovanni had been writing when the plague killed him in 1348. Matteo adds what the plague did to work and money: so many workers had died that the survivors “demanded the highest wages” they could name, and servants would not serve on the old terms at all. He also says that many who grew rich from the goods of the dead spent without care, as if life could not last. His chronicle is a ruler-side worry dressed as history: who will do the work, and at what price?

John of Fordun was a Scottish priest and chronicler writing from the 1360s. His *Chronicle of the Scottish Nation* records the pestilence reaching Scotland in 1350 and carrying off a great part of the people — and he notes that it spared neither the rich nor the poor. Scotland’s account arrived a little later than England’s, and it came by the same sea roads.

Our fourth witness was a Muslim scholar born in Tunis in 1332 — his name appears on Figure 4c_four_witnesses.png and in the sources table, as it sits above this book’s word level. The plague took both his parents there in 1348–49. Years later, in his great introduction to history (1377), he set the plague among the few events that have changed the whole shape of the world: it “consumed the landmarks of the past”, he wrote, and the inhabited world was changed, as if a new creation had come into being. His is the widest lens of our four witnesses — a thinker watching a whole civilisation reset itself.

Reading a plague witness: Boccaccio, Decameron, introduction

Florence, 1348 — a fresh translation made for this section from the Italian original.

THE PASSAGE

"In men and women alike, at the beginning of the disease, certain swellings showed themselves in the groin or under the arm, some as large as an apple, others as an egg — the common people called them buboes. Later, the disease changed its form: dark marks appeared on the arm or thigh or every part of the body, large and few or small and many. And against these illnesses no doctor's advice or medicine's power seemed of value. Perhaps the nature of the disease allowed no cure, or perhaps those who claimed to heal knew nothing of it. Few recovered; almost all died within three days of the signs appearing, most without any fever."

"This plague was the more fearsome because, in the sick, it threw fear into all around them. Most people, cruel in their fear, avoided the sick and their things. Brother deserted brother, uncle deserted nephew, and often sister deserted brother. What is more, and almost beyond belief: in many cases father and mother refused to visit and care for their own children, as if they had not been theirs."

Source: Giovanni Boccaccio, Decameron, author's introduction to Day 1, written about 1349-1353; translated from the Italian by the author for this section.

READING NOTES

What it shows of daily life

The symptoms and the swift death; the failure of doctors; fear breaking the closest ties — even parents leaving children. Daily life in a city under the plague.

What one writer cannot show

Other cities and the countryside; what happened to workers' pay (Villani adds that); the view of the poor, not the well-off; the spread beyond Florence.

Check it against the others

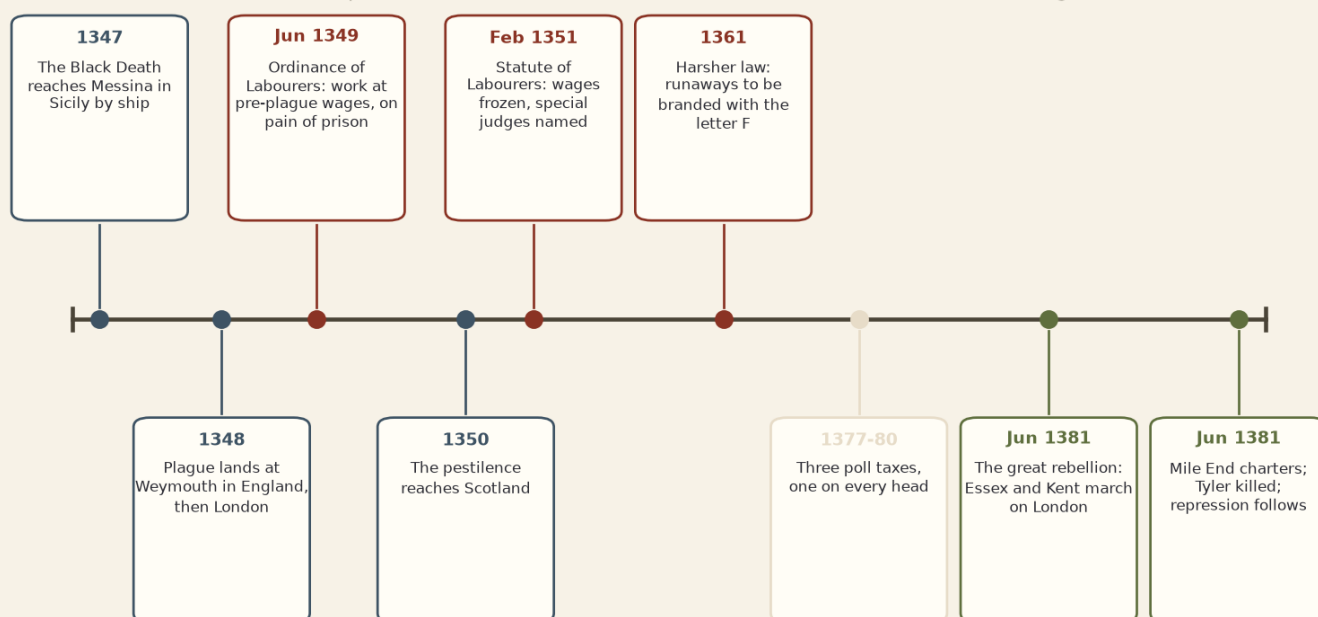
Villani confirms the same city's social break; Fordun and Ibn Khaldun show the same sickness across the sea. One account becomes a pattern only when it is joined to more.

The introduction to Boccaccio's book of a hundred tales describing the plague at Florence in 1348, in translation, with worked reading notes on what the passage shows of daily life, what one writer's account cannot show, and how it can be checked against the other witnesses

Read the four witnesses together and a pattern appears. The same disease produced the same struggles everywhere: bodies that could not be buried fast enough, towns emptied, fields with no hands to work them, prices rising — and, on every side, a sudden new power in the hands of the workers who survived. That is where the rulers felt the blow first.

From plague to law to rebellion, 1347-1381

Each step is a cause of the next: disease, then labour law, then taxes, then rising.



Red = laws of the rulers. Green = acts of the ruled. The same forty years that began with half the people dying ended with the survivors demanding new terms — and a king meeting them at Mile End.

Timeline from 1347 to 1381 CE showing the chain from plague to law to rebellion: the Black Death reaches Sicily in 1347, England in 1348 and Scotland in 1350; the Ordinance of Labourers is issued in June 1349 and the Statute of Labourers in February 1351; harsher laws follow in 1361; three poll taxes fall between 1377 and 1381; and the great rebellion rises in June 1381

Part 3: The rulers' answer — the labour laws, 1349–1361

The rulers of England answered the new power of the workers with law. First came the **Ordinance of Labourers**, issued on 18 June 1349 by the king, Edward III, and his council while parliament was not sitting. It ordered that everyone under sixty, with no land of their own and no craft, must work for anyone who needed them — and must take only the wages that were usual **before the plague**. It set prices for food and goods too, and forbade giving money to beggars who were able to work.

Two years later, in February 1351, parliament turned the ordinance into a **statute** — the **Statute of Labourers**, the strongest labour law of the middle ages and the centre of this section's primary source study. It fixed wages at their old level, named year by year, county by county; it set up **justices** — special judges — to hunt down workers who refused to serve or who took more than the fixed pay; and it punished the employers who paid above the rate just as hard as the workers who asked for it. The law's preamble tells you exactly whose perspective it was written from: the workers, it says, seeing the shortage of hands, demanded “excessive wages” and made the lords poor.

Then the rulers kept tightening. In 1361 parliament passed a harsher statute: a worker who ran from service before the term was done could be seized and branded with a hot iron, and the letter F stood for “runaway”. Between 1349 and 1361, then, the crown and parliament made three attempts to pin the labour market back where it stood before the plague. Each new law admitted, without meaning to, that the last one had not done the job.

The law was not a dead letter. The records of the justices show thousands of workers and employers brought before the courts in the 1350s and fined for breaking the wage rules. But the records show something else as well: the same offences, again and again, in the same villages — which tells you that the law was being broken as steadily as it was being made. You will weigh this evidence with care in the historians' debate at the end of the section.

Part 4: The ruled's answer — demands, refusals and the rebellion of 1381

The ruled had their own ways of answering. The most common was quiet and practical: workers simply took the best pay they could get, moved to the manor or town that paid most, or left service before the term was up. The records of the justices are full of them — and every one of those records is a small act of refusal, written down by the rulers'

side. Some demanded terms out loud; some bargained through the village elders; some struck when the harvest could not wait.

Then, in June 1381, refusal became rebellion. The cause was the third **poll tax** in four years (1377, 1379, 1380) — a flat charge on every head, which pressed hardest on the poor and which tax-gatherers were enforcing with unusual force. In Essex and Kent the collectors were driven off, and the protest marched. Led by a soldier called **Wat Tyler** and fired by the preaching of the priest **John Ball**, thousands of rebels walked to London. Ball's famous rhyme, preserved by the chroniclers, put the deepest question of the whole section into one line: "When Adam delved and Eve span, who was then the gentleman?" — when Adam dug and Eve spun wool, who was then the lord? In one question it denied that the ranks of rulers and ruled were natural at all.

At Mile End on 14 June the fourteen-year-old king, **Richard II**, met the rebels and granted charters: serfdom was to end, and rents were to fall to a low fixed sum. The next day at Smithfield, Tyler was killed by the king's men in front of the crowd, and the young king rode forward and promised the rebels fair treatment if they went home. They did — and the promises broke at once. The courts got to work: Tyler and Ball were executed, and with them about a hundred and fifty rebels. Richard's reported answer to a later plea from Essex — "villeins you are and villeins you shall remain" — is recorded in the chronicles of the time.

The great rebellion of June 1381: demands, then concessions, then repression

The ruled's answer to forty years of labour law and poll taxes.

1. The demands (Essex and Kent, May-June 1381)

- The third poll tax in four years drives the collectors off
- Thousands march on London behind Wat Tyler
- The priest John Ball preaches: 'When Adam delved and Eve span, who was then the gentleman?'
- The rebels demand: end serfdom, lower rents, remove the king's advisers



2. The concessions (Mile End and Smithfield, 14-15 June)

- At Mile End the fourteen-year-old king Richard II seals charters: serfdom to end, rents to fall to a low fixed sum
- At Smithfield, Wat Tyler is killed by the king's men before the crowd
- The young king rides forward: the rebels are promised fair treatment if they go home — and they go



3. The repression (June-July 1381)

- The promises break at once; the charters are torn up
- The courts get to work: Tyler and Ball are executed, and with them about a hundred and fifty rebels
- Richard's reported answer to a plea from Essex: 'villeins you are and villeins you shall remain'
- And yet: within a hundred years serfdom quietly withers in most of England — by bargain more than battle

The rulers' power was real — the leaders died and the charters broke. But their authority had bent: a king had met armed peasants as petitioners and sealed their demands. Power and authority ran in both directions.

Diagram of the great rebellion of 1381 in three stages: the demands of the ruled — end serfdom, lower rents, remove the king's advisers — met at Mile End with the king's charters; the killing of Wat Tyler at Smithfield and the king's promise of fair treatment; and the violent payback that followed, with the leaders executed and the charters broken

The rebellion failed — and yet look at what it shows. The rulers' power was real: the leaders died, the charters were torn up, and the law called the rebels traitors. But the rulers' **authority** had bent before the rising: a king had met armed peasants as petitioners and sealed their demands. And within a hundred years serfdom had quietly withered away in most of England — not by rebellion but by a thousand small bargains, as lords who could not find workers gave up labour services for money rents. The interaction of power and authority ran in both directions.

Part 5: Different punishments for different people

One of the clearest windows into the world of rulers and ruled is the law's punishments — because medieval law did not treat every group the same (the curriculum's .E02). Punishment differed by rank and by sex, and each difference tells you what the rulers believed about the people they ruled.

- **The nobility's privilege: trial by combat.** A free man of rank accused of a serious crime could demand trial by battle: the two sides fought, and victory was taken as God's judgement in favour of the winner. For the nobility this was a point of honour — the right to answer with sword rather than jury. The period word for these fighters appears in the figure below; our text keeps to plain words. The last such fight allowed by a French court took place in Paris in December 1386 — the Carrouges–Le Gris case, which you can read in Figure 4c_duel_1386.png.
- **The ducking stool and the law's view of women.** The ducking stool was used almost only on women, above all women convicted of being “common scolds” — that is, habitually quarrelling, insulting neighbours and disturbing the peace, as the courts put it. Town records across England from the 1200s on show stools set up at the cost of the town. The same courts punished dishonest brewers and bakers — and women ran many of the small brew-houses — with fines, the wooden frame that held the head and hands (the period name for it appears in the figure) or the ducking stool. The pattern is the point: a woman's speech and a woman's trade were policed in ways a man's were not.
- **Fines for those with money; bodies for those without.** A rich offender could often pay his way out. A poor one paid with his body — the wooden frame for cheating traders, whippings, the stocks, and hanging for theft. One rule of thumb ran through the courts: the less you owned, the more the punishment touched you.
- **Punishment as a deterrent.** Punishments were staged to be seen. The wooden frame stood in the market place; hangings took place in public, at Tyburn outside London and at gallows on the main roads; and the bodies of some criminals were left hanging in iron cages — **gibbets** — as a warning to those who passed by. The rulers did not punish only the offender; they punished for the audience. Fear was a tool of rule, and the spectacle was part of the power.

Different punishments for different people (the curriculum's .E02)

Medieval law did not treat every group the same. Each difference tells you what the rulers believed about the people they ruled.

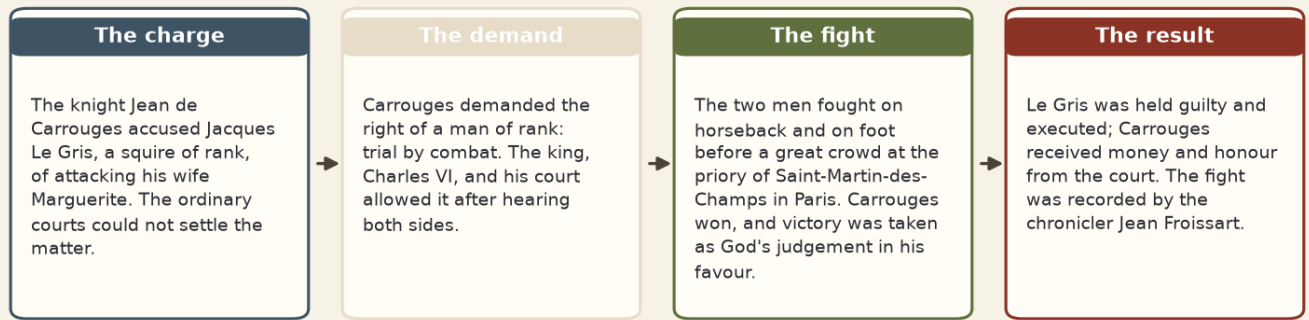
Punishment	Who mostly bore it	Where and how	The message it sent
Trial by combat	A privilege of the nobility and free men of rank	The two sides fought before the court; victory was taken as God's judgement. Last allowed by a French court in Paris, December 1386.	Honour and legal standing went together: a man of rank answered with his sword, not the common jury.
Fines	Mostly the wealthy, who could pay their way out	Paid to the lord's or the king's court, for many small offences.	Money could stand between a rich offender and his body.
Ducking stool	Almost only women — above all women convicted as 'common scolds'; also dishonest brewers, whose trade many women ran	A chair on a lever, fixed by the town, that dunked the person into water; town records across England from the 1200s on.	A woman's speech and trade were policed in ways a man's were not.
The wooden frame and the stocks	Dishonest traders and poor offenders who could not pay	Set up in the market place; the offender stood or sat in public view while the town passed by. Period name for the frame: the pillory.	Shame, staged where the whole town could watch.
Hanging, and the gibbet	Mostly the poor, for theft	Public hangings at Tyburn outside London and at gallows on the main roads; some bodies left in iron cages (gibbets) as a warning.	The rulers punished for the audience: fear was a tool of rule.

Read punishments as a set of choices: every difference between groups answers a question about who mattered, who was feared, and whose body the law felt free to use. Punishment as a public deterrent was part of the interaction between power and authority.

Table of medieval punishments sorted by who mostly bore them: trial by combat as the privilege of nobles, fines for the wealthy, the ducking stool mostly for women, the wooden frame and the stocks for dishonest traders, and hanging for thieves — each row noting where it happened and the message it sent, with a note that punishment was staged in public to frighten people away from crime

Trial by combat: a privilege of rank — the Carrouges-Le Gris case

Paris, 29 December 1386 — the last such fight allowed by a French court.



Why this case matters for this section

Trial by combat was a privilege of rank: a man of standing answered a charge with his sword, in front of the court, and his honour and his legal right were one thing. A poor man accused of the same crime faced a jury and, if found guilty, the gallows. The same law, two different doors.

Sources: the chronicles of Jean Froissart (near-contemporary; manuscripts in the Bibliothèque nationale de France); modern retelling: Eric Jager, *The Last Duel* (2004).

Trial by combat: a privilege of rank — the case of Jean de Carrouges and Jacques Le Gris, Paris, 29 December 1386: why the two men fought, how the French king and court allowed it, what happened, and why the case shows that rank carried its own legal privilege — the last such fight allowed by a French court

Read punishments the way a historian does: not as a list of horrors, but as a set of choices. Every difference between groups answers a question about who mattered, who was feared, and whose body the law felt free to use. Those choices show the interaction between power and authority at its plainest.

Part 6: What changed, and what continued

Sort the forty years from 1348 to 1381, as you learned in Section 7A.

What changed: real wages for free workers rose and stayed high; the price of food fell for a time while the price of labour rose; lords began letting serfs pay money instead of working the lord's land; and the survivors of the plague lived better, had more and better food, and knew their own worth better than their parents had. The rules of 1347 never came back.

What continued: the monarchy and the lords stayed on top; the Church kept its lands and its place in every village; the law still spoke for the rulers; and the ranks of rulers and ruled, though looser, stood firm until — gradually, by bargain more than battle — serfdom itself faded over the next century.

