**Historical Research Activity: The Middle Ages**

*The medieval world we know was far from perfect. Life expectancy was short, and disease was mostly incontestable. It was a world burdened by royal autocracy and social hierarchy inherited from ancient times. Its piety and devotion were affected by fanaticism and a potential for persecution. Its intellectuals were given to too abstract and not enough practical thinking. But it exhibited as elevated a culture, as peaceful a community, as benign a political system, as high-minded and popular a faith as the world has ever seen.*

—Norman F. Cantor

**OBJECTIVE:** Students will work in groups of two to three researching an important aspect of the Middle Ages and then present their findings to the class.

**TOPICS:** Your group members and topic will be chosen by your teacher. Your research should center around and answer the guiding questions listed below your topic:

**Feudalism**

How did the Norman Invasion change England?

How did feudalism change the social structure of Anglo-Saxon England?

What were the various social roles of people living under feudalism?

What developments in the fourteenth century began to undermine the feudal system?

**Religion and the Crusades**

What power did the Catholic Church have over Medieval Europe?

What influence did the Catholic Church have over people’s everyday lives?

What were the Crusades?

What were the causes and results of the Crusades?

**The Roles of Women**

What were medieval marriage practices like?

What was the role of women in medieval society?

What was a woman’s legal status in medieval society?

**Pilgrimages**

Who was Thomas á Becket?

Why did medieval people go on pilgrimages?

What are some pilgrimages people take today?

**Knights and Chivalry**

What was the life of a knight like?

What is chivalry?

How was chivalry similar to the Anglo-Saxon value of loyalty?

What are the rules set up by the chivalric code?

**The Black Death**

What was the Black Death and when did it occur?

How did the Black Death change Europe (socially, politically, etc.)?

**STEP ONE: RESEARCH**

Use your school’s Library/Media Center to find out as much as you can about your topic. Cite your sources below. Use a mix of print and electronic sources. All sources must be cited in MLA format to avoid plagiarism. A simple way to make sure your formatting is correct is to use **www.easybib.com**.

**List your sources here:**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Source 1:** | Beers, G. Kylene. *Elements of Literature. Essentials of British and World Literature*. [Austin, Tex.]: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 2008. Print |
| **Source 2:** |  |
| **Source 3:** |  |
| **Source 4:** |  |
| **Source 5:** |  |

**STEP TWO: PREPARATION**

1. Decide on a creative way to present the relevant information to the class. Groups may present their findings any way they wish as long as all of the relevant information is clearly conveyed. Some presentation methods you may consider (though do not feel limited to these) are: a Powerpoint Presentation, a skit, a poster, a rap, a song, a puppet show, or a short video.
2. Compose a 5 question quiz that can be answered from the information presented in your presentation. These quiz questions must be printed and turned in to your teacher.

**STEP THREE: PRESENTATION**

Hand in a printed copy of your 5 quiz questions to your teacher.

Then, each group will have 5-7 minutes to teach their information to the class. This assignment will be graded using the following rubric:

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| **Content-**20 points | Students provide comprehensive coverage of all relevant information and answer all focus questions in detail. |
| **Design and Execution-**15 points | Students convey their topic to the class in a way that is clear, compelling and creative. Presentation includes some kind of visual aide. |
| **Group Process Skills-**15 points | Students use time wisely, delegate tasks and share responsibility for the work. |
| **Written Work-**10 points | Students produce a 5 question quiz on relevant material and **cite all sources in their presentation**.  Any written work, ie. slides, lyrics, scripts, posters etc. must be turned in to your teacher. |
| **Total**-60 points |  |