

Medieval Times

Unit Summary

Medieval life comes alive in this middle school social studies classroom as students examine the life and times of people from this historical period. All middle school students wrestle with the Essential Question, *Can we really be whatever we want to be?* and in this unit they explore this question from their own perspective as well as from the perspective of people living during medieval times. After conducting extensive research about medieval life, and answering questions such as, *How did one's role in medieval times influence their daily life?*, *What resources were available to a person living in medieval society?* and, *How was the power structure organized among various people in medieval society?*, students select a medieval role to research further and then create a role-play performance for the class. All students experience an authentic feel of medieval life in regards to food, shelter, and heraldry by creating their own menu of medieval foods, building their dream castle, and creating a personal coat of arms based on the research they've gathered. To close the unit, students write an essay to connect their learning to their own life by revisiting the Unit Question, *How is medieval life different from yours?*

At a Glance

Grade Level: 6-8

Subject: Social Studies

Topics: World History,
Medieval European Life

Higher-Order Thinking

Skills: Decision Making,
Creativity

Key Learnings: Feudalism,
Medieval Life, Ancient
Architecture

Time Needed: 3-4 weeks, 3-4
hours per week, 45 minutes
per class

Curriculum-Framing Questions

- **Essential Question**
Can we really be whatever we want to be?
- **Unit Question**
How is medieval life different from yours?
How did one's role in medieval times influence their daily life?
How does form follow function in medieval castles?
- **Content Questions**
What resources were available to a person living in medieval society?
How was the power structure organized among various people in medieval society?
What were the various parts and functions of a castle in medieval society?

Things You Need

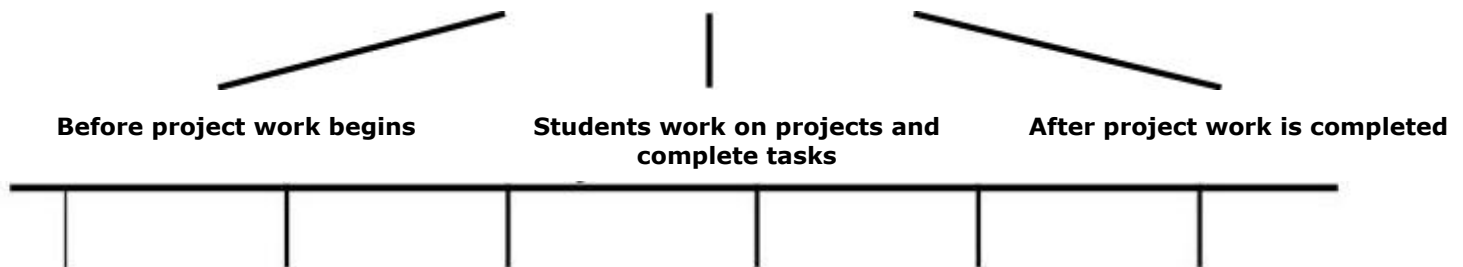
[Instructional Procedures](#)
[Standards](#)

Assessment Plan

Assessment Timeline

This timeline shows in chronological order the different types of formal and informal assessments that occur during the unit. The table below explains how each assessment is used and who uses it for what purpose.

Assessment Timeline



- Brainstorming
- Discussion Checklist
- Medieval Log
- Medieval Character Oral Presentation Rubric
- Medieval Log Checklist
- Critical-Thinking Checklist
- Discussion Checklist
- Menu Scoring Guide
- Castle Building Scoring Guide
- Blueprint Peer Review
- Critical-Thinking Checklist
- Discussion Checklist
- Medieval Character Oral Presentation Rubric
- Medieval Essay Rubric

