Reading Essentials and Study Guide

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Crusades and Culture in the Middle Ages, 1000–1500

Lesson 3 Culture of the Middle Ages

ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS

How did the Church influence political and cultural changes in medieval Europe? How did both innovations and disruptive forces affect people during the Middle Ages?

Reading HELPDESK

Academic Vocabulary

technical of or pertaining to a technique

corporation a form of business organization that has a separate legal entity with all the rights and responsibilites of an individual, including the right to buy and sell property, enter into legal contracts, and sue and be sued

Content Vocabulary

theology the study of religion and God

scholasticism a medieval philosophical and theological system that tried to reconcile faith and reason

vernacular the language of everyday speech in a particular region

chanson de geste a type of vernacular literature, this heroic epic was popular in medieval Europe and described battles and political contests

TAKING NOTES: *Contrasting*

ACTIVITY As you read, use a table like the one below to compare the Romanesque style of architecture with the Gothic style of architecture.

Romanesque	Gothic

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IT MATTERS BECAUSE

New ideas about architecture and learning developed in Europe during the High Middle Ages. Beautiful cathedrals, or large churches, were built across Europe. Europe's first universities were created during this period.

Architecture

Guiding Question *How did innovations change the architecture of churches and cathedrals in the High Middle Ages?*

Many cathedrals were built in Europe during the eleventh and twelfth centuries. These churches were built in the Romanesque style. Romanesque churches normally followed the basilica shape of churches built in the late Roman Empire. Basilicas were rectangular buildings with flat wooden roofs.

Romanesque builders replaced the basilica's flat wooden roof with a long, round, arched vault made of stone. This was called a barrel vault. Some roofs were built with a cross vault in which two barrel vaults intersected. The builder used the cross vault to create a church plan shaped like a cross. Romanesque churches required huge pillars and walls to hold them up. This was because stone roofs were very heavy. There was not much space for windows, so Romanesque churches were dark on the inside.

A new style, called Gothic, began in the twelfth century and was perfected in the thirteenth century. The Gothic cathedral was one of the greatest artistic successes of the High Middle Ages. Two basic innovations made Gothic cathedrals possible.

One innovation was replacing the round barrel vault of Romanesque churches. This was replaced with a combination of ribbed vaults and pointed arches. Builders could now make Gothic churches higher. This gave the churches a feeling of upward movement, as if the building was reaching to God.

Another **technical** innovation was the flying buttress. This was a heavy, arched support of stone built onto the outside of the walls. Flying buttresses made it possible to distribute, or spread out, the weight of the church's vaulted ceilings outward and down. This also got rid of the heavy walls that were needed in Romanesque churches. Gothic cathedrals were built with thinner walls that were filled with stained glass windows.

The stained windows of Gothic cathedrals show religious scenes and scenes from daily life. They are made of pieces of colored glass. The light from the sun shines through the windows and creates shifting patterns of colors on the floors and walls of the cathedral. The Gothic cathedral's towers reach up toward Heaven. The cathedrals tell about a time when most people believed in a spiritual world.

> ☑ **Reading Progress Check**
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> *Visualizing* Imagine visiting a Romanesque church and then a Gothic church on a warm and sunny day. How might you describe your experience?
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Universities

Guiding Question *How did universities reflect the intellectual revival that occurred in Europe during the High Middle Ages?*

Today's universities include faculty, students, and degrees. They are a product of the High Middle Ages. The word *university* comes from the Latin word *universitas,* which means "**corporation**" or "guild."

The first European university appeared in Bologna (buh•LOH•nyuh), Italy. Students were men only. They came from all parts of Europe to learn law from the great teacher Irnerius. The University of Paris was the first university in northern Europe. Many students and masters left Paris in the late 1300s to start a university at Oxford, England. Kings, popes, and princes thought it was honorable to found universities. Europe had 80 universities by 1500.

Students began their studies with the traditional liberal arts. These subjects were grammar, rhetoric, logic, arithmetic, geometry, music, and astronomy. Teachers lectured by reading from a basic text and adding explanations. Students took oral examinations after four to six years to earn a bachelor of arts degree and later a master of arts. Students earned a doctorate of law, medicine, or theology after about ten more years.

The most highly thought of subject was **theology**. This is the study of religion and God. The study of theology was strongly influenced by a philosophy known as **scholasticism**. Scholasticism tried to show that faith, or belief in God, was in harmony, or agreement, with reason. Its main goal was to make Christian teachings fit with the works of the ancient Greek philosophers. For example, the Greek philosopher Aristotle reached his conclusions by reason, not by faith. His ideas sometimes contradicted Church teachings. Anselm of Canterbury was a monastic theologian. His major work was the *Proslogion,* which made one of the first attempts in the eleventh century to show how faith could be used together with reason. Anselm argued that reason could prove that God exists.

Thomas Aquinas (uh•KWY• nuhs) made the most famous attempt to reconcile the teachings of Aristotle and Christianity in the 1200s. Aquinas is best known for his *Summa Theologica*. A "summa" was a summary of all knowledge on a topic. His masterpiece followed a logical, or reasonable, method of scholarly study. Aquinas first asked a question such as, "Does God exist?" Then he discussed opposing opinions before he made his own conclusions. He believed that truths arrived at through reason or faith could not conflict with each other. Reason without faith could only show truths about the physical world. It could not show spiritual truths. Natural law is part of God's eternal law. Aquinas believed that people could use reason to arrive at natural law. This would allow people to figure out what is naturally good and evil.

Roger Bacon was an English philosopher who wrote *Opus Majus* in the late 1260s at the request of Pope Clement IV. It was an encyclopedia supporting a reformation, or improvement, of all sciences. These sciences included logic, mathematics, physics, experimentation, and philosophy. Bacon felt mathematics was very important for the study of philosophy.

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☑ **Reading Progress Check**

Summarizing What degrees could students obtain by going to university?

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Vernacular Literature

Guiding Question *Why was the development of vernacular literature important during the High Middle Ages?*

Latin was the universal language of medieval civilization. However, literature was being written in the **vernacular** in the twelfth century. The vernacular is the language of everyday speech in a particular region. It includes languages such as Spanish, French, English, or German. The demand and desire for vernacular literature appeared in the twelfth century. Educated people at courts and in the cities took an interest in new sources of entertainment, and literature was one of them.

   Perhaps the most popular vernacular literature of the twelfth century was troubadour poetry. This was chiefly the product of nobles and knights. This poetry told of the love of a knight for a lady who inspires him to become a braver knight and a better poet.

   Another type of vernacular literature was known as the **chanson de geste**. This is a heroic epic. The main events described in heroic epic poems are battles in which knights fight with courage for their kings and lords. The earliest and best example of this literature is *The Song of Roland*. It appeared around 1100 and was written in French.

   The English author Geoffrey Chaucer used the English vernacular in his famous work *The Canterbury Tales* in the fourteenth century. This work is written by Chaucer in the form of a collection of stories told by a group of 29 pilgrims. They represented many types of people in English society. They were journeying together to the tomb of Saint Thomas á Becket at Canterbury, England.

Connections to TODAY

Gothic Architecture

Grand Gothic cathedrals, such as Chartres and Notre Dame, influenced American architecture. The American Gothic revival produced St. Patrick's Cathedral in New York City and university campuses such as Yale and Princeton.

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☑ **Reading Progress Check**

Identifying What were two popular types of vernacular literature in the twelfth century?

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