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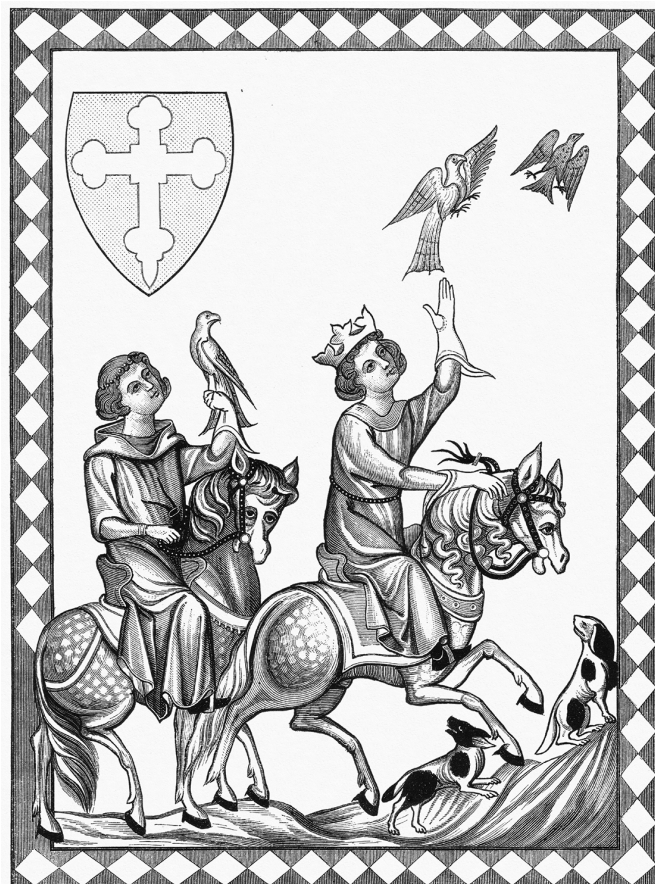
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Name: _____ Date: _____

MIDDLE AGES: Life in the Middle Ages

The Middle Ages lasted for more than 1,000 years—from the A.D. 400's to the end of the 1400's. While the Middle Ages is often considered a time of turmoil and violence, medieval people had a clear idea of where they belonged in the hierarchy of their own society. What role might you have been born into during the Middle Ages? Would you be noble knight or peasant farmer? What about a peasant, townsfolk or religious leader? Explore life the Middle Ages and find out what life was like for everyday people!

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FIND IT!

Find the answers to the questions below by using the "Search" tool to search key words. Since this activity is about Middle Ages, you can find many of the answers by searching the key word "Middle Ages." Sometimes "hints" will also suggest other articles.

Write the answers on the lines provided or below the question.

- Medieval people divided their society into three main groups: **clergy**, **lords**, and **peasants**. Can you match each group with the role assigned to it by medieval tradition?

