

Can feudalism be used as an effective form of government?

WebQuest Description: A study of feudalism in the Middle Ages from various perspectives.

Grade Level: 9-12

Curriculum: Social Studies

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Introduction

Welcome to the future..."It can't get any worse." That's what they said. That's what they said when the market collapsed. That's what they said when a world-wide plague struck, reducing the world's population from 8.3 billion to 5.6 billion. That's what they said when the nations of the world went to war. But when the bombs fell on major cities all over the world...on that terrible and terrifying day...stunned silence was all that could be heard.We live in a dark time...a time of CHAOS AND ANARCHY. A time in which survival has become a daily struggle. Warlords who have amassed fighting forces seek only to control more land, more power, and more people. They target whoever stands in their way: men, women, and children.And yet in these dark times there is a glimmer of hope, shining like a light: you. You are humanity's last hope. We are sending you on a dangerous but necessary mission. You see, just recently we uncovered the last time machine built by Dr. Chronos. It has enough power for only one time jump. Now, I know what you're thinking, "Let's just go back and prevent all that bad stuff from happening." That's not the way it works unfortunately. There is just too much to fix with one time jump. And humanity had this coming. No, if humanity hopes to survive, there is only one possible destination for this mission: Medieval Europe.Hurry, get into the time machine; we've got no time to waste. Don't worry about directions, all you need to know is described in detail in the other sections of your Mission Report. Good luck...we're counting on you.

Tasks

Welcome to Medieval Europe. The land during this period, like ours, is lacking a strong centralized government.While you are here your task is to answer one question: can the the system of government, economics, and society used by the Europeans during the Medieval Era be used by the people of this post-apocalyptic era to create a functional society? Or to put a little more basically: can Feudalism and everything that went with it successfully govern a society?We have provided you with ancient writing devices so that you won't stick out too much from the locals. What you write on is called "paper." What you write with is called a "pencil" or "pen." You will use these writing tools to create a flipbook, in which you will take notes on all of the information you will need to answer the question above. A shell of a flipbook has been provided for your reference.When all is said and done you will return to our time and do one of two things in the last section of your flipbook:1) Create a flyer which either persuades or dissuades people from using Feudalism as a system of government.2) Write a persuasive essay which either persuades or dissuades people from using Feudalism as a system of government.More detail on both of these options will be revealed in the next section of your Mission Report.

Process

Just in case you forgot, the reason you are going back in time is to answer one question: can the the system of government, economics, and society used by the Europeans during the Medieval Era be used by the people of this post-apocalyptic era to create a functional society?In order to answer this question you will need to carefully research and observe the government, economic, and social structures around you. Note your observations in your flipbook IN COMPLETE SENTENCES, using organized paragraphs or a well thought-out outline (even outlines are written in complete sentences).Additional Notes:At the bottom of this page is a series of resources to help you complete this task. Some of these tasks are referenced specifically during one of the upcoming steps. The others are general resources which can be used to explore a variety of topics.In the Image Gallery you can find illustrations and primary source portrayals of the issues you are researching. Check it out not only for the pictures but for the notes that go with them.In a given section you can write on both the top and the bottom flaps. For most sections the depth of your research will require you to do this.Step 1: CREATE YOUR FLIPBOOK1) Get FOUR sheets of the colored paper provided. Stagger and fold them as you see in the example provided.2) Label each tab from top to bottom in the following order (Please note that Medieval Times is also the title of your flipbook and should be both large and well decorated):Medieval TimesBackgroundFeudalismKings | NoblesKnights | PeasantsWar, Disease, and Religious DisagreementsThe VerdictStep 2: MEDIEVAL TIMESObjective: To create a 4 to 6 sentence summary of the Medieval Era. This can be done in a variety of ways, using a variety of sources, but should at the least incorporate the following basic information:1) When was the Medieval Era?2) Where was this time period mainly centered?3) What are some major events that happened during this time?4) What ideas define this time period?5) Why is the Medieval Era sometimes known as the Dark Ages? What is the problem with describing it this way?Check out the following resources to accomplish this task:A Short History of Medieval EuropeA Brief Summary of the Middle AgesThe Dark Ages...How Dark Were They? (in the resources section)The Start of the Medieval Era (in the resources section)Step 3:

BACKGROUNDObjective: To put the Medieval Era in context. You will need to give me information about what happened prior to this time period and what was going on in other parts of the world. I have provided some questions below to get you started but your research should take you further still. 1) What caused the Medieval Era to begin? 2) How did Europe change without the law, order, and protection they had under the Roman Empire? 3) How did the nobles respond to the changes that occurred after the collapse of the Roman Empire? 4) How did Feudalism attempt solve these problems? 5) How did Christianity act as a unifying force for people during this time? Check out the following resources to accomplish this task: The Start of the Medieval Era (in the resources section) Religion in Medieval Europe (in the resources section) The Role of Christianity in the Medieval Era (in the resources section)

