

# Reading Essentials and Study Guide



## Crusades and Culture in the Middle Ages, 1000–1500

### Lesson 4 The Late 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

**period** an interval of time

**consequence** the effect or result of an action

##### Content Vocabulary

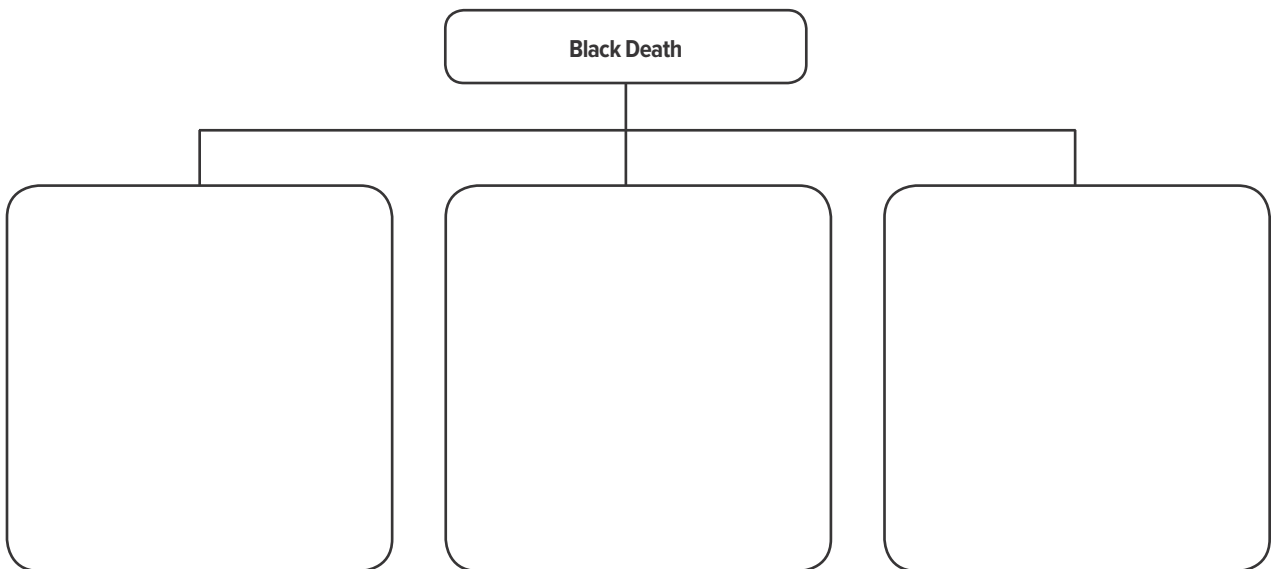
**anti-Semitism** hostility toward or discrimination against Jews

**new monarchy** in the fifteenth century, government in which power had been centralized under a king or queen, i.e., France, England, and Spain

**taille** an annual direct tax, usually on land or property, that provided a regular source of income for the French monarchy

#### TAKING NOTES: *Categorizing*

**ACTIVITY** As you read, use a chart like the one below to identify the impact of the Black Death.



# Reading Essentials and Study Guide

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## Crusades and Culture in the Middle Ages, 1000–1500

### Lesson 4 The Late Middle Ages, *continued*

#### IT MATTERS BECAUSE

Medieval European society reached its high point in the 1200s, but much changed in the 1300s. A series of problems caused trouble across Europe. The Black Death spread, killing more than one-third of the population. The Great Schism caused problems in the Catholic Church, and people's faith was weakened. Then the Hundred Years' War started. Recovery began in the 1400s, and rulers responded by creating their "new" monarchies.

#### The Black Death

**Guiding Question** *What social and economic effects did the Black Death have on Europe?*

Weather patterns changed in Europe toward the end of the thirteenth century. Europe entered a **period** that has been called a "little ice age." There was a drop in overall temperatures, which led to shorter growing seasons and bad weather conditions. Heavy rains between 1315 and 1317 in northern Europe destroyed crops and caused food shortages. This caused extreme hunger. The Great Famine expanded to other parts of Europe as well. Famine might have led to constant malnutrition. Malnourished people are less able to stop infection. This might help explain the high mortality, or high number of deaths, of the great plague known as the Black Death, which was the most destructive natural disaster in European history.