_____ to govern and fight

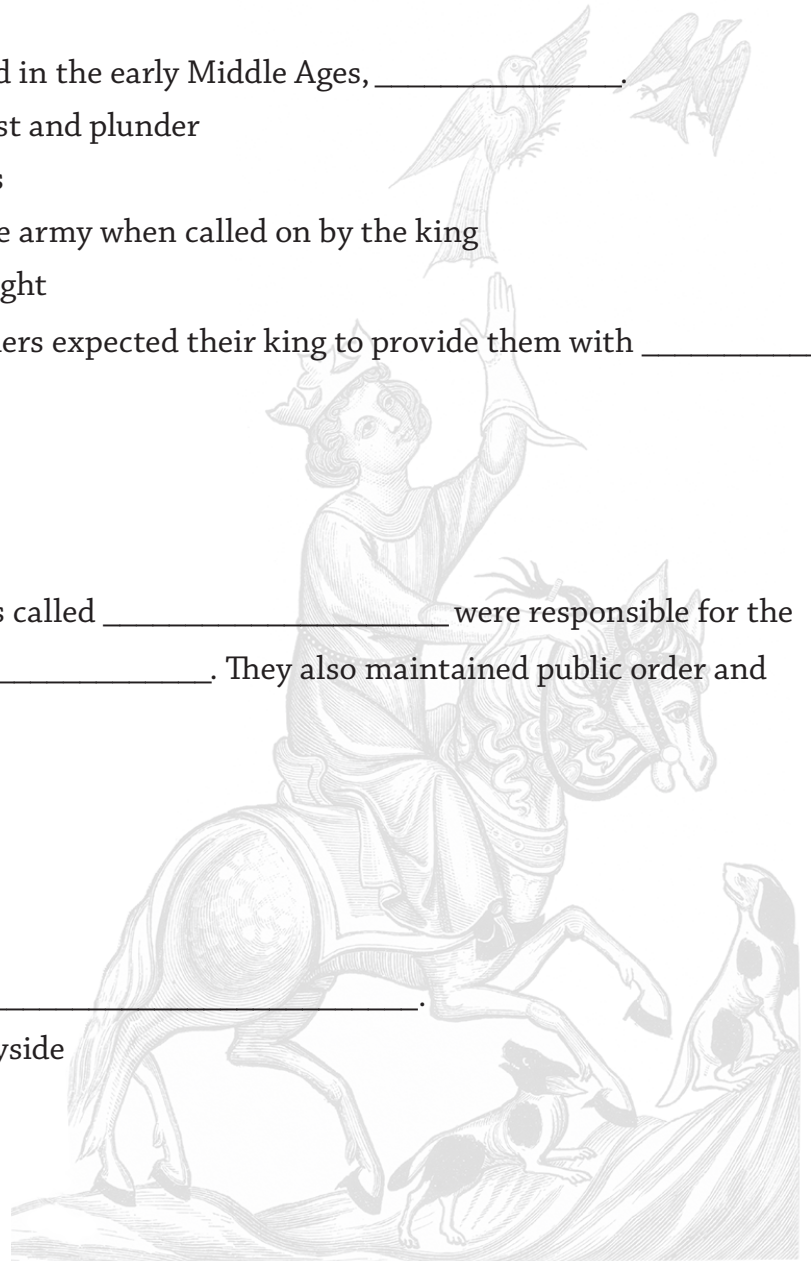
_____ to serve the church

_____ to work the land

The Lords

Lords were the military, political, and social leaders in the Middle Ages. Their role in society grew in part out of the need for people to find protection during the change and instability of the early part of the Middle Ages. Later, they continued to shape many aspects of medieval society. Circle the correct answers to demonstrate your knowledge of the life and times of a medieval lord.

2. In the early Middle Ages, Germanic leaders in Europe _____.
 - a. formed many small kingdoms
 - b. often received support from local Roman officials
 - c. continued using many old Roman practices to govern
 - d. a and b
 - e. all of the above
3. In the Germanic kingdoms that emerged in the early Middle Ages, _____.
 - a. most royal income came from conquest and plunder
 - b. heavy land taxes paid for large armies
 - c. free men were expected to serve in the army when called on by the king
 - d. everyone in the king's army was a knight
4. In return for loyalty, the Germanic soldiers expected their king to provide them with _____.
 - a. armor
 - b. money
 - c. land
 - d. cities
5. In the Carolingian Empire, local officials called _____ were responsible for the judicial system within their _____. They also maintained public order and mobilized men in times of war.
 - a. missi, counties
 - b. counts, counties
 - c. priests, parishes
 - d. sheriffs, shires
6. Wealthy lord usually lived _____.
 - a. in large fortified homes in the countryside
 - b. at the king's court
 - c. in large castles in the cities
 - d. in old Roman fortresses