That pattern — a slow loosening below, a stubborn holding above — is the answer the middle ages give to this section's question. Power and authority were not broken by the plague; they were bargained over, law by law, wage by wage, and the bargaining never quite stopped.

Primary source close study: the Statute of Labourers, 1351

The rulers' side of the argument survives in its own words. The **Statute of Labourers** was passed by parliament in February 1351, in the reign of Edward III, and it stayed in force for decades. It is the most cited law of the post-plague century, and it is this section's primary source close study. The original rolls survive at The National Archives of the United Kingdom, and the text has been printed in the official collection *Statutes of the Realm* since the 1810s.

Source card: the Statute of Labourers, February 1351

The rulers' answer to the ruled's new power — in the strongest form of law medieval England had.

What it is	A statute (an act of parliament) fixing the wages of workers and servants, ordering the able-bodied without land or craft to serve anyone who needed them, and naming special judges — justices of labourers — to enforce it.
Who made it	The parliament of Edward III, king of England, at its meeting of February 1351. It followed the quicker Ordinance of Labourers of June 1349.
Language and form	Written in law-French and Latin, the languages of English law; enrolled on the parliament rolls.
Why it was made	Half or more of the working people had died in the plague; survivors were asking wages far above the old rate, and lords said the demands were ruining them. The law tried to pin wages back to their pre-plague level.
Strengths as evidence	It is the rulers' perspective in their own words — frank about the shortage of hands and about what they feared. It is dated, official, and survives in the original.
Limits as evidence	No worker had a voice in it; it tells us what rulers wanted to happen, not what actually happened. Its own renewals (1361 and later) suggest it did not hold.
Where it survives	Original records at The National Archives of the United Kingdom; printed in Statutes of the Realm, vol. I (1810).

Kind of source: primary — made by the rulers at the time the events were happening. It is read in this section against the records of the courts that enforced it and the chronicles that complained about it.

Source card for the Statute of Labourers of February 1351: what it is, who made it, in what language it was written, why it was made, its strengths and limits as evidence, and where the original records survive today

Here is the preamble of the statute, and the heart of its first rule. The English is a fresh translation made for this section from the statute's law-French and Latin.

“Because a great part of the people, and especially of workmen and servants, died in the said pestilence, some of the workmen, seeing the distress of the lords and the great shortage of servants, would not serve unless they were given excessive wages; and some were unwilling to serve at all unless they were paid so much that the lords were being impoverished by their demands. Therefore our lord the king, wishing to provide a remedy for the harm done to the lords, has ordained and established that every man or woman of our realm, of whatever condition, free or unfree, under the age of sixty, who does not have a craft or trade or land of their own to work, shall be bound to serve the lord or other person who needs them, and shall take only the wages, livery, meed or salary that were used and accustomed in the places where they serve, in the twentieth year of our reign, and the two or three other common years before that.”

— Statute of Labourers, preamble and first clause, February 1351, translated from the law-French and Latin by the author for this section

Run your source questions over it:

- **Features and context:** a statute — the strongest form of law in medieval England — made by king and parliament two years after a disease that killed perhaps half the working people, in a land where the harvest still had to be got in.
- **What it shows:** the rulers' perspective in their own words. The shortage of hands is admitted; the workers' demands are called “excessive”; the lords' losses are the harm to be remedied. The wages of the ruled are to be frozen at their level of twenty years' standing.
- **Whose voice is missing:** the workers'. No labourer sat in parliament. The “excessive wages” of the preamble are the rulers' description of what the ruled called a fair price for scarce work. Reading the statute against the chroniclers — Villani's complaints about Florentine servants, the English justices' rolls full of wage cases — lets you hear the other side in the rulers' own words.

- **The claim to test:** that the law worked. A law this strong, renewed in 1361 with harsher penalties, suggests the rulers believed it could hold the market — and the fact that it had to be renewed suggests it could not. Both readings have evidence, and that is the historians' debate you meet next.

Reading the Statute of Labourers: preamble and first clause

A fresh translation made for this section from the statute's law-French and Latin.

THE PASSAGE

"Because a great part of the people, and especially of workmen and servants, died in the said pestilence, some of the workmen, seeing the distress of the lords and the great shortage of servants, would not serve unless they were given excessive wages; and some were unwilling to serve at all unless they were paid so much that the lords were being impoverished by their demands. Therefore our lord the king, wishing to provide a remedy for the harm done to the lords, has ordained and established that every man or woman of our realm, of whatever condition, free or unfree, under the age of sixty, who does not have a craft or trade or land of their own to work, shall be bound to serve the lord or other person who needs them, and shall take only the wages, livery, meed or salary that were used and accustomed in the places where they serve, in the twentieth year of our reign, and the two or three other common years before that."

WORKED READING NOTES

Whose perspective speaks?

The rulers'. The lords' losses are the harm to be remedied; the workers' demands are called 'excessive'. No labourer sat in parliament.

What it fixes and forbids

Wages frozen at their level of twenty years' standing; every able-bodied person under sixty without land or craft bound to serve; employers paying above the rate punished too.

Which voice is missing

The workers'. What the preamble calls excessive wages, the ruled called a fair price for scarce work. Hear them through the court rolls and the chroniclers.

The claim to test

That the law worked. Its strength shows the rulers believed it could hold the market; its renewals (1361) show it could not.

Source: Statute of Labourers, February 1351, parliament of Edward III; The National Archives (UK), printed in Statutes of the Realm, vol. I (1810).
Translated by the author for this section.

The preamble and first clause of the Statute of Labourers in translation, with worked reading notes: whose perspective speaks, which voices are missing, what the law fixes and forbids, and the claim to test — whether such a law could hold the labour market after the plague

Secondary source interpretation: did the rulers win?

Historians have turned the same evidence into two different answers to the question of the Statute of Labourers — a **secondary source** matter, because it is later writers interpreting the primary records.

The first reading says the law mattered, for a time. The historian **Bertha Putnam**, in *The Enforcement of the Statutes of Labourers During the First Years After the Black Death* (1908), went through the records of the justices and found thousands of cases in the 1350s: workers fined for taking wages above the rate, employers fined for paying them, runaways pursued. In this reading the crown had both the will and the machinery to police the labour market, and the law really did slow the rise of wages in the first years after the plague.

The second reading says the market beat the law. The historian **John Hatcher**, in *Plague, Population and the English Economy 1348–1530* (1977), put the weight of change on the economy itself: with so few hands and so much land lying empty, no statute could stop pay from rising in the long run. In this reading the repeated renewals of the law (1361 and after) and the endless wage cases are proof of failure, not of strength — a law that worked would not need remaking, and the courts could not be in every field at harvest time. The real wages of free workers did rise and stay high through the later middle ages.

Both readings are set out in their strongest form in Figure 4c_debate_statute.png. Notice the shape of the skill: the same records — fines, renewals, wage cases — can be counted as evidence of enforcement or as evidence of

defiance, depending on the question you ask of them. Your job is to weigh each case, say which you find better supported, and say why. Marks go to the reasoning, not the side you pick.

Did the rulers win? Two readings of the Statute of Labourers

The same records — fines, renewals, wage cases — can be counted two ways, depending on the question you ask of them.

VIEW 1: The law mattered, for a time

The case: Bertha Putnam, *The Enforcement of the Statutes of Labourers (1908)*, went through the records of the justices.
Its evidence:

- Thousands of cases in the 1350s: workers fined for taking wages above the rate, employers fined for paying them, runaways pursued
- The crown had both the will and the machinery — named judges in every county
- In this reading the law really did slow the rise of wages in the first years after the plague

Its limit:

Cases in the first years do not show what the law did over a whole century.

VIEW 2: The market beat the law

The case: John Hatcher, *Plague, Population and the English Economy 1348-1530 (1977)*, put the weight on the economy.
Its evidence:

- With so few hands and so much land lying empty, no statute could stop pay rising in the long run
- The renewals (1361 and later) and the endless wage cases are proof of failure — a law that worked would not need remaking
- The real wages of free workers did rise and stay high through the later middle ages

Its limit:

Long-run wages do not show how hard the law pressed on single workers in the 1350s.

The skill: weigh each case, say which is better supported — or note that each view answers a different question — and say why. Marks go to the reasoning, not the side you pick.

Two-panel historians' debate diagram on whether the Statute of Labourers worked: View 1, that the law was enforced and slowed the rise of wages for a time, with its evidence and limits; View 2, that the market beat the law and rising wages prove it, with its evidence and limits; and a note that the same records can be read both ways

The same habits — check the source, name what it can and cannot show, weigh the interpretations — apply to every source in this section. The table below sorts them.

The sources of this section, sorted

Primary = made at the time. Secondary = made later, about the time. All are real, citable artifacts.

Kind	Source	What it shows	Where it is found
Primary	Boccaccio, Decameron, introduction (c. 1349-1353)	The plague at Florence in 1348: the disease and the breaking of family ties	Manuscripts in Florentine libraries (e.g. Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana)
Primary	Matteo Villani, Cronica (1348-1363)	Florence after the plague: servants and workers demanding the highest wages; survivors spending wildly	Manuscripts in Florentine libraries
Primary	John of Fordun, Chronicle of the Scottish Nation (from the 1360s)	The pestilence reaching Scotland in 1350, sparing neither rich nor poor	Manuscripts in British libraries, incl. the British Library
Primary	Ibn Khaldun, Muqaddimah (1377) and his own notes	The plague killing his parents at Tunis (1348-49); the plague as an event that changed the whole shape of the world	Manuscripts in Europe and the Middle East
Primary	Ordinance of Labourers (June 1349) and Statute of Labourers (Feb 1351)	The rulers' answer: wages frozen, compulsory service, named judges; the harm = the lords' loss	The National Archives (UK); printed in Statutes of the Realm, vol. I (1810)
Primary	Records of the justices of labourers (1350s)	Thousands of wage cases: the law enforcing — and being broken	The National Archives and county record offices
Primary	Chronicles of the 1381 rebellion (Anonimale Chronicle, York; Thomas Walsingham, St Albans)	The rebels' demands; Mile End and Smithfield; the executions; the 'villeins you are' reply	Manuscripts in the British Library and other collections
Primary	Jean Froissart, Chronicles — the Carrouges-Le Gris duel (Dec 1386)	Trial by combat allowed by king and court; victory taken as God's judgement	Manuscripts in the Bibliothèque nationale de France
Primary	Town and manor court records of ducking stools and wage cases (from the 1200s)	The ducking stool used almost only on women; small brew-houses policed	County record offices and The National Archives
Secondary	Bertha Putnam, The Enforcement of the Statutes of Labourers (1908)	The enforcement reading: will and machinery of the law in the 1350s	Published study
Secondary	John Hatcher, Plague, Population and the English Economy 1348-1530 (1977)	The market reading: economy, not law, set wages in the long run	Macmillan
Secondary	Rosemary Horrox (ed.), The Black Death (1994)	A collection of translated plague documents, used to check the translations in this section	Manchester University Press

Table of the main sources used in this section, primary and secondary — the chronicles of Boccaccio, Villani, Fordun and the Tunis scholar, the Ordinance and Statute of Labourers, the justices' records, the chronicles of the 1381 rebellion, the records of the Carrouges duel, and the modern studies of Putnam, Hatcher and Horrox — with what each shows and where it can be found today

Practice tasks (with help)

Q1. Using Figure 4c_plague_timeline.png, put these six events in order from first to last and give the date of each: (a) the Statute of Labourers is passed by parliament; (b) the Black Death reaches England at Weymouth; (c) the great rebellion led by Wat Tyler reaches London; (d) the Ordinance of Labourers is issued by the king's council; (e) the plague reaches Scotland; (f) the third poll tax is collected.

Q2. Figure 4c_four_witnesses.png sets out four writers who saw the plague. Match each writer to (i) where they wrote from and (ii) what their account adds: (a) Boccaccio; (b) Villani; (c) Fordun; (d) the scholar born in Tunis. Choices of place: Florence, Florence, Scotland, Tunis. Choices of content: the disease and the breaking of family ties; workers demanding high wages and survivors spending without care; the pestilence reaching Scotland and sparing neither rich nor poor; the plague as an event that changed the whole shape of the world.

Q3. Figure 4c_power_authority.png keeps power and authority apart. Sort these four examples to the correct side: (a) a king's crown and anointing at his crowning; (b) a lord's castle and armed men; (c) a judge giving a sentence from the bench; (d) the king's prisons. Then, in one sentence, give one example of your own where a medieval ruler had authority but needed power too.

Q4. Read the Boccaccio passage in Figure 4c_boccaccio_extract.png. Name (a) two things it shows about daily life in plague-time Florence, and (b) one thing one writer's account cannot show. Then say, in one or two sentences, why Boccaccio's account needs checking against other witnesses before we treat it as the whole story.

Q5. Figure 4c_punishments.png sorts punishments by who mostly bore them. Answer for (a) the nobility and trial by combat and (b) women and the ducking stool: what was the punishment, and what did it tell each group about their place in the law? Then, in one sentence, say why punishments were staged in public.

Q6. Read the statute passage in Figure 4c_statute_extract.png. Identify (a) whose perspective the preamble speaks from, and (b) two rules the statute laid down. Then name the one group of people whose voice is missing from the text, and say what they would most likely have answered.

Tasks to try on your own

Q7. Write two short diary entries of five or six sentences each, set in the same village in the harvest of 1350. The first is by a lord who cannot find workers to bring in his grain; the second is by a free labourer who knows that three farms are bidding for his work. Both entries must use only what this section's evidence supports. Then write two sentences saying how the same event — a demand for higher wages — looks different from each side.

Q8. “The Statute of Labourers shows that the rulers had more power than the ruled.” Test the claim like a historian. Give two ways the evidence supports it (think about the law itself and the justices' records) and one way the evidence weakens it (think about what happened to wages, and to the law, afterwards). End with your own reasoned judgement.

Q9. Look at Figure 4c_debate_statute.png. For each view, give the strongest piece of evidence a supporter would use. Then write two or three sentences of your own: which view do you find better supported — or does each view answer a different question about the law? You are marked on the reasoning, not on which side you land on.

Q10. In one paragraph of 6–8 sentences, explain how the Black Death changed the interaction between rulers and ruled in England. Use at least two named pieces of evidence from this section (a source, a law, an event or a punishment), use the words **power** and **authority** as Part 1 defines them, and end with one sentence saying what continued as well as what changed.

Answer guide (for the teacher)

Q1. (b) 1348 → (d) June 1349 → (e) 1350 → (a) February 1351 → (f) 1380–81 → (c) June 1381. Accept dates within a year where the arrival of the plague varies by source (England: summer 1348; Scotland: 1350).

Q2. (a) Boccaccio — Florence; the disease itself (buboes, swift death) and the breaking of family and neighbour ties. (b) Villani — Florence; workers demanding the highest wages, servants refusing old terms, survivors spending wildly. (c) Fordun — Scotland; the pestilence arriving in 1350, sparing neither rich nor poor. (d) Ibn Khaldun — Tunis; the plague as a world-changing event that consumed the landmarks of the past. Accept either Florence writer in either Florence order, with the content correctly matched.

Q3. Authority: (a), (c). Power: (b), (d). Accept any reasoned added example, e.g. Richard II in 1381 had the rebels' accepted authority as king but needed armed power to end the rising; a crowned king still needed castles and soldiers.

Q4. (a) Accept any two of: the symptoms (swellings/buboes, dark marks, fever, death within about three days); doctors unable to help; the sick abandoned, even by family; fear breaking ordinary ties. (b) Accept: other cities and the countryside; what happened to workers' pay; the view of the poor (Boccaccio writes from a well-off town view); or the wider spread beyond Florence. The checking sentence should reach the idea that one writer, one city, written a few years after, is checked against the other witnesses and the records (6D/6E).

Q5. (a) Trial by combat let a man of rank answer a charge by fighting, with victory taken as God's judgement — honour and legal standing went together for the nobility. (b) The ducking stool punished women convicted as “common scolds”; it shows the courts policing women's speech in ways they did not police men's. The public sentence: punishments were staged as a deterrent — the audience was part of the point, and fear was a tool of rule.

Q6. (a) The rulers' — king, lords and employers; the preamble names the lords' loss as the harm to be remedied. (b) Accept any two of: able-bodied people under sixty without land or craft must serve anyone who needs them; wages fixed at the pre-plague level (the twentieth year of the reign and the years before); employers paying above the rate punished as well as workers taking it. Missing voice: the workers/labourers. Accept any reasoned answer for what

they would have said — e.g. that scarce work deserves a fair price, and the “excess” is what the shortage made it worth.

Q7. Mark on: both entries staying inside the section’s evidence (lords short of hands and facing the fixed-wage law; labourers knowing farms were bidding against each other despite the law); each entry written in first person with period detail that is defensible; and two sentences that show the same wage demand as “excessive and unjust” from the lord’s side and as “fair and earned” from the worker’s (6E: perspective depends on place in the world). Do not mark the invention itself below the standard of defensible detail.

Q8. Mark on: two supports (e.g. the law itself — king and parliament binding wages by force; the justices’ records — thousands fined in the 1350s, Putnam 1908) and one weakening (e.g. wages kept rising; the law was renewed and made harsher in 1361, which admits the first law had not held; the rebellion of 1381 showed the anger underneath). The judgement is marked on reasoning, not conclusion (CONTESTED_TERMS.md Rule 5).

Q9. Mark on: the strength of each side’s evidence (View 1: Putnam’s thousands of cases — will and machinery of enforcement; View 2: the renewals, the repeated offences in the same places, and real wages rising and staying high — the market beating the law) and the student’s own judgement with reasons. A strong answer may note the two views answer different questions: View 1 asks whether the law was enforced (yes, for a time); View 2 asks whether it achieved its purpose (no, in the long run). Two opposed judgements can both be full marks.

Q10. Mark on: two named pieces of evidence used accurately (e.g. the Statute of Labourers 1351; the justices’ records; the rebellion of 1381; the ducking stool or trial by combat as unequal law; Villani’s wage complaints; the poll taxes); **power** and **authority** used as Part 1 defines them; and a closing sentence naming at least one continuity (monarchy and lords on top; the Church’s place; the ranks holding, though looser) beside the change. The paragraph may note that serfdom faded over the following century by bargain rather than battle.