Bubonic plague was the most common form of the Black Death. It was spread by black rats that were carrying fleas that had a deadly bacterium. Italian merchants brought the plague with them from Kaffa on the Black Sea to the island of Sicily in October 1347. The plague had spread to southern Italy and southern France by the end of 1347. The path of the Black Death usually followed trade routes. The plague spread through France, the Low Countries (modern Belgium, Luxembourg, and the Netherlands), and Germany in 1348 and 1349. It spread to England in 1349 and then it expanded to northern Europe and Scandinavia. Eastern Europe and Russia were affected by 1351.

The total European population before the Black Death was 75 million. Possibly more than one-third of the population died of the plague between 1347 and 1351. Italy's crowded cities were hit very hard, where between 50 and 60 percent of the people died. Entire villages disappeared in England and Germany.

People did not know what caused the plague. Many believed that God sent it as punishment for their sins or that the devil caused it. Extreme reactions led to **anti-Semitism**, or a feeling of anger toward Jews. Jews were sometimes falsely accused of causing the plague by poisoning town wells.

The death of so many people had economic **consequences**. Trade declined, and a shortage of workers caused a sharp rise in the price of labor. The decline in the number of people also lowered the demand for food, which resulted in falling prices for food. Landlords were now paying more for labor at the same time that their incomes from rents were declining. Serfdom had been declining throughout the High Middle Ages. Some peasants made agreements with their lords to pay rent instead of owing services. This change freed them from serfdom. This contributed to the end of medieval Europe.

# Reading Essentials and Study Guide

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## Crusades and Culture in the Middle Ages, 1000–1500

### Lesson 4 The Late Middle Ages, *continued*



#### Reading Progress Check

**Identifying** What did many people believe caused the plague?

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## Decline of Church Power

**Guiding Question** *How did the Great Schism and other crises lead to the decline of Church power?*

The popes reached the height of their power in the 1200s. The Church faced a series of problems that led to a decline in its power in the 1300s.

### The Popes at Avignon

European kings started to reject the pope's authority by the end of the 1200s. The struggle between Pope Boniface VIII and King Philip IV of France had serious results for the papacy. This occurred in the late thirteenth century and early fourteenth century.

Philip claimed the right to tax the clergy, but Boniface argued that taxing the clergy required the pope's permission. This was because popes had power over both Church and state. Philip rejected the pope's position and sent French soldiers to Italy to bring Boniface back to France for trial. The pope escaped but died soon afterward. Philip then had Frenchman Clement V elected as pope in 1305. Clement moved to Avignon (a • VEEN • YOHN), a town in southern France. The popes lived in Avignon from 1305 to 1377.

Feelings against the papacy grew during this time. The pope was also bishop of Rome, and many believed that the pope should live in Rome, not in Avignon. The expensive living of the pope and cardinals in Avignon also led to criticism. Pope Gregory XI saw that there was decline in papal status, and he returned to Rome in 1377.

### The Great Schism

Gregory XI died soon after his return to Rome. The cardinals met to elect a new pope, who became Pope Urban VI. Urban was Italian, which was what the citizens of Rome had asked for. A group of French cardinals declared the election invalid five months later, and they chose a Frenchman as pope. This French pope returned to Avignon.

Urban stayed in Rome. This started the Great Schism of the Church, which lasted from 1378 to 1417. The schism, or split, divided Europe. France and its allies supported the pope in Avignon, and England and its allies supported the pope in Rome.

# Reading Essentials and Study Guide

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## Crusades and Culture in the Middle Ages, 1000–1500

### Lesson 4 The Late Middle Ages, *continued*

The Great Schism created political conflict and damaged the Church. Each pope was believed to be the true leader of Christianity by different people. Each line of popes called the other the Antichrist (someone who opposes, or is against, Christ). People's faith in both the papacy and the Church weakened. The situation became worse after an effort to solve the problem in 1409 resulted in the reign of three popes at the same time. A Church council finally met at Constance, Switzerland, and ended the schism in 1417. The competing popes either quit or were removed. Then a new pope whom everyone accepted was elected.

