

## Notes for the Parent or Teacher

This newspaper pack can be used in a number of ways. The pages can be printed on regular paper for drafting the articles and then printed on other various types of paper that give a more authentic feel. The images used in the pack are also repeated on extra pages at the end of the unit in case they are needed for other projects or formats.

"The Big Picture" provides students a very brief summary of events in order to help them understand how the events and people depicted were related, but it is meant only to serve as a springboard for further discovery as students investigate and complete their assignments.

Also, as explained in the student introduction, sometimes the artist's rendition of an event does not match what history records happened. This is a great opportunity to help the student learn about investigating the facts of history and weighing conflicting sources and evidence.

In a classroom setting, you may wish to assign one article to each student and then create a class newspaper or presentation of the events studied.

A template for a newspaper page. It features a large rectangular box with rounded corners for a main image or headline. Below this box are five horizontal lines for text. A large, diagonal 'SAMPLE' watermark is overlaid on the entire page.

## Reporting From the Middle Ages Instructions

It's time to go on assignment to the Middle Ages. You'll need a few tools to get started. First, read the section called "The Big Picture." This introduces you to the time period and helps you see how your assignments are connected to each other.

Next are your assignments. Each assignment includes a small picture that matches the large picture on a newspaper page you'll find in this pack.

The next tools you have been given are ten sets of pages for newspaper articles. Each set is made up of three pages. The first has a large picture. There is room at the very top for the name of your newspaper and space for the issue number and date beneath it. The large picture is a picture related to your assignment (but be careful—some of these field artists don't always depict the information accurately, so be sure to do your own research and determine what happened at the event). Write your incredible, eye-catching headline beneath the picture. Then you can start your news story. Fill the first page. Then, depending on how long your story will be, fill the next two pages or jump to the third page that has the small box in the corner. Finish your article on this page. In the small box, write something such as a short bio of the author of the article, an advertisement, a help-wanted ad, etc. But be sure to keep in line with the time period. You can't have an ad for a television before one would have been invented!

Write an article for each of your assignments. When you are done, you will have a great record of the Middle Ages!

## Reporting From the Middle Ages

### The Big Picture

The Middle Ages was a time in history from about the 400s through the 1400s. There are no fixed beginning and ending dates, but it is roughly the time between the fall of Rome and the discovery of the New World. It's also called the "medieval period."

Life was difficult, and most of the people worked very hard. Farming was extremely important. Crops and other farm items not only gave food the people needed to survive, but could often be traded or used to pay debts.

Many farmers worked on manors. The manor was divided into the land owned by the landlord and the land leased as farms to peasants. Peasants paid for their farms by working on the landlord's area to be sure it produced well. In any time they had left, they could work the land they leased. They also had to pay some of their produce to the landlord, so for many, survival was a daily struggle.

The seasons of the year determined what peasants were to do. Agricultural calendars, such as the one presented by Pietro de Crescenzi, showed how a farmer's life was governed by the seasons. In the spring, the peasant was especially busy preparing the landlord's fields in addition to trying to prepare his own for the year ahead. The work of preparing the fields was hard, as the newer types of plows were not used much by the common person. The plow they had to use barely broke up the surface of the ground. The farmers used the plow as much as possible, but they had to continue to work the soil with a shovel. Other tools used by the farmer included the scythe, pitchfork, and rake.

Much of Europe used the three-field rotation system, allowing winter wheat to be sowed in one field in the autumn, oats and barley to be sowed in another field in the early months of the year, and one field to be left fallow so as not to strip all minerals from it. This gave it a chance to replenish itself before the next planting.

Farmers worked long hours in all sorts of weather. Whether walking behind a plow and oxen, harvesting, or hauling firewood, there was always much to be done. As the year went on, harvest came. It was important to harvest as

many of the garden plants as possible for food for the workers and to make stews and soups to help feed families. People often worked in groups to gather the crops. Haymaking was also important, as the animals on the farm needed food throughout the winter, too.

While farming provided much of the food necessary for the people, hunting provided food and entertainment for the wealthy. Hunters used spears, bows, and swords and hunted from horseback, using dogs at their side. The poorer people hunted also, but they often could not keep the meat to feed their families. Instead, they often had to turn it over to the landlord or sell it to pay debts.