Assessment	Process and Purpose of Assessment
Brainstorming	Students use brainstorming to access prior knowledge. Teacher uses it to gauge readiness for medieval study.
Medieval Log	Students use the log to organize their ideas about medieval roles, document resources, and make connections. In the log, students respond to teacher prompts aimed at deepening the understanding of medieval times. Students use information from the log to create presentations and artifacts. Teacher uses the log to monitor each student's research progress, check for misunderstandings, and provide clarification as necessary
Medieval Character Oral Presentation Rubric	Students use the rubric to effectively plan oral presentations. Teacher uses it to assess the understanding and performance of the medieval character oral presentation.
Medieval Log Checklist	Students use the checklist to monitor their progress through the research process. It helps ensure that they have all the necessary research components for the project.
Critical-Thinking Checklist	Teacher uses this checklist to keep notes while questioning students as they work. The checklist helps track the critical thinking students are engaged in during the unit. Teacher also uses the checklist provide feedback to students and for assessment at the end of the project.
Discussion Checklist	Teacher uses the discussion checklist to observe student, notes participation in discussions, and reviews during the unit to adjust questioning as well as provide feedback. Teacher also uses it at the end of the project for final assessment.
Menu Scoring Guide	Students use this scoring guide to self-assess progress on the menu. It is also used as a final assessment by the teacher.
Castle Building Scoring Guide	Students use the scoring guide to self-assess success of their blueprint and castle constructions. Teacher uses it to assess how well students understand the purpose, parts, and construction of a medieval castle.
Blueprint Peer Review	Students use this peer review form to assess the quality of each other's blueprints. This guide provides the form and function pieces already filled in so students can compare to what is on the blueprint. Teacher uses the form to review student's ability to offer objective feedback and then adjusts instruction as necessary.
Medieval Essay Rubric	During a final class session students are asked to respond to the Unit Question; <i>How is medieval life different from yours?</i> Teacher uses this rubric to assess student's ability to connect their learning to their own lives.

Credits

William Brooks participated in the Intel® Teach Program, which resulted in this idea for an assessment plan. A team of teachers expanded the plan into the example you see here.

Assessing Projects: Medieval Times

Instructional Procedures

Instructional Procedures

Introducing the Unit

1. Pose the Essential Question, *Can we really be whatever we want to be?* Allow students to discuss in groups while asking probing questions. Have groups share their thinking.
2. Ask students if they think people throughout history have been able to be whatever they wanted to be. Ask for examples of times when people were kept from becoming what they wanted. Tell students that they will be studying a time when people were not able to be whatever they wanted to be and that they will uncover the reasons for this during this unit.
3. To set the tone of medieval times show students a short video clip such as *King Arthur* or *Robin Hood*. When the clip is over have students write down anything that they noticed about the time period. Have them share in pairs. Ask the whole class to brainstorm on what is medieval. Use all responses at this point attaching no judgments. Keep the brainstormed list posted in the room to help guide research.
4. Present students with a timeline of upcoming activities and responsibilities for the next few weeks.

Researching Medieval Society

1. Hand out the Medieval Log and inform students that this is where they will organize their research information throughout the project.
2. Provide students with a variety of online and print resources to research the class structure and roles during medieval times. Prompt students to find answers to the Unit and Content Questions when gathering information:
 - o *How did one's role in medieval times influence their daily life?*
 - o *What resources were available to a person living in medieval society?*
 - o *How was the power structure organized among various people in medieval society?*
 - o *What were the various parts and functions of a castle in medieval society?*
3. Prompt students to construct a graphic organizer in their Medieval Log noting any differences in resources, religion, health, needs, power, and standard of living for each class group. Collect these to ensure understanding and provide feedback as necessary.
4. As students become more familiar with medieval society, let them choose a medieval character to research in more detail. Explain that each student will present an oral performance in the guise of the character they choose. Discuss the **Medieval Character Oral Presentation Rubric**, noting the different levels. Make sure all students understand the expectations for their oral presentation.
5. Remind students as they research that they should keep vital information that supports their particular character in their log, such as information pertaining to daily life, religion, health, job, hardships, and duties. Encourage students to use the **Medieval Log Checklist** to ensure that they are gathering all of the necessary information for their oral presentation and artifact creation. Walk around and monitor student research, asking probing questions to check for understanding and encouraging further research. Use the **Critical-Thinking Checklist** to keep notes.
6. When students are finishing their research, review each student's Medieval Log to clarify any misconceptions or questions that have arisen and provide feedback.
7. To help students make connections between present day and medieval times pose the Unit Question, *How is medieval life different from yours?* Ask students to write as many differences they can think of in their Medieval Log and then share in groups. Then lead a class discussion asking for specific examples from their research. Use the **Discussion Checklist** to assess individual student's contribution to the discussion.

