Enquiry Question:
What was life like in Medieval England?

Big questions that will help you answer this enquiry question:

1. Why was the Church so important during Medieval England?
2. Who killed Thomas Becket?
3. What was life like in Medieval towns and villages?
4. How did people explain the causes of disease and illness during the Medieval period?
5. How did people try and treat and prevent disease and illness during the Medieval period?
6. Who healed the sick during the Medieval period?
7. Case study: The Black Death – causes, treatment, consequences, impact
8. What types of crime did people commit and how where they punished?
9. Why was the Magna Carta such an important document?
10. To what extent was King John a good King?
11. Why did the peasants revolt?
12. What were the consequences of the Peasants Revolt?
13. What was the role of the knights in Medieval England?

Medieval life spanned some 450 years from the time that William won at Hastings in 1066 to the year when Henry VII defeated Richard III at the Battle of Bosworth in 1485. This time was famous for great pageantry, war, mystery, murder, revolt, plague and more war and violence. The landscape of Britain changed too. Villages grew into towns and London became a large bustling city. The landscape became dotted with magnificent cathedrals and huge stone castles.

The Feudal System which stated soon after William became King condemned the poorest members of society, the Peasants, to a life of drudgery. Medieval writers divided society into 'those who fight', 'those who pray' and 'those who work', and Chaucer included all three sorts of person in his book the Canterbury Tales.
**Homework for week 1 and 2: Exam Prep**

**Instructions:** In class we have been looking at how to tackle exam type questions. To practice this skill, please complete the following tasks:

Describe two features of the beliefs that the Medieval Church had (4 marks)

Describe two features of the murder of Thomas Becket (4 marks)

Due week 2

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**Homework for week 3 and 4: Research Crime and Punishment**

**Instructions:** Research and find out what the Romans have done for Britain. Use the worksheet in the booklet (on next page), as well as some of the resources on the wider reading list. You will be presenting to the class so you could do this as a PowerPoint, video, leaflet or a poster.

Research the different crimes, punishments and policing that were around during the Medieval period. How is this different to today? Are they effective methods (Did they work)? Conclude your work with the most significant one e.g. which one you think was the most important and why? Be sure to include pictures, limited text, and your own opinion. Do not copy and paste.

Due week 4

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**Homework for week 5 and 6: Revision**

**Instructions:** You should revise for a knowledge test and an end of topic assessment

Revise the following:

1. Why was King John considered a weak or bad king?
2. Why was King John considered a good king?
3. What was John’s legacy (what was left for future generations)?

You could revise by re-writing your notes, saying your notes aloud, creating a mind-map on the key topics we have studied so far

Due week 6
Interpretation 1:
King John kept raising taxes to fund battles, which he kept loosing. This included a tax, which taxed sons when their fathers die. This meant many people thought he was only concerned about money. He was a poor leader in battle. He was so bad that he lost most of the land, which former kings had won for England. He also argued with the Pope many times. The Pope got so angry that the Pope closed all of the churches in England for 7 years. This meant that nobody could get married or have a proper Christian burial. This was particularly bad because of how religious people were.

Interpretation 2:
John had the administrative ability of a great ruler but he never got the chance to prove his skills. From the moment he began his rule, rivals and traitors tried to cheat him out of his inheritance. He had the potential for great success. He had the intelligence, administrative ability and he was good at planning military campaigns.

1. Study Interpretations 1 and 2. They give different views on the reign of King John. What are the main differences between these views? (4 marks)

2) To what extent do you agree with interpretation 1 about the rule of King John? Explain your answer using both interpretations and your own knowledge (16 marks)

Instructions for 16 mark question:
How far do you agree? Your opportunity to express your opinion—do you agree with what the historian is saying or disagree?

Interpretation: a historian's viewpoint on a topic

How do I answer the 16 mark question?

Introduction: what do both interpretations show? E.g. their view of King John

Paragraph 1: Why was John weak as a king. Use a quote (s) from the interpretation to support your answer. Explain 3-4 reasons (if possible) why you think he was weak.

Paragraph 2: Using interpretation 2 Use your own knowledge to explain 3-reasons (if possible) why you think John was a strong king

Conclusion: Answer the question- how far do you agree with the interpretation about the rule of King John. Do you strongly agree? Partially agree? Disagree entirely? Remember to have a supported conclusion e.g. explain why you think this.
Both interpretation 1 and interpretation 2 have very differing views of John as a king. Interpretation 1 supports the view that John was a weak king whilst interpretation 2 points out John’s strengths and his potential for success and both have some merit.

Interpretation 1 portrays John as a greedy, selfish and a poor leader who seemingly only cared about himself as illustrated; ‘King John kept raising taxes to fund battles which he kept loosing’. Whilst this is true, I know from my own knowledge that John’s brother Richard 1 had left England nearly bankrupt after the Crusade wars, so the only way to keep English lands abroad safe was to fund armies, which required further taxation from the Barons and this was not popular and many Barons were imprisoned as a result. There is no question that John did not distinguish himself on the field of battle as again illustrated in interpretation 1; ‘He was a poor leader in battle, he lost most of the land former kings had won for England’. John was not the easiest person to get a long with and often argued. This is also supported in interpretation 1 when it says; ‘He argued with the Pope many times’ the result of which was ‘the Pope closed all the churches in England for seven years and this meant that no one could be married or have a Christian funeral. John was also believed to be very cruel. He apparently left the wife of one of his enemies to starve in prison and he murdered his nephew in a drunken rage.