These problems in the Catholic Church had led to calls for reform, or change. In England, John Wyclif's disgust with clerical corruption led him to a far-ranging attack on papal authority. There was a marriage between the royal families of England and Bohemia. This allowed Wyclif's ideas spread to a group of Czech reformers led by John Hus. They called for an end to clerical corruption. They also wanted to end the great power held by the papal authority within the Church. The Council of Constance accused Hus of heresy, and he was burned at the stake in 1415. The Czechs then led a revolutionary upheaval in Bohemia that was not crushed until 1436. Hus's ideas would later have an impact on the German monk Martin Luther.

The Church had lost much of its political power by the early 1400s. The pope could no longer claim control over the state. Christianity remained central to medieval life, but the papacy and the Church had lost much of their authority.



#### Reading Progress Check

**Summarizing** Why were popes living in Avignon criticized?

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## The Hundred Years' War

**Guiding Question** *Why was the Hundred Years' War a turning point in warfare, and what were its consequences?*

Plague, economic crisis and the decline of the Catholic Church were not the only problems of the late Middle Ages. War and political instability also caused problems. The Hundred Years' War was the most violent struggle during this period.

Trouble began over the duchy of Gascony in France. England controlled it, and France wanted it. King Edward III of England was also the duke of Gascony and a vassal to the French king. King Philip VI of France seized the duchy in 1337, and Edward declared war on Philip. This action started the Hundred Years' War.

Knights were looking forward to battle when this war between England and France began. Knights were trained to be warriors. They viewed battle as a chance to show their fighting abilities. However, the Hundred Years' War was an important turning point in the nature of warfare. Peasant foot soldiers instead of knights won the main battles of the war.

# Reading Essentials and Study Guide



## Crusades and Culture in the Middle Ages, 1000–1500

### Lesson 4 The Late Middle Ages, *continued*

France's heavily armed noble cavalymen viewed foot soldiers as social inferiors. The English also used heavily armed cavalry, but they relied more on large numbers of peasants. The peasants were paid to be foot soldiers. English soldiers were armed with pikes, or heavy spears. They also used longbows. These bows had greater striking power, a longer range, and more rapid speed of fire than the crossbow, which had previously been used.

The first major battle of the Hundred Years' War occurred in 1346 at Crécy. The larger French army did not follow a battle plan and attacked in a disorderly way. The English archers defeated them with their use of longbows.

The Battle of Crécy was not decisive, and it did not end the war. The English did not have enough resources to conquer all of France, but they continued to try. The English king Henry V achieved victory at the Battle of Agincourt in 1415. The French knights who attacked Henry's forces across a muddy field were defeated. About 1,500 French nobles died in battle.

Charles was heir to the French throne. It was now up to him to lead the French cause, which seemed hopeless. A French peasant woman saved the fearful monarch. She was Joan of Arc, the daughter of successful peasants. She was a very religious person, and she claimed to have visions and believed that saints had told her to free France. Charles felt Joan was honest, and he allowed her to accompany a French army to Orléans when she was only 17. Joan's faith also inspired the French armies. They found new confidence, and they seized Orléans.

Joan had brought the war to a turning point but did not live to see its end. The English captured Joan in 1430. They accused her of witchcraft, or the use of magic, and they turned her over to the Inquisition. At the time, visions were thought to be inspired by either God or the devil. Joan was condemned to death but her achievements were important. Although the war dragged on for another two decades, English defeats at Normandy and Aquitaine led to a French victory by 1453. Also important to the French success was the use of the cannon. The cannon was a new weapon made possible by the invention of gunpowder.