Creating Medieval Artifacts

1. Ask students to synthesize what they have learned from their research by creating several medieval artifacts:
 - o A modern day Code of Chivalry for the class to follow.
 - o Their own personal coat of arms based on medieval heraldry, explaining the significance in the design and colors they have chosen.
 - o An authentic medieval menu for different class groups using the **Menu Scoring Guide** to help them monitor the quality of this work.
 - o A blueprint of a castle, a 3-D model based on the blueprint, and an explanation that answers the Unit Question, *How does form follow function in a medieval castle?*, using the Castle Building Scoring Guide to help them understand the expectations for this work.

Allow students to continue researching for further information if needed.

2. As students work both in groups and individually on the artifacts, observe them using the **Critical-Thinking Checklist**. Set up conferences to provide feedback, clarify misunderstandings, and to guide further research as necessary.

3. Ask student groups to provide peer feedback on each others' blueprints before allowing each group to build their castle. Ask groups to consider the accuracy of the representation as well as that both form and function have been considered. Provide the **Blueprint Peer Review Form** to help students assess the quality of the blueprints.

Wrapping Up

1. Have students revisit the **Medieval Character Oral Presentation Rubric** to begin planning their presentation of their medieval character. Ask them to design and gather props and encourage them to practice their presentation using the rubric as a guide.
2. Allow time for all students to present. Use the **Medieval Character Oral Presentation Rubric** to assess student performances.
3. After the presentations are complete, ask students to reconsider the Essential Question, *Can we really be whatever we want to be?* from the perspective of people living during medieval times. Discuss the constraints certain classes had during these times. Have students support their viewpoints using evidence they've gathered throughout the project. Post the Unit and Content Questions to provide structure to the discussion:
 - o *How was the power structure organized among various people in medieval society?*
 - o *How did one's role in medieval times influence their daily life?*
 - o *What resources were available to a person living in medieval society?*Use the **Discussion Checklist** and **Critical-Thinking Checklist** to monitor student thinking and participation.
4. Ask students to summarize their learning by writing an essay that answers the Unit Question, *How is medieval life different from yours?* Use the **Medieval Essay Rubric** to assess the final product. Additionally, review the initial brainstormed list in answer to this question in each student's Medieval Log to ascertain growth over the course of the project.

Assessing Projects: Medieval Times

Content Standards and Objectives

Targeted Content Standards and Benchmarks

Arizona State Standards

Social Studies: History

- Demonstrate and apply the basic tools of historical research, including how to construct timelines, frame questions that can be answered by historical study and research, and analyze and evaluate historical materials offering varied perspectives, with emphasis on:
 - constructing various timelines of key events, people, and periods of the historical era being studied
 - framing questions that can be answered by historical study and research
 - describing the difference between a primary source document and a secondary source document and the relationships between them
 - assessing the credibility of primary and secondary sources and drawing sound conclusions from them
- Describe the political and economic events and the social and geographic characteristics of Medieval European life and their enduring impacts on later civilizations.

Student Objectives

Students will be able to:

- Work cooperatively in small groups
- Research and log information vital to understanding medieval society
- Synthesize information from a variety of sources including: text, videos, Internet sources, etc.
- Use a variety of "found" materials to create a historical representation of a medieval castle
- Create a medieval menu that illustrates a typical diet of a noble and a peasant, as well as their typical eating habits and manners
- Produce a Coat of Arms that synthesizes information from various sources on medieval heraldry and combines it with symbols of modern life
- Illustrate the various relationships of a medieval lord, priest, knight, and serf
- Present an oral performance as a character from medieval society
- Compare life from modern times to medieval times

Medieval Character Oral Presentation

Name:

Date:

Instructions:

Carefully read each of the traits and use the rubric to plan your oral presentation. Practice your presentation and self-assess your work in each category. After you are finished, take time to reflect on the back as to what was successful about your presentation and what could use some work. This will be used to assess your final oral presentation.

