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EUROPE IN THE MIDDLE AGES

Grade Level: This unit is written for a four/five multi-age classroom. The activities included can be used to meet the needs of all students.

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Length of Unit: the unit is composed of eight lessons, some of which are designed to take more than one day.

I. ABSTRACT

This unit focuses on the development of European civilization during the Middle Ages in Europe. The social studies focus will include geography, feudalism, chivalry, Norman Conquest, growth of towns, England, and plagues from the time period of 400 A.D. to 1500 A.D. The language arts focus will be on myths and legends. There are three concepts in this unit. The first concept develops an awareness for time and place. The second concept develops an understanding of the complex nature of a given culture. The third concept develops an understanding of real and mythical characters.

II. OVERVIEW

A. OBJECTIVES

There are specific objectives that correlate with each of eight lessons in this unit. The overriding objectives are to develop an awareness of time and place, develop an understanding of the complex nature of a given culture, and develop an understanding of real and mythical characters.

B. CORE KNOWLEDGE SEQUENCE

The lessons follow the World Civilization for the fourth grade found in the Core Knowledge Scope and Sequence.

C. SKILLS

Many social studies and reading skills are integrated into this unit.

III. BACKGROUND KNOWLEDGE

The European Middle Ages are normally thought of as being the time period of 400 A.D. to 1500 A.D. The fall of the Roman Empire, Germanic Tribe Invasions, and the rise of Christianity began the Middle Ages. Feudalism played a tremendous part in European history. The majority of the people were peasants

who reported to the lords. A code of chivalry was developed for the knights. Towns became the center of commerce and guilds were developed, causing the weakening of feudal ties. In England, individual rights came to the forefront by trial by jury and the Magna Carta. Myths and legends played a significant role in the superstitions of this time period.

IV. RESOURCES

See Bibliography

V. LESSONS

A. Lesson One (or Day One): Background Information and Geography

1. Objective/Goal:

a. *Concept* Students will understand how human movement affects events in history.

b. *Skills*

(1) *Cause and effect Midway Benchmark 15.6*

(2) *Sequence events Midway Benchmark 15.1*

(3) *Identify land forms Forsyth County Skills Continuum/Grade 4/Maps and Globe Skills*

2. *Materials*

a. *Appendix A*

b. *Wall map of Europe*

c. *Student copies of European map*

d. *Physical desk maps of Europe*

e. *Transparency map of Europe*

f. *Construction paper, poster board, party streamers*

g. *Chisholm, Jane. World History Dates. ISBN 0-88110-232-6*

h. *Corrick, James A. The Early Middle Ages. ISBN 1-56006-246-0*

i. *Hirsch, E.D. What Your 3rd Grader Needs to Know. ISBN 0-385-31257-1*

j. *Hirsch, E. D. What Your 4th Grader Needs to Know. ISBN 0-385-31260-1*

k. *Millard, Anne. The Usborne Book of World History. ISBN 0-86020-959-8*

3. *Prior Knowledge for Students*

See "Rome" in What Your Third Grader Needs to Know.

4. Key Vocabulary

a. Nomadic-people who moved from place to place

b. Vandals-second group to invade the Roman Empire; today, a word for someone who

destroys things for the sheer fun of it

5. Procedures/Activities

a. Teacher will use wall map and transparency of map to explain the geographic location of

the following items:

(1) Rivers: Danube, Rhine, Rhone, and Oder

(2) Mountains: Alps, Pyrenees

(3) Seas: Mediterranean, North, Baltic

(4) Iberian Peninsula: Spain and Portugal, proximity to North Africa

(5) France: the region known as Gaul

(6) Italy

(7) Asia

See Appendix A

b. All desks and chairs will be removed from the room to allow for a large space on the floor.

Cardinal and intermediate directions will be assigned to the room.

c. Groups of students (about two per group) will be assigned the role of the geographic location

1-7. Using the cardinal and intermediate directions, students will role play the various locations. Their body movements should demonstrate the land form.

d. The student groups will then label the same geographic locations on a physical desk map.

(Plans C and D may need to be reversed depending on student ability.)

e. Each student will label an individual map of the geographic locations. Students may receive

help from their groups.

f. Using the wall map and transparency of map, the teacher will explain the movement of the

Germanic tribes (Visigoths, Vandals, Franks, Angles, Saxons) and their reasons for moving. The teacher should also point out the land forms encountered by the tribes, and how the

forms affected them.

g. Using construction paper, butcher paper, and party streamers, students will write and form

the geographic locations on the large floor space.

h. Groups of students will role play the tribes (one tribe per group) and track the movement of

the tribe.

