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Middle Ages: Medieval Art and Culture

Art and culture throughout the Middle Ages continued to evolve as the people's lives were altered by both warfare and peace. Yet, many of these cultural artifacts can still be experienced today. Have you heard the stories of Emperor Charlemagne, Sir Lancelot, or Maid Marian? Do you know what medieval people sang about? Use this webquest to discover trade secrets of medieval builders and painters. Embark on a quest through the World Book articles and medieval artwork to discover the art and culture of the Middle Ages!

First, go to **www.worldbookonline.com**
Then, click on "Advanced." If prompted, log on with your ID and Password.

Find It!

Find the answers to the questions below by using the "Search' tool to search key words. Since this activity is about Middle Ages, you can start by searching the key word "Middle Ages."

Write the answers on the lines provided or below the question

Early medieval culture

1. The Middle Ages began in the A.D. 400's, as _____peoples from northern Europe established small kingdoms that replaced the West Roman Empire. The kingdoms combined customs from both cultures, so they are sometimes called _____ – _____kingdoms.

2. Who was Beowulf, and how did his story reflect the Germanic influences on medieval culture? (Hint: To answer this question, see the "Beowulf" article.)

***Users of the *Advanced* database can find extension activities at the end of this webquest.**

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3. Leaders of the Christian church took over many responsibilities after the Roman Empire ended in western Europe. Two church institutions, the **cathedral** and the **monastery**, became enters of learning in the early Middle Ages, preserving ancient manuscripts and founding most of the schools. Write the correct term in the blank space.

   A. Communities of men and women who gave up worldly life to serve God through prayer and work were called _____.

   B. The home church of a bishop, a religious leader who administered an area containing a number of churches was called _____.

4. Starting in the 600's, Muslims assumed a major role in the trade on and around the Mediterranean Sea. What are two of the industries introduced to western Europe by the Muslim traders?

5. Mark the following statements about the Frankish ruler Charlemagne as "True" or "False." *(Hint: Some of the answers may be found in the "Charlemagne" article.)*

   a. _____ Charlemagne united much of western Europe in a single empire.

   b. _____ Charlemagne established a school at his palace in Paris.

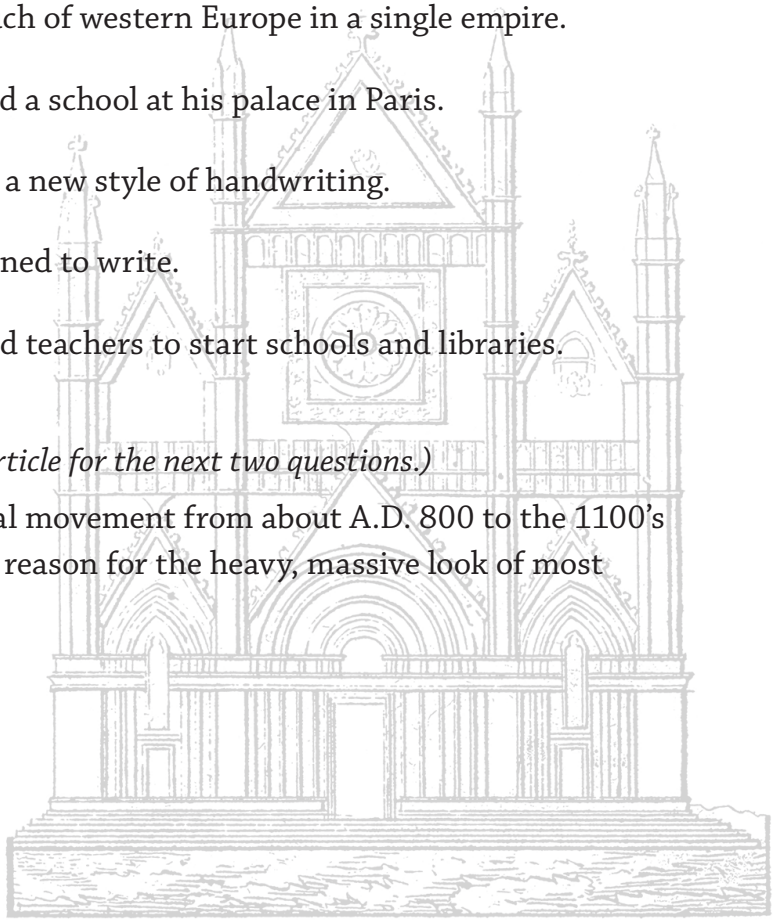
   c. _____ Charlemagne developed a new style of handwriting.

   d. _____ Charlemagne never learned to write.

   e. _____ Charlemagne encouraged teachers to start schools and libraries.

