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## MIDDLE AGES: Medieval Art and Culture

Art and culture throughout the Middle Ages continued to evolve as the people's lives were altered by both warfare and peace. Yet, many of these cultural artifacts can still be experienced today. Have you heard the stories of Emperor Charlemagne, Sir Lancelot, or Maid Marian? Do you know what medieval people sang about? Use this webquest to discover trade secrets of medieval builders and painters. Embark on a quest through the World Book articles and medieval artwork to discover the art and culture of the Middle Ages!

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Then, click on "Student." If prompted, log on  
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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 start by searching the key word "Middle Ages."

Write the answers on the lines provided or below the question

### Early medieval culture

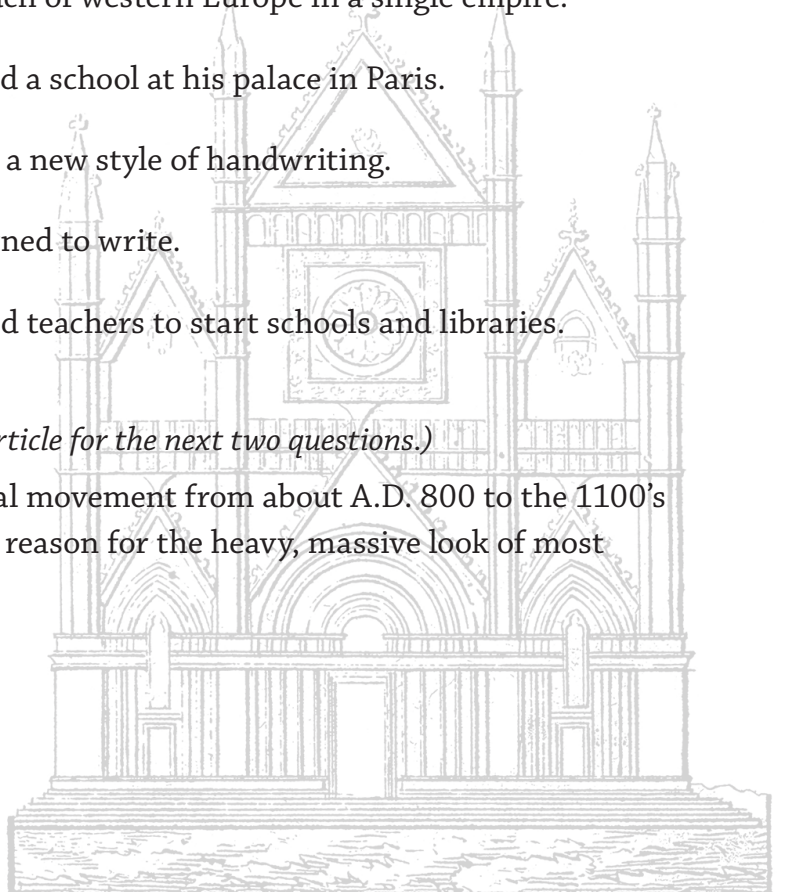
1. The Middle Ages began in the A.D. 400's, as \_\_\_\_\_ peoples from northern Europe established small kingdoms that replaced the West Roman Empire. The kingdoms combined customs from both cultures, so they are sometimes called \_\_\_\_\_ – \_\_\_\_\_ kingdoms.
2. Who was Beowulf, and how did his story reflect the Germanic influences on medieval culture? (Hint: To answer this question, see the "Beowulf" article.)



3. Leaders of the Christian church took over many responsibilities after the Roman Empire ended in western Europe. Two church institutions, the **cathedral** and the **monastery**, became centers of learning in the early Middle Ages, preserving ancient manuscripts and founding most of the schools. Write the correct term in the blank space.
- A. Communities of men and women who gave up worldly life to serve God through prayer and work were called \_\_\_\_\_.
- B. The home church of a bishop, a religious leader who administered an area containing a number of churches was called \_\_\_\_\_.
4. Starting in the 600's, Muslims assumed a major role in the trade on and around the Mediterranean Sea. What are two of the industries introduced to western Europe by the Muslim traders?
5. Mark the following statements about the Frankish ruler Charlemagne as "True" or "False."  
(Hint: Some of the answers may be found in the "Charlemagne" article.)
- a. \_\_\_\_\_ Charlemagne united much of western Europe in a single empire.
- b. \_\_\_\_\_ Charlemagne established a school at his palace in Paris.
- c. \_\_\_\_\_ Charlemagne developed a new style of handwriting.
- d. \_\_\_\_\_ Charlemagne never learned to write.
- e. \_\_\_\_\_ Charlemagne encouraged teachers to start schools and libraries.