Sources used in this section

Every source examined or quoted here is a real, citable artifact (D4). Verified 25 August 2026.

- **Giovanni Boccaccio, *Decameron*** — story collection finished about 1353; the author’s introduction describes the plague at Florence in 1348. Quoted above in my own translation from the Italian; manuscripts in Florentine libraries, including the Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana. Subject of Figure 4c_boccaccio_extract.png.
- **Matteo Villani, *Cronica*** — chronicle of Florence and the wider world, 1348–1363, continuing the work of his brother Giovanni, who died of the plague in 1348; Matteo died of plague in 1363. Quoted in my own words from the Italian; manuscripts in Florentine libraries. Cited in Part 2 and Figure 4c_four_witnesses.png.
- **John of Fordun, *Chronica Gentis Scotorum* (Chronicle of the Scottish Nation)** — written from the 1360s to the 1380s; records the pestilence reaching Scotland in 1350. Manuscripts in British libraries including the British Library. Cited in Part 2 and Figure 4c_four_witnesses.png.
- **Ibn Khaldun, *Kitab al-’Ibar* and its introduction, the *Muqaddimah*** — the *Muqaddimah* written 1377; the author’s own notes record that the plague killed his parents at Tunis in 1348–49. Quoted in my own translation from the Arabic; manuscripts in libraries in Europe and the Middle East (e.g. the Bibliothèque nationale de France, Paris). Cited in Part 2 and Figure 4c_four_witnesses.png.
- **Ordinance of Labourers, 18 June 1349** — royal ordinance issued by Edward III’s council at Westminster. Cited in Part 3.
- **Statute of Labourers, February 1351** — act of the parliament of Edward III; preamble and first clause quoted above in my own translation from the law-French and Latin. Original records at The National Archives (UK); printed in *Statutes of the Realm*, vol. I (Record Commission, 1810). Subject of Figures 4c_statute_card.png and 4c_statute_extract.png.
- **Records of the justices of labourers, 1350s** — court rolls of wage cases used as evidence in Part 3 and the historians’ debate; held at The National Archives (UK) and county record offices.
- **Chronicles of the rebellion of 1381** — including the Anonimale Chronicle, compiled at St Mary’s Abbey, York, shortly after 1381, and the chronicles of Thomas Walsingham of St Albans Abbey (manuscripts in the British Library). The rebels’ demands, the Mile End and Smithfield meetings, the executions of Tyler and

Ball, and the reported reply “villeins you are and villeins you shall remain” are cited from these, described in the author’s own words.

- **Jean Froissart, *Chronicles*** — near-contemporary account of the Carrouges–Le Gris duel of December 1386; manuscripts in the Bibliothèque nationale de France. Subject of Figure 4c_duel_1386.png; the modern retelling consulted is Eric Jager, *The Last Duel* (2004).
- **Town and manor court records of ducking stools and wage cases** — English town records from the 1200s on; held in county record offices and The National Archives. Cited in Part 5 and Figure 4c_punishments.png.
- **Bertha Haven Putnam, *The Enforcement of the Statutes of Labourers During the First Years After the Black Death, 1349–1354*** — 1908 study of the justices’ records; the enforcement reading of the debate. Subject of Figure 4c_debate_statute.png.
- **John Hatcher, *Plague, Population and the English Economy 1348–1530*** — Macmillan, 1977; the market-forces reading of the debate. Subject of Figure 4c_debate_statute.png.
- **Rosemary Horrox (ed. and trans.), *The Black Death*** — Manchester University Press, 1994; a collection of translated plague documents used to check my translations. Cited in Figure 4c_sources_table.png.
- **Max Weber, *Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft (Economy and Society)*** — published 1922; the senses of power and authority used throughout this section (CONTESTED_TERMS.md Rule 1). Cited in Part 1 and Figure 4c_power_authority.png.
- All dates follow the BCE/CE conventions taught in section 6B. No Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander content appears in this section; the Indigenous peoples of the Americas named in .E18 belong to the Spanish-and-the-Americas topic and are not taught here (D3, D9).

One significant person or group that drove change

Curriculum focus — teacher block

Owning content description — VC2HH8K22 (Historical Knowledge and Understanding, Europe and the Mediterranean, c. 600–1750 CE).

Elaboration linkage (D7 — linkage only, not a teaching order; ids verbatim from the VCAA export, final ids over substantive elaborations):

- **Medieval Europe (default path, D9):** .E01 the Catholic Church’s medieval role in social services (education, health care, welfare) and feudal village organisation; .E02 the influence and contributions of four named individuals: Gregory the Great, Charlemagne, Alfred the Great, Hildegard of Bingen. This section is authored end-to-end on that pairing: the Catholic Church is studied as the **group** whose social services ran medieval life (E01), and the four VCAA-named individuals are studied one by one (E02), with Charlemagne and Hildegard of Bingen as the two deep studies, per the chapter note (“the Catholic Church’s social services and individuals such as Charlemagne and Hildegard of Bingen (4D)”).
- **Alternative paths (join key, remain available to a teacher or a D9 sign-off swap):** .E03 Ottoman Empire — the Janissaries, earliest standing army of the modern era across Europe and the Mediterranean; .E04 Ottoman Empire — historians’ interpretations of Selim I (establishing the empire and taking Jerusalem) or of Suleiman the Magnificent (expansion into Europe); .E05 Vikings — Erik the Red’s Greenland settlements from 985 CE; .E06 Vikings — the L’Anse aux Meadows artefacts as possible evidence of a Viking journey to North America about 500 years before Columbus; .E07 Renaissance Italy — the Medici family as bankers, merchants and patrons of the arts; .E08 Renaissance Italy — Lucrezia Borgia, Galileo, Leonardo da Vinci, Lorenzo de Medici, Niccolo Machiavelli; .E09 the Spanish and the Americas — key life-events of Columbus, Cortés, Balboa, Pizarro and/or Montezuma II; .E10 how the modern world emerged — Henry VIII, Martin Luther, Elizabeth I; .E11 the Scientific Revolution — Copernicus, Galileo, Kepler and Newton overturning traditional views of the planets; .E12 Oliver Cromwell, Charles I’s execution, and the part the English Civil War played in developing the Westminster parliamentary system (the ancestry line §5 flags for Levels 9–10 Australian History). Each alternative reuses this section’s structure: context → the group or individual’s role → contributions to change → primary-source close study → secondary-source interpretation → evaluation with criteria.

Achievement standard coverage: this section serves the standard’s sentences on identifying and explaining the significant individuals, events, ideas and developments behind continuity and change, and on establishing and analysing historical significance with criteria — recognising and analysing the contributions and roles of events, individuals, locations, legacies and developments. Criteria work is owned by 7C (VC2HH8S09) and is applied here, not re-taught; source features and value are owned by 6C/6D (VC2HH8S03/VC2HH8S04) and applied here in the Admonitio generalis close study and the Einhard interpretation.

First Nations disposition (§2A): none — the CD and all twelve of its elaborations carry no Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander content. Nothing in this section is excluded.

Cross-references: 4A (the feudal order and the Church’s power shown in castles and churches), 4B (Charlemagne and the feudal order studied there as events and turning points; 4D studies the same man’s contribution to change — the two sections divide the work, they do not duplicate it), 4C (rulers and ruled, power and authority — the two-views exercise here is the first step of that analysis), 4E (interpretations of individuals and institutions — the Church’s role judged here is debated again there), 1D (the 600–1750 timeline and the spread of Christianity), 6C/6D (source features, strengths and limitations), 7C (significance criteria), 7D (constructing evidenced interpretations). The chapter’s evidence-based extended response lives in the Skills chapters (per-section volume, §3). No section assumes a specific Level 7 sequence (D1).

Key subject terms defined at first use (D2 exemption 2): role, contribution, change, group, significant individual, Catholic Church, clergy, pope, bishop, priest, parish, monastery, monk, nun, abbot, tithe, feudal/feudalism, social welfare, scriptorium, manuscript, capitulary, emperor, visions, sanctuary, unfree, bishopric, contemporaries, evaluate, criteria, biography, primary source, secondary source (the last two re-established in one sentence, owned by 6C). The higher-register technical forms *abbess*, *excommunication*, *interdict* and *chronicle* are deliberately kept to this teacher

block and the answer guide; the student-facing text carries their meaning in at-level phrasing defined at first use (“a woman with the same authority”, “cut off from the sacraments and from the community of the faithful”, a whole region’s churches closed, and “the record of every life”), so the vocabulary ceiling is never tested by them. Contested-term handling per `CONTESTED_TERMS.md`: “contribution” and “change” are defined with the operational frame stated at first use (a contribution is a change we can check in the sources; whether the change was good, and for whom, is a judgement that must be argued, not assumed); “feudal” is used with the working definition this section applies, noting that historians argue about the word; the two opposed views of the Church’s role (carer vs power-holder) are steelmanned (Rule 5) and tested symmetrically (Rule 4), and marking is on quality of reasoning, not conclusion reached (Rule 5, stated in the answer guide).

Teaching sequence (for the teacher). 1. Frame the CD: what “role”, “contribution” and “change” mean here, and why “contribution” needs a working definition (What you will learn). 2. The world of 600 CE and the place of the Catholic Church in it (Key ideas Part 1; Figure `4d_timeline.png`). 3. The Church’s social services: education, health care, social welfare, feudal village organisation — this is the E01 core (Part 2; Figures `4d_church_services.png`, `4d_parish.png`). 4. The four VCAA-named individuals, each with role, contribution and surviving evidence (Part 3; Figures `4d_individuals.png`, `4d_hildegard_panel.png`). 5. Two views of the Church’s role — steelman both; mark reasoning, not conclusion (Part 4; Figure `4d_two_views.png`). 6. Primary-source close study: Charlemagne’s *Admonitio generalis*, the schools order of 789 (Figures `4d_admonitio_card.png`, `4d_admonitio_extract.png`) — features, content, context, and what an order shows and cannot show. 7. Secondary-source interpretation: Einhard’s *Life of Charlemagne*, written after 814 (Figures `4d_einhard_card.png`, `4d_writing_panel.png`) — strengths, limitations, and what praise from a friend can and cannot tell us. 8. Evaluation with questions and criteria (Part 5; Figure `4d_criteria.png`), then scaffolded practice Q1–Q6, unscaffolded Q7–Q10. The chapter’s evidence-based extended response lives in the Skills chapters, not here (per-section volume, §3).

Common misconceptions to address: that “the Church” was one person with one plan (it was an institution of pope, bishops, priests, monks and nuns — a group whose members disagreed with each other, and whose role varied from village to kingdom); that medieval people got no education or care before modern governments existed (the Church ran the schools, the hospitals and the poor relief that did exist); that monasteries were only places of prayer (they were also farms, schools, copy-houses, guest houses and landlords); that Charlemagne himself was a skilled writer (Einhard says he tried and failed — the change he brought was through the schools he ordered, not his own pen); that Hildegard’s visions make her writings unhistorical (her books, letters and music are datable sources that show what one medieval woman knew, saw and said); that “the Church helped people” and “the Church held power over people” cannot both be true (both can be, and the task is to weigh evidence for each, not pick a team).

What you will learn in this section

About 1,400 years ago there were no government schools, no public hospitals and no welfare system in Europe. So who taught children to read, who looked after the sick, and who fed the poor? In most places, one group did nearly all of it: the **Catholic Church**. In this section you will study the **role** and **contribution** of that group — and of four people who worked through it: **Gregory the Great**, **Charlemagne**, **Alfred the Great** and **Hildegard of Bingen**. You will sort what they changed, check it against real sources from their own time, and judge — with evidence — how much difference they made, and for whom.

Some words we will use, defined as we meet them:

- **role** — the part a person or group plays in events.
- **contribution** — what a person or group adds to a society, and the part they play in bringing about change. **Note:** this is a contested word. Saying someone “contributed” can quietly mean they did something *good* — but the same person can bring change that helps some people and hurts others. In this section, a contribution is treated as *a change a person or group helped bring about that we can check in the sources*. Whether that change was good, and for whom, is a judgement you must argue with evidence — never assume.
- **change** — something becoming different: in this section, changes in how people were taught, cared for, ruled and fed. Remember that historians also look for **continuity** — what stayed the same while other things changed.
- **group** — a set of people whose combined actions made a difference. The curriculum for this section allows a group, an individual, or both. We study one group (the Catholic Church) and four individuals.

- **significant individual** — a person whose actions made a large, lasting difference to a society.
- **contemporaries** — the people who lived at the same time as the person being studied.
- **evaluate** — to judge how important or successful something was, using reasons and evidence.
- **criteria** — the standards or tests you use when you evaluate.
- **biography** — an account of a person's life, written by someone else.

We will also keep using words you have met in other sections: **source**, **evidence**, **primary source** (made at the time, by someone there or close to it), **secondary source** (made later by someone who was not there), **cause**, **consequence**, **continuity**, **change** and **significance**.

Key ideas

Part 1: The world of 600 CE — and the group at its centre

By about 600 CE the western half of the Roman empire had broken up into smaller kingdoms ruled by new peoples — Franks, Lombards, Visigoths, Anglo-Saxons. Towns shrank. Roads fell into disrepair. Few people outside the clergy could read or write. Across this patchwork of kingdoms, one institution held together: the **Catholic Church** — the Christian church of western Europe, led by the **pope** in Rome.

Here are the people and places that made it work:

- The **pope** — the bishop of Rome, head of the western Church.
- **Bishops** — leaders of the Church in each region, usually based in a city.
- **Priests** — who served local communities, one church at a time.
- **Monks and nuns** — men and women who lived in religious communities called **monasteries** (a house of nuns is often called a convent), led by an **abbot** — or, in a convent, by a woman with the same authority. They gave up private property and family life to work, pray and study.
- All of these together are the **clergy** — the people set apart for the Church's work — as distinct from ordinary people, who were mostly farmers.

The Church had three things no king had: a network that reached every village; people who could read and write; and land and wealth given to it by rulers over centuries. By about 600, a large share of Europe's farmland belonged to the Church. That network is why the Church — not kings — became the group that ran society's basic services.

One more word needs care. This section talks about the **feudal** world. Historians argue about the word *feudalism* — it covers many different local customs, and some historians avoid it. In this section, *feudal* is used in a simple working sense: *the way medieval society was organised, in which lords held land and gave protection, peasants worked the land, and everyone owed duties to those above them* — with the Church standing at the centre of village life. Every question in this section is answerable on that working sense alone.

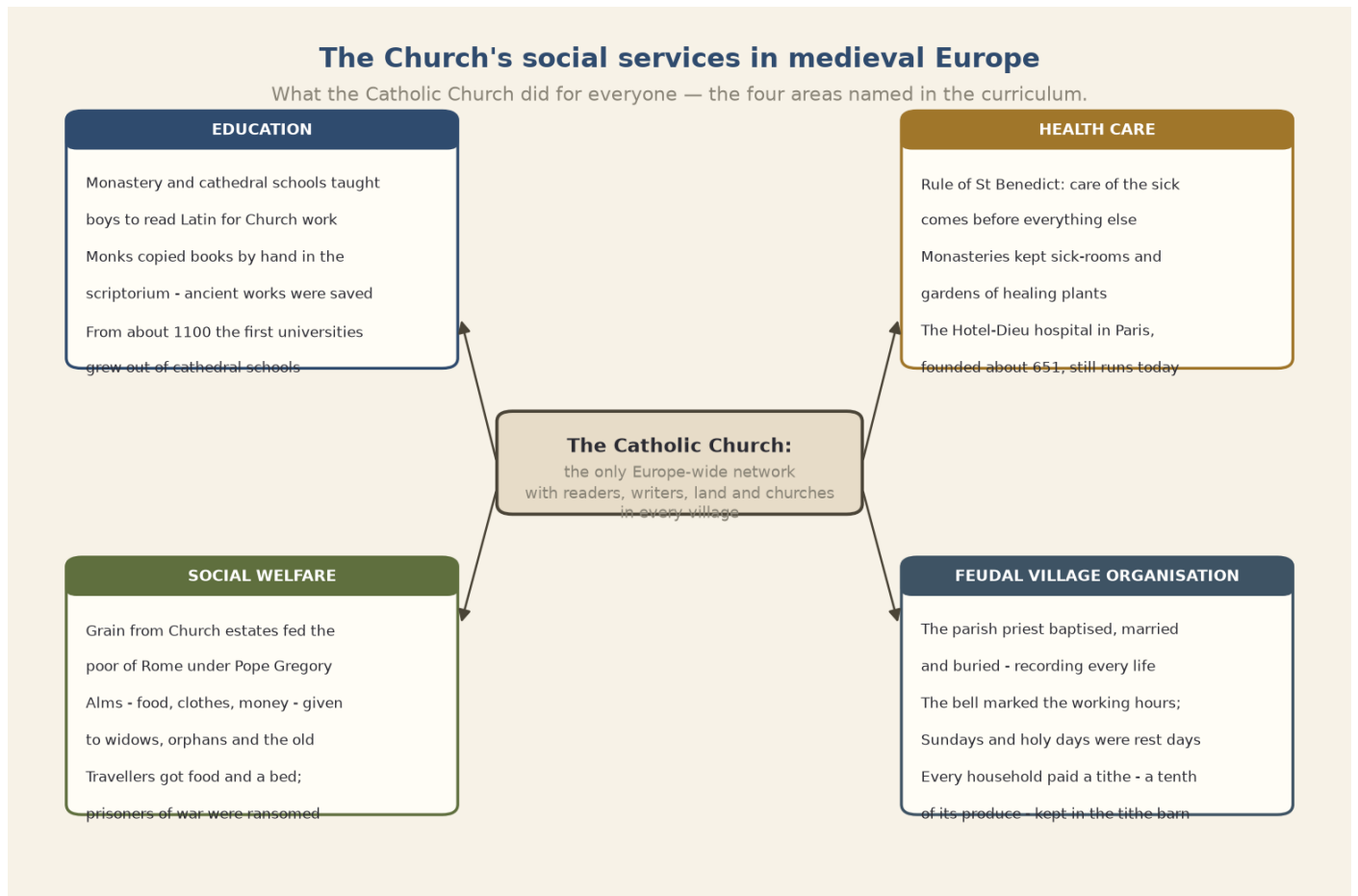
Part 2: What the Church did for everyone — education, health care, welfare, village life

Education. For centuries, almost the only schools in western Europe were run by the Church. Monasteries and cathedrals (the great churches of the bishops) taught boys to read Latin so they could serve as priests and monks. Monks copied books by hand in a writing room called a **scriptorium** — every book was a **manuscript**, written by hand, letter by letter. Without this copying, much of the writing of ancient Rome would have been lost. Later, from about 1100, the first European **universities** grew out of cathedral schools — at Bologna, Paris and Oxford. Girls could be educated too, mostly in convents; one convent girl, Hildegard of Bingen, grew into the most learned woman of her age.