	4	3	2	1
Knowledge of medieval character	The speaker demonstrates thorough knowledge of medieval character including information on daily life, religion, health, job, hardships, and duties.	The speaker demonstrates adequate knowledge of medieval character.	The speaker demonstrates some knowledge of medieval character.	The speaker demonstrates little or no knowledge.
Props-visual display	Props are historically accurate and reflective of the medieval time period. The visual materials greatly enhance the presentation and increase understanding of the historical character.	Props are historically accurate to the medieval time period. The visual materials add to the presentation, but do not necessarily increase the understanding of the historical character.	Props are used but are not specifically reflective of the medieval time period. The props do not necessarily increase the understanding of the historical character.	Props are used but are not historically accurate.
First person perspective	The speaker uses first person perspective the entire time, always using pronouns like I, me, we, our. It sounds like they are the medieval character.	The speaker uses first person perspective most of the time, with only an occasional slip out of character. They still sound like they are the medieval character.	The speaker slips in and out of character sometimes using first person perspective, and sometimes referring to the character as someone else.	The speaker is rarely in character, and sounds like he/she is giving a report on someone else instead of being that character.
Voice	Every spoken word can be heard and understood clearly with no difficulty by each person in the audience. The speaker uses a variety of volume modulations (louder/softer), voice inflections (tone of voice), gestures, and facial	A very brief portion of the talk may be unclear or inaudible to some members of the audience. The speaker makes some effort to be expressive to the audience.	Several parts of the talk are unclear or inaudible to some members of the audience. For the most part, the tone is lifeless or inappropriate.	Most of the talk is unclear or inaudible to most of the audience. Talk is flat. Voice is consistently a monotone. Little or no energy is used to convey feelings.

	expressions to convey enthusiasm or energy.			
Pace	Talk moves at natural rate and rhythm. There are no inappropriate pauses or silences.	Talk is slightly hurried or slow. There may be occasional gaps that do not detract very much from the meaning.	Talk is somewhat hurried or sluggish throughout OR there are several noticeable pauses in an otherwise well-paced talk.	Talk is noticeably rushed or protracted OR there are several lengthy pauses in the talk.
Rehearsed	The presentation seems well rehearsed with occasional looks to cue cards or notes but without losing contact with the audience.	The presentation seems rehearsed for the most part with some extended looks at cue cards or notes.	The presentation did not appear to have been rehearsed, and lines were mostly read from cue cards or notes to the audience.	The presentation was unprepared with no attempt to deliver a quality presentation.
Length of presentation	Presentation is completed in the allotted time limit.	Presentation is just a bit over or under the allotted time.	Presentation is over or under the allotted time by a significant amount.	Presentation is extremely over allotted time limit or is extremely under allotted time.

Managing Medieval Research Checklist for Medieval Log

Name:

Date:

My Medieval Log includes:	Yes	No	Comments
Answers to the Unit and Content Questions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>How did one's role in medieval times influence their daily life?</i> • <i>What resources were available to a person living in medieval society?</i> • <i>How was the power structure organized among various people in medieval society?</i> • <i>What were the various parts and functions of a castle in medieval society?</i> 			
A graphic organizer that explains relationships between different class structures.			
Accurate information on my medieval character that includes information on daily life, religion, health, job, hardships, and duties.			
Brief notes on the other medieval characters that my role interacts with.			
Research notes or sketches on the different types of period clothing.			
An explanation of the Code of Chivalry and notes explaining its relevance to the time.			
An explanation of the purpose and function of medieval heraldry.			
The types of food served for each class system.			
Explanation of the relationship of form and function of components in castles.			
Documentation of all research materials and sources to gather information and confirm the accuracy of information by listing a variety of			

sources.			
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Thinking Critically about Medieval Times

Dates and Comments

<p>Interpretation</p> <p>Description</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Describes important concepts and relationships of medieval society accurately <p>Showing Meaning</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Shows how information has special meaning by connecting it to experiences, knowledge, and beliefs• Shows purpose and theme related to information <p>Creativity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Surprises audience with unusual features that contribute to audience's enjoyment and understanding	
<p>Analysis</p> <p>Describing Parts of a System</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Identifies parts of medieval society accurately• Explains how parts of medieval society interact <p>Describing Relationships in a System</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Uses good reasoning strategies and subject-area knowledge to describe relationships within the medieval society <p>Drawing Conclusions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Uses analysis to draw conclusions and create meaningful insights answering the Essential Question: Can we really be whatever we want to be?	

