

AP World Unit 5 Test Study Guide

MEDIEVAL EUROPE:

The Medieval period, or **Middle Ages**, lasted from about 500 CE to 1500 CE. It began with the fall of the Roman empire and ended with the start of a new era, the Renaissance. During the Middle Ages, European people rebuilt their societies, economies, governments, and religions after the chaos following the destruction of Rome. Despite the absence of an emperor, many local leaders of the former Roman empire continued to govern their respective areas. Invader groups contested for power, but no single group became powerful enough to really re-establish imperial rule. The Franks, however, came pretty close.

- **The Franks**

The Franks had sufficient resources and a strong enough military to organize half of the territories of the west Roman empire, but they didn't last very long. They built their society based on agriculture, with the center in modern France and Germany. They made an alliance with the Roman Catholic Church, leading to the cultural dominance of Roman Christianity.

However, they had very little political experience and they didn't know much about the territory. They didn't have a strong leader until **Clovis**, who led forces to wipe out the last of Roman authority, imposed his authority on his own people, and organized military campaigns against neighboring peoples. Clovis' most notable contribution was his conversion to Roman Christianity, which cemented the Franks' relationship with the church and attracted the allegiance of Christian citizens of the former Roman empire. When Clovis died, the Franks pretty much lost all their power, leaving room for the Carolingian dynasty to take their place.

- **The Carolingian Empire**

During all this time, Europe was still facing the threat of Muslim expansion from the south and the east. In 732 CE, **Charles Martel** led a military campaign and stopped Muslim expansion in Europe at the **Battle of Tours**.

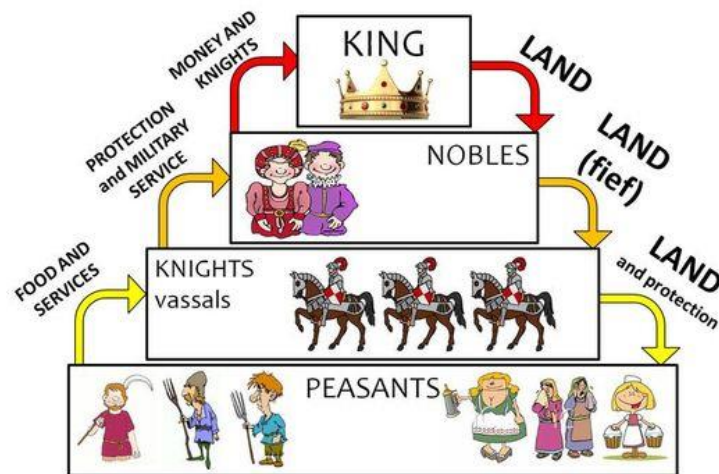
Charles' grandson, **Charlemagne**, was the most important Carolingian ruler. He established centralized imperial rule for a short period of time, and maintained good relations with the Byzantine and Abbasid empires. During his lifetime, he expanded his realm to include France, Belgium, Holland, Germany, Spain, Bavaria, and Italy, while other areas paid him tribute as well. However, he didn't have the resources to maintain an elaborate bureaucracy, so instead he relied on aristocratic deputies called **counts**, who usually had their own agendas.

Ultimately, his empire fell due to the counts' disloyalty and outside invasions. Islamic people from the south raided Mediterranean Europe and seized several territories, while the **Magyars** from central Asia raided settlements in Germany, Italy, and France.

- **Vikings**

Vikings from Scandinavia were the most feared of all the invading groups. They were often brutal and extremely unpredictable on their quest for wealth through trading and raiding throughout the Carolingian empire. They built boats that worked really well in all types of waters, and carefully coordinated their ship movements and attacks to the tides.

Sure, the Vikings and the Magyars are cool and everything, but the aspect of the Middle Ages that you really need to know is **feudalism**. Feudalism was a system of social, political, and economic order where everyone gave something and everyone got something. All the land was technically owned by a king, who then awarded grants of lands to prominent people (most likely military leaders) called **lords** or nobles. A lord could then in turn give a portion of his land to a **vassal**, who was kind of like mini-lord. Vassals and lords kept peasants and **serfs** to work on their land and pay taxes in return for military protection. Each plot of land, or **fief** (estate/manor), was mostly self-sufficient. They had bakers and craftsmen and pretty much everything else they needed.



Feudal Pyramid of Power

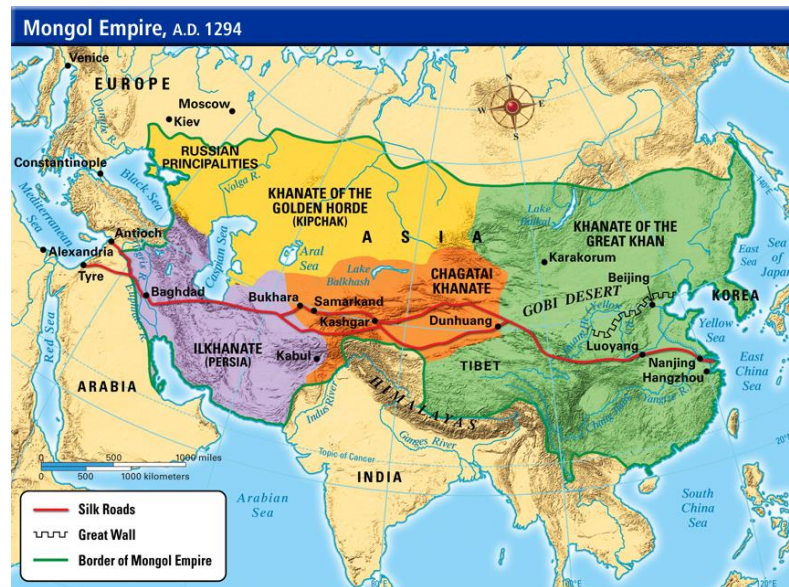
THE MONGOLS:

The Mongols! Exciting! Brutal! Non-assimilating! Nomadic! Horsemen! Massive empire!