   (Hint: See the "Romanesque architecture" article for the next two questions.)

6. The main western European architectural movement from about A.D. 800 to the 1100's is known as Romanesque. What was one reason for the heavy, massive look of most Romanesque buildings?



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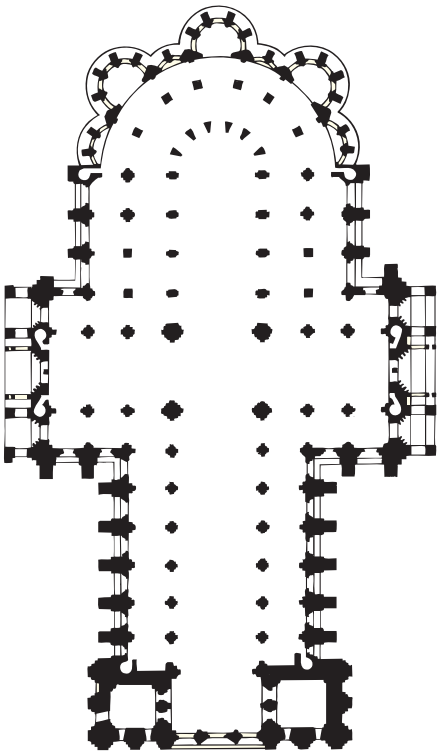
No church laws specify the design of a cathedral. However, cathedrals in Western religions have traditionally been built according to the general plan of a medieval cathedral.



Floor plan of a cathedral

7. Unscramble each of these terms describing Romanesque church construction and put it in the proper space.

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A. The plan of a typical Romanesque church was in the shape of a _____.

B. Large columns called _____ supported the roof vaults.

C. _____ arches were built in openings in the walls and between the piers.

D. The roof over the_____ (main gathering area) consisted of vaults of stone constructed on the principle of the arch.

E. Stone _____ and carvings in the churches usually depicted scenes and people from the Bible.

Story or History?

8. Match each early medieval person with his or her description. In the space before the name, indicate whether you think the individual is a historical person (H) or a fictional character from medieval stories (F). (Hint: Each person has a biographical article in the World Book database.)

_____King Arthur	A. Irish saint
_____Sir Lancelot	B. British leader
_____Beowulf	C. French knight
_____St. Patrick	D. A warrior who aided a Danish king

High Middle Ages

Between the 1000's and the late 1200's, western Europe enjoyed increased peace and prosperity, and medieval culture reached its high point.

9. During the High Middle Ages, increased contact with what civilizations brought back ancient learning that had been lost in western Europe?

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10. The works of what major Greek philosopher became more well known in the High Middle Ages when scholars translated them from Greek and Arabic into Latin?

(Hint: See the "Scholasticism" article for the next two questions.)

11. What was scholasticism and what did it emphasize?

12. The most important scholastic of the Middle Ages was Saint Thomas Aquinas. What claim did he make about reason and religion?

See It!

In the High Middle Ages, the thick walls and small windows that gave Romanesque buildings their dark, heavy appearance gave way to soaring ceilings and huge stained glass windows that flooded buildings with light and color. See the "Gothic art" article to explore the look of this new style.

13. Precisely, when and where was the Gothic style introduced?

14. Among the constructional devices most associated with the Gothic style are _____ arches.

15. Exterior columns and supports, called _____, were introduced about 1175. They helped reduce the amount of solid wall space needed to support the roof, allowing the walls to be opened with large stained glass windows.

16. _____windows are round stained glass windows with elegant radiating geometric patterns.

I spy

17. Which of the features identified in the three questions above are visible in each of the three cathedral pictures in the "Gothic art" article?

    Notre Dame: _____

    Cathedral at Bourges: _____

    Chartres Cathedral: _____

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18. To celebrate your newfound knowledge of Gothic architecture, seek out a troubadour! What was a troubadour? (Hint: Find the answer to the next questions in the "Song" article.)