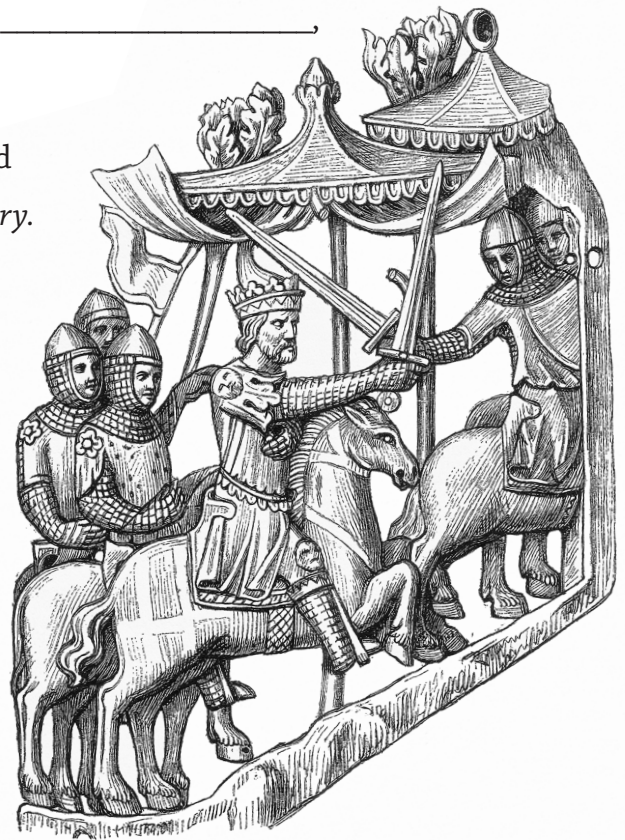


7. In the late Middle Ages, kings began to make alliances with a new middle class made of up _____ and small _____, offsetting the influence of the great lords.
- a. townspeople, businessmen
 - b. laborers, craftworkers
 - c. bishops, traders
 - d. townspeople, landowners
8. Traditionally, medieval kings received advice from a council of high-ranking aristocrats and clergy. Later, representatives from towns and counties were also invited to the assemblies. In England, the gatherings developed into _____.
- a. the king's court
 - b. Parliament
 - c. the House of Lords
 - d. an annual holiday

The Knight Life

(Hint: For information about knights, see the “Knights and knighthood” article.)

9. The word *knight* comes from the Old English word _____, which means *household retainer*.
10. The word *chivalry* comes from the Old French word *chevalerie*, meaning _____ *soldiery*.



11. Face this bold challenge! Use the definitions below to identify the words describing knightly life that lie hidden in the tangle of letters below:

_____ : first level of training for knighthood, starting about age 7

_____ : more advanced knight-in-training, who rode into battle with his lord

“I _____ you knight”: words said by someone bestowing knighthood on another

_____ : a mounted warrior

_____ : knight’s code of behavior

_____ : protective garments made of small interlaced metal rings

_____ armor: heavy metal plating worn to protect against blows

_____ : combat practice between two groups of knights

_____ : competitive combat between two knights with blunted weapons

_____ : competition in which two knights charged on horseback, each trying to unseat the other with a blunt lance or sword

_____ : symbolic markings indicating a knight’s identity

N	A	G	N	B	L	E	T	Q	E
P	A	C	R	A	N	C	L	R	G
W	A	T	Q	S	P	L	I	O	A
T	H	G	I	N	K	U	A	S	P
I	W	L	E	M	Q	D	M	D	L
L	D	M	T	S	U	O	J	T	A
T	O	U	R	N	A	M	E	N	T
B	C	R	B	U	X	R	O	P	E
S	M	R	A	F	O	T	A	O	C
Y	R	L	A	V	I	H	C	S	W



12. List at least four qualities of a true knight, according to the code of chivalry.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____

13. Why did knights wear a coat of arms?

Home Sweet Castle

Castles served as homes, fortresses, barracks, prisons, storehouses, centers of local government and more for medieval monarchs and nobles. They were also central to the lives of peasants—as the home of their landlord and a place of refuge in times of danger.

14. Fill in the blanks to identify these basic parts of an early medieval castle made of earth and wood. Later, builders incorporated these features into more elaborate stone castles.

(Hint: To answer these questions, see the “Castle” article.)

