

twinkl

# Life in Medieval times



# Words to know



## **Tapestry**

a piece of thick fabric with pictures or designs made by weaving, used as a wall hanging



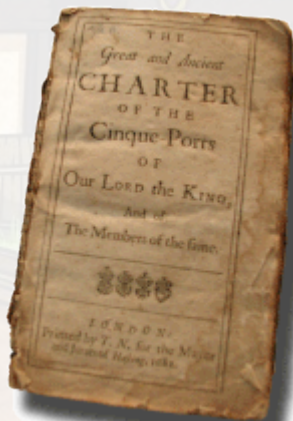
## **Jester**

An entertainer like a clown is today

# Words to know



A **minstrel** was a medieval entertainer. Originally describing any type of entertainer such as a musician, juggler, acrobat, singer or fool, the term later came to mean a specialist entertainer who sang songs and played musical instruments.



In medieval times, royal **charters** were used to create cities. Before a place could be called a city and hold a market they first needed to get a charter

# Words to know



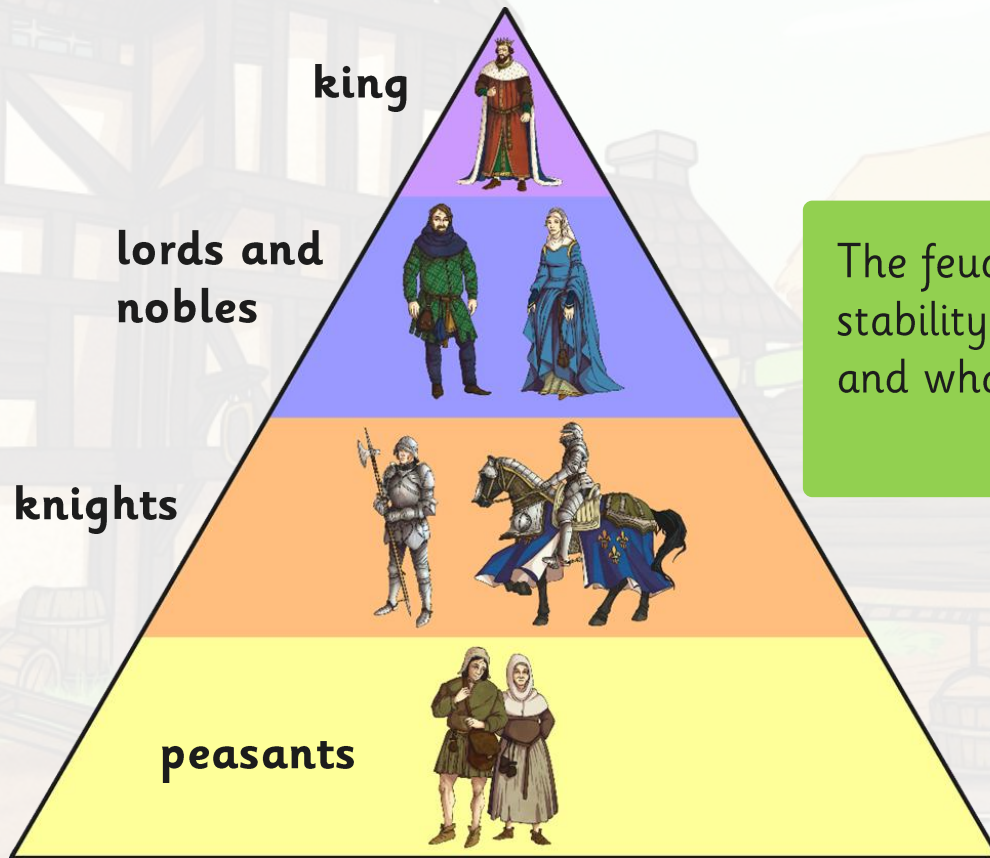
## **Town Crier**

Someone who makes public announcements



A serf is a worker who has to stay in one area. Serfs were different from slaves. Serfs could have property. In most serfdoms, serfs were legally part of the land, and if the land was sold, they were sold with it.

# The Feudal System



The feudal system provided order and stability. Everyone knew their place and what they had to do.

# Society in The Middle Ages

We usually say people are either rich, normal everyday people or poor. During these times people were divided into 'those who fight', 'those who pray' and 'those who work',

Knight, squire, soldier (i.e. Those who fight)

nun, priests, monk, friar (i.e. Those who pray)

Shop keeper, Lawyer, carpenter, weaver, dyer, tapestry weaver, cook, sailor, doctor, ploughman, miller, reeve (i.e. Those who work)

# A Day in the Life of a Medieval Lord



**Dawn:** Hear Mass, followed by a breakfast of white bread and wine.

**Morning:** The lord would speak with his reeve (the general manager for his manor). His lady would perhaps do embroidery. Knights and pages would practise fighting.