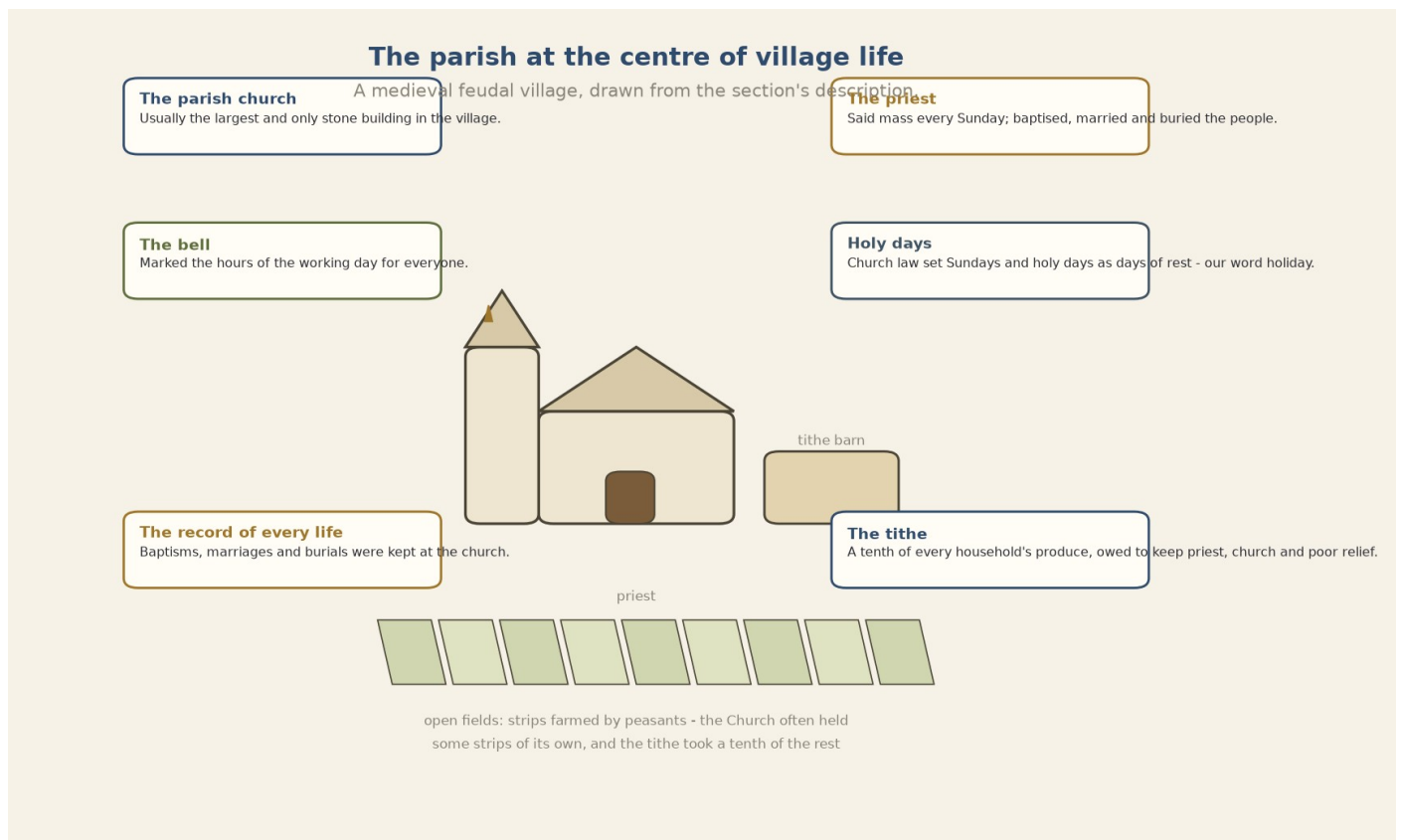
Health care. There were no public hospitals; the Church ran them. The monks' rule-book, the **Rule of St Benedict** (written about 530), told every monastery: care of the sick comes before everything else, "so that they may be served in very deed as Christ himself". Monasteries kept sick-rooms and grew gardens of healing plants. One of the oldest hospitals in Europe, the Hôtel-Dieu in Paris, was founded by a bishop in about 651 and is still open today. When soldiers and others fell sick far from home — for example, pilgrims on the long road to Jerusalem — religious orders grew up to run hospitals for them.

Social welfare. *Social welfare* means organised help for people who cannot provide for themselves: the poor, the sick, widows, orphans, the old. Medieval rulers had no welfare system; the Church filled the gap. Bishops and monasteries fed the poor daily, gave out clothing and money (called **alms**), offered food and beds to people on the road, and paid to set prisoners of war free. Popes in Rome organised grain from the Church's own estates to feed the city's poor in times of shortage.

Feudal village organisation. In a medieval village, the Church was the centre of life in a very concrete sense. The parish church was usually the largest and only stone building. The **parish** was the local church district with its priest at its head. The priest said mass every Sunday, baptised babies, married couples and buried the dead — so the Church kept the record of every life from start to finish. The Church's bell marked the hours of the working day. Church law set aside Sundays and holy days as days of rest — the word *holiday* comes from *holy day*. And every household owed the Church a **tithe** — a tenth of its produce, grain, eggs or wool — to keep the priest, the building and the poor relief going. Tithes were stored in a great **tithe barn**, often the second-largest building in the village.



Web diagram sorting the social services the Catholic Church provided in medieval Europe into four areas — education, health care, social welfare and feudal village organisation — with examples of each



Labelled diagram of a medieval feudal village showing the parish church at the centre of life: the priest, the tithe barn, the church bell marking the working hours, the churchyard record of baptisms, marriages and burials, and the holy days set aside from work

Part 3: Four people who changed things

The curriculum names four individuals. Each one used the Church's network to bring change.

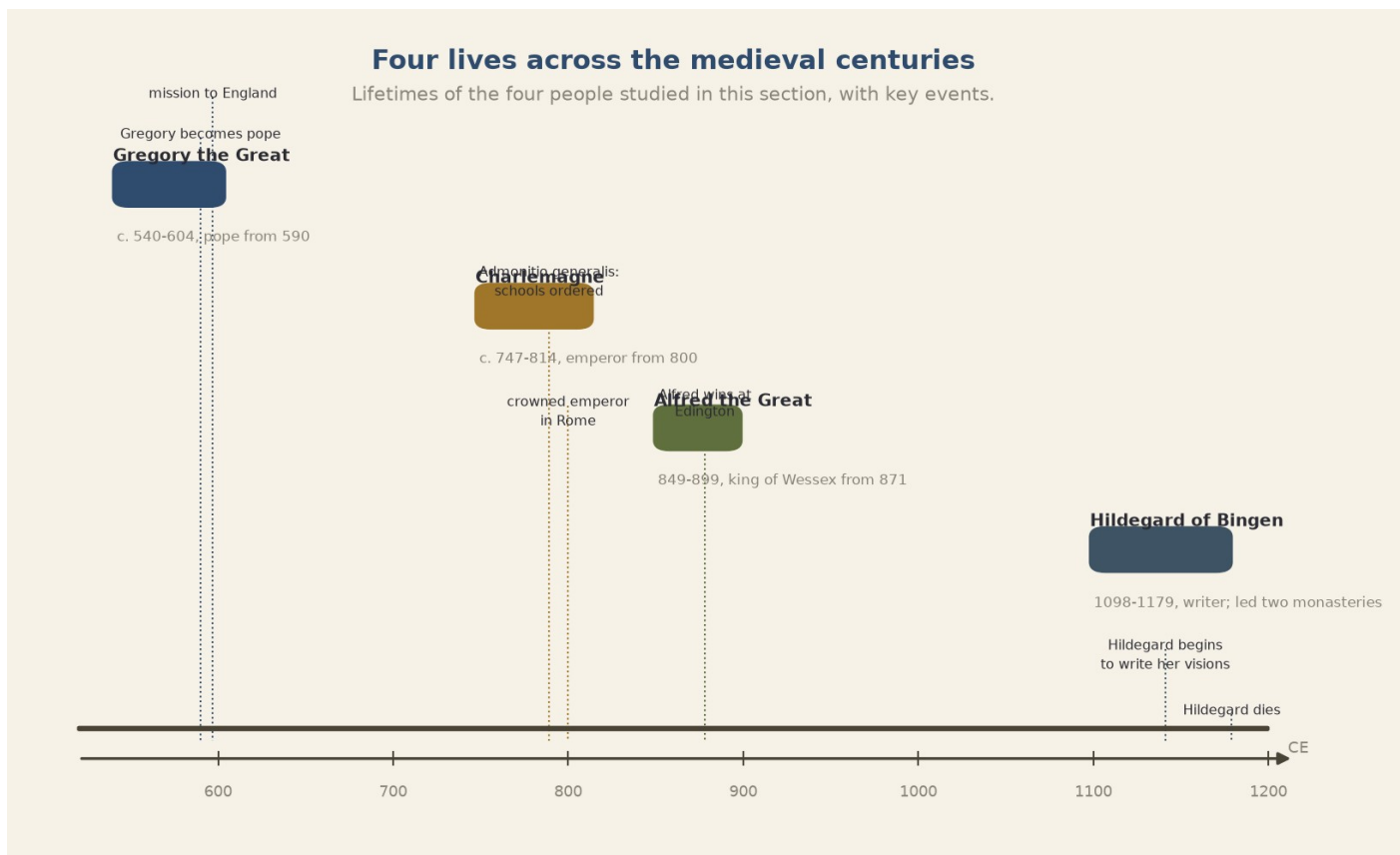
Gregory the Great (about 540–604; pope from 590). Gregory was born into one of Rome's richest families and served as the city's chief official before becoming a monk — he turned his own family house into a monastery. When he became pope in 590, Rome was a city in trouble: floods, disease, and invaders at the gates, while the emperor's officials far away could not or would not help. Gregory stepped into the gap. He organised grain from the Church's estates in Sicily to feed Rome's poor, ransomed people taken prisoner in war, and made peace with the invaders. He also sent a mission of about forty monks, led by a monk named Augustine, to England in 597 — the start of a great growth of Christianity there. More than 850 of his letters survive, and they show a leader fussing over details: how much grain to give out, which priest to send where, how to treat people well. He wrote a famous handbook for bishops, the *Pastoral Rule*, about how a leader should care for the people in his charge. Later ages called him “the Great”.

Charlemagne (about 747–814; king of the Franks from 768; emperor from 800). Charlemagne (“Charles the Great”) ruled the largest kingdom in Europe since Rome — the lands of modern France, Germany and more. On Christmas Day in the year 800, the pope crowned him **emperor** in Rome. His greatest lasting change was not a battle but a command: in 789 he issued an order (a **capitulary** — a set of laws and orders divided into short chapters) requiring monasteries and cathedrals to set up schools and correct their books. You will study that order closely below as a primary source. His court became a centre for scholars from across Europe, and his copy-houses wrote books in a new, clear style of handwriting that kept the works of ancient Rome alive. Charlemagne also made the payment of tithes a matter of law. But his changes had a dark edge: he waged long wars of conquest, and he forced conquered peoples, such as the Saxons, to accept Christianity. That too is part of his contribution — and part of what historians judge.

Alfred the Great (849–899; king of Wessex from 871). By 878, Viking armies had overrun every English kingdom except Wessex. Alfred held out, won a great victory at Edington in 878, and made a peace that fixed the boundary between his lands and the Viking-controlled north and east. Then he rebuilt — and not just walls. He planned a network of fortified towns, reorganised the army, and had ships built. His second great work was learning. He

believed the Viking wars had burned down a world of books, and he set out to rebuild it in his own language: he gathered scholars and translated (or had translated) key books from Latin into English — including Gregory the Great’s *Pastoral Rule* — and ordered that free-born boys learn to read. One of the finest objects to survive from his time, a gold and enamel pointer found in Somerset, carries the words “Alfred ordered me to be made”.

Hildegard of Bingen (1098–1179; a writer who led two monasteries). Hildegard was given to the Church as a child and raised by a holy woman named Jutta at a German monastery. From her first years she said she saw **visions** — striking scenes of light that she understood as messages from God. At about forty-two she was told by the pope to write them down. The result was *Scivias* (“Know the ways”), finished about 1151. She went on to found and lead two monasteries of her own — unusual authority for a woman in her time. Her surviving works are astonishing in range: her visions; books on the natural world and on medicine and healing; the largest collection of music by any medieval composer; a play; and more than 300 letters to popes, emperors and abbots — letters in which she told them frankly what she thought. She even preached in public, travelling from town to town. In 2012 the Catholic Church declared her a saint and a “Doctor of the Church” — a title of honour for teachers of the faith given to very few women.



Timeline from about 540 CE to 1179 CE showing the lifetimes of Gregory the Great, Charlemagne, Alfred the Great and Hildegard of Bingen, with key events: Gregory becomes pope 590, Charlemagne’s schools order 789, Charlemagne crowned emperor 800, Alfred’s victory at Edington 878, Hildegard begins to write her visions 1141

Four individuals who changed medieval Europe

Who they were, what they did, and the evidence that survives.

Individual	When and role	Main contribution to change	Evidence that survives
Gregory the Great	c. 540-604; pope from 590 - 604	Wrote the <i>Book of the Pastoral Care</i> (c. 590) and the <i>Dialogues</i> (c. 600). He is credited with the spread of Christianity into Western Europe.	His <i>Dialogues</i> and the <i>Book of the Pastoral Care</i> are still read today. His influence is seen in the liturgical calendar and the feast of St. Andrew the Apostle in England in 597.
Charlemagne	c. 747-814; king of the Franks	Ordered the <i>Carolingian Renaissance</i> (c. 780-800) and the construction of the Aachen Palace and the Palatine Chapel in Aachen (790-805). He is credited with the spread of Christianity into Western Europe.	His <i>Capitulary of Aachen</i> (c. 795) and the <i>Carolingian Renaissance</i> are still read today. His influence is seen in the liturgical calendar and the feast of St. Andrew the Apostle in England in 597.
Alfred the Great	849-899; king of Wessex	He is credited with the spread of Christianity into Western Europe. He is credited with the spread of Christianity into Western Europe.	His <i>Anglo-Saxon Chronicle</i> (c. 890-900) and the <i>Anglo-Saxon Chronicle</i> are still read today. His influence is seen in the liturgical calendar and the feast of St. Andrew the Apostle in England in 597.
Hildegard of Bingen	1098-1179; writer, composer	Wrote the <i>Scivias</i> (c. 1141-1151) and the <i>Physica</i> (c. 1151-1155). She is credited with the spread of Christianity into Western Europe.	Her <i>Scivias</i> and the <i>Physica</i> are still read today. Her influence is seen in the liturgical calendar and the feast of St. Andrew the Apostle in England in 597.

One group behind all four: each of them worked through the network of the Catholic Church.

Table comparing the four individuals studied in this section — Gregory the Great, Charlemagne, Alfred the Great and Hildegard of Bingen — with their dates, their role, their main contribution to change, and the surviving evidence for each

Hildegard of Bingen, 1098-1179

One medieval woman's surviving works - visions, medicine, music and letters.

WHAT SHE LEFT BEHIND

Scivias ('Know the ways'), c. 1141-1151

her book of visions, written with the pope's approval

Physica and Causes and Cures

books on plants, animals, stones, sickness and healing

Symphonia - a harmony of heavenly revelations

the largest collection of music by any medieval composer

Ordo Virtutum - a play about the virtues

one of the earliest plays of its kind to survive

More than 300 letters

to popes, emperors and abbots - plain-spoken advice and sharp rebukes

Two monasteries

founded and led at Rupertsberg and Eibingen

THE LIFE IN BRIEF

- Given to the Church as a child; raised by Jutta, a holy woman, at a German monastery
- Said she saw visions - scenes of light she understood as messages from God - from her first years
- In 1141, at age forty-two years and seven months, she says she was told to write them down
- The pope approved her writing about 1147-48
- Preached in public, travelling from town to town - rare for any woman of her time
- Died 17 September 1179
- In 1920 declared a saint and a Doctor of the Church - one of very few women so honoured

Feature panel on Hildegard of Bingen's surviving works: her book of visions *Scivias*, her books on nature and medicine, her music and play, her letters to popes and emperors, and the two monasteries she founded and led

Part 4: What do historians argue? Two views of the Church's role

You have seen the services. But history is not a thank-you letter, and historians ask harder questions too. Was the Church's role mostly care — or mostly control? Both views are held by serious historians with real evidence, and both deserve their strongest form before you judge either.

View 1 — the Church cared for people. For a medieval peasant, the Church was the safety net. It taught the only schooling available, kept the only hospitals, fed the poor in hard years, ransomed prisoners and gave people far from home a bed. Its copying rooms saved ancient books from being lost. Its parish churches gave every village a shared calendar, shared festivals, and a place where every life — birth, marriage, death — was marked and remembered. In a violent age, the Church also used its authority to limit violence: it declared certain days and places off-limits to fighting, and offered **sanctuary** — protection inside a church — to people in danger. In this view, the Church's social role was a genuine gift, and medieval people knew it.