6. Evaluation/Assessment

a. Using a large piece of poster board, each group will draw a map of Europe, label the

geographic locations and land forms studied, and track the movement of their assigned

Germanic tribe. During group presentations, students will provide the following information:

(1) Route of tribe

(2) Cause and effect of Germanic tribe movement on Europe

(3) Geographic encounters and how the encounters related (cause and effect) to the success

or failure of the movement.

b. Student groups will sequence themselves according to the order of invasions of the Germanic tribes, then presentations will take place through a museum.

c. Standardized test connections

(1) Cause and effect

(2) Sequencing

B. Lesson Two: Feudalism (lords, vassals, knights, freedmen, serfs, castles, and life on a manor)

1. Objective/Goal:

a. Concept

(1) Understand the complex nature of a given culture

(2) Forsyth County Continuum 4th grade social studies--Identify how people adapt to

and

modify their environment

b. Skill

(1) Read and follow directions Midway Benchmark 15.12

(2) Compare/contrast Midway Benchmark 15.11

2. Materials

a. Books from school and public library on Middle Ages, on lords, vassals, knights, freedmen, serfs, castles, and manor

b. Wall chart or overhead transparency of the Ladder of Society (see page 126 in What Your 4th Grader Needs to Know)

c. Video of David Macauley's Castle

d. Large piece of cardboard, such as a side of a refrigerator box, for base of manor display

e. Assorted small empty boxes, construction paper, scissors, glue, glue sticks, markers, and

colored chalk for manor buildings

f. Pyramids to Pueblos by Helen H. Moore and Carmen R. Sorvillo

g. What Your 4th Grader Needs to Know

h. Plastic lids to use for drawing circles for Venn diagram

i. Paper and pencils

3. Prior Knowledge for Students

Review Vikings from 3rd grade Core Knowledge sequence, emphasizing their raiding.

4. Key Vocabulary

a. Feudalism-a system of life in the Middle Ages in Europe

b. Lord-one who offered protection in return for loyal service

c. Vassal-one who gave loyal service

d. Knight-a soldier on horseback

e. Manor-the lord's land and possessions

f. Mill-building for grinding grain into flour

g. Smithy-building for shaping iron objects

h. Serfs-peasant farmers who stayed on a given manor

i. Freedmen-peasant farmers who could move from the manor

a. Fallow-unused (as in fields)

k. Moat-water surrounding a castle

l. Tapestries-a picture of a story woven on cloth, hung on castle walls for decoration and warmth

5. Procedures/Activities

a. Visual (poster or overhead) used to introduce and explain the Ladder of Society (see What

Your 4th Grader Needs to Know by E. D. Hirsch)

b. Students will use library books and the jigsaw method to become experts on one of the rungs of the ladder of society (lords, vassals, knights, freedmen, serfs).

c. Students view video of David Macaulay's Castle. Students work in cooperative groups to build a castle.

d. Students read about the manor on page 127 of What Your 4th Grader Needs to Know by E. D. Hirsch. Then students work in pairs to make a model of an assigned part of the manor

(farmland, woods, pastures, animal sheds, church, castle, many peasant huts, priest's house, mill, brewery, smithy, etc.) These will be combined into a class manor display.

e. Students will complete a Venn diagram to compare/contrast society in feudal Europe and 20th century United States.

6. Evaluation/Assessment

a. Students will write or tell about the manor, describing the use of various buildings.

b. Evaluate students' Venn diagrams that compare/contrast society in feudal Europe and 20th

century United States.

c. Standardized test connections

(1) Read and follow directions

(2) Compare and contrast

C. Lesson Three: Chivalry

1. Objective/Goal:

a. Concept

Understand the complex nature of a given culture.

b. Skills

- (1) Understands meaning of words and phrases. Midway Benchmark 15.2.***
- (2) Compares and contrasts. Midway Benchmark 15.11***
- (3) Describes life in medieval times.***

2. Materials

- a. Poster and student copy of the Rules of Chivalry. (Arnold, Ralph. Kings, Bishops, Knights, and Pawns)***
- b. Sample of ballad (Grout, Donald Jay. A History of Western Music. ISBN 0-393-951***
- c. Example of True-Love Knot. (Gravett, Christopher. Knights. ISBN 0-679-83882-1)***
- d. Hirsch, E. D. What Your 4th Grader Needs to Know. ISBN 0-385-31260-1.***
- e. Howarth, Sarah. Medieval People. ISBN 1-56294-153-4.***

3. Prior Knowledge for Students

Students should be familiar with manners that are used everyday.

