

SECTION
3

Reading for Understanding

▶ Key Ideas

BEFORE, YOU LEARNED

Ancient Greek and Roman achievements continue to influence our world today.

NOW YOU WILL LEARN

Feudalism provided stability after the fall of the Roman Empire. The Renaissance marked a rebirth of creativity in Europe.

▶ Vocabulary

TERMS & NAMES

Middle Ages the period between the fall of the Roman Empire and the modern era, from about A.D. 476 to 1453

medieval from the Middle Ages

feudalism a political system in which lords gave land to vassals in exchange for services

lord a powerful landowner

vassal a less wealthy noble who paid taxes to and served a lord in exchange for land

knight a vassal trained in combat who fought on behalf of lords

serf a person who lived and worked on the manor of a lord or vassal

manor a noble's house and the villages on his land where the peasants lived

Renaissance (REHN•ih•SAHNS) a rebirth of creativity, literature, and learning in Europe from about 1300 to 1600

patron a wealthy or powerful person who provides money, support, and encouragement to an artist or a cause

secular worldly or not related to religion

perspective a technique used by artists to give the appearance of depth and distance

Reformation a movement in the 1500s to change practices in the Catholic Church

Protestant a member of a Christian Church founded on the principles of the Reformation

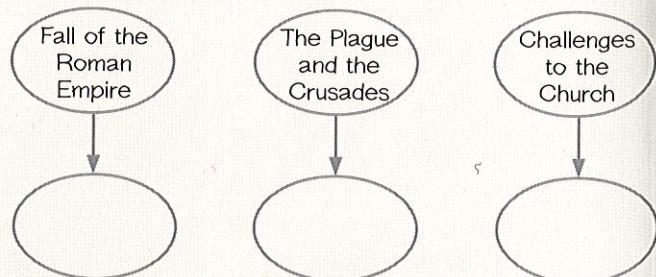
▶ Reading Strategy

Re-create the cause-and-effect diagram shown at right. As you read and respond to the **KEY QUESTIONS**, use the diagram to help you find the effect of the events listed in the first ovals in each pair.



See Skillbuilder Handbook, page R8

ANALYZE CAUSE AND EFFECT



GRAPHIC ORGANIZERS

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The Middle Ages and Renaissance

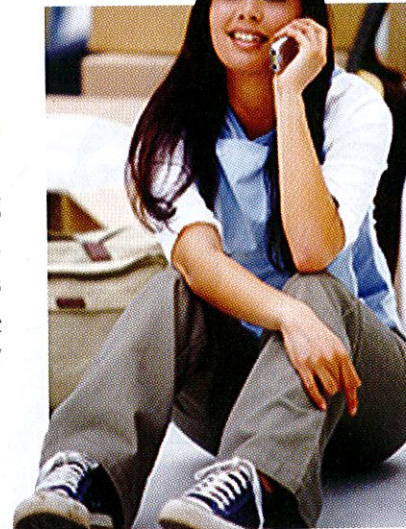


7.02 Examine the causes of key historical events in selected areas of South America and Europe and analyze the short-and long-range effects on political, economic, and social institutions.

8.01 Describe the role of key historical figures and evaluate their impact on past and present societies in South America and Europe.

Connecting to Your World

Sometimes it can be difficult to imagine life without the ideas and technology that exist today. The pace of change seems to increase with every passing decade. Even 25 years ago, cell phones were just being invented. Now they are everywhere. At the beginning of the period in European history you are about to study, new ideas and inventions traveled much more slowly than they do today. Yet change did take place. In time, new ideas and discoveries challenged many Europeans' accepted beliefs about how the world worked and their place in it.



Cell phones Many people today use cell phones.

The Middle Ages

KEY QUESTION Why did feudalism develop in Europe?

Historians call the period of history between the fall of the Roman Empire and the beginning of the modern era the **Middle Ages**. It is also called the **medieval** period, from the Latin words for "Middle Ages." The collapse of the Western Roman Empire made many people fearful and uncertain. Europeans no longer had a strong central government, an army to protect them, or a common culture and belief system to unite them. Many advances of the ancient world were lost.

Bayeux Tapestry
This textile shows feudal knights during the Norman Conquest of England from 1064 to 1066.



European Knight Knights often wore a suit of armor to protect themselves in battle. These suits made it difficult to move quickly—the average suit weighed 65 pounds! What might the advantages and disadvantages of armor be?

air holes for breathing

body armor for protection

flexible gloves for sword handling



Medieval Society The Germanic tribes in western Europe were quite different from the Romans. They had no tradition of central government. At first, many small kingdoms replaced the Roman Empire. Roads and water systems were not kept up. Trade declined. As their economies slowed, western European towns shrank. Residents abandoned them, heading to the countryside to become farmers. Literacy—and with it the educated middle class—all but disappeared.

During the early Middle Ages, invaders such as the Huns, Moors, and Vikings threatened Europe. Constant conflict and warfare plagued the region. In the 700s, a ruler named Charlemagne (SHAHR•luh•MAYN) brought much of France and Germany under his control. Charlemagne was a strong military leader. He worked with the pope, the leader of the Roman Catholic Church, to strengthen the church and his own empire. Pope Leo III crowned him emperor in 800. However, Charlemagne died in 814. In 843, his three grandsons divided his empire among themselves. Europe again became a disorderly group of small kingdoms.

Faced with such disorder, Europeans turned to a political system called **feudalism**, which would remain in place from about the 9th to the 14th century. Feudalism created a new social structure in Europe. The king ruled at the top of society. Nobles, church officials, knights, and peasants had their places below the king.

Feudalism depended on an agreement between two groups of nobles—lords and vassals.

- **Lords**, or powerful landowners, gave some of their land to less-wealthy nobles called vassals.
- **Vassals** pledged to serve their lords. They paid taxes to the lords in exchange for their plots of land, called fiefs (feefs).
- Some vassals were warriors known as **knights**, who began combat training as young boys. Knights fought on behalf of their lords.
- The feudal structure also included peasants. Most were **serfs**, who lived and worked on a noble's land. Serfs received housing and protection in return.

This political system kept Europe divided into many small kingdoms and estates, with little trade between them. As a result, the nobles' lands became the center of most economic activity. The main part of a noble's land was called a **manor**. Often the manor was a fortified house, surrounded by farmland worked by serfs. Manors supplied much of what their residents needed. Towns grew less important, as townspeople left to work on manors.

The Role of the Church The Roman Catholic Church was one institution that survived the fall of Rome. After the division of the Roman Empire, Christianity split into several different churches. The Roman Catholic Church developed in the Western Roman Empire. Many of the Germanic tribes that invaded Rome converted to Christianity. The religion spread slowly across Europe. The church became the main source of education during the Middle Ages. Church officials built universities where nobles could go and study.

Eventually, the territory once controlled by Charlemagne became the Holy Roman Empire. It was a loose confederation of states associated with the Catholic Church, rather than a unified empire with a strong central government. Even so, the Holy Roman Empire helped to bring Europe back together after the divisions of the Middle Ages.

ANALYZE CAUSES Explain how events in Europe contributed to the rise of feudalism.

Animated GEOGRAPHY

European Feudalism

[Click here](#) to hear from each level of feudal society @ [ClassZone.com](#)

King This man sat atop feudal society and ruled over large areas of land.

Church Officials and Lords
These people owned land and therefore held much power.

Knights Many of these warriors were vassals who provided military service to lords in return for land.

Peasants Peasants known as serfs worked the land for nobles and performed other backbreaking tasks.

