

# Before the Renaissance

## By Kristen Heider

This history course covers the time period from AD 400 to Pre-Renaissance and includes the following types of activities:

- World Book Online readings
- Vocabulary
- Mapping / Geography
- Journal / Notebooking
- Research and summary activities
- Art projects

For your journal/notebooking entries, you may include drawings, illustrations, and clipart along with written responses to express your answers. There are notebooking pages provided in the downloads for use, if you choose.

Journal pages are also available at SchoolhouseTeachers.com, if you wish to print them rather than use a notebook. <https://schoolhouseteachers.com/blog/wide-ruled-college-journal-page-printouts-free/>

### Course Objectives

By the end of the course, you should be able to demonstrate knowledge of writings, ways of life, governments, wars, and major contributions of this period including:

1. Migration and lifestyles of Celtic people
2. The Dark Ages, focusing on the roles of the barbarians, the Huns, Germanic tribes, Vandals, Franks, Angles, and Saxons
3. Ways of life in feudal societies
4. Significance of the Arab contributions to science, math, and medicine
5. Causes and events of the Crusades
6. Rise of Christianity in relation to the influence of the Roman Catholic Church, Charlemagne, and the split between Roman and Greek Orthodox
7. Historical significance of Henry II, Magna Carta, Parliament, Hundred Years' War, and the Black Death

### Course Text

The reading material for this course is available in the Student Library of World Book Online. Access is included with your SchoolhouseTeachers.com membership and is explained here: <https://schoolhouseteachers.com/world-book/>.

## *Vocabulary*

Important terms are identified at the beginning of each unit. List each term in your notebook on the first day of lessons for that unit and then define the terms as you encounter them during your reading and other activities throughout the unit.

## *Timeline*

Throughout this course, you can create a timeline to illustrate the events discussed. There are a number of ways you can do this including:

- Use a large sheet of paper to track events and dates; display it on a wall in your home
- Record events and dates on index cards and file them in chronological order
- Create your timeline on standard-size paper and insert it into your notebook

## *Additional Notes*

Notes are provided throughout the units to use for additional study and review.

## *Optional Activities*

There are optional activities suggested throughout the course for students to examine topics in more depth or to be used as additional assignments for older or advanced students. If a unit includes optional activities, they are presented at the beginning of the unit's lessons so they may be inserted across the unit as you choose.

## *Quizzes and Test*

Quizzes are provided at the end of each unit (eight total), and a brief final course test is available at the end of Lesson 18. Answers may be found in the corresponding lesson answer keys.

## *Final Project*

Lesson 18 includes a final project. You may want to view this lesson early in the course to begin formulating ideas about the direction and format for the project, as well as to allow time for gathering any needed materials.

## Lesson 1 – Introduction to the Middle Ages

### Optional

Insert these suggested activities into the unit as time and interest allow.

- Reading: Read about Medicine in the Year 1000  
<https://www.worldbookonline.com/student-new/#/search/medicine%20in%20the%20year%201000/type/sr?searchType=basicsearch> (Note: click on the first article, *Medicine in the Year 1000*. If the article does not load, click on the link above again, and instead of clicking on the article, click on the icon on the far right-hand side of the page for the article, then click Download as PDF. This will download the article to your computer so you can read it.)
  - How did people view illnesses during the Middle Ages?
  - Who helped provide new information to the medical field?
- Reading: Read part of *The Song of Roland (La Chanson de Roland)*, which is based on a real event as well as an idealistic view of knights, courage, and bravery.  
<https://www.gutenberg.org/cache/epub/391/pg391.html>
- Art: Research the different alphabets and styles of writing during the Middle Ages such as Carolingian, Lombardic, calligraphy, Black Letter, and illuminated manuscripts.
  - Read more about calligraphy.  
<https://www.worldbookonline.com/student-new/#/article/home/ar088520/calligraphy>
  - Try calligraphy or write a short story or poem using illuminated letters.
- Reading: eBooks related to this time period are available within World Book Online, including the following titles, or choose books from your local library for further introduction to the time period.
  - *A Look At The Age of Knights and Castles*
    - It provides a timeline; an overview of castles and forts; examination of life during the Middle Ages; an overview of knights, Medieval Law, and the Magna Carta; information about the Church and the Crusades, education, and the arts during the Middle Ages; and information about myths, legends, fashion, and more. This book can provide a good introduction or review for this course.
  - *Robin Hood* by J. Walker McSpadden
  - *King Arthur and the Nights of the Round Table* by Sir Thomas Malory
  - *The Legends of King Arthur and His Knights* by James Knowles
- Reading: Read about the trade routes during the Middle Ages by focusing upon the paragraph headed Medieval Routes.  
<https://www.worldbookonline.com/student-new/#/article/home/ar563580/trade%20routes>

**Vocabulary:** vernacular language, troubadours, scholasticism, chivalry, prestige, theology

**Journal #1:** What images come to mind when you hear the phrase “Middle Ages”?

**Reading:** Read the World Book Student article about the Middle ages and respond to the following review questions in your notebook. This lengthy article provides an overview of the time period. Divide the reading across multiple days, if desired.