(Hint: See the "Romanesque architecture" article for the next two questions.)

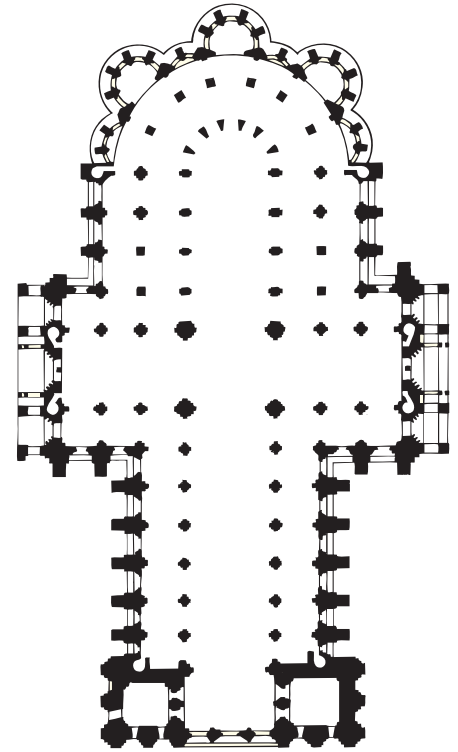
6. The main western European architectural movement from about A.D. 800 to the 1100's is known as Romanesque. What was one reason for the heavy, massive look of most Romanesque buildings?



No church laws specify the design of a cathedral. However, cathedrals in Western religions have traditionally been built according to the general plan of a medieval cathedral.

7. Unscramble each of these terms describing Romanesque church construction and put it in the proper space.

S R C S O   R I P E S   N D O U R   A V N E   L P U E R T S C U



Floor plan of a cathedral

- A. The plan of a typical Romanesque church was in the shape of a \_\_\_\_\_.
- B. Large columns called \_\_\_\_\_ supported the roof vaults.
- C. \_\_\_\_\_ arches were built in openings in the walls and between the piers.
- D. The roof over the \_\_\_\_\_ (main gathering area) consisted of vaults of stone constructed on the principle of the arch.
- E. Stone \_\_\_\_\_ and carvings in the churches usually depicted scenes and people from the Bible.

## Story or History?

8. Match each early medieval person with his or her description. In the space before the name, indicate whether you think the individual is a historical person (H) or a fictional character from medieval stories (F). (Hint: Each person has a biographical article in the World Book database.)

_____ King Arthur	A. Irish saint
_____ Sir Lancelot	B. British leader
_____ Beowulf	C. French knight
_____ St. Patrick	D. A warrior who aided a Danish king

## High Middle Ages

*Between the 1000's and the late 1200's, western Europe enjoyed increased peace and prosperity, and medieval culture reached its high point.*

9. During the High Middle Ages, increased contact with what civilizations brought back ancient learning that had been lost in western Europe?

10. The works of what major Greek philosopher became more well known in the High Middle Ages when scholars translated them from Greek and Arabic into Latin?

*(Hint: See the “Scholasticism” article for the next two questions.)*

11. What was scholasticism and what did it emphasize?

12. The most important scholastic of the Middle Ages was Saint Thomas Aquinas. What claim did he make about reason and religion?

.....  
**SEE IT!**

*In the High Middle Ages, the thick walls and small windows that gave Romanesque buildings their dark, heavy appearance gave way to soaring ceilings and huge stained glass windows that flooded buildings with light and color. See the “Gothic art” article to explore the look of this new style.*

13. Precisely, when and where was the Gothic style introduced?

14. Among the constructional devices most associated with the Gothic style are \_\_\_\_\_ arches.

15. Exterior columns and supports, called \_\_\_\_\_, were introduced about 1175. They helped reduce the amount of solid wall space needed to support the roof, allowing the walls to be opened with large stained glass windows.

16. \_\_\_\_\_ windows are round stained glass windows with elegant radiating geometric patterns.