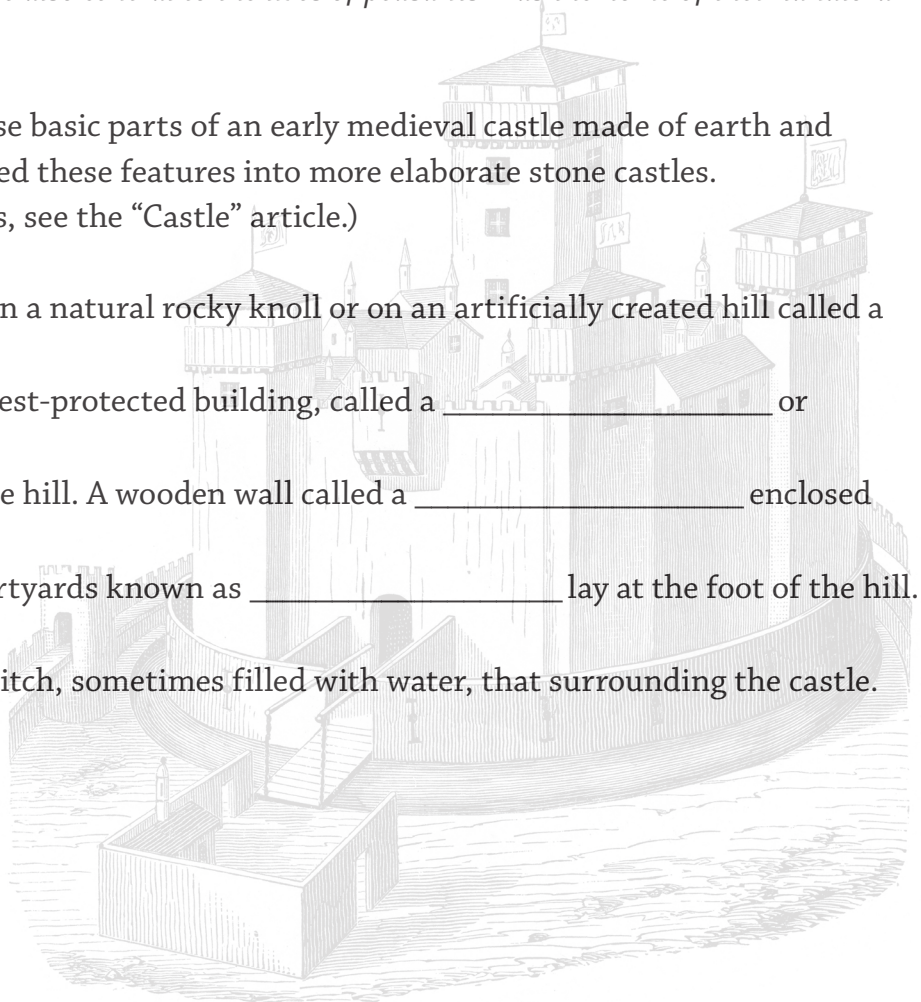
Builders usually constructed castles on a natural rocky knoll or on an artificially created hill called a

_____. The castle’s best-protected building, called a _____ or

_____, stood atop the hill. A wooden wall called a _____ enclosed

the hilltop. One or more fortified courtyards known as _____ lay at the foot of the hill.