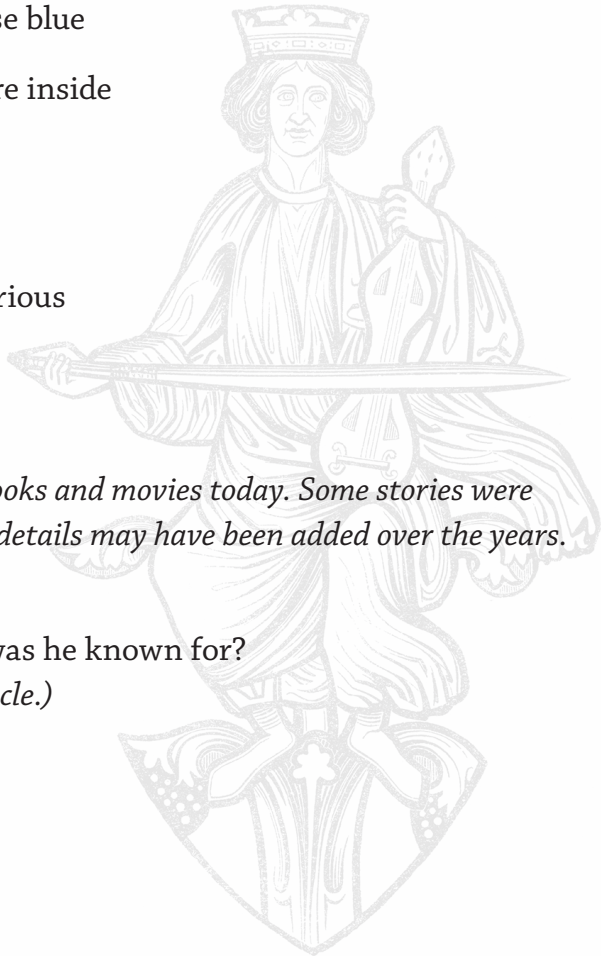
19. How were the songs of the troubadours different from earlier medieval songs, like the Gregorian chants? (You can even hear a clip of a Gregorian chant in the "Song" article!)

To see a page from a medieval music book and answer the next two questions, go to the article titled "Illuminated manuscript."

20. What is an illuminated manuscript, and what does the term "illuminated" mean?

21. Talented scribes and artists produced illuminated manuscripts throughout the Middle Ages. Match these terms describing illuminated manuscripts with their definitions. Also, look at the illustration to see which ones you can find.

_____ historiated initial	A. amusing human or animal figures
_____ decorated initial	B. gem for making intense blue
_____ drolleries	C. large letter with picture inside
_____ miniature	D. writing room
_____ lapis lazuli	E. small painting
_____ scriptorium	F. letter adorned with various "motifs" (designs)



Fact or Fiction

Many stories from the Middle Ages are still told and retold in books and movies today. Some stories were fictional from the start. Others are based on fact, but made-up details may have been added over the years. It can be tricky to sort out fact from fiction! See how you do.

22. According to legend, who was Robin Hood and what was he known for?
(Hint: Use a keyword search to find the "Robin Hood" article.)

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23. Historians don't know if the entire legend associated with Robin Hood is fact or fiction. However, there is an element of truth to the story. Which part do historians know is a fact? Put an "X" in the correct box next to each character's names.

Name	Fact	Historians don't know
Robin Hood		
Maid Marian		
Friar Tuck		
Sherwood Forest*		

** (Hint: do a separate search for this article topic.)*

One of the villains in most modern retellings of the Robin Hood story is Prince John, the brother of King Richard the Lion-Hearted. Although John's connection with Robin Hood is fiction, there was a real Prince John. He even became king in 1199, but (like the prince in the Robin Hood stories) he was not loved by his people.

24. Why was the real King John unpopular?
(Hint: Use a keyword search for "John" to find the article on the English king. Be careful. If you search for "King John," you may find a play by William Shakespeare instead.)

25. What did John's subjects really do to limit the king's power? Explain why their actions were so important. *(Hint: Examine both the main text of the article and the caption of the article's illustration of the Magna Carta.)*

Late Middle Ages

The late Middle Ages (between 1300 and 1500) were a time of enormous cultural change in Europe, as the Middle Ages gave way to modern times. Return to the "Middle Ages" article to begin exploring this era.

26. The growth of a new outlook called "humanism" led some scholars and artists to become less concerned with religion. What topics did humanist scholars prefer to study?