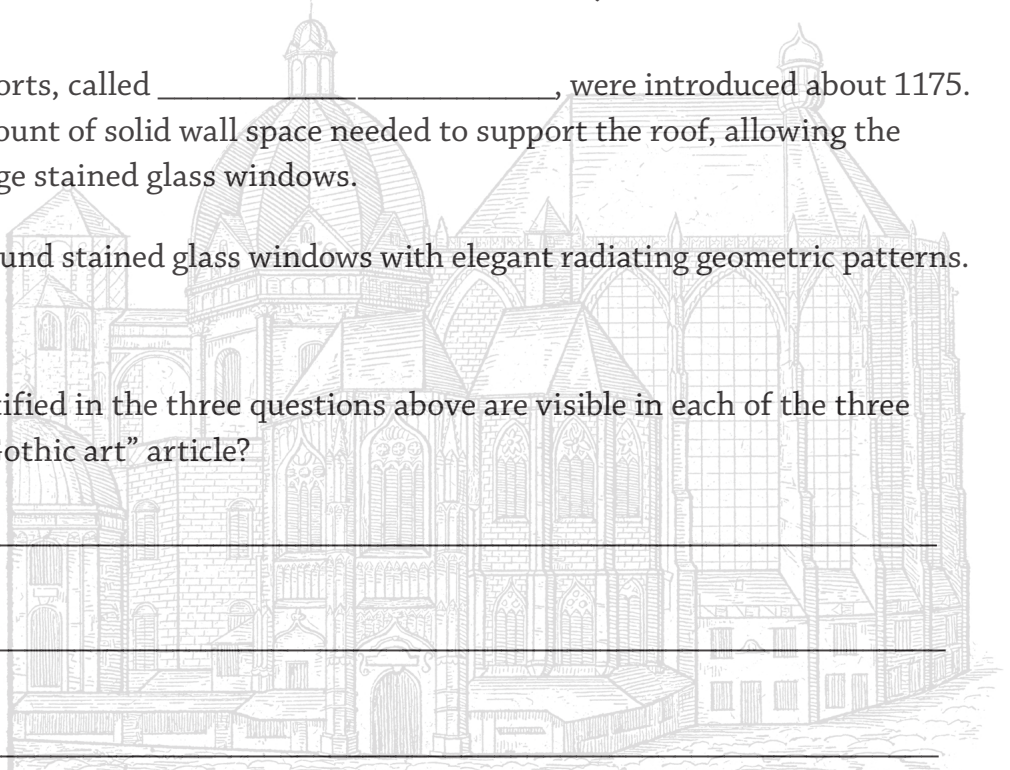
**I spy**

17. Which of the features identified in the three questions above are visible in each of the three cathedral pictures in the “Gothic art” article?