<https://www.worldbookonline.com/student-new/#/article/home/ar360060/Middle%20Ages>

### Introduction

1. To what time period does the term Middle Ages apply?
2. What was another name given for the Middle Ages?
3. What are the three periods of the Middle Ages?

### The Fall of Rome

1. How did Diocletian attempt to organize the Roman Empire?
2. How did the Germanic peoples first interact with the Romans?
3. Why did the Romans call the Germanic peoples barbarians?
4. Which group invaded the region, causing the Germanic people to seek to move into the Roman Empire?

### Romano-Germanic Kingdoms

1. How were the Romano-Germanic kingdoms different from the Roman Empire in terms of their army?
2. What were some of the tasks the Christian church oversaw?
3. What were two centers of learning established by the Christian church?
4. What happened in AD 610 in Mecca?
5. What did the counts do during the rule of the Carolingians?
6. Who were the missi?
7. What was the importance of Aachen?
8. What was the Treaty of Verdun?

### Post-Carolingian Europe

1. What was feudalism?
2. Who was Otto I or “Otto the Great”?
3. What areas did the Vikings explore, raid, or colonize?
4. What groups were influenced by the Byzantine empire?

### The Lives of the People

1. Who were the three main groups of people in medieval society?
2. What was chivalry?
3. What was the job of village priests?
4. Why were peasants better off than farm laborers?

### The High Middle Ages

1. Why is the period 1000 to 1300 called the High Middle Ages?
2. What grew in importance during the 1000s?
3. How were medieval cities different from Roman cities?
4. What was one natural disaster that could destroy a town?
5. What were the Crusades?
6. What could be found at trade fairs?
7. For what architectural style is the High Middle Ages known?

### The Late Middle Ages

1. What happened during the 1300s that led to a decline in advancements in Europe?
2. What event united Spain in the 1400s?
3. What was happening in the church regarding popes during the late Middle Ages?
4. Why was the printing press important?

**Geography:** Label a map of Europe and the Mediterranean region with the modern countries, bodies of water, and other key geographic features. Over the next few weeks, you will be labeling maps to depict past kingdoms, nations, and countries.

**Journal #2:** Listen to Medieval Dance Music and respond to the questions.

<https://www.worldbookonline.com/student-new/#/media/au008350/type/audio>

- What do you think of this music?
- How would you describe it or categorize it by today's standards?

**Journal #3:** Listen to the Gregorian Chant and respond to the questions.

<https://www.worldbookonline.com/student-new/#/media/au008351/type/audio>

- How is this music different from the Medieval Dance Music?
- What is the purpose of this type of music?
- How does it compare to any modern church music familiar to you?

**Art:** Complete one or both of the following projects.

- Design a cathedral using the style of the Middle Ages. Look at examples like Cathedral of Saint-Etienne in Auxerre in France or Cathedral of Notre Dame in France.
- Create a tapestry to decorate the walls of a great hall. After researching several examples, begin by sketching and coloring a first draft. Be sure the design fills the entire paper. After your first draft is completed, show it to your parent for approval. Next, draw, paint, or sew your tapestry on paper, poster board, cardboard, or fabric. What themes did tapestries depict, and what was their purpose?

## Additional Notes:

### Language and Literature

- Latin – written and spoken language of educated people in western Europe
- people with little education spoke vernacular languages
- early vernacular literature
  - o troubadours – traveling singers who wrote poems about love and chivalry; sang their love poems in castles and in towns
  - o romances/fictional stories
    - adventures of King Arthur and the Knights of the Round Table
  - o animal stories/fables – “Reynard the Fox”
  - o national epic – long poem about a hero
    - France – *The Song of Roland*
  - o drama – miracle plays, morality plays, mystery plays; short dramas with religious or Biblical themes - “Noah’s Flood”
- growth of vernacular literature
  - o Dante Alighieri (from Tuscany, Italy)
    - *The Divine Comedy* – takes an imaginary journey through hell, purgatory, and heaven; placed his friends and supporters in heaven and his political enemies in hell
    - wrote in Tuscan
  - o Geoffrey Chaucer (from England)
    - *The Canterbury Tales* – group of stories told from the point of views of about thirty pilgrims traveling to the shrine of St. Thomas à Becket at Canterbury; pokes fun at clergy
    - wrote in Middle English (vernacular of the time)