View 2 — the Church held power over people. The same services gave the Church power that no one had voted for. The tithe was not a gift; it was a tax everyone had to pay. The Church owned perhaps a third of the land in some kingdoms, and peasants worked Church estates just as they worked a lord's. Its greatest weapon was spiritual: a person who disobeyed could be cut off from the sacraments and from the community of the faithful until they obeyed. And a whole region could be punished the same way — its churches closed, no baptisms, marriages or burials — until its ruler obeyed. The Church also controlled what could be taught and believed, and punished those who taught otherwise. In this view, the schools, the charity and the fear worked together: care was real, but it came with strings — obedience, payment and belief on the Church's terms. And the Church's wealth stood in plain sight beside the poverty of the people it served.

Neither view is silly, and neither is complete. The same parish priest could feed a widow on Sunday and demand her tithe on Monday. Your task as a historian is not to pick a side because it sounds nicer, but to weigh the evidence for each and say what you judge, and why. Different students, reasoning well from evidence, may reach different judgements — that is expected, and it is the reasoning that is marked.

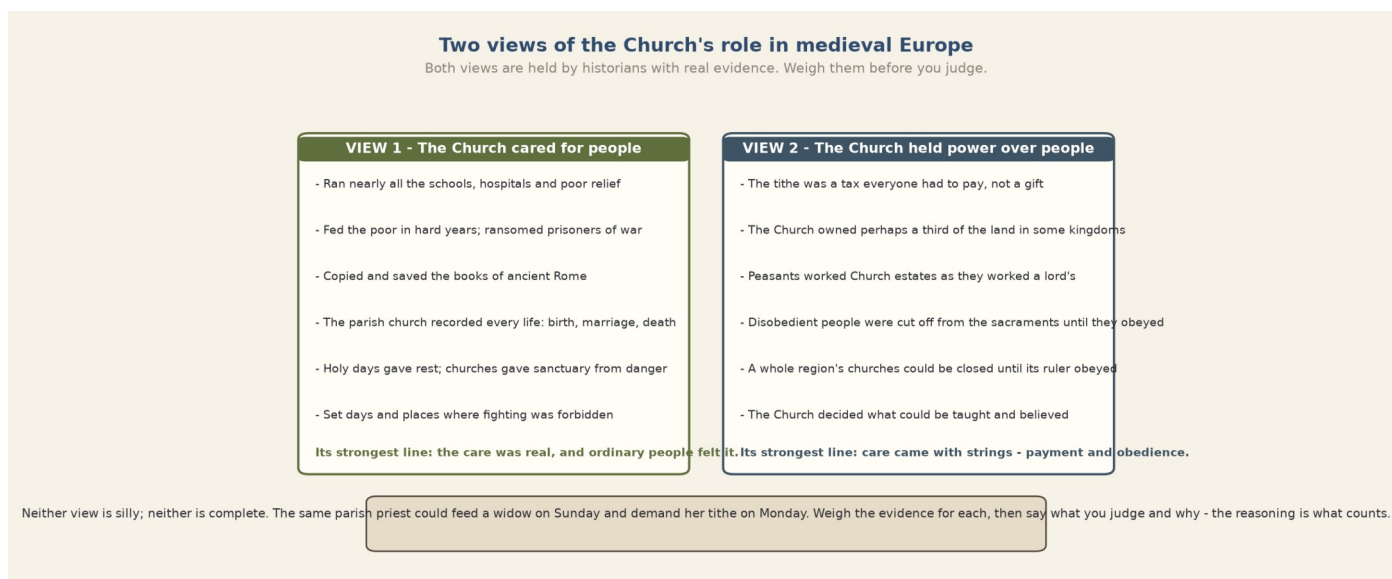


Diagram presenting two views of the Church's role in medieval Europe side by side — the Church cared for people, and the Church held power over people — each with its strongest evidence and the reminder that judgement must follow evidence

Part 5: Evaluating contributions with questions and criteria

To evaluate the contributions in this section, historians use questions and **criteria** — agreed tests for judging importance. You met significance criteria in section 7C; here are the ones we use here:

1. **How big was the change?** One schoolroom in one monastery, or the way a whole kingdom is taught, fed or ruled?

2. **How many people felt it?** The monks of one house, or every village in a kingdom?
3. **How long did it last?** A year, or centuries after the person died?
4. **What do the sources show?** Orders, letters, buildings, objects and books can all be checked. Whose voices do they carry — and whose are missing (the poor, women, peasants who left no writings of their own)?
5. **Good for whom?** A contribution for the Church or the king may be a burden for the peasant who pays for it. A full evaluation names who gained and who lost.

Five questions for judging a contribution

Worked example: Charlemagne's order of 789 for schools in monasteries and cathedrals.

1. How big was the change?	Not one schoolroom: a kingdom-wide command for schools in every monastery and cathedral, and for corrected books.
2. How many people felt it?	Boys across the Frankish kingdom - but the order names boys only, so girls felt nothing of it at all.
3. How long did it last?	Monastery and cathedral schools ran for centuries after him; Europe's first universities grew out of them.
4. What do the sources show?	The order survives; later copied books and school records show some obeyed. Many villages probably saw no change - that must be checked.
5. Good for whom?	Good for the Church's worship and its trained clergy; the cost fell on those who paid; most peasants and all girls missed out.
The criterion	Worked example: the schools order of 789

Finish with a judgement of your own - tied to the criteria, and naming who gained and who lost.

Table of the five evaluation questions and criteria used in this section, with a worked example applied to Charlemagne's order of 789 for schools in monasteries and cathedrals

Primary source close study: Charlemagne's schools order — the Admonitio generalis (789)

On 23 March 789, Charlemagne issued a long set of orders to everyone in his kingdom — bishops, abbots, priests, officials and people. It is called the **Admonitio generalis** — “the general warning” or “general order” — and it survives in 82 short chapters covering everything from weights and money to how priests should behave. The chapters on schools and books are the most famous part, and they are the heart of this section. They are a **primary source**: an official document from Charlemagne's own reign, in his name.

Primary source card: the Admonitio generalis

Charlemagne's orders to his whole kingdom - including the famous school clauses.

PRIMARY SOURCE - an official order from 789, in the king's name	
What it is:	A capitulary - a set of orders divided into short numbered chapters - covering everything from money and weights to priests' behaviour. 82 chapters in all; chapters 70 and 71 are about schools and books.
Who issued it:	Charlemagne, king of the Franks, with his advisers and churchmen.
When:	23 March 789.
Form:	Written in Latin; read out and copied across the kingdom for bishops, abbots, priests and officials.
Purpose:	To put the kingdom's church life in order - right prayer needed right books, and right books needed schools and careful scribes.
Where it survives:	In Carolingian manuscripts; the standard modern text is printed in Monumenta Germaniae Historica, Capitularia regum Francorum I, no. 22.
It CAN show:	the plan in the government's own words; what worried the king
It CANNOT show:	whether schools were actually built; anything about girls, whom the order does not mention.

Source card for the Admonitio generalis: what it is, who issued it, when, what form it took, what it was for, and where its text can be studied today

Here are the schooling chapters, 70 and 71. Two terms inside the order: *unfree* people were bound to serve a lord, and had fewer rights than free people; a *bishopric* was the region a bishop looked after. The English below is a fresh translation made for this section from the standard Latin text.

“70. Schools for the reading of boys shall be established with all diligence in monasteries and bishoprics. In each monastery and each bishopric they shall teach the psalms, musical notation, singing, the reckoning of time and grammar correctly, and they shall have the books used in church carefully corrected — because often, while people want to pray to God in the right way, they pray wrongly because their books are full of errors. And do not let your boys spoil such books by reading or writing carelessly.”

“71. And priests shall not refuse to teach the sons of free men or the sons of unfree people, and let schools be set up in villages and in the country to teach boys to read, to write and to sing.”

— Admonitio generalis, chapters 70 and 71, issued 23 March 789, translated from the Latin by the author for this section

Run your source questions over it:

- **Features and context:** a **capitulary** — a set of orders divided into short numbered chapters, read out and copied across the kingdom. It is law and instruction together. It is a primary source from 789, in the king's name.
- **What it shows:** Charlemagne saw wrong books and bad reading as a kingdom-wide problem with a kingdom-wide fix: schools everywhere, careful copying, and — in chapter 71 — a striking openness, since the sons of unfree people are not shut out.
- **What it does not show:** whether the order was carried out. An order is a wish until someone obeys it. Some monasteries certainly built schools; many villages probably saw no change at all. To judge the real effect, historians check later evidence: surviving school records, copied books and the careers of men who were taught.
- **A small clue to careful reading:** notice that the schools are for *boys*. The order tells us a great deal about what Charlemagne valued — and one thing it valued less was girls' schooling, which the order does not mention.

The schools clauses of the Admonitio generalis, 789

Chapters 70 and 71, translated from the Latin by the author for this section.

ADMONITIO GENERALIS, CHAPTERS 70-71

70. Schools for the reading of boys shall be established with all diligence in monasteries and bishoprics. In each monastery and each bishopric they shall teach the psalms, musical notation, singing, the reckoning of time and grammar correctly, and they shall have the books used in church carefully corrected - because often, while people want to pray to God in the right way, they pray wrongly because their books are full of errors. And do not let your boys spoil such books by reading or writing carelessly.

71. And priests shall not refuse to teach the sons of free men or the sons of unfree people, and let schools be set up in villages and in the country to teach boys to read, to write and to sing.

- Charlemagne's order, issued 23 March 789

What it tells us

Wrong books were seen as a kingdom-wide problem with a kingdom-wide fix: schools everywhere, careful copying.

A striking openness

Chapter 71 does not shut out the sons of unfree people - rare in a world of lords and peasants.

What it cannot tell us alone

An order is a wish until someone obeys it. Later records - school notes, copied books, men's careers - must be checked.

Who is left out

The schools are for boys. Girls' schooling is not mentioned - a silence that is itself evidence.

The Admonitio generalis chapters 70 and 71 in English translation, with notes on what the order tells us, what it cannot tell us on its own, and whose schooling it leaves out

Secondary source interpretation: Einhard, The Life of Charlemagne

After Charlemagne died in 814, a man named **Einhard** wrote his life story. Einhard (about 770–840) had been one of the king's closest helpers — a scholar at the palace school who grew up to manage the king's building works. The book, *The Life of Charlemagne*, was written some years after the death — historians place it somewhere between about 817 and about 833 — from the memory of a man who had been there. It is a **secondary source**: made after the events by someone looking back — but by someone who knew his subject well.

Secondary source card: Einhard, *The Life of Charlemagne*

A friend and helper writes the king's life - after the king has died.

SECONDARY SOURCE - written after the events, by someone who knew the king

What it is:	A biography of Charlemagne in 33 chapters: his wars, his looks and habits, his family, his crowning as emperor, his death and his buildings.
Who wrote it:	Einhard (about 770-840): a scholar trained at Charlemagne's palace school who became the king's superintendent of building works - a close insider.
When:	After Charlemagne's death in 814; historians place it between about 817 and about 833 - they disagree on the exact year.
Purpose:	Einhard says he wrote from duty and love for Charles, so that the king's deeds would not be forgotten.
Sources:	His own memory of court life, plus what other courtiers told him; he modelled the book on the Roman biographer Suetonius.

It CAN show:

human detail no official order keeps - the king's writing tablets, his meals, his buildings, his habits, his family, his crowning as emperor, his death and his buildings.

It CANNOT be trusted to show:

the dark side of things as Einhard chooses to tell his version of the Saxon wars' violence and is silent on the forced conversions.

*Source card for Einhard's *Life of Charlemagne*: who Einhard was, when he wrote, how he knew Charlemagne, and the strengths and limitations of reading him today*

On Charlemagne's love of learning, Einhard includes one of the most human passages in all medieval writing — including the king's failure:

“He also tried to learn to write. He used to keep writing tablets and blank sheets under the pillows of his bed, so that in his spare moments he could train his hand to form the letters. But because he began so late in life, his efforts met with little success.”

— Einhard, *The Life of Charlemagne*, written after 814, translated from the Latin by the author for this section

That passage does two things. It praises the king's effort — and it quietly admits that the great friend of learning could not write well himself. In the rest of the book Einhard is full of praise: he presents Charlemagne's wars as fair and right, says little about the bloodshed of the Saxon wars, and passes over the forced conversion of conquered peoples almost in silence. We know from other sources that those wars were brutal. Einhard is like a friend who writes your biography: full of true warmth and real knowledge, but choosing which rooms of the house to open. Secondary sources like his are still precious — he keeps details of the king's body, his meals, his buildings and his habits that no official order would ever record — but a historian reads the praise with one eyebrow raised, and checks the silences against other evidence.

The king who could not write

Einhard's most human passage about Charlemagne - praise and honesty in one breath.

EINHARD, THE LIFE OF CHARLEMAGNE, WRITTEN AFTER 814

He also tried to learn to write. He used to keep writing tablets and blank sheets under the pillows of his bed, so that in his spare moments he could train his hand to form the letters. But because he began so late in life, his efforts met with little success.
- translated from the Latin by the author for this section

What we learn from this passage

- The great friend of learning could not write well himself.
- He kept trying - the tablets stayed by his bed.
- Einhard was there: this reads like a memory, not a rumour.

What a reader must still check

- Einhard wrote after the death - memory looks back kindly.
- He praises the king almost everywhere in the book.
- On the Saxon wars he is vague; on the forced conversions, silent.
- Compare him with other records before you judge the wars.

A friend's biography is full of true warmth and real knowledge - but it chooses which rooms of the house to open.

Read the praise with one eyebrow raised, and check the silences against other evidence.

Feature panel of Einhard's passage about Charlemagne learning to write, in English translation, with what the passage tells us about the king, and what Einhard's friendship means a reader must still check

Practice tasks (with help)

Q1. Using Figure 4d_timeline.png, put these five events in order from first to last, and give the date of each: (a) Charlemagne is crowned emperor in Rome; (b) Gregory becomes pope; (c) Hildegard dies; (d) Charlemagne issues the Admonitio generalis; (e) Alfred wins the battle of Edington.

Q2. Figure 4d_church_services.png sorts the Church's social services into four areas. Sort these six actions into the correct area, with one line of evidence from the section for each: (a) monks copying books in a scriptorium; (b) a monastery sick-room run under the Rule of St Benedict; (c) grain from Church estates given out to feed Rome's poor under Gregory; (d) a priest baptising, marrying and burying the people of a village; (e) schools ordered in monasteries and cathedrals by the Admonitio generalis; (f) the Hôtel-Dieu hospital in Paris, founded by a bishop in about 651.

Q3. Read the Admonitio passage in Figure 4d_admonitio_extract.png. Which parts are **orders** (things Charlemagne commanded), and which parts are **his reasons or worries** (why he gave the command)? Name one of each and explain your sorting. Then name one important question this source cannot answer on its own.

Q4. Give one strength and one limitation of each source studied in this section: (a) the Admonitio generalis; (b) Einhard's *Life of Charlemagne*. Use the two source cards (Figures 4d_admonitio_card.png and 4d_einhard_card.png) to help you.

Q5. Look at Figure 4d_two_views.png. Match each piece of evidence below to the view it best supports — View 1 (the Church cared for people) or View 2 (the Church held power over people): (a) monasteries keeping sick-rooms and gardens of healing plants; (b) the tithe, a tenth of every household's produce, owed to the Church; (c) bishops feeding the poor and ransoming prisoners of war; (d) cutting a disobedient person off from the sacraments and the community of the faithful until they obeyed; (e) the parish church marking every birth, marriage and death in a village; (f) the Church owning perhaps a third of the land in some kingdoms, worked by peasants.

Q6. Biography planner. Copy the frame in Figure 4d_biography_frame.png and fill in each box for Hildegard of Bingen: childhood and how she came to the Church; the visions and the pope's order to write; her books and her music; the monasteries she founded and led; her letters and her preaching; her death and what she left behind. Use information from Part 3 and Figure 4d_hildegard_panel.png.

Biography planner

Fill the six boxes, then write your paragraph. The model shows one good shape.

1. Childhood: how they came to the Church
(fill in from Part 3 and the Hildegard panel)

2. The visions, and the pope's order to write
(fill in from Part 3 and the Hildegard panel)

3. The books, the music, the works
(fill in from Part 3 and the Hildegard panel)

4. The monasteries she founded and led
(fill in from Part 3 and the Hildegard panel)

5. The letters and the preaching
(fill in from Part 3 and the Hildegard panel)

6. Death and what was left behind
(fill in from Part 3 and the Hildegard panel)

MODEL PARAGRAPH

Hildegard of Bingen (1098-1179) was given to the Church as a child and raised by Jutta, a holy woman, at a German monastery. From her first years she said she saw visions - scenes of light she understood as messages from God - and at about forty-two, with the pope's approval, she began to write them down in a book called Scivias. She wrote books about the natural world and about sickness and healing, and composed more music than any other medieval composer. She founded and led two monasteries, wrote frank letters to popes and emperors, and even preached in public. She died in 1179, and in 2012 the Catholic Church declared her a saint and a Doctor of the Church. Her life shows that one woman, with pen and voice, could change her world.

Biography planner with six boxes to fill — childhood, the visions, the works, the monasteries she led, her letters and preaching, death and what was left behind — and a model paragraph about Hildegard of Bingen beside them

Tasks to try on your own

Q7. Choose ONE contribution from this section — for example, Gregory's poor relief in Rome, Charlemagne's schools order, Alfred's translation program, or Hildegard's writings. Evaluate it using all five criteria in Figure 4d_criteria.png. Finish with a clear judgement of your own: how important was this change, and for whom? Give evidence for every point.

Q8. Using your planner from Q6 as a model, write a short biography of ONE of the four individuals studied in Part 3 — Gregory the Great, Charlemagne, Alfred the Great or Hildegard of Bingen — in one paragraph of 5–7 sentences. Cover who they were, their role, their main contribution to change, and what evidence survives, and end with one sentence of your own evaluation. The model paragraph in Figure 4d_biography_frame.png shows one good shape; yours may be different.