Step 4: FEUDALISM & MANORIALISMObjective: To explain in detail what feudalism was all about. You will need to explain what society was like during the Medieval Era and examine how Feudalism impacted it. Use the questions below to guide your explanation of feudalism: 1) What political and military conflicts led to the development of feudalism? [A brief review of research you did for Step 3] 2) How does feudalism organize government and society? 3) How is power distributed to the different groups? 4) How do the different classes interact with each other under feudalism? (i.e. How do they depend on each other?) 5) Describe the economic system of manorialism and how it was related to feudalism. Paste one of the cut out charts of the Feudal System (provided for you...also found as the first image in the Image Gallery) in your flipbook for your reference. Check out the following resources to accomplish this task: Log in to Britannica Online and locate the article on "feudalism" (free version [HERE](#)) Log in to Britannica Online and locate the article on "manorialism" (free version [HERE](#)) The Dark Ages...How Dark Were They? (in the resources section) Feudalism & Manorialism (in the resources section)

Steps 5 & 6: KINGS, NOBLES, KNIGHTS AND PEASANTSPLEASE NOTE THAT THIS SECTION SUBDIVIDED BETWEEN TWO PORTIONS OF THE FLIPBOOK. SEE STEP 1 FOR DETAILS. Objective: To be able to compare how different classes lived during this time period. You will be looking at four groups, examining how they lived, what their quality of life was, how much political power they had, and evaluating whether or not they were treated fairly by Feudalism. As you research EACH OF THE CLASSES listed (kings, nobles, knights, and peasants), use the following questions to guide you (in other words, you will answer the following questions for each of the four classes): Please note that nobles are sometimes referred to as barons or lords. Please note that peasants are sometimes referred to as serfs, villeins, or vassals. 1) How does/can a person become a member of this class? 2) What kind of jobs do people of this class typically have? 3) What political power do people of this class typically have? 4) How do the people of this class typically interact with the other classes? (i.e. Do they get along?) 5) How do the people of this class live? (type of house, clothing, food, daily activities, etc.) 6) What is the overall quality of life for people of this class? Explain. Check out the following resources to accomplish this task: Life Inside a Castle The Royal Court The Barons (Noblemen) Knights and their Armor The Medieval Knight Peasants Life as a Peasant (Short Movie) Food for Peasants and Nobles Medieval Clothing Medieval Education Commerce in the Medieval Era Life in a Village Life in a City People of the Middle Ages The Feudal Structure of the Medieval World Resource #5 (at the bottom of this page)

Step 7: WAR, DISEASE, AND RELIGIOUS DISAGREEMENTObjective: To be able to analyze and explain the significance of the Crusades, the Hundred Years' War, the Black Death, and the Great Schism. Each of these items is broken down further in the space below, providing some guiding questions for that topic. The Crusades 1) When did these wars begin and end? 2) What were the two major groups involved in these conflicts? 3) Where were The Crusades mainly fought? 4) What was the territorial goal of the Crusades? 5) What were the effects of the Crusades? The Hundred Years' War 1) Is the Hundred Years' War one conflict or a series of conflicts? Explain. When did it/they start and end? 2) Who were the main participants in the Hundred Years' War? 3) Why was the Hundred Years' War fought? 4) What finally led to the end of the Hundred Years' War? 5) What affect did this have on Medieval Europe? The Black Death (also known as the Black Plague and the Bubonic Plague) 1) What was the Black Death? What caused it? 2) Where did the Black Death begin? How did it get to Europe? 3) How did people react to this plague? Who did they blame? 4) What did people try to do to keep from getting the disease? 5) How did the Black Death impact Medieval Europe? The Great Schism 1) How important was Christianity during the Medieval Era in Europe? 2) How did Christianity impact the lives of Medieval people? 3) What two groups were involved in the Great Schism? 4) Over what issue(s) did the Great Schism occur? 5) What was the outcome of the Great Schism? Was there any true resolution as a result of this conflict? Check out the following resources to accomplish this task: The Crusades The Christian Crusades (1095-1291) The Hundred Years' War The Hundred Years' War, 1337-1453 The Hundred Years' War The Black Death: Bubonic Plague Eyewitness to History - The Black Death, 1348 Disease During the Medieval Era The Great Schism (1378-1415) Religion in the Middle Ages See Resource #6 (at the bottom of this page) See Resource #7 (at the bottom of this page) See Map of the Black Death (in the Image Gallery)

