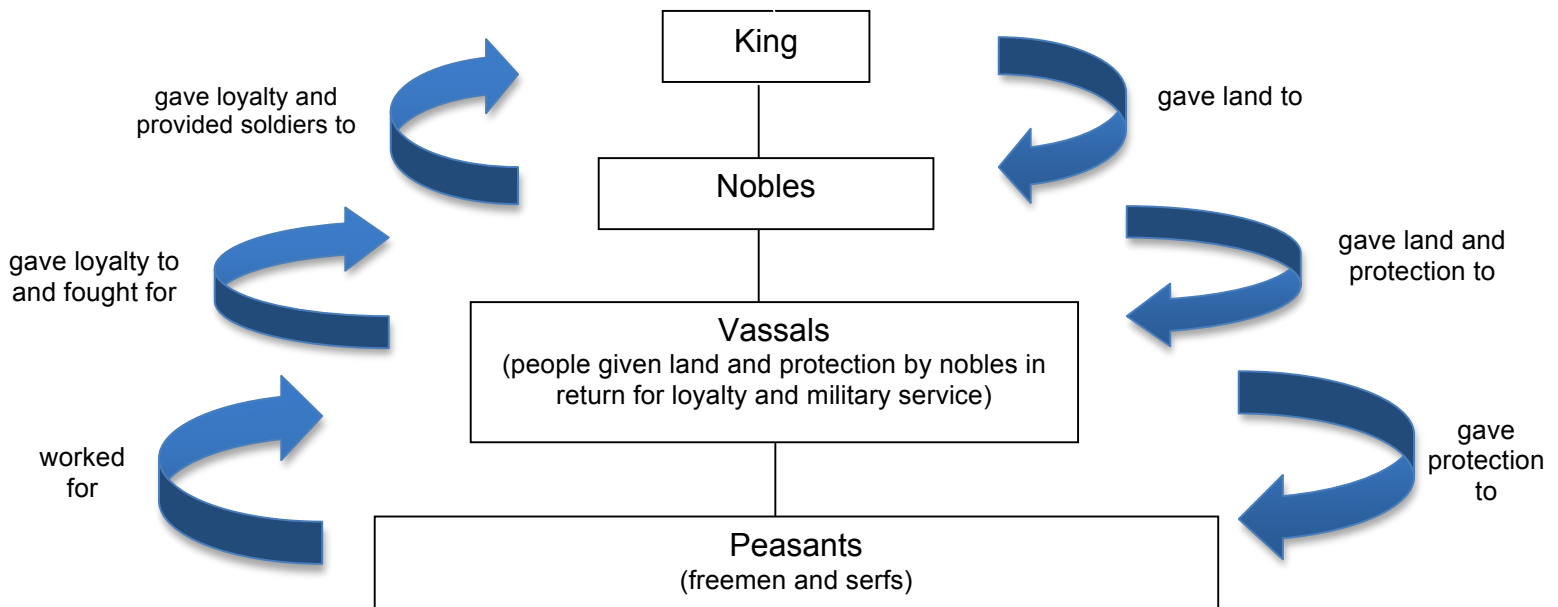# The Middle Ages
Feudalism in the Middle Ages

Feudalism was a political and military system that provided some **stability**[1] during the Middle Ages. The Middle Ages began after the Roman Empire collapsed. There was no strong **central**[2] government left in Western Europe. Many little kingdoms formed. They often battled each other and created a lot of **chaos**.[3] Feudalism helped **establish**[4] order by creating a system in which different classes of people supported each other in different ways. The following is a chart showing the structure of the feudal system.

STRUCTURE OF FEUDALISM

King

gave loyalty and provided soldiers to   gave land to

Nobles

gave loyalty to and fought for   gave land and protection to

Vassals
(people given land and protection by nobles in return for loyalty and military service)

worked for   gave protection to

Peasants
(freemen and serfs)

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[1] **stability** – a steady, unchanging state or quality
[2] **central** – located in the center; main
[3] **chaos** – disorder, extreme confusion
[4] **establish** – to set up on a firm and lasting basis

Name: _____ Date: _____

1. What was feudalism?

    a. a type of government in which people elected their leaders
    b. a trade agreement among the countries of Western Europe
    c. a political and military system in the Middle Ages
    d. a religion practiced by many people in the Roman Empire

2. According to the chart, nobles gave land and protection to

    a. the king
    b. themselves
    c. peasants
    d. vassals

3. Based on the chart, which of the following groups was probably LEAST powerful?

    a. nobles
    b. vassals
    c. peasants
    d. royalty

4. Read the following sentence: "The Middle Ages began after the Roman Empire collapsed. There was no strong central government left in Western Europe."

In the passage, the word **collapsed** means

    a. fell apart
    b. came to power
    c. exploded
    d. expanded

5. The main purpose of the passage and chart is to

    a. compare and contrast feudalism with democracy
    b. explain and illustrate how feudalism worked
    c. inform people about the dangers of medieval life
    d. provide a list of rules for establishing a government

6. Based on the chart, who had the most power in the feudal system?

_____

_____

_____

7. Why might the author have used a chart to help explain feudalism instead of just writing about it?

_____

_____

_____

8. The question below is an incomplete sentence. Choose the word that best completes the sentence.

_____ a strong central government, Western Europe fell into chaos.

    a. Because of
    b. As a result of
    c. Without
    d. Although

9. Answer the following questions based on the sentence below.

During the Middle Ages, vassals fought for nobles in exchange for land and protection.

Who? <u>vassals</u>

(did) What? _____

Why? _____

When? _____

10. **Vocabulary Word**: peasant: someone who owns or works on a small farm; someone without much money and social standing.

Use the vocabulary word in a sentence: _____

_____

Teacher Guide and Answers

Passage Reading Level: Lexile 810

Featured Text Structure: Descriptive – the writer explains, defines, or illustrates a concept or topic

Passage Summary: This passage describes the system of feudalism during the Middle Ages. A chart is used to illustrate relationships among the various social classes.

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       b. a trade agreement among the countries of Western Europe
       c. a political and military system in the Middle Ages
       d. a religion practiced by many people in the Roman Empire

2. According to the chart, nobles gave land and protection to
       a. the king
       b. themselves
       c. peasants
       d. vassals

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6. Based on the chart, who had the most power in the feudal system?

Suggested answer: The king had the most power in the feudal system.

7. Why might the author have used a chart to help explain feudalism instead of just writing about it?

Suggested answer: The author might have thought that a chart would make understanding feudalism easier for people than just writing about it. By breaking feudalism into different groups and showing how those groups were connected, the chart makes it possible to see clearly how the system worked.

8. The question below is an incomplete sentence. Choose the word or phrase that best completes the sentence.

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    c. Without
    d. Although

9. Answer the following questions based on the sentence below.

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Who? vassals

(did) What? **fought for nobles**

Why? **in exchange for land and protection**

When? **during the Middle Ages**

10. **Vocabulary Word**: peasant: someone who owns or works on a small farm; someone without much money and social standing.

Use the vocabulary word in a sentence: answers may vary.