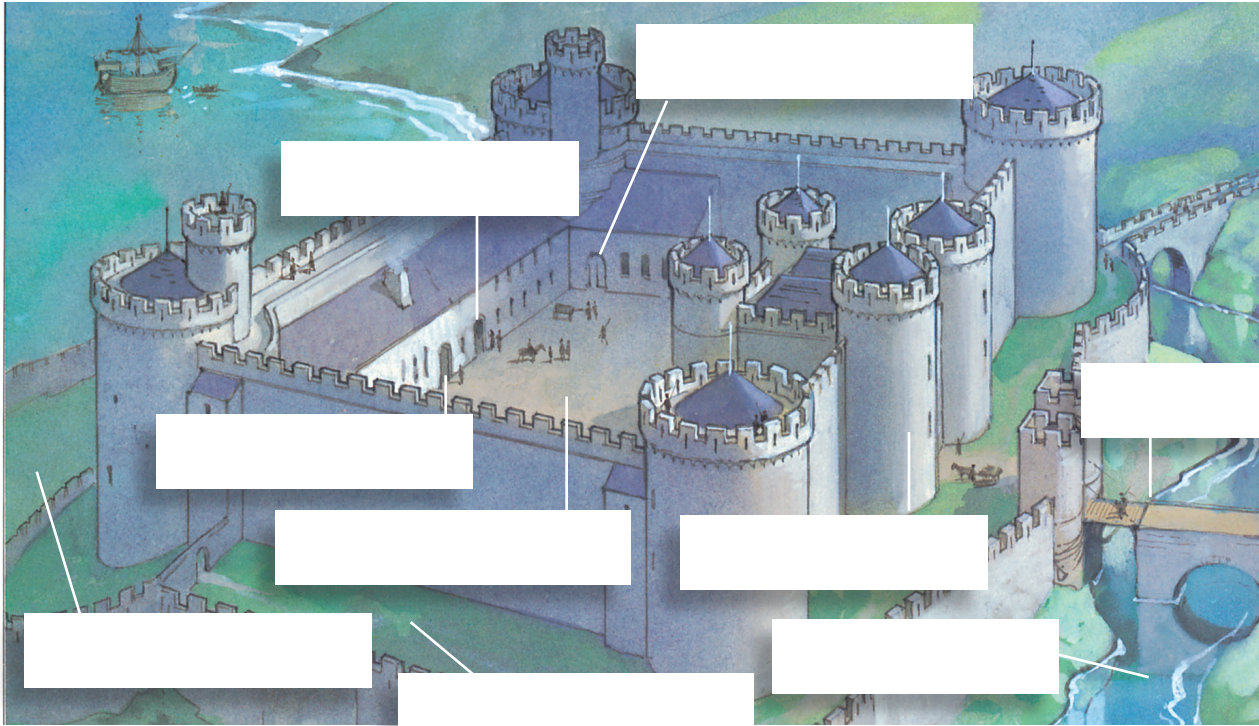
A _____ was a deep ditch, sometimes filled with water, that surrounding the castle.



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SEE IT!

15. Look at the drawing of a “Stone castle of the Middle Ages” in the “Middle Ages” article. Label nine parts of the castle, as shown in the image.



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FIND IT!

What role did aristocratic women play in medieval life? To find out, return to the “Middle Ages” article.

16. A. What were the responsibilities of aristocratic women in managing a medieval household?

B. What were some of the limitations on what women could do?

17. What was an abbess? In addition to religious duties, what other responsibilities might an abbess have?

The Peasants

Most medieval people were farmers. What was it like to work on the land in medieval times?

18. In the 500's, the old Roman system of large farms worked by slaves began to be replaced by a type of estate called a bipartite estate or a _____.
19. On these estates, a landlord controlled part of the land directly and rented out portions to tenant farmers. What sort of rents did these tenants pay?
20. Many peasant and landless farm laborers were what historians call "semifree." What did it mean to be "semifree?"

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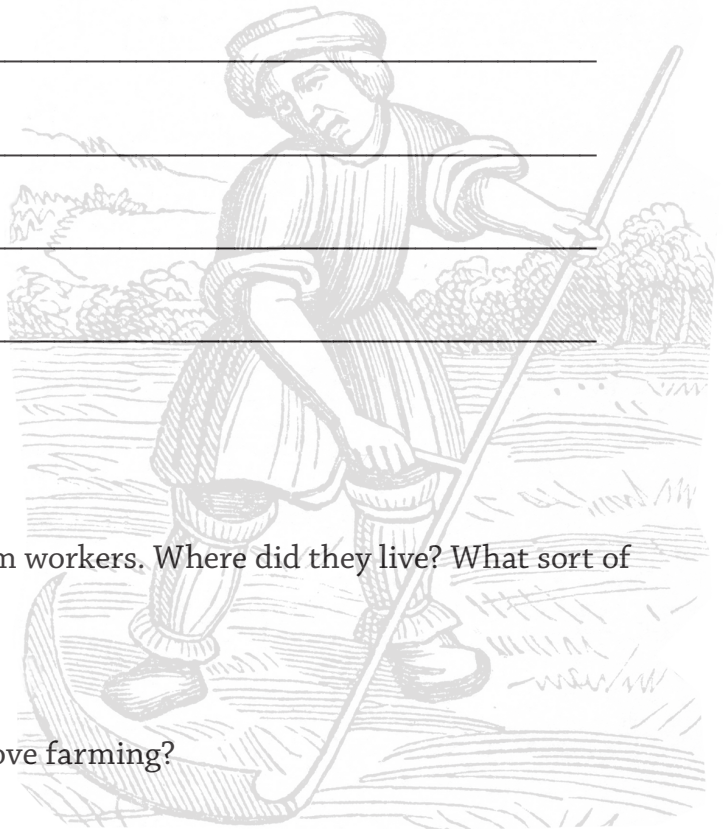
SEE IT!