**10am:** Lunch was normally half a dozen (6) simple dishes, but if the lord was entertaining guests there would be many more dishes, as well as entertainment such as jesters, fools and jugglers.

**Afternoon:** Hunting or hawking, or chess if the weather was bad.

**Late afternoon:** Prayers, then a meal. If there were guests, this would be magnificent!

**After supper:** Listen to the news and stories or just sit and talk.

**Bedtime:** When the lord decided he wished to go to bed, the household would have a light supper, say prayers and go to sleep.

# Castle Life in the Middle Ages

Many nobles lived in castles. The great hall was the centre of a castle. The walls were decorated with tapestries. Everyone except the lord, sat on benches. There was a minstrel gallery for musicians and singers. At night, the servants slept on the floor.

The great hall would have at least one fireplace with a chimney. This was a Norman invention and stopped the room filling with smoke.

The lord had his own room, called the solar, and his own four-poster bed, with curtains for privacy.

At the top of the castle, the lady would have a day room for herself and her maids-in-waiting (friends who weren't married yet). This had the largest windows and the best views.



# Life in A Medieval Town



A medieval town would seek a charter giving it the right to become a town. The rich merchants would then be allowed to choose a mayor and hold a market where they could buy and sell all the things they had been making.

Houses were made of a wooden frame, with the gaps filled with woven strips of wood, known as 'wattle', and covered (or 'daubed'), with clay and horse-dung. Most roofs were thatched. Can you remember who else used wattle and daub??

# Life in A Medieval Town

Medieval shops were workshops that were open to the street for customers, with the craftsman's house above. Because few people could read, shops signs were a sample of what they made inside. People of the same trade often worked in the same street.

The streets of a medieval town were narrow and busy. They were noisy, with the town crier, church bells and traders. There were many fast food sellers, selling such things as hot sheep's feet and beef-ribs.



# Life in A Medieval Town

At dusk, a bell rang for curfew, when everyone was supposed to shut up their house. The gates to the town would be closed, then a watch would patrol the streets looking for thieves and apprentices who stayed out late.

Criminals were put in the stocks or the pillory. These were wooden boards with holes for feet, hands or head. Medieval punishments were cruel.



# Life in A Medieval Town

In November, the poor of the town would elect a 'lord of misrule', who would wear a paper crown and get up to mischief. At Christmas, poor people would go around town demanding traders give them charity.

Holy Days would be marked by colourful processions, as the different guilds (group of people who have the same job) competed to make the best display.

If a serf ran away from his village to a town and remained free for a year and a day, he could become a 'freeman' of the town.



# A Day in the Life of a Medieval Town



**4am:** The Angelus bell rang to announce the first Mass of the day and the end of the night watchman's duty.

**6am:** Shops and market stalls opened.

**8am:** Foreign merchants were allowed to start trading.

**9am:** Breakfast.

**3pm:** Most shops and market stalls closed.

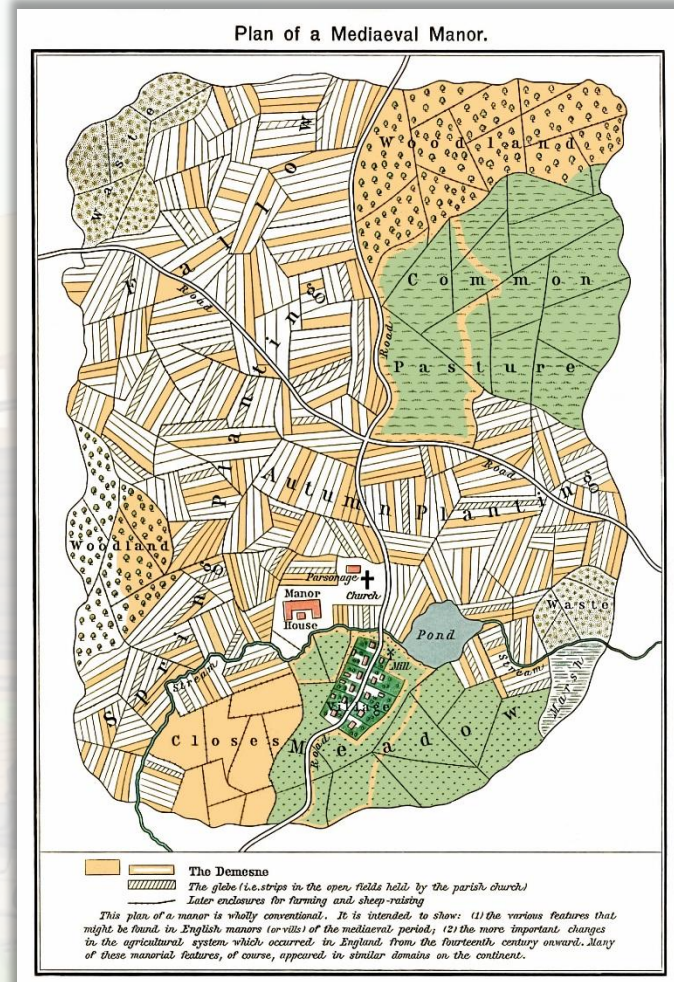
**8pm:** Curfew Bell. Town gates closed, houses shut up, the night watch began.