<p>Making Inferences</p> <p>Making Connections</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uses knowledge and experiences to draw connections and make inferences between own life and medieval times <p>Monitoring</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uses knowledge, experiences, and sound reasoning to draw connections and make inferences • Modifies inferences and makes new ones continuously 	
<p>Evaluation</p> <p>Forming Opinions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bases opinion on good evidence synthesized from multiple, credible sources • Shows understanding of complexity of issues of medieval society by investigating and synthesizing information from different viewpoints <p>Communication</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • States opinion clearly and supports it with several good reasons from reliable sources • Communicates deep understanding of complexity of issues surrounding medieval society 	
<p>Generalizing</p> <p>Identifying Patterns</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identifies patterns in different groups from medieval society <p>Interpreting Patterns</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Generates meaningful insights from these patterns <p>Using Patterns to Generalize</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uses insights generated from these patterns to develop broader, meaningful categories that apply to own life 	

Medieval Discussion Checklist

Teacher uses a discussion checklist for each student, targeting a few students each day, to record observations and notes.

Student:

	Date & Comments	Date & Comments	Date & Comments
Engagement			
Enjoys class discussions			
Thinks deeply about others' comments			
Listens to all ideas with an open mind			
Communicates engagement with appropriate body language			
Interaction			
Contributes an appropriate amount of personal experiences and opinions			
Enhances and builds on others' comments			
Asks clarification or elaboration questions of classmates			
Summarizes and paraphrases others' comments			
Supports opinions with good reasoning and credible information			

Collaboration			
Enthusiastically contributes to discussion without monopolizing			
Encourages classmates to participate			
Responds respectfully to opposing opinions			
Considers criticism of own ideas respectfully			
Changes mind when persuaded of different point of view			
Follows class discussion rules			

Food Fit for a King or a Page? Medieval Meal Scoring Guide

Name:

Date:

Instructions: Create a medieval menu that includes selections for both lords/nobles and peasants/serfs.

	5	3	1
	Menu selections are accurate, creative, appropriate for class and completed with detail	Menu selections are complete and appropriate for class	Menu selections are incomplete or are not accurate for class
Cover: Design a cover for your menu complete with a name for your restaurant. Pictures may be included to enhance the looks of your menu.			
Lords/nobles: Create a section of the menu that has food selections that would be appropriate for this social class.			
Peasants/serfs: Create a section of the menu that has food selections that would be appropriate for this social class.			
Appetizer: Include detailed description of an appetizer for each class.			
Main courses: Include detailed description of three main courses for each class.			
Desserts: Include detailed description of two desserts for each class.			
Drink: Include detailed description of a drink for each class.			
Total/35			

Medieval Dream Home- Castle Building Scoring Guide

Before Construction

	35	25	10
	Planning is extremely detailed and accurate. Form and function of each component is explained in detail.	Planning has some detail. Description of form and function of each component is explained but is not backed by research or it is not complete and accurate.	Planning is lacking in details. No explanations of forms or functions are included.
Castle blueprint			
Materials			

During Construction and Beyond

	5	3	0
Component	Model representation is accurate and complete.	Component may be included in model, but representation is not accurate.	Castle component is not included in model.
Keep			
Towers			
Walls or Curtain			
Gatehouse			
Drawbridge			
Windows and arrow loops			
Battlements			
Moat			
Murder Holes			
Chapel			
Stable			
Barbican			
Great Hall			
Add each column			
Total/100			

Blueprint Peer Review

Please review the group's blueprint and provide comments in support of your rating. Then review the components included in the explanation and rate each one according to how well it fits the criteria.