- **Chinggis Khan and the Mongol Empire**

Story time! When Temujin (I'll call him Chinggis) was born, the Mongols were split into several warring tribes. His father set out to unite these tribes but was poisoned in the process, so young Chinggis made it his goal to unite them under one ruler. He led his tribe in military campaigns against the others. He eventually succeeded in his goal and was proclaimed Chinggis Khan- the "universal ruler".

His policies really strengthened the empire. He built his capital at **Karakorum**, which symbolized the source of Mongol authority. Chinggis tolerated all existing cultures, religions, and beliefs, which prevented rebellion. He chose military and political leaders based on merit rather than connections, and emphasized the importance of the military. Since the Mongols were nomadic, they were crazy good with horses. They formed extremely skilled cavalry units which helped them conquer a massive area, stretching from China in the east to the Caspian Sea in the west. Chinggis ruled over the largest land empire of all time! He conquered brutally, but ruled peacefully, establishing the ***Pax Mongolica***, which helped trade flourish (and was probably also responsible for the Black Plague in Europe). However, when he died, his descendants fought over succession and eventually broke the empire into four khanates.



- **Khubilai Khan and the Yuan Dynasty**

Chinggis' grandson Khubilai went on to rule the Yuan dynasty in China. He ruthlessly attacked his enemies (the Song dynasty) but took an interest in cultural matters. He promoted Buddhism although he supported other beliefs as well. Khubilai moved the Yuan capital to Beijing. You probably remember that up until this point in Chinese history, the foreigners who continually took over China also assimilated into the Chinese culture. The Mongols were an exception- these guys made a special point of not mixing with the Chinese. They forbade intermarriage and discouraged friendships. Mongol women were not allowed to bind their feet (which actually sounds like a pretty good deal??) in typical Chinese fashion.

Power struggles, imperial assassination, and civil war ultimately contributed to the fall of the Yuan dynasty in China. They were succeeded by the Ming dynasty.

- **The Golden Horde**

The Golden Horde was ready to move into Europe at the time of Chinggis' death, but the loss of their leader prevented them from doing so. Instead, they ruled over Russia and extracted tribute from the people living there. This really isolated Russia from the rest of Eurasia, so when Europe entered the Renaissance, Russia was left in the cold (pun totally intended).

THE AMERICAS

The Americas were home to a variety of civilizations which tend to go ignored.

- **The Aztecs of Mexico**

The Aztecs started out as the **Mexica**, who were kind of insane. They had a reputation for causing trouble- they kidnapped women and stole land, which consistently got them kicked out of places, so they had to migrate around. They eventually settled down on an island in the middle of Lake Texcoco, and built the great city of **Tenochtitlán**, which became their capital. Soon enough, they became powerful enough to overcome their neighbors and demand tribute from their subjects. They built an extensive empire, but didn't maintain an elaborate bureaucracy. They didn't even keep garrisons or standing armies, but their reputation created fear that kept most of their subjects in line. They also highly valued warriors. Women could even gain honor by giving birth to skilled warriors.

- **The Inca of the Andes**

The Incan civilization developed in the Andes mountain range in South America. Although they didn't have a system of writing, they built a powerful state, vast empire, and complex society.

The Inca settled around Lake Titicaca and began to launch military campaigns against their neighbors. They created the largest state ever built in South America, and ruled with a military and administrative elite. They led armies made up of conquered people and maintained a staffed bureaucracy that managed political affairs. They encouraged obedience by putting loyal colonists in garrisons and using forced resettlement. The vastness of the Inca empire posed a challenge to govern, so they implemented taxes to support rules, organized a system of state-owned storehouses and constructed an extensive road network. These roads were the best of their time, along with official runners who could carry messages.

The most unique feature of the Inca civilization was their command economy. Inca subjects could barter specialized goods among themselves at a local level, but the government mandated what goods were needed for distribution throughout the empire.

OCEANIA:

The people of Oceania had very little interaction with people from outside societies, but they created extensive trade networks and flourishing societies among themselves.

- **Australian Nomads**

Because Australia is so geographically diverse, nomadic societies developed with heavy dependence on their respective regions. They didn't experience much cultural diffusion because their culture was so dependent on their land. Australians were primarily hunter-gatherers until the Europeans showed up in the 1800s and 1900s. They traded with neighboring groups, so goods from one end of Australia could make it all the way across the continent through a series of small-scale interactions.

- **Polynesian Societies**

Unlike the Australians, Polynesians built agricultural societies. They linked the island groups with trade networks, which facilitated the exchange of useful goods, exotic items, and foodstuffs. This helped rulers establish and maintain good relations, allowed for intermarriage and encouraged cultural diffusion. They built impressive canoes that could travel all the way from Oceania to Hawai'i and other islands.

The success of agriculture and fishing led to massive spikes in population. In some places, this led to large-scale social organization, while in other places, competition for resources led to disaster (i.e. cannibalism on Easter Island).