# Manors

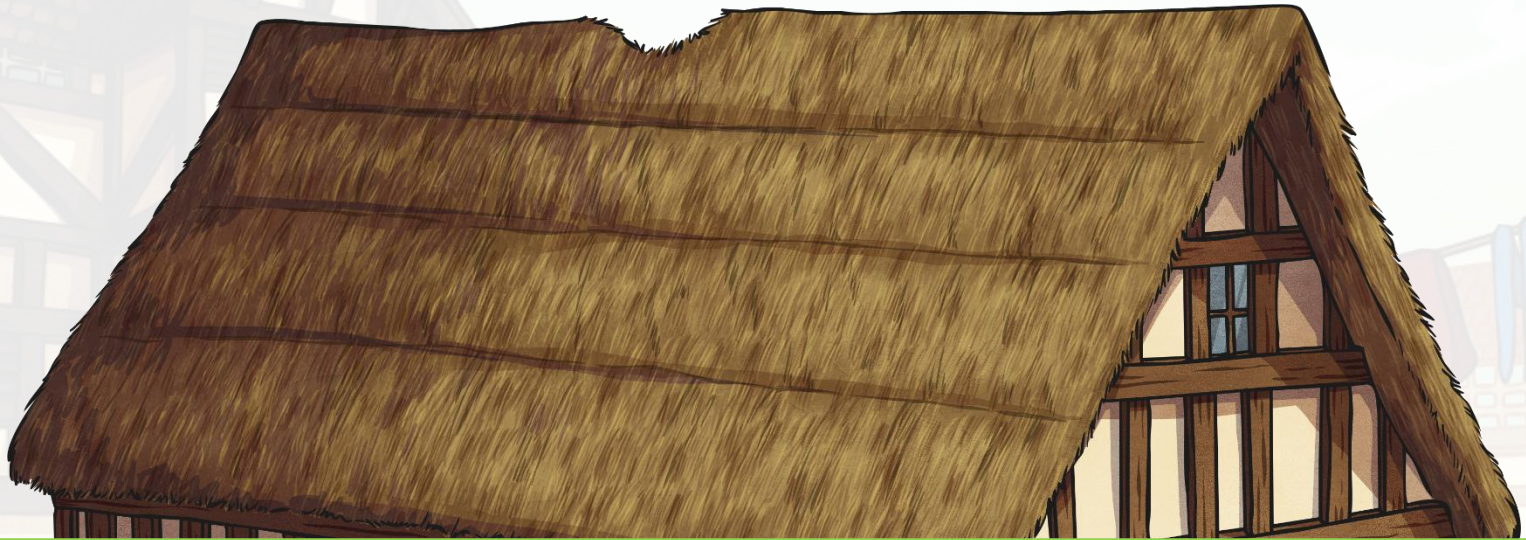
The manor was the lord's estate. The manor system was an economic arrangement between a lord and his serfs.

The lord would provide serfs with housing, strips of farmland and protection from bandits (thieves). In return, the serfs tended the lord's lands, cared for his animals and performed other tasks to maintain the estate.

The manor was largely a self-sufficient community.