Notre Dame: \_\_\_\_\_

Cathedral at Bourges: \_\_\_\_\_

Chartres Cathedral: \_\_\_\_\_



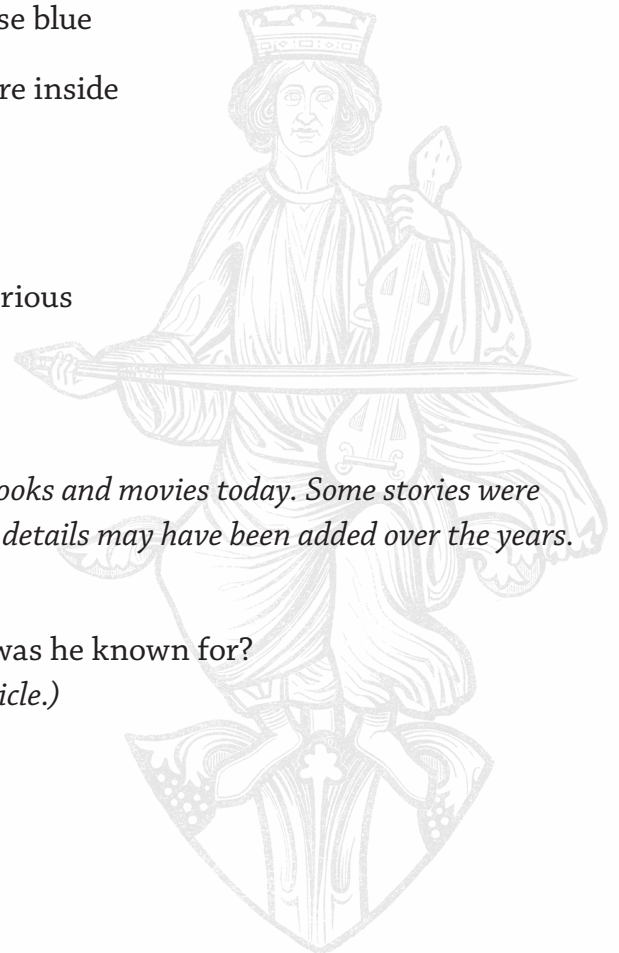


18. To celebrate your newfound knowledge of Gothic architecture, seek out a troubadour! What was a troubadour? (Hint: Find the answer to the next questions in the “Song” article.)
19. How were the songs of the troubadours different from earlier medieval songs, like the Gregorian chants? (You can even hear a clip of a Gregorian chant in the “Song” article!)

*To see a page from a medieval music book and answer the next two questions, go to the article titled “Illuminated manuscript.”*

20. What is an illuminated manuscript, and what does the term “illuminated” mean?
21. Talented scribes and artists produced illuminated manuscripts throughout the Middle Ages. Match these terms describing illuminated manuscripts with their definitions. Also, look at the illustration to see which ones you can find.

- |                           |   |
|---------------------------|---|
| _____ historiated initial | A. amusing human or animal figures                |
| _____ decorated initial   | B. gem for making intense blue                    |
| _____ drolleries          | C. large letter with picture inside               |
| _____ miniature           | D. writing room                                   |
| _____ lapis lazuli        | E. small painting                                 |
| _____ scriptorium         | F. letter adorned with various “motifs” (designs) |



## **Fact or Fiction**

*Many stories from the Middle Ages are still told and retold in books and movies today. Some stories were fictional from the start. Others are based on fact, but made-up details may have been added over the years. It can be tricky to sort out fact from fiction! See how you do.*

22. According to legend, who was Robin Hood and what was he known for?  
(Hint: Use a keyword search to find the “Robin Hood” article.)

23. Historians don't know if the entire legend associated with Robin Hood is fact or fiction. However, there is an element of truth to the story. Which part do historians know is a fact? Put an "X" in the correct box next to each character's names.

Name	Fact	Historians don't know
Robin Hood		
Maid Marian		
Friar Tuck		
Sherwood Forest*		

*\* (Hint: do a separate search for this article topic.)*



One of the villains in most modern retellings of the Robin Hood story is Prince John, the brother of King Richard the Lion-Hearted. Although John's connection with Robin Hood is fiction, there was a real Prince John. He even became king in 1199, but (like the prince in the Robin Hood stories) he was not loved by his people.

24. Why was the real King John unpopular?  
*(Hint: Use a keyword search for "John" to find the article on the English king. Be careful. If you search for "King John," you may find a play by William Shakespeare instead.)*

25. What did John's subjects really do to limit the king's power? Explain why their actions were so important. *(Hint: Examine both the main text of the article and the caption of the article's illustration of the Magna Carta.)*

## Late Middle Ages

The late Middle Ages (between 1300 and 1500) were a time of enormous cultural change in Europe, as the Middle Ages gave way to modern times. Return to the "Middle Ages" article to begin exploring this era.

26. The growth of a new outlook called "humanism" led some scholars and artists to become less concerned with religion. What topics did humanist scholars prefer to study?

27. From where did humanist scholars and artists of the late Middle Ages gain much of the inspiration?

*Hint: See the “Renaissance” article to answer the next questions.*

28. Humanism was part of a cultural movement called the Renaissance. When and where did the Renaissance begin?

29. Earlier medieval artists and those of the Renaissance had very different painting styles. Put the following characteristics in the proper column. Write Medieval or Renaissance on the line.

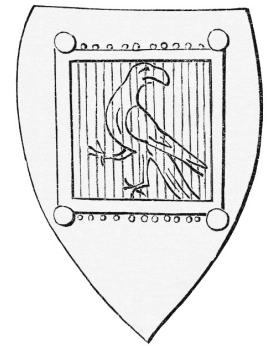
\_\_\_\_\_ emphasized beauty of the human body

\_\_\_\_\_ symbolic purpose

\_\_\_\_\_ stiff and unrealistic

\_\_\_\_\_ lifelike

\_\_\_\_\_ linear perspective



*Click on the link to “Images, Videos, and Audio” at the top of the “Renaissance” article. Under “Photos” find and click on the painting of the “Family and Court of Ludovico Gonzaga II by Andrea Mantegna.”*

30. How is the style of this painting different from the style of the picture of a troubadour at a royal court that you looked at in the “Song” article? How does this reflect the differences between earlier medieval art and Renaissance art?