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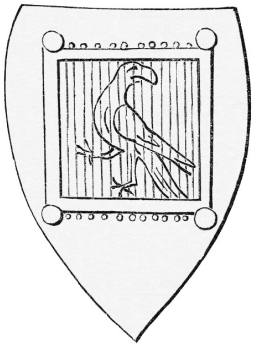
27. From where did humanist scholars and artists of the late Middle Ages gain much of the inspiration?

Hint: See the "Renaissance" article to answer the next questions.

28. Humanism was part of a cultural movement called the Renaissance. When and where did the Renaissance begin?

29. Earlier medieval artists and those of the Renaissance had very different painting styles. Put the following characteristics in the proper column. Write Medeival or Renaissance on the line.



_____emphasized beauty of the human body

_____symbolic purpose

_____stiff and unrealistic

_____lifelike

_____linear perspective

Click on the link to "Images, Videos, and Audio" at the top of the 'Renaissance" article. Under "Photos" find and click on the painting of the "Family and Court of Ludovico Gonzaga II by Andrea Mantegna."

30. How is the style of this painting different from the style of the picture of a troubadour at a royal court that you looked at in the "Song" article? How does this reflect the differences between earlier medieval art and Renaissance art?

31. Architects also returned to classical Roman styles. Go back to "Images, Videos, and Audio" and find the picture titled "Interior of the Pazzi Chapel." How is the look and feel of this architectural style different from that of the Gothic cathedrals?

32. What two changes in the late Middle Ages made learning and literature more available to more people? *(Hint: Return to the "Middle Ages" article for this question.)*

1. _____

2. _____

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33. Match the following late medieval authors who wrote in the vernacular with their descriptions. *(Hint: Each person has a biography in the World Book database.)*

_____ Geoffrey Chaucer	A. Italian poet who helped start the movement called humanism
_____ Christine de Pizan	B. English poet, considered the greatest of the Middle Ages
_____ Dante Alighieri	C. French author of *The Book of the City of Ladies*
_____ Petrarch	D. Italian poet whose work, about life after death, is a summary of medieval thought

Investigate the printing revolution of the 1400's by using a keyword search to find the "Printing press" article.

34. Around 1436, a _____ goldsmith named Johannes Gutenberg experimented with movable type.

    a. French
    b. English
    c. German
    d. Italian

35. With movable type, the type pieces (small individual plates, each with an individual _____ or _____ carved or stamped on it) can be arranged and rearranged.

    a. letter or word
    b. stroke or symbol
    c. line or dot
    d. letter or symbol
    e. page or picture

36. Gutenberg set letters one by one into wooden _____, applied ink, and pressed paper onto the letters.

    a. stamps
    b. frames
    c. cylinders

37. Printing spread so quickly in Europe that _____ of books had been printed by 1500.

    a. hundreds
    b. thousands
    c. millions

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Extension Activity 1: Illuminated Manuscript 2.0

In the "Illuminated manuscript" article, examine the picture title "Historiated initial." The picture shows an illuminated page from a late medieval choir book. Create an illuminated manuscript page depicting a verse of one of your favorite songs. Along with the song text, include several typical illuminated manuscript features—such as a decorated or historiated initial, decorated borders, drolleries, or line endings. Use medieval-style artwork OR pick a more modern art style, such as anime.

Extension Activity 2: A "New" Discovery

It's 1440, and you've traveled from your home to northern Italy. You've just seen your first Renaissance style paintings. Write home and describe this new style to your family. How would you describe the paintings? How do you feel about this new style?

Extension Activity 3: Fact and Fiction

You are a private investigator who has been hired to sort fact from fiction. Your client wants to work with one of the medieval legends listed below, but they aren't sure what to believe!

A. Choose one of the following famous medieval people to become the subject of a full investigation. Do research in the World Book database to help you separate fact from fiction. You can find more biographies in the "Related Information" tab within the Middle Ages article.

Once you start your investigation, write up your findings. Some questions to consider might be:
Was this a real person? What did the person do? How did the person's story become legend?
What are the differences between the historical person and the stories told about him or her?

- King Arthur
- Saint Joan of Arc
- Macbeth
- William Tell (hero of Switzerland)

B. Next, create a one-page resume for this person. You will want to include his or her real information, as well as debunk any fictional stories that have circulated. This resume should include:

- Name and Location:
- Short summary of this person's legend:
- Skills and/or interests:
- Accomplishments (include years):
- Mention fictional accomplishments, if only to correct them:
- References:

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