Q9. "The medieval Church cared for people." "The medieval Church held power over people." For each claim, give the strongest evidence a supporter would use, as in Figure 4d_two_views.png. Then write your own reasoned judgement — two or three sentences — saying which claim you find better supported by the evidence, or why each claim holds some truth. You are marked on the reasoning, not on which side you land on.

Q10. The curriculum allows a group as well as an individual. Choose ONE group that helped change medieval Europe — for example, monks and nuns, parish priests, or the scribes who copied manuscripts in scriptoria. List their role, their contribution and one achievement, and name one source you would use to study them (a building, a book, an object, a letter or an order).

Answer guide (for the teacher)

Q1. (b) Gregory becomes pope, 590 → (d) Admonitio generalis, 789 → (a) Charlemagne crowned emperor, 25 December 800 → (e) battle of Edington, 878 → (c) Hildegard dies, 1179. Accept dates within a year where sources vary.

Q2. (a) education; (b) health care; (c) social welfare; (d) feudal village organisation; (e) education; (f) health care. Evidence lines: scriptoria and manuscript copying kept learning alive (Part 2); the Rule of St Benedict puts care of the sick first (Part 2); Gregory's letters record grain distributions and ransoms (Part 3); the parish priest records every life and the bell marks the day (Part 2); Admonitio generalis ch. 70–71 (primary source close study); the Hôtel-Dieu, founded c. 651, still operates (Part 2).

Q3. Orders, e.g.: schools shall be established in monasteries and bishoprics; books shall be carefully corrected; priests shall not refuse to teach the sons of free and unfree people. Reasons/worries, e.g.: people want to pray rightly but pray wrongly through faulty books; careless boys spoil books. Unanswerable-on-its-own question, e.g.: whether the order was carried out — an order is a wish until someone obeys it; later records must be checked. Accept any sorting defended with reasoning; the test is separating command from motive, and recognising that implementation is not shown by the text.

Q4. (a) Admonitio generalis: strength — primary, from 789, in the king's name, shows the plan in his own government's words; limitation — shows the wish, not the result; says nothing of girls' schooling; silent on whether villages obeyed. (b) Einhard: strength — written by a man who knew Charlemagne personally, keeps human detail (writing tablets, buildings, habits) no official record keeps; limitation — written after the death (between about 817 and about 833), full of praise, vague on the Saxon wars' brutality, silent on the forced conversions. Accept reasoned variants.

Q5. (a) View 1; (b) View 2; (c) View 1; (d) View 2; (e) either view with reasoning — accept View 1 (community care and remembrance) or View 2 (the Church controlling the record and the calendar), provided the reasoning is given; (f) View 2. Accept reasoned moves of any item to the other view (e.g. a student who argues the tithe also funded the poor relief), provided the reasoning is given.

Q6. Accept completed organisers that carry, at minimum: given to the Church as a child, raised under Jutta at a German monastery; visions from early years, told to write them down with the pope's approval (about 1141, she says in Scivias, when she was forty-two years and seven months old); Scivias finished about 1151, plus books on nature and medicine, music, a play, more than 300 letters; founded and led monasteries at Rupertsberg and Eibingen; preached in public; died 1179; declared a saint and Doctor of the Church in 2012.

Q7. Mark on: criterion-by-criterion application (size, reach, duration, source support, who gained and lost), evidence named for each point, and a judgement tied to the criteria. Any contribution from the section is acceptable; different judgements with sound reasoning meet the standard (CONTESTED_TERMS.md Rule 5). Strong answers note the “good for whom” test (e.g. the schools order mainly served boys and the Church's own needs; the tithe-funded poor relief burdened the same peasants it sometimes fed).

Q8. Mark on coverage (who, role, contribution, surviving evidence, closing evaluation) and on evidenced statements. All four individuals are acceptable; the Part 3 texts and the figures supply the material. The model paragraph is one acceptable shape.

Q9. Mark on: the strength of each side's evidence (View 1: schools, hospitals, poor relief, sanctuary, the parish record of life; View 2: the compulsory tithe, Church land and peasant labour, excommunication and the interdict, control of teaching, wealth beside poverty), and the student's own judgement with reasons. Do not mark the conclusion itself; two opposed judgements can both be full marks. The most complete answers hold both truths at once: care and control ran through the same institution, often the same parish priest.

Q10. Accept any group with a stated role, contribution and achievement, plus one real, named source (e.g. the scribes: surviving manuscripts such as the books copied in Charlemagne’s scriptoria; parish priests: the surviving parish churches and tithe barns; monks and nuns: the Rule of St Benedict, monastery buildings, Hildegard’s own writings). The point is transfer: the same framework applies to a group as to an individual.

Sources used in this section

Every source examined or quoted here is a real, citable artifact (D4). Verified 25 August 2026.

- **Admonitio generalis** — capitulary of Charlemagne, issued 23 March 789, 82 chapters; the standard text is in Monumenta Germaniae Historica, Capitularia regum Francorum I, no. 22 (ed. A. Boretius, 1883), surviving in Carolingian manuscripts. Chapters 70–71 quoted above in my own translation from the Latin. Subject of Figures 4d_admonitio_card.png and 4d_admonitio_extract.png.
- **Einhard, The Life of Charlemagne (Vita Karoli Magni)** — written between about 817 and about 833 (historians disagree on the exact year); 33 chapters; Einhard (c. 770–840) was a court scholar and Charlemagne’s superintendent of building works. The writing-tablets passage quoted above in my own translation from the Latin; the book’s praise of Charlemagne and its silences on the Saxon wars noted in the author’s own words. Subject of Figures 4d_einhard_card.png and 4d_writing_panel.png.
- **Rule of St Benedict** — monastic rule written by Benedict of Nursia about 530; the chapter on the sick (“care of the sick comes before everything else”) rendered in my own words from the Latin; governed monastic life throughout the medieval period. Cited in Part 2.
- **Gregory I, letters (Registrum epistularum)** — more than 850 letters survive, standard edition in Monumenta Germaniae Historica, Epistolae I–II (ed. Hartmann); cited in Part 3 for the grain distributions, ransoms and pastoral care; the *Pastoral Rule* (c. 591), his handbook for bishops, named in Part 3 and translated into English under Alfred (below). The mission of Augustine to Kent in 597 described in the author’s own words.
- **Alfred’s preface to the Pastoral Care** — Old English letter-preface, c. 890s, in which Alfred describes the decay of learning and his plan to translate into English “the books most necessary for all men to know”; survives in manuscripts including Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Hatton 20. Described in the author’s own words in Part 3; the translation program itself confirmed by the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle and by Asser.
- **Asser, Life of King Alfred** — written in 893 by Asser, a Welsh monk of St Davids who joined Alfred’s court; describes the king’s translations and his love of learning in the closing chapters. Named in the teacher’s answer guide and Part 3 context.
- **Hildegard of Bingen, Scivias** — book of visions, begun 1141, finished about 1151; the opening describes the “fiery light” and states her age (forty-two years and seven months) in that year; standard modern edition in Corpus Christianorum, Continuatio Mediaevalis 43. Her more than 300 surviving letters, her natural-history and medical works (Physica; Causae et Curae), her music (Symphonia) and her play (Ordo Virtutum) described in the author’s own words, not quoted. Subject of Figure 4d_hildegard_panel.png. Her declaration as a saint and Doctor of the Church by Pope Benedict XVI in 2012 stated in Part 3.
- **The Alfred Jewel** — gold, enamel and rock-crystal object with the Old English inscription “Alfred ordered me to be made”, c. 880s–890s, found at North Petherton, Somerset, in 1693; Ashmolean Museum, Oxford. Cited in Part 3.
- **The Palatine Chapel at Aachen** — Charlemagne’s court church, built in the 790s and consecrated 805; the core of today’s Aachen Cathedral, a UNESCO World Heritage site. Einhard records it among the king’s building works; cited as surviving evidence in Part 3.
- **The Hôtel-Dieu de Paris** — hospital founded in about 651, traditionally by Landry, bishop of Paris; still operating; cited in Part 2 as evidence of the Church’s health care.
- All dates follow the BCE/CE conventions taught in section 6B. No First Nations content appears in this section (none exists in this CD or its elaborations).

How historians read an event, person or institution — and its legacies

Chapter 4 — Europe and the Mediterranean, c. 600–1750 CE · Section 4E · History 8

Content description VC2HH8K23 (Victorian Curriculum 2.0, Levels 7 and 8).

Draws on (elaboration ids of VC2HH8K23, verbatim from the VCAA export):

id	topic	what the elaboration asks for
.E01	Medieval Europe	how historians test medieval myths — the King Arthur and Pope Joan stories
.E02	Medieval Europe	weighing historians' differing interpretations of the Black Death's impact on Europe
.E03	the Ottoman Empire	differing views of the Fall of Constantinople (1453 CE) — its prophecies and legends, and the effect these had on historians' readings of the people who lived through it
.E04	Vikings	whether the oral histories in the Icelandic sagas support historians' interpretations (Erik the Red's Greenland settlement)
.E05	Vikings	how films, games and today's wider popular culture show the Vikings
.E06	Renaissance Italy	how much key women mattered in Renaissance society (for example Caterina Sforza, Lucrezia Borgia, Isabella d'Este, Catherine de Medici)
.E07	the Spanish and the Americas	how far historians disagree over whether 'Gold, God and Glory' really drove the Spanish conquest
.E08	how the modern world emerged in Europe	linking interpretations of science's discoveries to ideas of free human reason and progress
.E09	how the modern world emerged in Europe	interpreting the Scientific Revolution and how the Age of Reason began — and why both matter to society today

This book's default case study for Chapter 4 is **Medieval Europe** (VC2HH8K23.E01–.E02), so this section is taught through two famous medieval stories — King Arthur and Pope Joan — and the historians' debates about the Black Death. The other five topics stay in the table above as paths a teacher may choose instead. Every question on this page is answerable from the Medieval Europe material.

1 · What is a historical interpretation?

An event in the past cannot speak for itself. What survives are **sources** — objects, buildings, written records, bones, coins — and sources only ever show part of what happened. An **interpretation** is a historian's reasoned reading of the past, built from those sources. The word matters enough that this section defines it at first use: *an interpretation is an*

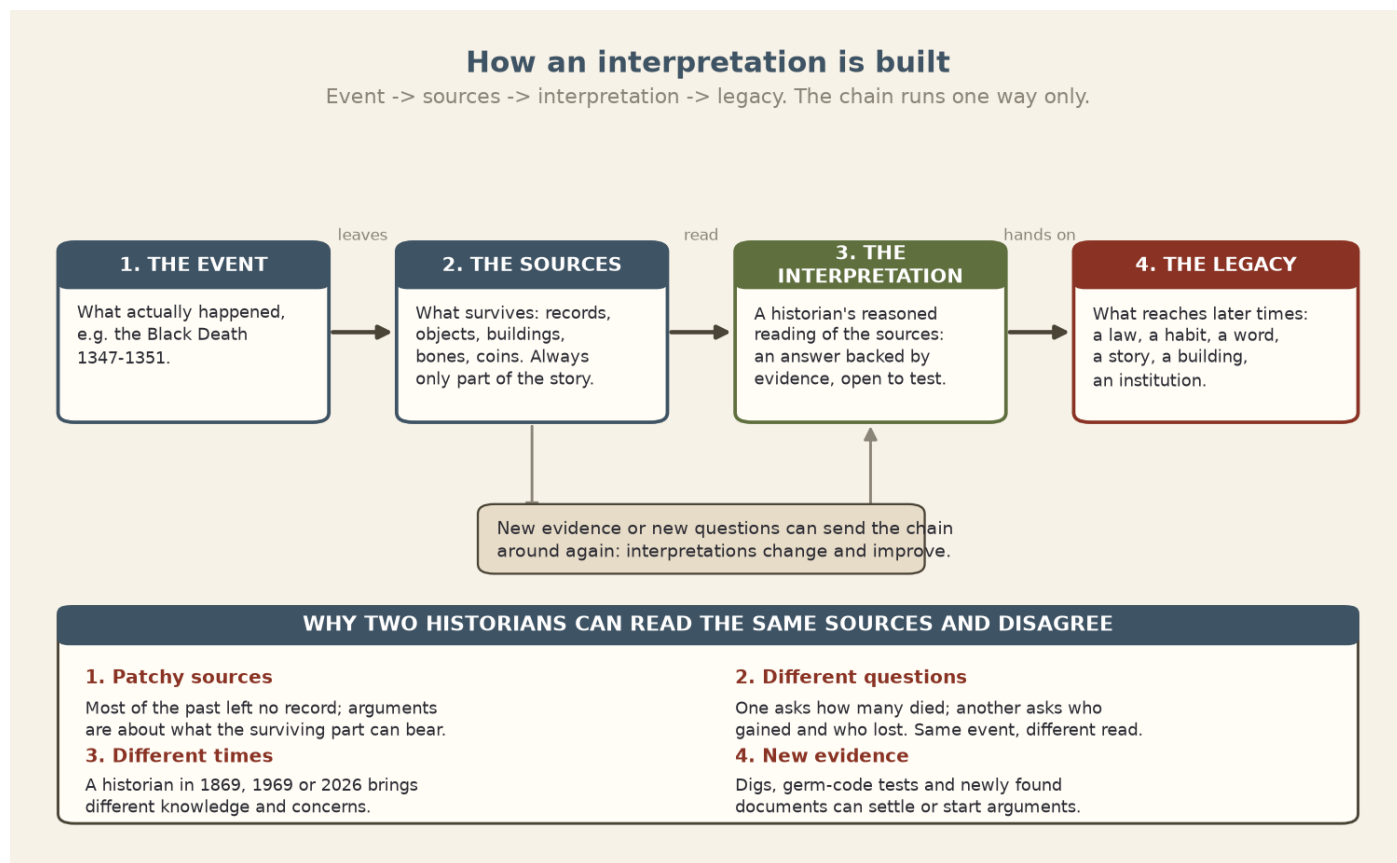
answer to a question about the past that is backed by evidence, and that can change when new evidence or new questions arrive. It is not a guess and it is not just an opinion: it must be shown, and it can be tested.

Two more subject terms in the title of this section:

- an **institution** is an organisation that a society sets up and keeps running across generations — in medieval Europe, the chief examples are the Catholic Church and its head office, the **papacy** (the office of the pope), and the universities;
- a **legacy** is anything handed down from the past that is still at work in later times: a law, a building, a habit, a word, a story, or an institution that survived.

The same event, person or institution can receive different interpretations, and that is normal. Four reasons cover most of the cases you will meet:

1. **The sources are patchy.** Most of the past left no record at all. Historians argue about what the surviving part can bear.
2. **Historians ask different questions.** One asks how many people died; another asks who gained and who lost. Same event, different answers.
3. **Historians write in different times.** A historian in 1869, 1969 and 2026 brings different knowledge and different concerns to the same evidence.
4. **New evidence arrives.** Digs, germ-code tests and newly found documents can settle old arguments — or start new ones.



A model diagram showing how history is made: an event in the past leaves surviving sources, a historian reads the sources and builds an interpretation, and some interpretations become legacies that reach the present day; a side list gives the four reasons why two historians can read the same sources and disagree.

Figure 1 — how an interpretation is built. Keep this chain in mind for every case study on this page.

Contested term — myth. The Victorian Curriculum uses the word *myth* (in VC2HH8K23 . E01 — the King Arthur and Pope Joan stories) but does not define it. In everyday speech “myth” often means “a false story”, which is already a verdict. This section therefore treats a *myth* as a story a society tells and retells about its past, whose truth or falsity the historian tests against the evidence — and every question on this page is answerable on that definition alone. A related word, **legend**, is used here for a story about a person

or event that may hold a grain of truth but has grown in the retelling. Neither word is used on this page as an insult.

The three case studies that follow each test a famous story against the evidence: King Arthur (an individual who may never have lived), Pope Joan (an individual who almost certainly did not), and the Black Death (a real event whose impact historians still argue about). All three leave legacies.

2 · Case study 1 — King Arthur: a man, or a story?

The legend in short: Arthur, a king of Britain, who with his Round Table fellowship drove back the invading Saxons, guided by the wise man Merlin. Films, books and games still retell it. The historian's question is sharp: **was there a real Arthur?**

To answer it, historians apply three tests to any story about the past.



A diagram of the three tests historians apply to a story about the past: Test 1, is it recorded by someone alive at the time? Test 2, when does the story first appear in writing, and how long after the events? Test 3, how has the story changed as it was retold, and does it grow like a legend?

Figure 2 — the three tests. Both case studies in this section, and every task, use them.

Test 1 — records from the lifetime. If Arthur lived, it was around 500 CE, in the years after Roman rule in Britain ended. The best writer alive in those years was the British monk **Gildas**, who about the 540s wrote *On the Ruin and Conquest of Britain*. He tells of a great British victory at Badon Hill and names the leader who gathered the Britons: Ambrosius Aurelianus. He never mentions Arthur. In 731 the monk **Bede** retold the same history in his *History of the English Church and People*. He too never mentions Arthur. The first writers closest to the time are silent.

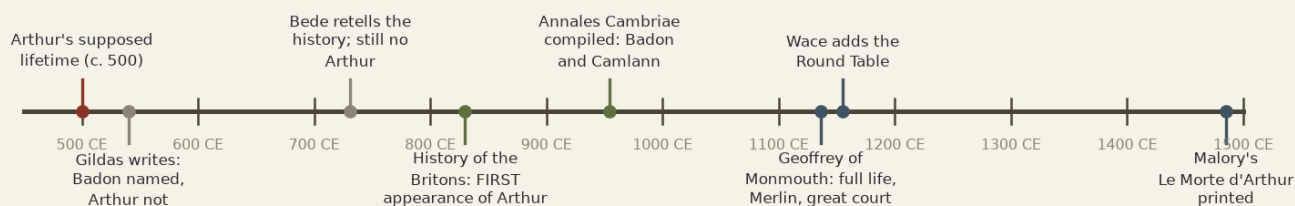
Test 2 — the first appearances. Arthur's name first shows up in writing centuries later. The *History of the Britons* (*Historia Brittonum*), put together in Wales around 829–830 and later linked to a writer called Nennius, lists twelve battles fought against the Saxons and calls Arthur their *dux bellorum* — “leader of battles”. Note: a war leader, not a

king. Then the *Annales Cambriae* — a set of Welsh **year-records** (records kept one line per year, usually in a monastery), compiled about 954 — gives Arthur two lines: one for a victory at Badon, one for his death at Camlann (you will read both lines in Part 4).