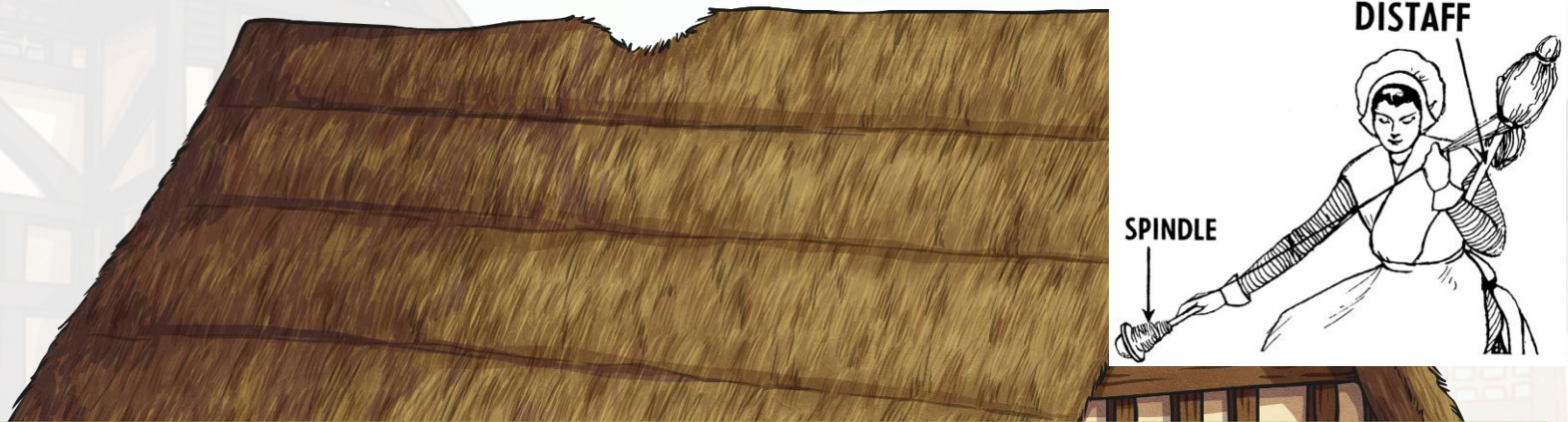
# Life in A Medieval Village



In the early Middle Ages,, the life of a serf was hard.

Even in the later Middle Ages, the medieval peasant's life was hard and the work back-breaking. It followed the seasons – ploughing in autumn, sowing in spring, harvesting in August. Work began at dawn, preparing the animals and it finished at dusk, cleaning them down and putting them back into the stalls.

# Life in A Medieval Village



A peasant's hut was made of wattle and daub, with a thatched roof and no windows.

Inside the hut, a third of the area was penned off for the animals, which lived in the hut with the family. A fire burned in a hearth in the centre of the hut, so the air was permanently eye-wateringly smoky. Furniture was maybe a couple of stools, a trunk for bedding and a few cooking pots.

Many peasants' huts included a simple loom. The daughter would spin wool using a distaff and spindle, and the wife would weave it into rough cloth.

# Life in A Medieval Village

Peasant food was mainly vegetables, plus anything that could be gathered – nuts, berries, nettles. The usual drink was weak, home-brewed beer. Honey provided a sweetener. If they ate bread, the peasants did not eat white wheat bread, but black rye bread.

The most difficult time was late spring, when food stores were running out and new food was not yet ready to be eaten. A poor harvest meant that some of the villagers would starve to death.

# Life in A Medieval Village

A male peasant would wear a rough tunic, with a hood and gloves, and leather shoes with wooden soles. Women wore a coarse gown over a sleeveless slip.

Village life was not all misery and hardship. Holy days meant a day off work. Peasant fun was rough – wrestling and shin-kicking. The ball was almost unnecessary to a medieval ball game, which was basically a fight with the next village. Occasionally a travelling musician or bear-baiter would pass through.



# Knights



The education of a young noble began early (age 7). He would be sent off to the castle of another lord. He waited on his hosts and learned courtly manners. He played chess and learned war strategies. To develop fighting skills, he would practise sword fighting.

At around the age of 14, the boy would become a squire and would act as a servant to a knight. The squire took care of the knight's armour, weapons and warhorse. The squire would also escort the knight to battles.

At around 21, a squire became a fully-fledged knight. Knights were to abide by a complex set of rules, which became known as the code of chivalry.

# Knights

Later in the Middle Ages, battles were often for show. Knights were bound by a strict code of conduct called chivalry.

According to this code, knights were expected to be brave, loyal, true to their word and protective of women and those weaker than themselves.



# The Church and the Holy Roman Empire

Feudalism and the manor system created divisions among people. Shared beliefs in the teachings of the Church bonded people together.

Priests and other religious officials administered the sacraments, or important religious ceremonies.

Kings and peasants were subject to canon law, or the law of the Church, in matters such as marriage and religious practices.

The Holy Roman Empire became the strongest kingdom.



