

# Middle Ages DBQ

## Document-Based Question Format Directions:

The following question is based on the accompanying documents (The documents have been edited for the purpose of this exercise).

This question is designed to test your ability to work with and understand historical documents. You will have three days to complete this assignment. Plan your tasks to use time efficiently.

### Document-Based Question:

Which title best suits the time known as the Middle Ages: Dark Ages, Age of Faith, Age of Feudalism, or Golden Age?

### Write a response that:

- Has a relevant thesis and supports that thesis with evidence from the documents.
- Cites three pieces of evidence from included source perspectives.
- Analyzes the documents by grouping them in as many appropriate ways as possible.
- Does not simply summarize the documents individually.
- Takes into account both the sources of the documents and the author's points of view.



## Historical Context

In European history, the Middle Ages, or Medieval period, lasted from the 5th to the 15th century. It began with the collapse of the Western Roman Empire and merged into the early modern period. The Middle Ages is the middle period of the traditional division of Western history into Antiquity, Medieval, and Modern periods. The period is subdivided into the Early, the High, and the Late Middle Ages. Depopulation, de-urbanization, and barbarian invasions, which had begun in Late Antiquity,

continued in the Early Middle Ages. The barbarian invaders formed new kingdoms in what remained of the Western Roman Empire. During the High Middle Ages, which began after AD 1000, the population of Europe increased greatly as technological and agricultural innovations allowed trade to flourish and crop yields to increase. Kings became the heads of centralized nation states. Intellectual life was marked by scholasticism, a philosophy that emphasized joining faith to reason, and by the founding of universities. The Late Middle Ages was marked by difficulties and calamities including famine, plague, and war, which much diminished the population of Western Europe; between 1347 and 1350.

## **Part I: Guiding Questions**

**Read all documents and answer the guiding questions in the space below. Answer the questions to the best of your ability. Make sure to answer in complete sentences with complete, rationalized thoughts.**

**Document 1: Source - In the Middle Ages, historian Frantz Funck-Brentano made use of previously published texts to describe Europe in the ninth and tenth centuries (Heinemann, 1922, pp.1-3.)**

**The barbarians have broken through the ramparts. The Saracen [Moors] invasions have spread in successive waves over the South. The Hungarians swarm over the Eastern provinces... they sacked town and village, and laid waste the fields. They burned down the churches and then departed with a crowd of captives... There is no longer any trade, only unceasing terror... The peasant has abandoned his ravaged fields to avoid the violence of anarchy. The people have gone to cower in the depths of the forests or in inaccessible regions, or have taken refuge in the high mountains... Society has no longer any government.**