31. Architects also returned to classical Roman styles. Go back to “Images, Videos, and Audio” and find the picture titled “Interior of the Pazzi Chapel.” How is the look and feel of this architectural style different from that of the Gothic cathedrals?

32. What two changes in the late Middle Ages made learning and literature more available to more people? (*Hint: Return to the “Middle Ages” article for this question.*)

1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

33. Match the following late medieval authors who wrote in the vernacular with their descriptions.  
(Hint: Each person has a biography in the World Book database.)

- |                          |  |
|--------------------------|--|
| _____ Geoffrey Chaucer   | A. Italian poet who helped start the movement called humanism                        |
| _____ Christine de Pizan | B. English poet, considered the greatest of the Middle Ages                          |
| _____ Dante Alighieri    | C. French author of <i>The Book of the City of Ladies</i>                            |
| _____ Petrarch           | D. Italian poet whose work, about life after death, is a summary of medieval thought |

Investigate the printing revolution of the 1400's by using a keyword search to find the "Printing press" article.

34. Around 1436, a \_\_\_\_\_ goldsmith named Johannes Gutenberg experimented with movable type.

- a. French
- b. English
- c. German
- d. Italian

35. With movable type, the type pieces (small individual plates, each with an individual \_\_\_\_\_ or \_\_\_\_\_ carved or stamped on it) can be arranged and rearranged.

- a. letter or word
- b. stroke or symbol
- c. line or dot
- d. letter or symbol
- e. page or picture

36. Gutenberg set letters one by one into wooden \_\_\_\_\_, applied ink, and pressed paper onto the letters.

- a. stamps
- b. frames
- c. cylinders

37. Printing spread so quickly in Europe that \_\_\_\_\_ of books had been printed by 1500.

- a. hundreds
- b. thousands
- c. millions





# TEACHER PAGE

## ANSWERS:

1. The Middle Ages began in the A.D. 400's, as Germanic peoples from northern Europe established small kingdoms that replaced the West Roman Empire. The kingdoms combined customs from both cultures, so they are sometimes called Romano-Germanic kingdoms.
2. Beowulf was the main character in an epic poem that is considered the first great work of English literature. He was a mighty warrior who had the qualities most admired by the Germanic peoples known as the Anglo-Saxons—strength, courage, loyalty, and generosity. He served a king loyally and fought bravely in battle.
3. A. monastery:  
Communities of men and women who gave up worldly life to serve God through prayer and work  
B. cathedral:  
The home church of a bishop, a religious leader who administered an area containing a number of churches
4. Muslim traders introduced many new crops and such industries as papermaking and silk-weaving to western Europe.
5. a. True  
b. False: Charlemagne established a school at his palace in Aachen.  
c. False: Carolingian scribes created a new style of handwriting, but Charlemagne did not invent it personally.  
d. True  
e. True
6. Romanesque buildings were frequently isolated from the few developed cities of the period. The massive character of these buildings was a response to the demands for security and defense that such locations required.
7. CROSS    PIERS    ROUND    NAVE    SCULPTURE  
A. The plan of a typical Romanesque church was in the shape of a cross.  
B. Large columns called piers supported the roof vaults.  
C. Round arches were built in openings in the walls and between the piers.  
D. The roof over the nave (main gathering area) consisted of vaults of stone constructed on the principle of the arch.  
E. Stone sculpture and carvings in the churches usually depicted scenes and people from the Bible.

8. H King Arthur: B. British leader

*(Note: Most historians believe a real Arthur probably existed in the 500's and was a British leader who won victories against Germanic invaders, although the King Arthur stories we know today are mostly fictional stories written about him much later. Such characters as Sir Lancelot and Queen Guenevere are entirely fictional.)*

F Sir Lancelot: C. French knight

F Beowulf: D. A warrior who aided a Danish king

H St. Patrick: A. Irish saint

9. Increasing contact with Arab and Byzantine civilizations reintroduced some learning that had been lost to western Europe since the end of the Roman Empire.