King Arthur: the events and the records

The gap between the supposed lifetime and the first record is the point.

about 330 years of silence: no writer names Arthur



Read the pattern:

The two writers closest to the time (Gildas, Bede) name the battle but not the man. Arthur first appears about 330 years after his supposed lifetime, and the story is greatest in the latest writers - the 1100s and after. That is the shape of a growing legend, not of fading memory.

A timeline from about 500 CE to 1485 placing, in order: the lifetime in which Arthur is said to have lived; the writing of Gildas (about the 540s, no Arthur named); Bede (731, no Arthur named); the *History of the Britons* (about 830, first appearance of Arthur); the *Annales Cambriae* (about 954); Geoffrey of Monmouth (about 1136); Wace (1155, the Round Table); and Malory (1485). A bracket marks the gap of about 330 years between the events and the first record.

Figure 3 — the gap is the point: about 330 years separate the supposed events from the first record that names Arthur.

The Arthur sources on one page		
What each says, and what a historian can trust it to prove.		
SOURCE & DATE	WHAT IT SAYS	HISTORIAN'S VERDICT
Gildas, On the Ruin and Conquest of Britain, c. 515-545 CE	Tells of the British victory at Badon Hill; names the leader Ambrosius Aurelianus. Never mentions Arthur.	The nearest witness to the time. His silence about Arthur is the single hardest fact in the case.
Bede, History of the English Church and People, 731 CE	Retells the same history from Gildas. Again no Arthur.	A second early silence, 200 years after the events.
History of the Britons, Wales, c. 829-830 CE (later linked to Nennius)	Lists twelve battles against the Saxons; calls Arthur dux bellorum, 'leader of battles' - not king.	First appearance of Arthur, about 330 years after his supposed life; a war leader, not yet a king.
Annales Cambriae, compiled c. 954 CE (copy c. 1100, British Library, Harley MS 3859)	Two lines: Badon - Arthur carries the cross three days and nights; Camlann - Arthur and Medraut fall.	Oldest dated records of Badon and Camlann; already hold a wonder; written c. 400 years late.
Geoffrey of Monmouth, History of the Kings of Britain, c. 1136-1138	Arthur's full life: Tintagel, a great court, Merlin, conquests across the north - from an 'ancient book' no one else saw.	The legend-maker: much judged invention. The grand king is built six centuries after his setting.

Bottom line: no source from Arthur's own lifetime names him. Each later source can show what its own age believed about Arthur - it cannot, on its own, prove that Arthur lived.

A table of the five main written sources for King Arthur: Gildas (about the 540s), Bede (731), the History of the Britons (about 830), the Annales Cambriae (about 954) and Geoffrey of Monmouth (about 1136), with a column for what each says about Arthur and a column for the historian's verdict on what it proves.

Figure 4 — the Arthur sources on one page. Read the verdict column last: no source from Arthur's own lifetime names him.

Test 3 — how the story grew. Everything changes with **Geoffrey of Monmouth**, who about 1136–1138 wrote the *History of the Kings of Britain*. Geoffrey gives Arthur a full life: birth at Tintagel in Cornwall, a great court, conquests across northern Europe, Merlin at his side. He claims his material came from “a very ancient book in the British language” given to him by Walter, a senior churchman of Oxford — a book no one else ever saw. Historians judge much of Geoffrey's Arthur to be invention: the grand king of the legend is built in the 1100s, six centuries after the time the story is set in. After Geoffrey the legend only grew: the French poet Wace added the Round Table in 1155; Chretien de Troyes added Lancelot and the quest for the Holy Grail in the late 1100s; Thomas Malory gathered it all into *Le Morte d'Arthur*, printed by William Caxton in 1485. The “medieval” Arthur most people know was mostly made in the high and late Middle Ages.

The verdict, with both sides given fair weight. Historians are careful here, because the evidence does not settle everything. Two positions are worth stating in their strongest form:

- **Position A — a real leader stands behind the name.** The battle of Badon really happened — Gildas confirms it. Arthur's name appears in several early Welsh and Latin texts that were kept apart from each other. Perhaps one British war leader of about 500 CE won a name that later ages built on.
- **Position B — Arthur as told is a legend, not a person.** No writer from his lifetime names him. The first entries about him already hold wonders (carrying a cross into battle for three days and three nights). Each retelling makes him greater — the pattern of a legend growing, not of memory fading.

On the evidence, Position B settles the king of the legend: he cannot be shown to have lived. Position A keeps a smaller question open — that some real war leader gave his name to the story — and that question cannot be proved

or disproved from anything that survives today. Notice what the debate is about: not “do you like the story”, but what the evidence can bear.

Legacy. The Arthur legend is one of medieval Europe’s most lasting exports: Malory’s book, the poems of Tennyson in the 1800s, and a steady stream of films, TV shows and games since. Tintagel Castle in Cornwall, run today by English Heritage, draws visitors mostly because of the story; modern digs there have found a wealthy site of the right centuries — but nothing that carries Arthur’s name. The idea of the “once and future king”, a hero who will return when needed, is itself a legacy worth noticing: it tells historians what later ages wanted from their past.

Checkpoint 1. Which is the stronger piece of evidence against the legend — that Gildas never mentions Arthur, or that Geoffrey’s “ancient book” was never seen by anyone else? Give one reason.

3 · Case study 2 — Pope Joan: a story that failed every test

The papacy is one of medieval Europe’s great institutions: the office of the pope, head of the Catholic Church, with an unbroken list of office-holders going back centuries. The story tested in this case study runs like this: a clever woman, educated and dressed as a man, rose through the Church, was elected pope and reigned about two years; her secret was found out when she suddenly gave birth during a formal street walk through Rome. Most versions place her in the 850s, between the popes Leo IV and Benedict III.

Historians have checked this story against the records, and it fails every test.

Pope Joan: the claim against the records

Each row is one check. The story fails them all.

WHAT THE STORY CLAIMS	WHAT THE RECORDS SHOW
- A clever woman, dressed as a man, rose through the Church. - She was elected pope and reigned about two years. - Most versions place her in the 850s, between Leo IV and Benedict III. - Her secret was found when she gave birth during a street procession in Rome.	No witness from the time No source from the 850s mentions a female pope - and none does for more than 400 years after. The first telling is c. 1250 (Jean de Mailly, Metz). No gap in the papal list Leo IV died in 855 and Benedict III took office within weeks - no room for a two-year reign. Coins and a living witness Coins struck under Benedict III in 855 survive; Anastasius, who lived through those years and wrote the lives of both popes, never hints at her. A story that keeps moving The dates shift between the 850s and the 1099 as writers try to fit the tale in - the sign of a story looking for a home.

Verdict: no serious historian today holds that Pope Joan reigned (Oxford Dictionary of Popes). The myth is still studied - as evidence of how stories spread and how critics of an institution used them.

A two-column checking panel for the Pope Joan story: the left column lists what the story claims (a woman reigned as pope about two years between Leo IV and Benedict III in the 850s); the right column lists what the records show (Leo IV died in 855 and Benedict III took office within weeks, leaving no gap; coins of Benedict III from 855 survive; a churchman who wrote the lives of both popes never mentions a woman; and no source of any kind mentions a female pope for more than 400 years after the supposed reign).

Figure 5 — the claim against the records. Each row is one test the story fails.

When does the story first appear? Not until the 1200s. The first known telling is in a world **chronicle** (a history written year by year) by Jean de Mailly, written at Metz about 1250 — and he places the story around 1099, not the

850s. Then Martin of Troppau, in a widely copied list of popes and emperors written about 1277, moved her to the gap between Leo IV and Benedict III. From 855 to 1250 — four hundred years, including writers who listed the popes one by one — no one mentions a female pope at all.

Do the records leave room for her? No. Leo IV died in 855, and Benedict III took office within weeks. There is no two-year gap for Joan to reign in. Coins struck under Benedict III in 855 survive today. A Roman churchman called Anastasius, who lived through those very years and wrote the official lives of both Leo IV and Benedict III, never hints at a woman on the papal throne. As writers tried to fit the story in, its dates kept moving between the 850s and the 1099 — a sign of a story looking for a home, not a memory being reported.

The honest witness. In 1647 the French scholar David Blondel — a Protestant, and no friend of the papacy — went through the records step by step and showed that the story could not fit. When a critic of an institution checks a damaging story and reports that it fails, that is strong evidence the check was honest. Historians of every background have agreed with Blondel ever since. Modern reference works, such as *The Oxford Dictionary of Popes* (edited by J. N. D. Kelly), state plainly that there is no evidence from the time for a female pope; the French historian Alain Boureau in 1993 studied not the woman but the myth itself, and how it grew.

Why was it believed? Three reasons cover most of it. First, the story was useful: critics of the papacy in the later Middle Ages and at the Reformation repeated it because it served their argument. Second, medieval writers copied each other's chronicles without always checking, so a story once written down spread from book to book. Third, it is a good story — and good stories travel. The marble-chair tale shows the same habit: two ancient marble chairs were used in papal ceremonies at the Lateran church in Rome, and from the 1200s a rumour grew that one was used to make sure each new pope was a man. The chairs are older than the myth — most likely plain old Roman furniture — and the rumour seems to have grown up to explain them. Myths often arise to explain things people find puzzling.

The verdict. Unlike Arthur, Pope Joan is settled: no serious historian today holds that she reigned. What historians still study is the myth as evidence — of how stories spread, of copy-and-paste habits in medieval chronicles, and of how an institution's critics used a tale against it. That is the pattern to remember: **an extraordinary claim needs records from its own time, and a long silence where records should exist is evidence too.**

Checkpoint 2. The story was useful to the papacy's critics. Does that fact alone prove the story was invented? Say what it does prove and what it does not.

4 · Primary source close study — the *Annales Cambriae*

Source card: the *Annales Cambriae* ('Year-Records of Wales')

Primary source - the oldest dated records of Badon and Camlann.

THE SOURCE

What it is:

Welsh year-records - history kept one line per year, the way a monastery marked time.

Put together:

The entries run to about 954 CE and were compiled shortly after, probably in Wales.

Surviving copy:

Written about 1100; held today in the British Library as Harley MS 3859 - a manuscript, a book written by hand.

Kind of source:

PRIMARY for what the 900s believed; written about 400 years after the events it reports for the 500s.

The two Arthur lines:

Year 72 (c. 516): Badon - Arthur carries the cross three days and nights; Britons win. Year 93 (c. 537): Camlann - Arthur and Medraut fall; death-plague follows.

USE IT WITH CARE

Strengths

- Oldest dated records of Badon and Camlann.
- Proves the Arthur story was told in Wales by the 900s.

Limits

- Compiled about 400 years after the events.
- One line per battle: too little to build a life from.
- The Badon line already holds a wonder; some scholars read 'shoulders' as a copying slip for 'shield'.
- No record from the time itself backs Arthur up.

How to use it:

Strong evidence for memory and belief in the 900s; not proof that Arthur lived in the 500s.

*A source card for the *Annales Cambriae*: what it is (a set of Welsh year-records kept one line per year); when it was put together (about 954); where the surviving copy was written and is held today (British Library, Harley MS 3859, written about 1100); its kind (primary); its strengths (the oldest dated records of Badon and Camlann; proof that the Arthur story was told in Wales by the 900s); and its limits (written about 400 years after the events; one line each; no check from the time itself).*

Figure 6 — source card for the close study. The two entries are read below.

Features. The *Annales Cambriae* ("Year-Records of Wales") is a set of **year-records**: history kept one line per year, the way a monastery marked time. The entries run up to about 954, and were put together shortly after, probably in Wales. The oldest copy that survives was written about 1100 and is held today in the British Library as Harley MS 3859 — a **manuscript**, meaning a book written by hand.

Content. Two entries concern Arthur. In my English, from the Latin:

Year 72 (about 516 CE): *The Battle of Badon, in which Arthur carried the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ on his shoulders for three days and three nights, and the Britons were the victors.*

Year 93 (about 537 CE): *The Battle of Camlann, in which Arthur and Medraut fell, and there was death-plague in Britain and Ireland.*

Context and value. These two lines are the oldest dated records of Badon and Camlann, and they prove something real: that by the 900s, people in Wales told that Arthur had fought at Badon and died at Camlann. That is evidence about belief and memory — it is not proof that Arthur lived. Three limits keep a historian cautious:

1. The year-records were put together about four hundred years after the events;
2. each battle gets one line — far too little to build a life from;
3. the Badon line already holds a wonder (three days and three nights carrying a cross into battle). Some scholars even think "shoulders" came from a copying slip for an old Welsh word meaning "shield". When a text changes as it is copied, every word has to be weighed.

This is the whole skill of the section in one object: a real source, honestly read, which supports part of the legend and proves none of it.

Checkpoint 3. If a friend said “the *Annales Cambriae* proves Arthur was real”, which one of the three limits would you answer with first, and why?

5 · Case study 3 — the Black Death: a real event that historians still argue about

Arthur and Pope Joan are stories tested against thin evidence. The Black Death is the opposite: an event with masses of evidence, whose **impact** historians still disagree about. Section 4A told what happened; this section studies what historians make of it.

In short: between 1347 and 1351 a disease swept through Europe and kept returning in later waves. People at the time called it the “Great Mortality” or the pestilence; the name “Black Death” came into use centuries later. Even the name is an interpretation. Three debates frame the section.

Debate 1 — what was the disease? For a long time historians assumed bubonic plague. Then a few argued the other way, and their case deserves a fair hearing: the symptoms described at the time, and the speed at which the disease jumped between towns, do not match later outbreaks of plague, and quarantines of the time worked better than they should if it were plague alone (Samuel K. Cohn, 2002; Christopher Duncan and Susan Scott, 2004). The debate turned on a new kind of evidence. Scientists read the plague germ’s code from the teeth of skeletons in plague burial grounds — including East Smithfield in London, where about 2,400 victims were buried in 1348–1349 — and found the germ *Yersinia pestis*, the plague bug first identified in 1894 (S. Haensch and team, 2010; and the 2011 *Nature* study of the East Smithfield code). Most historians now accept that plague did the killing. The lesson: a new kind of evidence — here, the germ’s own code — can settle an argument that documents alone never could.

Debate 2 — how many died? Nobody knows exactly, and the honest answer is a range, not a number. The classic study, Philip Ziegler’s *The Black Death* (1969), judged that between one quarter and one half of Europe’s people died. Ole Benedictow, after gathering records region by region, argued in 2004 for about 60 per cent. Writers alive at the time guessed too — Jean Froissart wrote that a third of the world died, and others wrote more. They disagree for a plain reason: the records are patchy. Manor rolls, church lists and town records survive unevenly, and what is true of one county may not be true of the next. The debate is really about how far thin records can be stretched.

The Black Death: three debates among historians

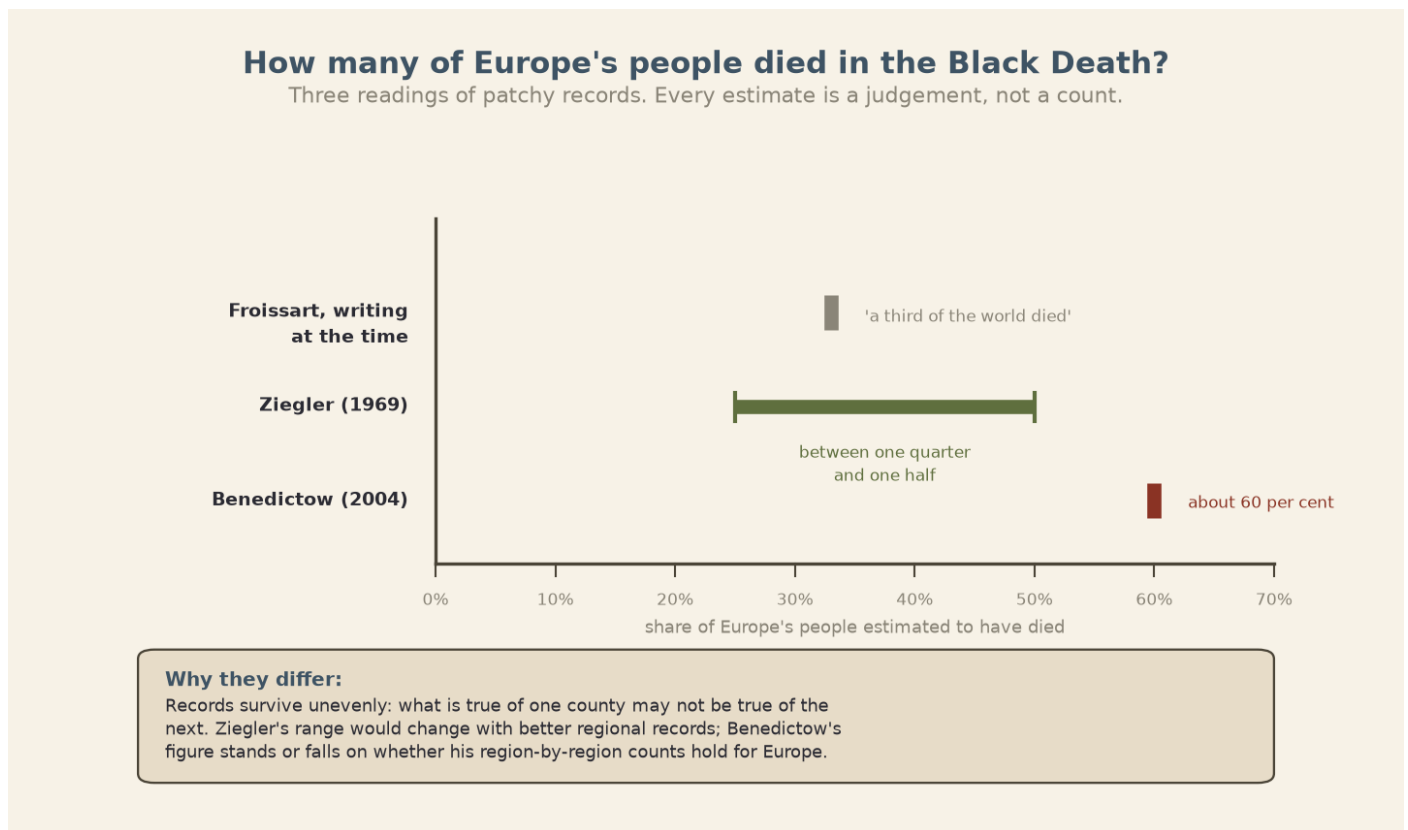
Both sides of each debate are stated in their strongest form before any verdict.