21. Examine the pictures titled "Life in the Middle Ages" and "Food production in the Middle Ages," that can be found in the "Middle Ages" article or in the "Images, Video, and Audio" tab.

Name at least 4 aspects of life on a medieval manor that are illustrated in the pictures.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____

22. Did peasants ever own their own land?
23. Landless laborers were usually the poorest farm workers. Where did they live? What sort of foods did they eat?
24. How did the invention of the heavy plow improve farming?



The Clergy and the Church

The Christian church touched nearly every aspect of life in the Middle Ages, from birth and baptism to burial. The clergy (people ordained for religious work), came from all classes.

25. A. From what class did most high-ranking church leaders come?
- B. What non-religious responsibilities did they sometimes handle?
26. A. What job did peasants usually do if they became clergyman?
- B. What were their responsibilities?

(Hint: See the “Monastery” article to answer the remaining questions about church activities.)

27. What are Christian monasteries and convents?
28. For a Christian monk of the Benedictine order living in the 1100’s, when and how did the day begin? List at least three daytime activities. When and how did the day end?

Start of Day

When: _____

What: _____

Activities: _____

End of Day

When: _____

What: _____

SEE IT!

Some monasteries were important centers of learning. Find and examine the picture titled “Monk in a scriptorium” in the article or in the “Images, Video, and Audio” tab.

29. A. What is the monk doing?
- B. Why do you think this work would have been important in the Middle Ages?

Townpeople and trade

City people did not fit neatly into the traditional medieval view of a society that was divided into three groups—clergy, nobles, and peasants. This became increasingly the case as the number of towns expanded in the High Middle Ages, the middle class grew, and towns gained more independence from local nobles. So, what was it like to live in a medieval town? Let's find out. (Hint: Return to the "Middle Ages" article for the rest of the questions.)



30. What attracted landless laborers to the towns?
31. What are some kinds of work done by women who lived in towns?
32. Imagine you are on the town council of a growing medieval town. The council has some tax money to spend on improving the town. What improvements will you recommend?
33. Why was fire such a danger in medieval towns?
34. What was a town charter?

35. What role did guilds play when they were first organized?

36. How did guilds help towns win more self-government?

TEACHER PAGE

ANSWERS:

1. lords to govern and fight
clergy to serve the church
peasants to work the land
2. e. all of the above
3. c. free men were expected to serve in the army when called on by the king
4. c. land
5. b. counts, counties
6. a. in large, fortified homes in the countryside
7. d. townspeople, landowners
8. b. Parliament
9. The word *knight* comes from the Old English word ***cnicht***, which means household retainer.
10. The word *chivalry* comes from the Old French word *chevalerie*, meaning ***horse soldiery***.
11.
 - page** – first level of training for knighthood, starting about age 7
 - squire** – more advanced knight-in-training, who rode into battle with his lord
 - “I **dub** you knight” – words said by someone bestowing knighthood on another
 - knight** – a mounted warrior
 - chivalry** – knight’s code of behavior
 - mail** – protective garments made of small interlaced metal rings
 - plate** – armor, heavy metal plating worn to protect against blows
 - tournament** – practice combat between two groups of knights
 - joust** – competitive combat between two knights with blunted weapons
 - tilt** – competition in which two knights charged on horseback, each trying to unseat the other with a blunt lance or sword
 - coat of arms** – symbolic markings indicating a knight’s identity

N	A	G	N	B	L	E	T	Q	E
P	A	C	R	A	N	C	L	R	G
W	A	T	Q	S	P	L	I	O	P
T	H	G	I	N	K	U	A	S	P
I	W	L	E	M	Q	D	M	D	L
L	D	M	T	S	U	O	J	T	A
T	O	U	R	N	A	M	E	N	T
B	C	R	B	U	X	R	O	P	E
S	M	R	A	F	O	T	A	O	C
Y	R	L	A	V	I	H	C	S	W