**Document 1: What were conditions like in Europe in the 800s?**

**Answer:**

**Document 2: Source - The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle tells of invasions of England**

**842. In this year there was a great slaughter in London and Quentavic and**

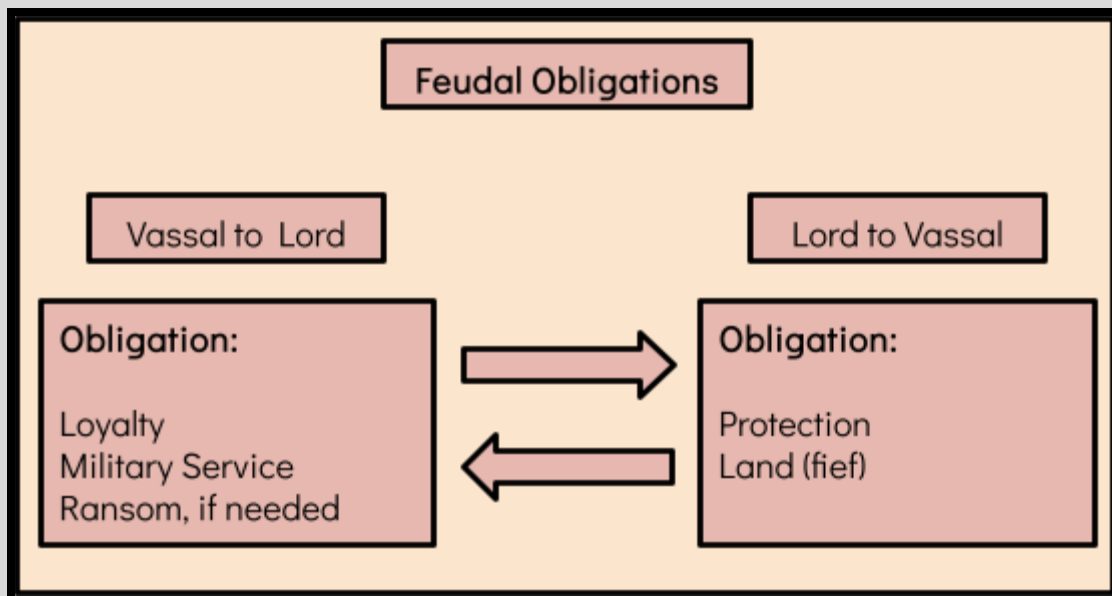
**in Rochester**

**846. According to their custom the Northmen plundered... and burned the town of Dordrecht... the Northmen, with their boats filled with immense booty [treasure], including both men and goods, returned to their own country...**

Document 2: According to this Chronicle, what is happening at this time?

Answer:

Document 3: Source - Illustration of the feudal obligations between a lord and a vassal.



Document 3: Explain the mutual obligations illustrated in the diagram

Answer:

Document 4: Source - A Church council calls for the observation of the Truce of God, 1083.

**... That from the first day of the Advent of our Lord through Epiphany... and**

**throughout the year on every Sunday, Friday, and Saturday, and on the fast days of the four seasons... this decree of peace shall be observed... so that no one may commit murder, arson, robbery, or assault, no one may injure another with a sword, club, or any kind of weapon... On... every day set aside, or to be set aside, for fasts or feasts, arms may be carried, but on this condition, that no injury shall be done in any way to anyone... If it shall happen that any castle is besieged during these days which are included within peace, the besiegers shall cease from attack unless they are set upon by the besieged and compelled to beat the latter back...**

Document 4: What is the Church trying to accomplish?

Answer:

Document 5: Source - Gray C. Boyce, "The Medieval Period" in The 34th Yearbook of the National Council for the Social Studies, 1964, pp. 69-70.

**... we learn that an age once traditionally described as "dark" had remarkable vitality and exuberance. Even at its worst it performed the function of guarding, frequently by accident and chance, the knowledge and treasures of what had come before, but even more it was creative and inventive, and transmitted to later ages great riches of its own.**

Document 5: What function was provided during the Middle Ages?

Answer:

Document 6: Source - Medieval Europe by H.C. Davis, Oxford University Press, 1946, p. 79.

**... Medieval culture was imperfect, was restricted to a narrow circle of superior minds... Measure it, however, by the memories and the achievements that it has bequeathed to the modern world, and it will be found not unworthy to rank with those of earlier and later Golden Ages. It flourished in the midst of rude surroundings, fierce passions, and material ambitions... we must judge them by their philosophy and law, by their poetry and architecture...**

Document 6: How does a decline in education correlate with the decline of society?

Answer:

Document 7: Source - Frances & Joseph Gies, *Cathedral, Forge, and Water Wheel: Technology and Invention in the Middle Ages*, Harper Perennial (adapted)

... In a word, Europe was turning from a developing into a developed region. The growth of industry meant the growth of cities, which in the eleventh and twelfth centuries began to abandon their old roles of military headquarters and administrative centers as they filled with the life of commerce and industry. Some, like Genoa, once Roman villages, mushroomed, while others, like Venice, appeared out of nowhere. Still others, calling themselves simply "New City" (Villanova, Villeneuve, Neustadt), were founded by progressive rulers. Instead of growing haphazardly, they were built on a plan, typically a grid pattern with a central square, church, and market buildings. Beginning in tenth-century Italy, businessmen and craftsmen in many cities established what they called "communes," declaring themselves free men who owed allegiance only to a sovereign who collected taxes but otherwise left them alone. Astute lords granted charters exempting city dwellers from feudal obligations—"so that my friends and subjects, the inhabitants of my town of Binarville, stay more willing there," sensibly explained one lord. Under the rubric "Free air makes free men," even serfs were declared emancipated if they maintained themselves in a city for a year and a day....

Document 7: What was one impact of the growth of European cities on medieval European societies?

Answer:

Document 8: Source - This excerpt is from the monastic vows of Brother Gerald

I hereby renounce my parents, my brother and relatives, my friends, my possessions... and the vain and empty glory and pleasure of this world. I also renounce my own will, for the will of God. I accept all the hardships of the monastic life, and take the vows of purity, chastity, and poverty, in

**the hope of heaven; and I promise to remain a monk in this monastery all the days of my life.**

Document 8: What sacrifices must be made to commit oneself to a monastery?