While the poor struggled daily to have enough to eat, the wealthy often threw huge feasts. They ate many types of meat, such as deer, pigs, peacocks, and even eels. They ate the meat with heavy sauces and many spices to give it a rich flavor.

The wealthy not only indulged with fine food, they took great care to make sure the feast was presented fashionably. Guests dressed elaborately, and their hosts presented extravagant entertainment, such as musical performances and pageants.

Falconry was an extremely popular sport in Europe during the Middle Ages. It was also called hawking, and owning falcons was considered a status symbol. There were even rules on what types of birds could be owned and flown by wealthy people with different social ranks. In addition to the high status that came with owning the falcons, the wealthy competed to increase their status by hiring people to work for them who could best train their birds to be the best anywhere.

While some think learning diminished during the Middle Ages, historians have found that it's not true. Education and art, though not accessible to the common person, continued to flourish in certain places. The Book of Kells is an illuminated manuscript, meaning that it is done with beautiful decorations throughout the book. It is thought to have been produced around AD 800. The book was written with ornate letters and artwork, with some decorated initials filling a full page. The Book of Kells contains the four Gospels and other material in Latin. The handwriting is done in a beautiful script that adds to the beauty of the book.

Around the 1070s, the Bayeux Tapestry was produced. The tapestry is an embroidery showing scenes from the Norman invasion and scenes from medieval life. The tapestry is 231 feet (70 meters) long and 19.5 inches (49.5 cm) wide. There are many interpretations of what the scenes mean, as there are few words to explain what is shown, but the major focus of the tapestry is telling the story of the Norman conquest of England.

During the Hundred Years' War between France and England, the siege of the French city of Orleans took place. After more than eighty years of fighting, the French finally had a decisive victory at Orleans when seventeen-year-old Joan of Arc led the French against the English and ended the siege, with the help of a force from Orleans. After winning the Battle of Orleans and seeing Charles crowned king of France, she went on fighting for the French. However, she was executed in 1431 after being captured by the English.

While the study of mathematics and astronomy had been occurring since ancient times, the Middle Ages saw advancements that have greatly impacted modern times. Leonardo Fibonacci from Italy helped revive learning in Europe, showed people the importance of place value, created the Fibonacci sequence, and more. Scientists such as John Philoponus and Nicole Oresme asked questions, developed theories, and worked to test them. As the Middle Ages closed, Leonardo da Vinci developed inventions, art, and theories that continue to capture the imagination of people today.

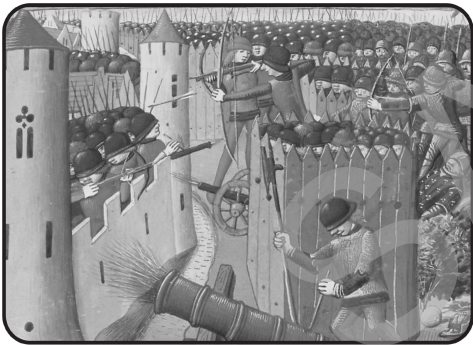
Life changed greatly from the early to later Middle Ages. While the life of the common person may not have seemed to be impacted greatly, advancements were coming that would change everyone's lives.



**On Assignment: The Treasure of the Book of Kells**  
Write an article about the Book of Kells. Describe the book and help people understand what an illuminated manuscript is. Talk about the colors used and how beautifully the work has been done. Try to do something in this type of beautiful script and write about how difficult it is to do.



**On Assignment: A Closer Look**  
Your newspaper was able to get a picture of the part of the Bayeux Tapestry that shows Harold's coronation. Write about the coronation of King Harold. Include information that tells of the scenes on the tapestry showing the Battle of Hastings and the death of King Harold.



**On Assignment: On the Battlefield at Orleans**  
Report on the siege of Orleans. Be certain to include an interview with some of the soldiers who talk about Joan of Arc and her leadership of the French against the English, with the help of a force from Orleans. How do they feel about the siege being over?



**On Assignment: Interview with Scholars**  
Interview the people gathered to study astronomy. What new ideas and discoveries are they discussing? What is the man with the two pieces of wood studying? What is being observed by the man looking up at the sky?





[illegible]