

Middle Age Timeline

The Middle Ages, or Medieval Times, in Europe was a long period of history from 500 AD to 1500 AD. That's 1000 years! It covers the time from the fall of the Roman Empire to the rise of the Ottoman Empire.

This was a time of castles and peasants, guilds and monasteries, cathedrals and crusades. Great leaders such as Joan of Arc and Charlemagne were part of the Middle Ages as well as major events such as the Black Plague and the rise of Islam.

Middle Ages, Medieval Times, Dark Ages: What's the Difference?

When people use the terms Medieval Times, Middle Ages, and Dark Ages they are generally referring to the same period of time. The Dark Ages is usually referring to the first half of the Middle Ages from 500 to 1000 AD.

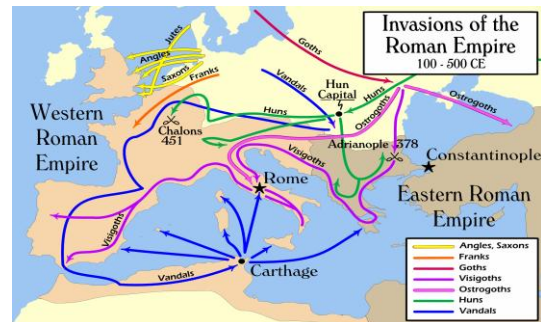
After the fall of the Roman Empire, a lot of the Roman culture and knowledge was lost. This included art, technology, engineering, and history. Historians know a lot about Europe during the Roman Empire because the Romans kept excellent records of all that happened. However, the time after the Romans is "dark" to historians because there was no central government recording events. This is why historians call this time the Dark Ages.

Although the term Middle Ages covers the years between 500 and 1500 throughout the world, this timeline is based on events specifically in Europe during that time.

Date Event

350 A.D. **Barbaric invasions (350 - 800 A.D.).** Barbaric tribes come into the Roman lands to steal and to find better places to live. Such groups include the Anglo-Saxons, the Vandals, the Visigoths, and the Huns. Some keep moving to new areas. Some settle and make their conquered lands their home.

410 A.D. **Rome falls (410 - 476 A.D.).** The Roman Empire has been split into two sections. The Western Roman Empire is still ruled by Rome. In 410 the Visigoth king, Alaric, attacks Rome for three days. In 476 the last Roman emperor, Romulus Augustus, is thrown out of Rome by German invader Odoacer.



Eastern Roman Empire continues (412 - 565 A.D.).

Emperor Constantine I has made Constantinople his capital in 330.

About 412, protective walls are built to keep the city safe from invaders.

- 412 A.D. Justinian I rules from 527- 565. He wants to reunite the western and eastern empires, but cannot do so.



Muslim invasions halted (741 - 732 A.D.).

Along with barbarians from the north, Muslims begin to conquer lands from the south. Charles Martel, the Frank king, stops the Muslims' northward push in 732.

- 741 A.D.



Charlemagne rules (768 - 814 A.D.).

Charles Martel's grandson, Charlemagne, becomes the new Frank king. He desires to spread Christianity.

- 768 A.D. As he conquers land, he extends his faith. He is crowned "Emperor of the Romans" in 800 by Pope Leo III. Charlemagne dies in 814. The first castles are built around this time.



A divided kingdom.

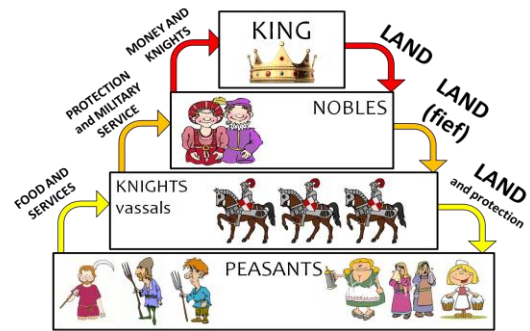
- 840 A.D. After Charlemagne's son dies, the kingdom is split into three. Raids into western Europe increase. In order to protect themselves, kingships are created.

Alfred the Great of England rules (871 - 899 A.D.).

- 871 A.D. Alfred the Great defeats the Danes (Vikings) in 878. In 886 he captures London. He signs a treaty, splitting England between him and the Danes. As a ruler Alfred encourages education by establishing schools.

City states and feudal systems (1000 - 1200 A.D.).

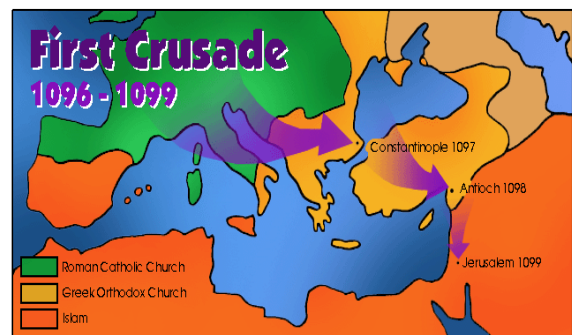
Rome, Florence, Venice, and other Italian towns become city-states. The feudal system begins. Kings give sections of land called fiefs to lords in exchange for help during wars. The lords can give land to knights. The peasants work the land in exchange for food and protection.



Feudal Pyramid of Power

First Crusade (About 1096 - 1099 A.D.).

Religious people go on pilgrimages to visit sacred Biblical sites. When the Seljuk Turks rule, they forbid visits to the Holy Land. The Pope calls for a crusade against the Seljuks. Eventually the crusaders take the city of Jerusalem. There will be nine crusades in all between now and 1272.



Stained glass and gothic style (About 1135 - 1144 A.D.).

St. Denis Abbey in Paris is rebuilt in the Gothic style, the first church to use this design. The church also uses stained glass windows. By this time there are many Catholic monasteries in France. Some monks spend their days hand-copying holy books and drawing beautiful designs along the borders.



Magna Carta is signed.

Rebels oppose King John of England. But they have no ruler to take his place. Instead they have him sign a document, the Magna Carta, stating that there is no divine right of kings.



The Hundred Years War (1337 - 1453 A.D.).

1337 A.D. Edward III of England declares war on France since he feels he should also be king of that country. The fighting continues off and on until about 1453.

The Black Death (Around 1347 - 1350 A.D.).

A plague reaches the shores of Italy around 1347, believed to have been carried by merchant ships. Large black boils, oozing with blood and pus, are seen on the victims, who also have fevers, diarrhea, vomiting, and chills. The disease spreads quickly. About 1/3rd of the population dies.



Joan of Arc (1429 - 1431 A.D.)

Joan of Arc wins the Battle of Orleans for France during the Hundred Years War. She continues to fight, encouraging her troops in their war against the English, until she is captured. Falsely accused of being a witch, she is tried and then sentenced to death. She is burned at the stake.



The movable type (1440 - 1456 A.D.).

Johannes Gutenberg of Germany invents a printing press with movable type that can copy a page multiple times. There is no need to copy books by hand anymore. In 1455, the first printed Bible is made. The Middle Ages will be remembered as a time of transitions as old empires fell away, and new nations emerged, leading to a need for fresh ideas and innovations.



1453 - The Ottoman Empire captures the city of Constantinople. This signals the end of the Eastern Roman Empire also known as Byzantium.