

# Advances in the Middle Ages

**B**etween 1000 and 1300, farming and trade in Europe made a lot of progress. Towns and cities grew as the population of western Europe expanded.

The climate grew warmer, so farmers could plant crops in areas that were once too cold for farming. Farmers also came up with new methods of farming. They used horses to plow fields instead of oxen. Horses were faster, and farmers could plow twice as much in a day. They developed a three-field system of farming, which allowed them to grow more crops in a season.



Because of the advances in farming, more food was available to people. Villagers had more food to eat, so people could raise larger families. Well-fed people lived longer and resisted disease better. The population grew.

Trade and finance increased with the population. By the 1000s, people were making goods by hand for local and long-distance trade. Trade routes spread across Europe. They went from Flanders, the area along the coast of present-day Belgium and France, to Italy. Italian merchant ships traveled to the Byzantine Empire and to Muslim ports in North Africa.

Most trade happened in towns. Peasants from nearby manors came to town on fair days, the days when trade took place. Local fairs met the needs of daily life for a small community. Cloth was the most commonly traded item. Other items people traded included bacon, salt, cheese, wine, leather, dyes, knives, and rope.

Towns grew quickly. They offered many opportunities that were attractive to serfs who came to town on fair days. The custom was that if a serf lived in a town for a year and a day, he or she was free. So, many serfs who were bound by contract to lords left their manors and never returned.

Most towns grew too quickly to be carefully planned out. Towns were dirty, smelly, noisy, and crowded. They had no garbage collection or sewer system. So, people would dump their household waste into the streets in front of their houses. Narrow and crowded streets were filled with horses, pigs, and other animals. Houses were built of wood and had roofs made of straw, so they were a constant fire hazard. Most people rarely bathed, and their houses often had no fresh air, clean water, or light.

Although there were drawbacks to living in a medieval town, economic and social opportunities attracted people. Towns and cities like London, England, grew and did well in the Middle Ages.

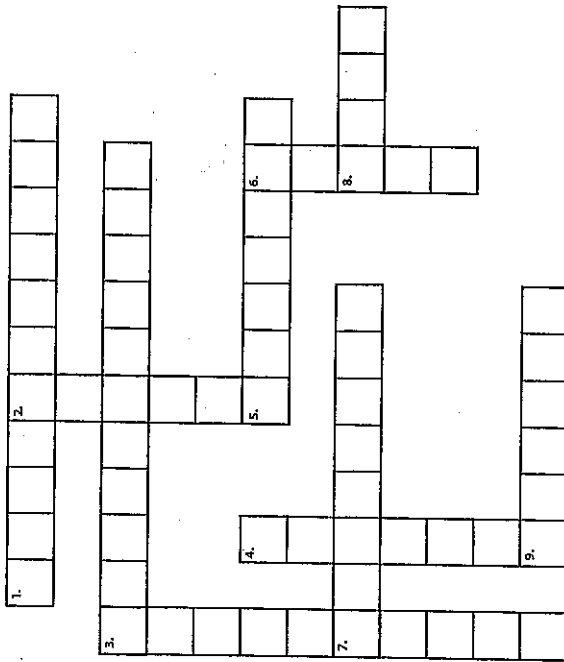
Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

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## Crossword Puzzle

Write the best answer in each blank, and complete the crossword puzzle.



## ACROSS

- Italian merchant ships traveled to the Byzantine Empire and to Muslim ports in \_\_\_\_\_.
- \_\_\_\_\_ spread across Europe from Flanders to Italy.
- People dumped their household waste into the \_\_\_\_\_ to trade items.
- Peasants came to town on \_\_\_\_\_ and had straw roofs, so they were a constant fire hazard.
- The population of western \_\_\_\_\_ expanded in the Middle Ages.

## DOWN

- Farmers used \_\_\_\_\_ instead of oxen to plow fields.
- Farmers developed a/an \_\_\_\_\_ system of farming, which allowed them to grow more crops in a season.
- A warmer \_\_\_\_\_ let farmers grow crops in areas that were once too cold for farming.
- Most \_\_\_\_\_ grew too quickly to be carefully planned out.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

# Advances in the Middle Ages

## Chart – Medieval Society

Use the chart to answer the following questions. Write the answers in complete sentences.

<b>Political System: Feudalism</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>alliances between lords and vassals</li> <li>loyalty in exchange for military service and land</li> </ul>	<b>Economic System: Manors</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>self-sufficient: everything needed is made, produced, or grown on manor</li> <li>serfs work for lords</li> </ul>
<b>Belief System: The Church</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>power over everyday lives of people</li> <li>involved in politics</li> </ul>	<b>Code of Behavior: Chivalry</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>knights show courage in war</li> <li>loyalty to feudal lord</li> </ul>

1. Where did medieval people get the things they needed?

\_\_\_\_\_

2. Who had alliances in the political system of feudalism?

\_\_\_\_\_

3. What was the Church involved in?

\_\_\_\_\_