Answer:

Document 9: Source - Minnesota State University E-Museum

**The role of the Church was very large in Medieval Europe. More than any other institution, it unified Europeans and gave every person a sense of how the world worked. Since political leaders only had local power, the Church was the most powerful institution. This secondary source describes the multiple roles the Church played in the Middle Ages. In a time of great political chaos, the Roman Catholic Church was the single, largest unifying structure in medieval Europe. It touched everyone's life, no matter what their rank or class or where they lived. With the exception of a small number of Jews, everyone in Europe was a Christian during the Middle Ages from the richest king down to the lowest serf. From the moment of its baptism a few days after birth, a child entered into a life of service to God and God's Church. As a child grew, it would be taught basic prayers, would go to church every week barring illness, and would learn of its responsibilities to the Church. Every person was required to live by the Church's laws and to pay heavy taxes to support the Church. In return for this, they were shown the way to everlasting life and happiness after lives that were often short and hard. In addition to collecting taxes, the Church also accepted gifts of all kinds from individuals who wanted special favors or wanted to be certain of a place in heaven. These gifts included land, flocks, crops, and even serfs. This allowed the Church to become very powerful, and it often used this power to influence kings to do as it wanted.**

Document 9: What is the role of the Church during the Middle Ages?

Answer:

Document 10: Source - Medieval French manuscript illustration of the three classes of medieval society: The Cleric, Knight, and Peasant. Li Livres dou Sante, 13th century.





**Document 10: What does this painting tell us about the three predominant social classes of the Medieval Ages?**

Answer:

## **Part II: Outline**

**Using the documents, create an outline that plans your essay here:**

### **I. Introduction**

A. Hook Line:

B. 5 W's-Background Information on Question

1. Who:
2. What:
3. Where:
4. Why:
5. When:

C. Thesis (Answer to the question):

1. Reason #1:
2. Reason #2:
3. Reason #3:

II. Body Paragraph One



Topic Sentence  
One should  
match your  
first label in  
your thesis.

A. Topic Sentence:

B. 1st Explanation:

1. In-text evidence (use quotes):
2. Source (Author/Title):

C. 2nd Explanation:

1. In-text evidence (use quotes):
2. Source (Author/Title):

D. 3rd Explanation:

1. In-text evidence (use quotes):
2. Source (Author/Title):

E. Concluding/Transition Statement

III. Body Paragraph Two

A. Topic Sentence:

B. 1st Explanation:

1. In-text evidence (use quotes):
2. Source (Author/Title):

C. 2nd Explanation:



1. In-text evidence (use quotes):
2. Source (Author/Title):

D. 3rd Explanation:

1. In-text evidence (use quotes):
2. Source (Author/Title):

The concluding statement should end your paragraph and transition into the next topic.

**E.** Concluding/Transition Statement:

IV. Body Paragraph Three

A. Topic Sentence:

B. 1st Explanation:

1. In-text evidence (use quotes):
2. Source (Author/Title):

Be specific with your supporting details. What document did it come from?

C. 2nd Explanation:

1. In-text evidence (use quotes):
2. Source (Author/Title):

D. 3rd Explanation:

1. In-text evidence (use quotes):
2. Source (Author/Title):

E. Concluding/Transition Statement:

V. Conclusion

**A.** Thesis Statement (Remix):

B. Main Support for Reason #1:

C. Main Support for Reason #2:

D. Main Support for Reason #3:

E. Explain the significance of your thesis:

Remix the original thesis statement to make it sound new

F. How does this relate to the modern world?

### Part III: Essay

**Directions:** Using your outline, write a well-organized essay that includes an introduction, several paragraphs, and a conclusion. Use evidence from the documents to support your response with relevant facts, examples, and details. Include additional outside information.

#### Document-Based Question:

Which title best suits the time known as the Middle Ages: Dark Ages, Age of Faith, Age of Feudalism, or Golden Age?

**Write your answer in the box below (it will expand as you write).**

**Remember:** A well developed DBQ essay/answer has at least five paragraphs total (introduction, three body paragraphs, and a conclusion). Follow the same format you outline in Part II.

**Answer:**