10. The Greek philosopher Aristotle.

11. Scholasticism was a philosophical system that emphasized the use of reason in exploring questions of philosophy and theology.

12. Saint Thomas Aquinas developed a philosophy that claimed to lead through reason alone to basic truths about God and the soul.

13. The style was first introduced at the Abbey of St.-Denis, the burial place of French kings, just north of Paris. Abbot Suger supervised the rebuilding of the west and east ends of the church in this new style, which were completed in 1144.

14. Among the constructional devices most associated with the Gothic style are pointed arches.

15. Exterior columns and supports, called flying buttresses, were introduced about 1175. They helped reduce the amount of solid wall space needed to support the roof, allowing the walls to be opened with large stained glass windows.

16. Rose windows are round stained glass windows with elegant radiating geometric patterns.

17. Notre Dame: pointed arches, rose windows

Cathedral at Bourges: pointed arches, flying buttresses, rose windows

Chartres Cathedral: pointed arches, rose windows

18. Troubadours were poets and singers. These traveling musicians often performed before royalty.

19. The troubadours helped popularized secular (non-religious) songs.

The earliest surviving medieval songs, which date from the late A.D. 800's, are hymns known as Gregorian chants. These songs had Latin texts, and were used in religious services. The earliest known secular songs date from the 1100's. Between the 1100's and the 1600's, poets and singers called troubadours and trouveres in France and minnesingers and meistersingers in Germany composed works that glorified romantic love and heroic deeds.

20. An illuminated manuscript is a book written and decorated by hand. "Illumination" refers to the art of decorating books with bright colors and precious metals so they seem to glow.

21. historiated initial: C. large letter with picture inside  
 decorated initial: F. letter adorned with various “motifs” (designs)  
 drolleries: A. amusing human or animal figures  
 miniature: E. small painting  
 lapis lazuli: B. gem for making intense blue  
 scriptorium: D. writing room

22. According to legend, Robin Hood was an English outlaw who stole from the rich and gave to the poor.

23.

Name	Fact	Historians don't know
Robin Hood		X
Maid Marian		X
Friar Tuck		X
Sherwood Forest	X	

24. John was inconsistent and sometimes cruel. He did not always administer justice fairly, and he imposed many taxes on his subjects. The growing power of France also made John's reign difficult.

25. Answers will vary, but may include information from both the main text and the caption:  
 In 1215, some English barons and clergy revolted. In June of that year, John reluctantly approved the settlement that became known as Magna Carta. It limited the king's powers and stated the rights of the English aristocracy.

Magna Carta is a document that English barons forced King John to approve in June 1215 at Runnymede, southwest of London. The Latin words “Magna Carta” mean “Great Charter.” The document limited royal power and made it clear that even the king had to obey the law. Magna Carta marked a decisive step forward in the development of constitutional government and legal ideas in England. The charter later became a model for those who demanded democratic government and individual rights for all.

26. During the late Middle Ages, scholars and artists were less concerned with religious thinking and concentrated more on understanding people and the world.

27. Scholars and artists of the late Middle Ages rediscovered the ancient works of the Greeks and Romans and gained inspiration from them.

28. The Renaissance was a great cultural movement that began in Italy during the early 1300's. It spread to England, France, Germany, the Netherlands, Spain, and other countries in the late 1400's.

29. Renaissance emphasized beauty of the human body  
 Medieval symbolic purpose  
 Medieval stiff and unrealistic  
 Renaissance lifelike  
 Renaissance linear perspective
30. Observations and answers will vary, but may include: The people appear more natural and realistic. There is greater depth and perspective.
31. Observations and answers will vary, but may include: The chapel has round arches rather than pointed arches. It uses such elements of classical architecture as arches and columns. It feels simple and harmonious.
- 32.
1. More and more writers composed prose and poetry in the *vernacular* (native languages) instead of Latin.
  2. The introduction of the printing press in Europe in the mid-1400's meant that books and documents could be made more cheaply. Thus, books became available for many more people to read.
33. Geoffrey Chaucer: B. English poet, considered the greatest of the Middle Ages  
 Christine de Pizan: C. French author of *The Book of the City of Ladies*  
 Dante Alighieri: D. Italian poet whose work, about life after death, is a summary of medieval thought  
 Petrarch: A. Italian poet who helped start the movement called humanism
34. c. German
35. d. letter or symbol
36. b. frames
37. c. millions