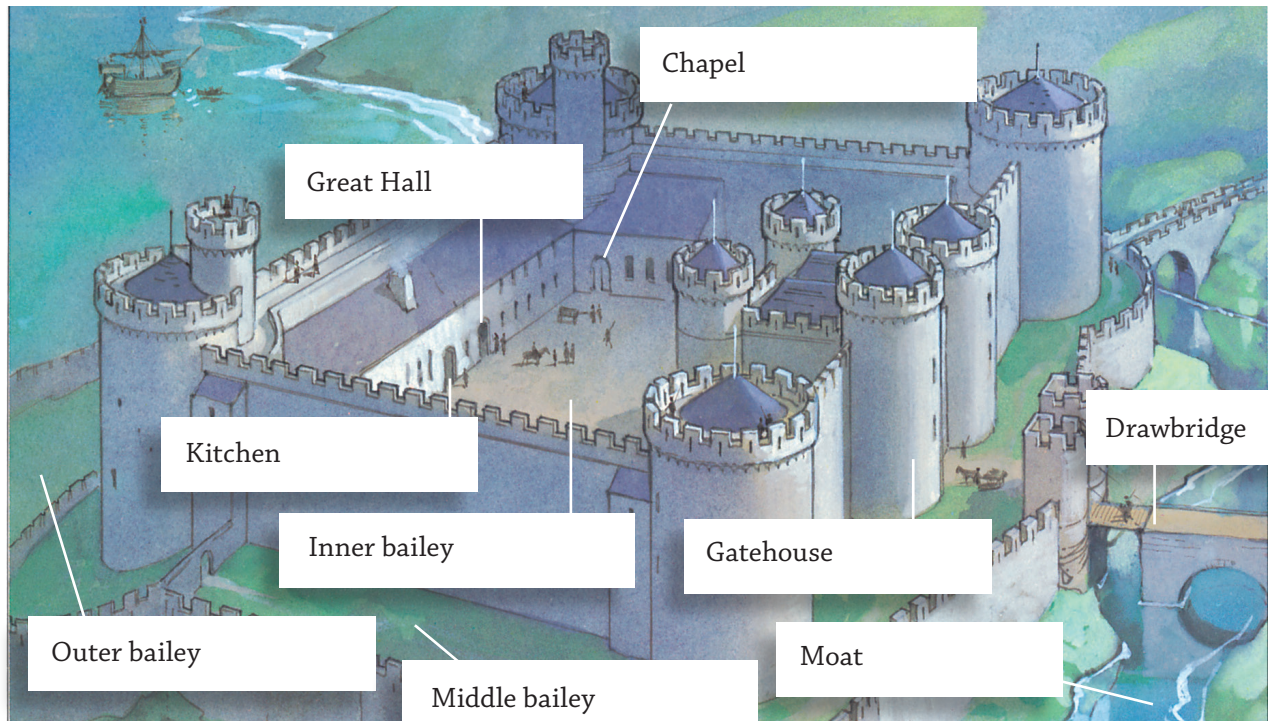
12. Correct responses may include:

- show faith and a deep love of the Christian religion
- defend the church and be ready to die for it
- love the land of his birth
- give generously to all
- protect women
- protect the feeble
- champion right against injustice and evil
- never surrender or flinch in the face of the enemy

13. A coat of arms, often painted on a shield or surcoat, helped identify a knight covered with armor. Horses and flags too were often marked with a knight's coat of arms.

14. Builders usually constructed castles on a natural rocky knoll or on an artificially created hill called a motte. The castle's best-protected building, called a keep or donjon, stood atop the hill. A wooden wall called a palisade enclosed the hilltop. One or more fortified courtyards known as baileys lay at the foot of the hill. A moat was a deep ditch, sometimes filled with water, that surrounding the castle.

15.