Step 8: THE VERDICTObjective: After thoroughly considering the evidence, create a well organized response to the question which prompted this mission: can the the system of government, economics, and society used by the Europeans during the Medieval Era be used by the people of this post-apocalyptic era to create a functional society? Your response will be either a flyer OR a persuasive essay which supports or condemns feudalism as a working political system. Option 1: Flyer On the last page of your flipbook you will create a flyer which demonstrates your support or condemnation of feudalism. You may NOT use markers but may use pencil, colored pencil, and black pen. Your poster should include a catchphrase that announces your position (ex. "Know the truth: feudalism is futile" or "Feudalism: the way of our future"...you may not use either of these examples) and a visual representation of your reasoning. Your flyer will be similar to a political flyer in that it is trying to persuade the viewer to agree with a desired viewpoint. THREE EXAMPLES OF PERSUASIVE FLYERS CAN BE FOUND IN THE IMAGE GALLERY FOR YOUR REFERENCE (see last three images). Option 2: Persuasive Essay On the last page of your flipbook you will write a persuasive essay which analyzes the positive and negative characteristics of feudalism, taking a position either for or against the use of feudalism as an acceptable form of government in our post-apocalyptic age. You will need to explain why feudalism would or wouldn't work and provide historic examples to support your reasoning. Your essay should be at least three paragraphs long with an introductory, body, and conclusion paragraph. ESSAYS ARE NEVER ONE LONG PARAGRAPH.

Below you will find some non-specific resources that will help you find some of the information you need. These resources are not arranged in any order and include electronic (PDF) versions of other textbooks in addition to other types of resources.

Conclusion

If you are reading this page then you have successfully accomplished the task previously set before you. No one but you could have pulled this off. No hurry up and set the time machine to bring you back. We won't know if feudalism will work until your back, but regardless the knowledge you have gained will be invaluable. Great job. Prepare your notes as the future is counting on them!

Evaluation

Before you examine how it is you will be graded you should first understand why we are doing this assignment in the first place. The Medieval Era is a fascinating period of time! It is in this time that King Arthur is said to have created a band of warriors known as the Knights of the Round Table. It is a time of castles and Crusades, of chivalry and jousting. All of a sudden, Europe goes from being the top of the civilization food chain to the bottom, only to rise back to the top with time. In short, this is once again the story of us: people are living the good life, go through some hard times, and have to work hard to regain their success. What's more, humans will learn from the experiences of the Medieval Era and will grow tremendously as a result. With this in mind, your task is to create a flipbook with all the information you could ever need to know about the Medieval Era. HAVE FUN WITH THIS. Yes, it is a grade and yes it is work, but this should be something that you can enjoy learning about. After all, not everyone get's to go back in time. You have the opportunity to explore this time period in your own way and come to your own conclusions. Own those conclusions and be proud of the work that leads you to them. Be creative with how you present your findings.

Category and Score	A	B	C	D or F	Score
Research	Accurate, applicable, and extensive research combined with insightful historic interpretation.	Accurate and applicable research combined with some historic interpretation. Some additional research present.	Researches only the guiding questions. Accurate sufficiently addresses necessary topics.	Content provided insufficiently addresses topics, demonstrating little research.	50
Organization	Information is very well organized, with topics flowing naturally from one to the other. Clear handwriting.	Information is organized into well written sentences. Ideas and research are connected. Neat handwriting.	Information is sufficiently organized, though room for improvement exists. Legible handwriting.	Information is disorganized and/or presented in incomplete sentences. Handwriting is difficult to read.	15
Creativity	Creatively presented, engaging, and informative.	Creative elements interwoven with the information presented.	Some elements of creativity added to the flipbook.	No significant attempts at creativity were added to the creation of the flipbook.	10
Flyer or Essay	The essay/flyer exceeds expectations. Demonstrates an informed evaluation of feudalism and supports its point of view with historical evidence.	The essay/flyer is successfully completed. It contains an evaluation of feudalism and includes some historical support.	The essay/flyer is completed. It has a evaluation of feudalism, though that evaluation could be improved.	The essay/flyer is either incomplete or does not sufficiently evaluate feudalism as a political system.	25
				Total Score	100

Teacher Page

As with all webquests, it is imperative that student's create a product that demonstrate their learning. I have chosen the flipbook as a way for students to take notes, though you might choose something else. Because this is meant to be an activity that occurs over several classes, a quiz has been included as a way of identifying students who are not staying on task/focused. It is meant to be open note, as a way to encourage students to take quality notes. There are a couple of things you need to consider if you are to use/adapt this webquest: 1) For starters, please give credit where credit is due. I have no problem with you adapting this but don't go claiming it as your own. 2) There are a lot of resources here and undoubtedly some of the links will decay with time (i.e. stop working). Be sure to check each link so that you know what resources will be available to your students. 3) Because there are a lot of resources students can use, the potential for students (especially students with learning disabilities) to get overwhelmed exists. If this becomes an issue, I recommend that you select one or two resources in advance from each section for them to focus on. In other words, help them focus their research. The other possibility is to divide this assignment up as a group project.

Standards

Credits

Other