DEBATE	ONE READING	THE OTHER READING	WHERE IT STANDS
1. What was the disease?	It was bubonic plague, caused by the germ <i>Yersinia pestis</i> - its code, read from the teeth of skeletons in plague burial grounds, confirmed it (Haensch 2010; Nature study, 2011).	The symptoms described at the time and the speed of spread do not match later outbreaks of plague (Cohn 2002; Duncan and Scott 2004).	Most historians now accept it was plague: a new kind of evidence - the germ's code - settled what documents alone never could.
2. How many died?	One quarter to one half of Europe's people - the classic study is Ziegler, 1969.	About 60 per cent - Benedictow, 2004, adding regional records up. Writers alive at the time guessed too: Froissart wrote of a third.	No exact figure is possible: records are patchy. The debate is about how far thin records can be pushed.
3. Did ordinary people gain?	Yes - with far fewer workers, pay rose; some call the century after 1351 a 'golden age' for working people (idea from Thorold Rogers, 1887).	Gains were slow and uneven: the Statute of Labourers (1351) tried to freeze pay and stop workers moving; serfdom was already weakening before 1348.	All sides use the same named evidence and weigh it in different ways - a live debate.

The difficult history, in one line: in 1348-1349 fear turned on the Jews - mobs accused them of poisoning wells, and hundreds were killed, as at Strasbourg in February 1349. Pope Clement VI issued two papal orders forbidding the attacks and gave shelter to Jews at Avignon; the chronicles record both the violence and the attempts to stop it.

A table of the three historians' debates about the Black Death, with a row per debate: Debate 1, what was the disease (plague, supported by code studies of burial-ground skeletons, against doubts raised from symptoms and speed of spread); Debate 2, how many died (Ziegler: one quarter to one half; Benedictow: about 60 per cent; the records are patchy); Debate 3, did ordinary people gain (higher wages and weaker serfdom, against the Statute of Labourers of 1351 and resistance from landowners).

Figure 7 — the three debates. In each row, both positions are stated in their strongest form before any verdict.



A range bar chart of estimates of the share of Europe's people who died in the Black Death: Froissart, writing at the time, about one third; Ziegler (1969), between one quarter and one half; Benedictow (2004), about 60 per cent. A note reads: records are patchy, so every estimate is a reading of thin evidence, not a count.

Figure 8 — how far apart the estimates sit. Notice that the oldest estimate, from a writer alive at the time, lands inside the modern range — a reminder that the debate is about how records are read, not only about who measured.

Debate 3 — did ordinary people come out better off? Here the arguments run like this. With far fewer workers, those who survived could demand more: wages rose, and some historians have called the century after 1351 a “golden age” for working people (an idea going back to J. E. Thorold Rogers in 1887). On the other side: landowners and the state pushed back hard. In England the Statute of Labourers (1351) tried to freeze wages at their pre-plague level and stop workers moving to better pay, and the Peasants’ Revolt of 1381 grew out of exactly those pressures. A third reading adds that serfdom was already weakening before 1348, and the plague only sped up a change that was under way. All three readings use the same named evidence; they weigh it in different ways.

A difficult part of the story, told plainly. Fear made people look for someone to blame. In 1348–1349, mobs attacked communities of Jews, accusing them of poisoning wells; at Strasbourg in February 1349 hundreds of Jews were killed. Pope Clement VI issued two papal orders forbidding the attacks and gave shelter to Jews at Avignon, and the chronicles record both the violence and the attempts to stop it. Historians read these events as evidence of how fear and rumour move through a society in crisis — and of how an institution (the papacy) tried, with limited success, to hold the line.

Checkpoint 4. Why did the germ-code evidence change Debate 1 in a way that more documents might not have?

6 · Secondary source interpretation — two historians weigh the Black Death

A **secondary source** is a later writer’s reading of the evidence. Part 5 named several; this part puts two side by side so you can watch the same event receive two readings.

Two historians weigh the Black Death

Same event, same pool of records - two different readings.

PHILIP ZIEGLER, *The Black Death* (1969)

The claim:

Between one quarter and one half of Europe's people died.

The evidence:

Reads the patchy records as they stand: manor rolls, church lists, town accounts, region by region.

The caution:

Refuses one exact number: what is true of one county may not be true of the next.

What would change it:

Better regional records.

OLE BENEDICTOW, *The Complete History* (2004)

The claim:

About 60 per cent of Europe's people died.

The evidence:

Gathers records region by region and adds them up into a total for Europe as a whole.

The caution:

Other historians say his counts push thin records hard.

What would change it:

Showing his region-by-region totals hold across Europe.

What the pair teaches:

Neither historian is careless; they differ on how far the records can be pushed. Treat a secondary source as an interpretation: ask what it claims, what evidence it is built on, what it admits is uncertain, and what would change its mind.

*A two-panel comparison of Philip Ziegler's *The Black Death* (1969) and Ole Benedictow's *The Black Death 1348-1350: The Complete History* (2004): each panel states the historian's estimate of the death toll, the evidence he leaned on, and his caution; a strip below names the lesson — two historians reading the same patchy records reach different totals, because they weight the records in different ways.*

Figure 9 — two readings of one event. Neither historian is careless; they differ on how far the records can be pushed.

When you use a secondary source in your own work, ask the four questions of Figure 9: what does the historian claim, what evidence is it built on, what does the historian admit is uncertain, and what would change their mind? Ziegler would change his figure if better regional records appeared; Benedictow's figure stands or falls on whether his region-by-region counts can be trusted for Europe as a whole. That is what it means to treat a secondary source as an interpretation rather than a fact machine.

Checkpoint 5. A classmate writes: "Benedictow wrote his book later than Ziegler, so he must be right." What is wrong with that reasoning?

7 · Legacies — what the medieval past still hands on

Every case study on this page leaves something at work in later times.

Legacies: what these medieval stories still hand on

A legacy is anything from the past still at work in later times.

CASE STUDY	THE LEGACY	WHERE IT IS STILL AT WORK
King Arthur	One of medieval Europe's most lasting stories: the 'once and future king' who will return when needed.	Books from Malory (1485) to today, films, TV shows and games; tourism at Tintagel Castle, Cornwall, where modern digs found a wealthy site of the right centuries - but nothing bearing Arthur's name.
Pope Joan	A standing lesson in checking claims: an extraordinary story needs records from its own time, and a long silence where records should exist is evidence too.	The myth is still retold in books and film today - and the habit of testing such claims is part of how history is now taught and done.
The Black Death	Public health practice, wage law, and a weaker hold of serfdom across western Europe.	Quarantine: Ragusa's thirty-day rule (1377) and Venice's forty days (1423) give the word still used in disease control; the Statute of Labourers (1351) sits at the start of laws about pay and work.

The biggest legacy is a habit of mind:

Every case study here was settled or advanced by one question - what is the evidence? Asked of films, games, headlines and speeches as well as chronicles, that question is the export of this section that lasts longest.

A table of legacies in three rows (King Arthur, Pope Joan, the Black Death), with columns for what the legacy is, where it is still at work today, and the source or evidence for the claim: Arthur in books, films, games and tourism at Tintagel; the Pope Joan story as a standing lesson in checking claims against records of the time; and the Black Death in quarantine practice from Ragusa (1377) and Venice (1423), in wage law from the Statute of Labourers (1351), and in the weakening of serfdom in western Europe.

Figure 10 — legacies of the three case studies. The last row matters most: the habit of asking “what is the evidence?” is itself a legacy of studying these debates.

Two of the legacies deserve a closer look:

- **Quarantine.** In 1377 the port city of Ragusa (now Dubrovnik) ordered ships from plague areas to wait offshore for thirty days before landing. By 1423 Venice was holding arriving ships for forty days — *quaranta giorni* in Italian, the origin of the English word “quarantine”. A public health habit born of the Black Death is still in use whenever a disease spreads.
- **The fading of serfdom.** Across much of western Europe, serfdom — the state of being bound to work a lord's land — weakened and then disappeared in the century and a half after 1351. Historians argue about how much of that the plague caused (Debate 3), but the change itself is not in doubt.

And the biggest legacy of all is a habit of mind. Every case study here — Arthur, Joan, the Black Death — was settled or advanced by people asking one question: *what is the evidence?* That question, asked of films, games, headlines and speeches as well as of chronicles, is the export of this section that lasts longest.

Worked examples

Worked example 1 (scaffolded) — apply the three tests to Pope Joan.

Task: copy the table and complete the two empty cells.

Test	Question	Answer for Pope Joan
1	Recorded by anyone alive at the time?	No — no source from the 850s (or for 400 years after) mentions a female pope.
2	When does the story first appear?	<i>About 1250, in Jean de Mailly's chronicle at Metz.</i>
3	Does the story grow like a legend?	<i>Yes — its dates moved between the 850s and the 1099 as writers tried to fit it in, and the marble-chair rumour grew up afterwards to explain objects people found puzzling.</i>

Why it works: each test produces a checkable answer, and the answers point the same way. A story that fails all three tests is not proved false by any one of them alone — it is the pattern that settles it.

Worked example 2 (scaffolded) — read the estimates chart.

Task: using Figure 8, answer in full sentences: (a) Which estimate is the widest range? (b) Which modern estimate is the highest? (c) Why can no historian give a single exact figure?

- (a) Ziegler's — it runs from one quarter to one half of Europe's people.
- (b) Benedictow's — about 60 per cent.
- (c) Because the records are patchy: manor rolls, church lists and town records survive unevenly, and a figure for one region may not hold for the next. Every total is a reading of thin evidence, not a count.

Why it works: the answer names the historians, not just numbers, and says what the disagreement is really about (how far thin records can be pushed).

Worked example 3 (unscaffolded) — write the short answer.

Task: "How do historians decide whether a story about the past can be trusted?" (4 marks). Study the model response and its margin notes, then list the four moves it makes.

Model response

'How do historians decide whether a story about the past can be trusted?' (4 marks)

Historians decide by testing a story against the evidence, using three tests: was it recorded by someone alive at the time, when does the story first appear in writing, and how has it changed as it was retold?

Move 1

Answer directly

The Pope Joan story fails the first test badly: it first appears about 1250, in a chronicle written at Metz, more than four hundred years after her supposed reign in the 850s.

Move 2

Name the tests with a dated example

It also fails against the records of the time: Leo IV died in 855 and Benedict III took office within weeks, leaving no gap for a two-year reign, and coins of Benedict III from 855 still survive.

Move 3

Use a real record to show the claim failing

Failing the tests shows that no evidence supports the story; it does not prove where the story came from. The myth itself then becomes worth studying - as evidence of how tales spread and how critics of the papacy used them.

Move 4

State the limit honestly

Notice what the model does not do: it never calls the medieval writers foolish or wicked - it tests their claims the way a historian would, and says what the evidence can and cannot settle.

A four-sentence model response to the question "How do historians decide whether a story about the past can be trusted?", with margin notes naming its four moves: it answers directly (test the story against the evidence); it names the three tests with a dated example (the Pope Joan story first appears about 1250, four hundred years after her supposed reign); it uses a real record to show the claim failing (Leo IV died in 855 and Benedict III took office within weeks, leaving no gap); and it states the limit honestly (failing the tests shows no evidence supports the story — the myth itself then becomes worth studying).

Figure 11 — model text. The four moves: answer directly; name the tests; use a dated record; admit the limit.

Practice tasks

Scaffolded

Q1 (1 mark). Which writer, alive close to Arthur's supposed lifetime, tells of the victory at Badon Hill without naming Arthur? *Hint: Part 2, Test 1.*

Q2 (2 marks). Using Figure 4: (a) in about what year was the *History of the Britons* put together? (b) what title does it give Arthur — and what title does it *not* give him?

Q3 (2 marks). Using Figure 3: about how many years separate Arthur's supposed lifetime from the first written record that names him? Show how you worked it out.

Q4 (2 marks). (a) About when does the Pope Joan story first appear in any chronicle? (b) Between which two popes do the later versions place her?

Q5 (2 marks). Using Figure 8, state (a) Ziegler's estimate of the share of Europe's people who died, and (b) Benedictow's.

Q6 (3 marks). Three parts on the *Annales Cambriae*: (a) where is the surviving manuscript held, and under what shelf mark? (b) about when was that copy written? (c) give one of the three limits that keep a historian from treating its Arthur lines as proof.

Un scaffolded

Q7 (4 marks). How have historians disproved the Pope Joan story? Use two different kinds of evidence from Part 3 in your answer.

Q8 (4 marks). “The Black Death was a disaster — but some ordinary people came out of it better off.” Support the first half with one fact from Part 5, and support the second half with one named historian’s interpretation. Then give one reason some historians would push back against the second half.

Q9 (3 marks). Why does it matter that no writer from Arthur’s own lifetime mentions him? Answer in terms of Test 1 from Figure 2.

Q10 (4 marks). Steelman: write the strongest case that a real Arthur stood behind the legend, then the strongest case that he is a figure of legend only. Finish with your reasoned verdict and the evidence it rests on. Marking rewards the quality of the reasoning on both sides, not the verdict you reach.

Extended response (chapter task — the full criteria live in 7C and 7D)

ER1. Choose one of the three case studies — King Arthur, Pope Joan or the Black Death. Which of its legacies is the most significant, and why? Use at least two sources from this section, apply the significance criteria from 7C (importance, depth, how many people, how long it lasted, relevance to us), and present your answer as a short evidenced argument in a format from 7D. Address the strongest counter-case to your choice of legacy.

Checkpoints (scaffolded tasks)

Checkpoint 1. Either answer can be argued; the stronger one names what each piece of evidence does. Gildas shows that the closest writer to the time knew the battle but not the man; the missing book shows that Geoffrey’s claimed source cannot be checked at all.

Checkpoint 2. Usefulness proves motive, not invention. It proves that critics had a reason to repeat the story; it does not by itself prove that someone made the story up — for that, the records have to be checked, and they fail the story on their own.

Checkpoint 3. Any one of the three earns the mark, but the gap of about four hundred years between the events and the writing is the cleanest answer: a record made so long after the events cannot serve as a witness to them.

Checkpoint 4. Documents from the 1340s already disagreed about symptoms and causes; the germ code was a kind of evidence the medieval writers never had, and it came from the victims’ own bodies rather than from anyone’s opinion.

Checkpoint 5. Being later does not make a historian right. Benedictow may or may not be closer to the truth, but the test is his evidence and how he weighs it — not his date of publication.

Answers to the scaffolded questions

Q1. Gildas.

Q2. (a) About 829–830 CE. (b) It calls him *dux bellorum*, “leader of battles” — it does not call him king.

Q3. About 330 years: from about 500 CE (the supposed lifetime) to about 830 CE (the *History of the Britons*).

Q4. (a) About 1250. (b) Leo IV and Benedict III.

Q5. (a) Between one quarter and one half. (b) About 60 per cent.

Q6. (a) The British Library, Harley MS 3859. (b) About 1100. (c) Any one of: written about 400 years after the events; one line per battle; the Badon line already holds a wonder, and no record from the time itself backs Arthur up.

What a strong unscaffolded answer includes

Q7. Two genuinely different kinds of evidence, such as: (1) the silence of the records — no source mentions a female pope from 855 until about 1250; and (2) the papal records themselves — Leo IV died in 855 and Benedict III took office within weeks, leaving no two-year gap, and coins of Benedict III from 855 survive. A strong answer also notes that the story’s dates kept moving (850s in one version, 1099 in another) — a sign of invention, not memory.

Q8. First half: any concrete disaster fact from Part 5 (for example, the death toll estimates of one quarter to one half of Europe’s people, or the burial ground at East Smithfield with about 2,400 victims). Second half: a named interpretation — for example, the “golden age” reading that wages rose for working people after the plague (idea going back to Thorold Rogers). Resistance: the Statute of Labourers (1351) tried to freeze wages and stop workers moving; or: gains were slow and uneven and met resistance from landowners.

Q9. Test 1 asks whether anyone alive at the time recorded the story. If Arthur won great battles, someone close to the events would certainly have named him — yet Gildas and Bede, the nearest writers, are silent. A silence that long weakens every later claim, because later writers cannot be reporting what they saw.

Q10. The case for a real leader: the battle of Badon really happened (Gildas confirms it); Arthur’s name appears in several early texts kept apart from each other; a real war leader of about 500 CE could have given his name to the story. The case for legend only: no writer from the lifetime names him; the oldest entries already hold wonders; each retelling makes him greater, which is how legends grow. The verdict must follow the weighing, not a preference — and it must say what the evidence cannot settle either way.

ER1. A named legacy with dated evidence (for example, quarantine from Ragusa 1377 and Venice 1423; the Arthur legend in books, films, games and tourism; or the habit of checking claims against records); the 7C criteria applied visibly; the counter-case given real strength before it is answered.

Key terms, defined where first used

interpretation · institution · papacy · legacy · myth (defined, see box) · legend · chronicle · year-records · manuscript · primary source · secondary source · quarantine · serfdom · sources. (*Primary source*: an object or record from the time being studied — the *Annales Cambriae*, the coins of Benedict III, the skeletons at East Smithfield. *Secondary source*: a later writer’s reading of the evidence — Ziegler’s and Benedictow’s books. *Serfdom*: the state of being bound to work a lord’s land. *Quarantine*: a set waiting period kept away from others, used to stop disease spreading.)

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All medieval texts are quoted or reworded in my own English; every figure in this section is an original diagram made for this book.