

SECONDARY SOURCES

Two-Three Paragraph Secondary Source

Directions: Read this passage about medieval society in Europe. Use information from the passage to answer the questions that follow.

Medieval Society

In medieval times, wealth and power were measured by how much land a person owned and controlled. Kings were the largest landowners, but the king awarded parcels of land, called fiefs, to barons, bishops, and other high-ranking noblemen. In exchange, each nobleman became the vassal, or servant, of the king and pledged to provide the king with soldiers during times of war. The high-ranking nobles in turn divided their lands among lower nobles, or knights. In this way, the knights became the vassals of the more powerful nobles.

At the bottom of medieval society were the peasants. Most peasants lived on the manor of a nobleman, or lord. The peasants farmed the lord's land, gave a share of their crops to the lord, and kept the rest for themselves. Peasants were not the vassals of the lords, however. In times of war, it was the lord's responsibility to protect the peasants. The peasants worked on the manor in exchange for this protection.

- 1 In medieval society, a baron was the vassal of a _____.
A bishop
B king
C knight
D peasant
- 2 The lower nobles in medieval society were _____.
A knights
B bishops
C peasants
D barons
- 3 When a nobleman pledged himself to be the king's vassal, the nobleman promised to _____.
A pay money to the king
B provide food for the king
C give his land to the king
D supply the king with soldiers
- 4 What role did peasants have in medieval society?
A They farmed the land.
B They served as soldiers.
C They granted fiefs.
D They protected their vassals.

Test Your Knowledge

In what ways did medieval society change after new farming methods were introduced in the 11th century?