

Part II – The So-Called Middle Ages  
Unit V – The High Middle Ages

*The roots of modern Europe and western civilization are found in the second half of the medieval period. Europeans experienced improvements in their quality of life. For example, their food improved both in quantity and quality; housing developed; and wages increased, as did job opportunities. There were significant improvements in education, and the knowledge acquired opened the eyes of many Europeans to new theories and possibilities other than those offered by the church. Much of these improvements and changes were the result of expanded trade both within Europe and with foreign cultures – namely those within Byzantine, Muslim, and Asian areas.*

*This period is complex yet exciting, filled with drama, epic battles, destructive plagues, dramatic political changes, astonishing architecture, and wonderful details about everyday life in the growing towns and cities. It is impossible to study this period in perfect chronological order; instead we will go topic by topic always keeping an eye on dates, but not obsessively.*

**Fundamental Themes**

The Impact of Learning on Political and Religious Institutions in Europe

The Ascendance and Decline of Major Ideas and Institutions

**Topics of Study**

**The Age of Faith**

Church Reform (Problems and Solutions)  
The Crusades  
Medieval Architecture

**Early Commercialism**

Towns and Cities  
Fairs, Markets, and Trade  
Money, Guilds, and Banks

**Seeds of Learning**

The New Universities  
Scholasticism

**Natural and Man-Made Disasters**

The Bubonic Plague  
The Hundred Years' War

**Emerging Political Identities**

Ascendancy of Kings, Nations  
Deterioration of the Feudal Order  
Weakening of the Church

**Further Reading**

*Patterns of Interaction*, Chapter 14, “The Formation of Western Europe,” pp. 379-392, 398-403

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*Below is a [tentative] list of items to review throughout the unit.*

*General Topics*

Causes, Effects, and Purposes of the Crusades  
Historical Geography  
Church Reform

Development of Towns and Cities (and  
Effect on Medieval Life)  
The Emergence of Universities  
Causes and Effects of Black Death

*Key Names, Groups, Places*

Pope Gregory VII  
Pope Urban II  
Emperor Alexius Komnenos  
Richard the Lionheart(ed)  
Saladin and the Muslims  
The Hanseatic League  
St. Francis of Assisi (and Franciscans)  
Poor Clares, Benedictines, and Dominicans

Pope Innocent III  
Frederick Barbarossa  
Joan of Arc  
Flagellants  
Scholastics (Thomas Aquinas)  
If there's time – Late Medieval Literature by  
Geoffrey Chaucer and Giovanni Boccaccio  
Edward III of England

*Events*

The Age of Faith (1000s-1300s)  
The Crusades (1096-1291)  
    Pope Urban II's Speech at the Council  
    of Clermont (1095)  
    First Crusade (1095/96-1099)  
    Second Crusade (1145-1149)  
    Third Crusade (1189-1192)

    Fourth Crusade (1202-1204)  
The Black Death (1347-1351)  
The Hundred Years' War (1337-1453)  
    Crecy (1346)  
    Poitiers (1356)  
    Agincourt (1415)  
    The Battle of Orléans (1429)

*Ideas and Concepts*

Cluniac Reform  
Medieval Architectural Characteristics  
(Gothic, Romanesque)  
Simony  
Nepotism

Lay Investiture  
Excommunication  
Medieval Fairs and Markets  
The Role of Jews in the Late Middle Ages