16. *Answers will vary, but may include some of the following:*

- A. From a young age, aristocratic women learned to manage a household. A medieval household was large. It might include children and other relatives, servants, craftspeople, and even warriors. The task of managing it required good business sense and administrative skills. In some cases, the wives of powerful men also managed the family's lands when their husbands were absent.
 - B. Women had few rights. Among the aristocracy, a father or other male relative normally decided whom a woman would marry. In most cases, women were excluded from ruling or warfare. In the church, women could not serve as bishops or priests, but they could lead religious lives as nuns.
17. An abbess was the female head of an abbey. People often donated land to the abbeys and convents where nuns lived. The abbess of a large abbey might be responsible for extensive lands and many workers.
18. In the 500's, the old Roman system of large farms worked by slaves began to be replaced by a type of estate called a bipartite estate or a manor.
19. The rents usually included part of each tenant's crop as well as such services as working the landlord's personal fields, cutting wood, storing grain, or repairing roads and bridges.
20. Semifree people could not be bought or sold. They had control over some aspects of their lives, but they had to obtain permission from the landowner for certain activities, such as moving away, getting married, or exchanging property.

21. Answers will vary, but may include:
- peasants working the land
 - land divided into small plots
 - a castle where the lord lived
 - an orchard
 - plowing done with a plow pulled by oxen
 - both men and women worked in the fields
22. Yes. Many peasants owned a section of land, and some owned all their land.
23. Landless laborers often lived in crude huts and slept on bags filled with straw. They ate black bread, eggs, poultry, and such vegetables as cabbage and turnips.
24. At the start of the Middle Ages, peasants generally used oxen to pull a light plow suitable to the dry, light soils in the Mediterranean region. Early medieval Europeans invented a heavy plow that was more effective at turning over the wet, heavy soils of northern Europe.
25. Most bishops and other high-ranking clergymen were noblemen who devoted their lives to the church. The churches they ruled possessed extensive lands and other economic assets. The church leaders managed these estates much as secular landholders managed theirs.
26. Many peasants who became clergymen served as village priests. Each village priest lived in a small cottage near his church. He performed church ceremonies such as baptisms, marriages, and burials. He advised and helped peasants and settled disputes.
27. A monastery is a community of men called monks, who have given up worldly life to serve God through prayer and work. The men live together ruled by religious vows. Similar institutions for women are generally called convents.

28. **Start of Day**

When: about 2 a.m.

What: An official called the “subsacristan” rang a bell. The monks came from the dormitory, where they slept, into the church. They sang psalms and prayers in the day’s first office (church service), called “Matins.”

Answers may also include: additional church services, meals, reading, writing, painting, carving, gardening, fishing, looking after the sick, games such as bowls or skittles

End of Day

When: about 6:30 p.m. in winter and 8 p.m. in summer

What: Following a light supper, the monks attended the day’s last church service, called “Compline,” and went to bed.

29. A. The monk is copying a book by hand.
B. Answers to the second question may vary. Medieval monks preserved books and learning by keeping and copying books at a time when printing did not yet exist.
30. Some landless laborers moved to towns where they could live as free citizens.
31. Women often worked with their husbands in a family's business. They also worked independently in such occupations as silk weaving and beer brewing.
32. *Answers will vary, but may be based on the following:*
- Many cities that dated back to the Roman Empire had outgrown the massive stone walls that had protected them. Some cities began expanding their walls to enclose new suburbs and important churches. In contrast to the orderly grid pattern of the old Roman cities, the streets of newer suburbs and towns were often narrow, crooked, dark, and unpaved. Houses stood crowded together. People often threw their garbage into the streets, and disease spread quickly. As towns became wealthier during the 1200's, the people in some of them began to pave their streets with rough cobblestones and improve sanitation. Fire prevention was also a major problem.
33. The wide use of lamps, torches, and candles made fire one of the great dangers for a medieval town. Wealthy citizens had stone and brick houses, but most houses were made of wood. A large fire was likely to wipe out a whole town.
34. A town charter granted a town certain rights of self-government.
35. Guilds were organizations set up by merchants and craftworkers. A guild protected its members against unfair business practices, established prices and wages, and settled disputes between workers and employers.
36. During the 1000's, important merchants and guilds in Italian cities began to demand charters that gave them certain rights of self-government. In the 1100's and 1200's, many townspeople elsewhere in Europe made similar demands. Guilds often led the fight for self-government, and so members of guilds often ran the new town governments.