### Education

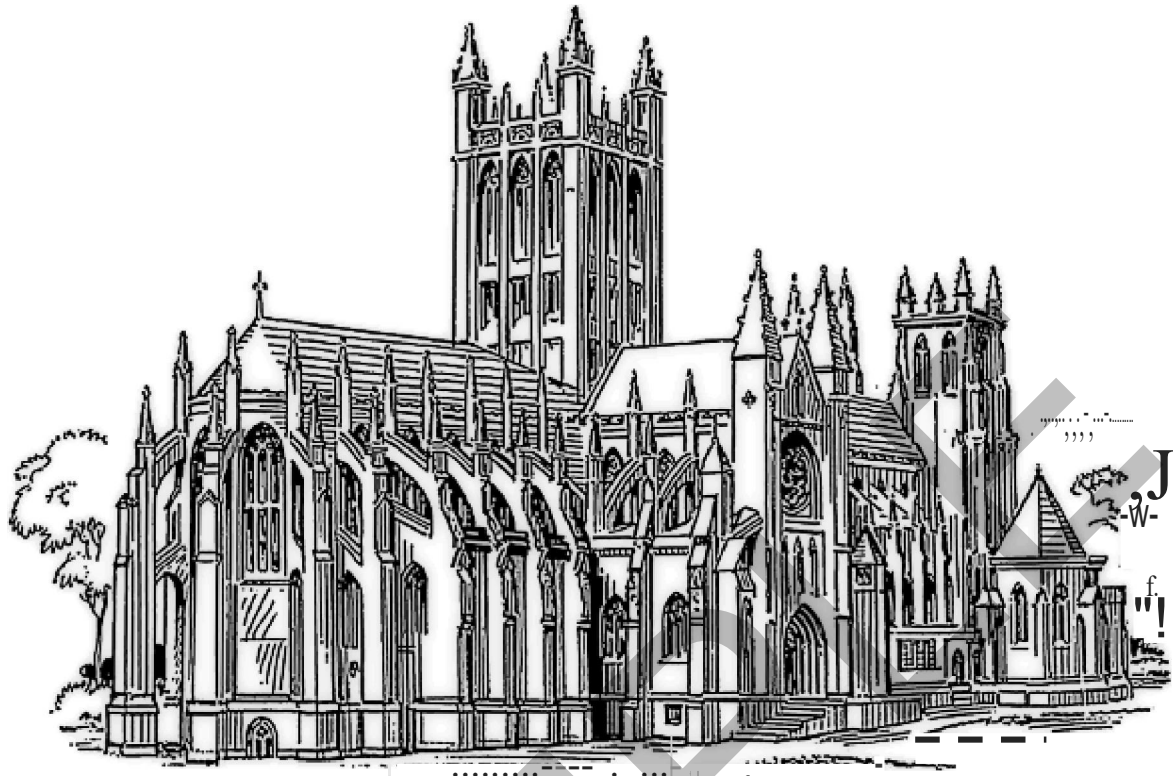
- few people received an education – only nobles and clergy
- taught at monasteries and churches
- other schools grew as towns grew
  - o teacher would set up a school and try to attract students
  - o admitted any males who wanted to study and could pay the fee
- formed guilds
  - o four great universities developed – Paris, Oxford, Bologna, Salerno

## Philosophy and Science

- Muslim scholars kept works of Greek and Roman philosophers and scientists alive
- philosophy
  - Medieval European philosophers tried to combine Aristotle's ideas and those of early church writers
    - an attempt to bring faith and reason together – scholasticism
  - Peter Abelard – philosopher of scholasticism – taught in Paris in 1100s
    - *Sic et Non* (Yes and No) – showed many of the church's ideas conflicted with each other
  - Thomas Aquinas – monk of Dominican order
    - *Summa Theologiae* – summarized medieval Christian thought
- science
  - Bible and church were the main sources for information about the world
  - made advances that helped everyday life
    - designed better winches and pulleys to make lifting and pulling heavy objects easier
    - made iron plows and better oxen yokes to make farming easier
  - used windmills and waterwheels to draw water (inventions from Asia)

## Architecture

- church architecture – main art form
  - followed Romanesque style – heavy domed stone roof; few windows; dark inside
- mid-1100s – new style developed – Gothic
  - churches had tall spires
  - on outside walls, builders placed rows of supporting structures, called flying buttresses; connected to church's walls with arches and carried part of the roof's weight; church walls could be high and thin
  - everything in Gothic churches reached toward heaven (pointed arches, tall spires, high walls)
  - large stained-glass windows – filled the inside of the churches with light
  - statues of holy family, saints, and rulers lined the inside; relief sculptures adorned the walls
  - tall building towered above the growing town around it
  - traders did business in the marketplace near its walls
  - religious plays presented within and outside



SAMPLE