Blueprint

	Planning is extremely detailed and accurate.	Planning has some detail.	Planning is lacking in details.
Blueprint			
Materials			

Comments:

Explanation of Form and Function

Component	Form and function of component is explained in detail.	Description of form and function of component is explained but is not backed by research or it is not complete and accurate.	No explanations of form or function are included.
Keep - A tower or tall building inside of the castle which was the last resort to run for protection when under attack. Usually, but not always square or rectangular.			
Towers - Each castle should have at least 2. The best towers were round to prevent attack and were used for guarding and observation. They were also used for sleeping quarters or as dungeons to hold prisoners.			
Walls or Curtain - Should be tall and sturdy in construction. Many castles had inner and outer walls for even better protection.			
Gatehouse - A sturdy structure built into the wall of the castle by which to go in and out of the castle. Had heavy wooden gates or doors and lots of defensive traits like arrow loops in the sides and murder holes in the roof. A portcullis or heavy iron gate could also be lowered to block the entrance.			
Drawbridge - A wooden structure that could be			

raised or lowered to prevent intruders from crossing the moat into the castle.			
Windows and arrow loops - Windows were long and narrow, sometimes covered with stained glass designs. Windows would be placed high in a castle for defensive purposes and would have large wooden shutters to close from the inside. Arrow loops were narrow slits cut into the walls from which archers could shoot arrows at intruders.			
Battlements - These were the main fighting areas along the tops of the castle walls. They had a tooth (merlon) and notch (embrasure) appearance.			
Moat - A deep trench usually filled with water that surrounded a castle.			
Murder Holes: A section between the main gate and an inner portcullis where arrows, rocks, and hot oil could be dropped from the roof through holes.			
Chapel - A building that served as a place of worship. Could be a separate building or be part of the keep, tower, or gatehouse. Often was a private church for the lord and his family.			
Stable - Used to house animals and livestock of all kinds.			
Barbican - The Barbican was a forward defensible structure jutting out or set in front of the main castle or walls.			
Great Hall - The building in the inner ward that housed the main meeting and dining area for the castle's residence; throne room.			

Medieval Essay Rubric

Name:

Date:

	4	3	2	1
<p>Content- Answering the Unit Question: <i>How is medieval life different from yours?</i></p>	<p>Student response demonstrates in-depth understanding of relevant concepts, explaining the difference between medieval life and student's life.</p> <p>Offers unique interpretations or extensions making connections and discussion points that relate to topics such as, but not limited to: opportunities, schooling, food, chores, clothes, money, transportation, friends, furniture, homes, music, religion, health, extracurricular activities, and entertainment.</p>	<p>Student response demonstrates understanding of major concepts explaining the difference between medieval life and student's life.</p> <p>Some supporting ideas/details may be overlooked or misunderstood. Offers expected interpretations or extensions.</p>	<p>Student response demonstrates that there are gaps in conceptual understanding of the difference between medieval life and student's life.</p> <p>Offers few or no interpretations or extensions.</p>	<p>Student response has gaps in conceptual understanding of the difference between medieval life and student's life.</p> <p>No interpretations or extensions included in response.</p>
<p>Writing</p>	<p>Writing shows sophisticated tone, voice, and sense of audience.</p> <p>Writing uses strong language to create writing that is</p>	<p>Writing shows appropriate tone, voice, and sense of audience.</p> <p>Language is interesting</p>	<p>Writing attempts to reflect the individuality of the author and the audience.</p> <p>Language is</p>	<p>Writing is generic, reflecting little about the author or the audience.</p>

	<p>interesting and powerful.</p> <p>Sentences flow together naturally and are varied in length and structure to enhance meaning.</p>	<p>and engaging.</p> <p>Sentences vary and flow together naturally.</p>	<p>predictable.</p> <p>Sentences show little variety.</p>	
Mechanics	<p>Essay contains no spelling, grammatical, or typing errors.</p>	<p>Essay has a few spelling, grammatical, or typing errors that do not distract the reader from the content.</p>	<p>Many spelling and grammatical errors that question the content of the essay.</p>	<p>Multiple errors in both spelling and grammar that distract the reader from the content of the essay.</p>