#### Reading Progress Check

**Identifying** What event sparked the Hundred Years' War?

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### Political Recovery

**Guiding Question** *What kind of political recovery occurred in Europe in the 1400s?*

European rulers faced serious problems in the 1300s. Many hereditary monarchies or dynasties in Europe were unable to produce male heirs. The founders of new dynasties had to fight for their positions when groups of nobles supported opposing candidates for the kingship. Rulers also had financial problems.

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## Crusades and Culture in the Middle Ages, 1000–1500

### Lesson 4 The Late Middle Ages, *continued*

Recovery occurred during the 1400s when many new rulers in Europe tried to reestablish, or bring back, the centralized power of monarchies. Some historians called these reestablished states the **new monarchies**. This term can be used for the monarchies of France, England, and Spain as they existed at the end of the 1400s.

#### France

France was worn out after the Hundred Years' War, but the war had also developed a strong French national feeling toward a common enemy. The kings used that spirit to reestablish royal power.

King Louis XI ruled France from 1461 to 1483. He wanted to develop a strong French state. Many called Louis the Spider because of his tricky ways. He strengthened the use of the **taille** as a permanent tax imposed by royal authority. This was an annual direct tax usually on land or property, and it gave Louis a regular source of money. Louis relied on support from the lower nobility and middle class to stop the power of the great French nobles. He added Anjou, Maine, Provence, and other regions to his kingdom. He created the foundations of a strong monarchy by strengthening his power and by promoting industry and trade.

#### England

The Hundred Years' War had also strongly affected the English. The cost of the war and losses in manpower weakened the economy. England faced even greater problems at the end of the war. Civil conflicts known as the Wars of the Roses occurred. Noble factions, or groups, fought to control the monarchy. This ended when Henry Tudor established a new dynasty in 1485.

Henry VII was the first Tudor king. He worked to create a strong royal government. Henry ended the wars between the nobles by getting rid of their private armies. He was also very thrifty and won support from the nobles and the middle class because he did not make them pay too many taxes.

#### Spain

Spain also experienced the growth of a strong national monarchy at the end of the 1400s. Christian rulers in Spain had fought to regain their lands from the Muslims during the Middle Ages. Several independent Christian kingdoms had developed in the course of the long reconquest of the Iberian Peninsula. Among them were Aragon and Castile.

Aragon and Castile were strong kingdoms. Isabella of Castile married Ferdinand of Aragon in 1469. This was a major step toward unifying Spain. Castile and Aragon remained separate kingdoms. However, Isabella and Ferdinand worked together to strengthen their royal control in the dual monarchy. Ferdinand and Isabella believed that religious unity was necessary for political unity. They put forth a policy for a strict following of Catholicism. This policy meant the forced conversion of both Jews and Muslims. They forced out all Jews from Spain who did not convert in 1492.

Muslims lost their final battle to Ferdinand and Isabella's armies in 1492. Muslims were given the choice of converting to Christianity or going into exile. Ferdinand and Isabella were said to be the "most Catholic" monarchs. They had achieved their goal of religious uniformity, or sameness. To be Spanish was to be Catholic.

#### Central and Eastern Europe

The Holy Roman Empire did not develop a strong monarch authority. Germany was a land of hundreds of states. Most of these states acted independently of the German ruler. The Hapsburg dynasty held the position of Holy Roman emperor after 1438. The Hapsburgs ruled the Austrian lands along the Danube.

# Reading Essentials and Study Guide **networks**

## Crusades and Culture in the Middle Ages, 1000–1500

### Lesson 4 The Late Middle Ages, *continued*

Rulers in Eastern Europe found it difficult to centralize their states. Religious differences troubled the area. There were problems between Roman Catholics, Eastern Orthodox Christians, and other groups, including Mongols and Muslims.

Russia had been under Mongol control since the 1200s, but Ivan III, the grand prince of Muscovy (Moscow), had overthrown the Mongols by 1480. The next ruler of Muscovy was Ivan IV. He was recognized as the ruler and czar (Russian ruler) of Russia by the Orthodox Church.



#### Reading Progress Check

**Monitoring** What type of government had France, England, and Spain developed by the end of the 1400s?

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