Interpretation 2 presents John in a different light, showing him to have ‘the administrative ability of a great ruler’ It suggests that John’s reign was doomed to fail from the start and as a result was plagued with many problems; ‘From the moment he began his rule rivals and traitors tried to cheat him out of his inheritance’ John tried to be the hero king and did try to defend the lands that had been previously won and some historians believed he had the skills to plan military campaigns but did not have the time to prove himself.

John was seen as a weak negotiator, non more than at the signing of the Magna Carta in 1215. Here the Barons forced him to change the way of running the country or be forced to fight an army that threatened to take London. This was a major step in reducing the power of the monarch and many believe this was the first step in becoming one of the most famous democracies in the world.

Overall, I agree with interpretation 1 that through a set of historical circumstances John did prove himself to be a weak king. During Medieval times a king was judged on winning battles abroad and to this end, John’s record in battle was poor. However, but for the signing of Magna Carta we would not arguably have the democracy we have today.
**L1 The Feudal System.**

After taking the throne in 1066, William had a few problems:
- He does not trust the English lords, who do not like him.
- He has to force the English to accept him as king.
- Many of the English are rebelling and fighting against William.
- He has to pay the French knights who helped him to win the throne.

Solution: William crushes the rebellions and took the land away from the English lords and gave it to his supporters. He now has his supporters helping him to control the whole country.

William also set up the Feudal System. This forced the English to give William their taxes and promises of loyalty, in return for protection and land to farm. William is at the top of the system, as he holds all the land and money, which he gives to the Barons. They promise William their money, soldiers and loyalty. They give the land to the Knights in return for loyalty and military service. Finally, the Knights give the land to the Peasants. The Peasants farm the land and give food, money and services to the Knights.

**FEUDAL SYSTEM**

- **KING**
- **BARONS**
- **KNIGHTS**
- **PEASANTS**

**L2 Castles**

William also kept control by building castles throughout England. Over time 5 types of castles developed throughout Britain.

- **Motte and Bailey**: The first castles built to help fight against rebellions. They were built quickly and made out of wood, meaning they were not very strong and could be easily destroyed. The castle was on flat land, where majority of the people lived.
- **Stone Keep**: This castle was made out of stone and had towers as a form of defense. The main part of the castle was the keep, a large square tower, used as the main defense.
- **Concentric**: A concentric castle was a very strong castle and the hardest to attack because it had an outer and an inner wall with towers all along it.

**L3 – A Medieval Village**

- **The Church**: The church was the central feature of the village. It was the law that everyone went to church on a Sunday so if a person did not attend church, they would be punished.
- **The Manor House**: The manor house was the home of the lord and his family.
- **The Manor Garden**: The manor garden was the garden where the lord grew his food.
- **The Mill**: The mill was used to grind wheat into flour.

**L4 – Crime and Punishment**

In the Medieval period there was a range of punishments for crimes that were committed in daily life.

Criminals might undergo an “orderly” or an experience to prove their innocence.

- **Ordained by fire**: The accused would hold a red hot iron and take 3 steps. The hand would then be bandaged. If after 3 days, the hand was healing, they were innocent.
- **Ordained by water**: The accused would be tied up and thrown into water. If they sank, they were innocent and if they floated they were guilty.

Ordained by Combat: This was only for knights or noblemen to settle argument. The accused and the accuser would fight to the death. The winner would have been blessed by God and therefore innocent.

**Amputation**: For crimes of dishonesty or dealing, a part of your body would be chopped off.

**Hanging**: For serious crimes such as murder, you would be hanged by your neck in front of others – as a warning.

**Stoics or Pillory**: For lesser serious crimes, you would be placed in the stocks for a day to embarrass you. Villagers could come and throw rotten food at you.

**Fines**: Again for lesser serious crimes, criminals might have to pay money to the victim.

**L5 – A Medieval Murder**

- **1154**: King Henry I appointed Thomas Becket as his Chancellor. His job was to look after the church and the King’s laws.
- **1161**: Henry asked Thomas to become the new archbishop of Canterbury. Becket was asked to make the church courts fair, as they favored the churchmen. Becket refused and made Henry very angry.
- **1164**: Henry announced that he would be in charge of the church court, but Becket disagreed and they changed his mind. Seeing danger, Becket fled to France.
- **June 1170**: Henry ordered the Archbishop of York to crown the next king. This was usually the job of the Archbishop of Canterbury. Becket was furious!
- **July 1170**: Henry and Becket met in France. They ended their argument.
- **November 1170**: Despite this, Becket revoked Henry’s supporters from the church.
- **December 1170**: Henry found out that Becket had removed his supporters from the church. Henry was furious and shouted “Will no one rid me of this troublesome priest?”
- **28th December 1170**: Four knights heard Henry’s shout and went to Canterbury Cathedral. They found Becket and tried to force him to change his mind. Becket refused and the four knights stabbed him to death in the church.
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Wider Reading List

BBC Bitesize King John and Magna Carta
https://www.bbc.com/education/guides/zqgqtftr/revision/1


Medieval England by Edmund King

A Brief History of Life in the Middle Ages( Brief Histories) by Martyn Whittock.

Measly Middle Ages (Horrible Histories) by Terry Deary