4. Key Vocabulary

- a. Medieval-of, like, characteristic of, or suggestive of the Middle Ages***
- b. Chivalry-the noble qualities a knight was supposed to have***
- c. Medallion-a large medal***
- d. Chansons-French for ballad or song***

5. Procedures/Activities

- a. Lead a group discussion about chivalrous customs in medieval times.***
- b. Talk about how knights would treat the ladies, write poems of love, and perform courageous acts of rescue.***
- c. Distribute copies of medieval rules of chivalry.***
- d. In cooperative groups, have students develop a modern day Code of Chivalry.***
- e. Review group discussion about chivalrous customs.***
- f. Share example of chanson (ballad) with class. Discuss the reasons knights had of writing them.***
- g. Lead a class discussion about medallions created in medieval times. Show children an example of a True-Love Knot.***
- h. Individually, have students write a chanson (ballad) OR create a True-Love Knot and explain what their medallion represents.***

6. Evaluation/Assessment

a. These activities will be assessed as complete or incomplete.

b. Standardized test connections

(1) Compare/contrast

(2) Understand meanings of words

D. Lesson Four: The Norman Conquest

1. Objective/Goal:

a. Concept Students will understand how human movement affects events in history

b. Skills

(1) Sequence events Midway Benchmark 15.1

Summarize Midway Benchmark 15.7

2. Materials

a. Wall map

b. Paper and pencils for students

c. Chrisp, Peter. The Normans. 1994. ISBN 1-56847-174-2.

d. Hirsch, E. D. What Your 4th Grader Needs to Know. 1992. ISBN 0-385-31260-1.

3. Prior Knowledge for Students

a. Visual Arts

b. Bayeaux Tapestry

c. Geographic locations of Europe, France, England, and English Channel

4. Key Vocabulary

a. Mercenary-soldier who could be hired to fight in any army

b. Vassal-servant

5. Procedures/Activities

a. Teacher will explain the culture of the Normans and events which led to the Battle of Hastings.

Geographic locations will be pointed out on a wall map.

b. Each table of students (about 4-6) will write and perform a skit. Skit topics may be one of the following:

(1) William/Harold Friendship Goes to War

(2) From Norsemen to Normans

(3) The Battle of Hastings

(4) William the Conquering Hero

6. Evaluation/Assessment

Standardized test connections-sequencing and summarizing

E. Lesson Five: The Growth of Towns

1. Objective/Goal:

a. Concept

(1) Student will develop an awareness of time and place.

(2) Student will understand the complex nature of a given culture.

b. Skill

(1) Describe the growth of towns as the center of commerce Midway Benchmark 15.2

(2) Compare/contrast town life with life today Midway Benchmark 15.11

(3) Understand the meaning of words Midway Benchmark 15.2

2. Materials

a. Overhead projector

b. Transparency: why was there a need for feudalism?

c. Hirsch, What Your Fourth Grader Needs to Know.

d. Filmstrip, "Medieval Europe"

e. Six pieces of butcher paper (one per team)

f. Coloring utensils

g. Caselli, History of Everyday Things: the Middle Ages.

3. Prior Knowledge for Students

4. Key Vocabulary

a. Merchant/Seller-person who sold goods

b. Producer/Freedman-person who could farm on the manor, and sell extra goods

c. Guild-association of craftsmen

d. Apprentice-a person who learned a specific craft.

5. Procedures/Activities

a. Introduce the word "feudalism" by brainstorming. Using a list, compare the existence of various jobs in and around a manor. Emphasize that the manor was "self-existing", therefore many serfs were born and raised without ever leaving the manor.

b. Brainstorm what might have happened to cause the need for change. (Roads, technology, excess crops)

c. Brainstorm what a town might need to be formed. Encourage what is found in and around towns today.

d. Read an excerpt from the book, History of Everyday Things: The Middle Ages, entitled "Trades, Fairs, and Markets," page 24.

e. Review the trades, and importance of a "gathering place to exchange goods."

f. Student will choose an occupation/trade that appeals. Student will create a stall/market booth to display and sell wares. Within groups, student will create a crossroads, and create how the goods would be displayed.

g. Each group will connect the crossroads forming a "market place."

h. Student will write a paragraph telling about the growth of towns, underlining above vocabulary words.

6. Evaluation/Assessment

a. Students will be assessed by their participation in forming market stall.

b. Students will be assessed by cooperation within groups.

c. Students will be assessed by their writing.

d. Standardized test connections

(1) Compare/contrast

(2) State main idea or information from text

(3) Understand meaning of words and phrases

E. Lesson Six: England in the Middle Ages (Henry II, right to trial by jury, murder of Thomas Becket in Canterbury Cathedral, Eleanor of Aquitaine, Magna Carta, King John, and Parliament)

1. Objective/Goal:

a. Concept understand the complex nature of a given culture

b. Skill Distinguish fact and opinion Midway Benchmark 15.8

2. Materials

a. Transparency or wall chart of family tree of Henry II and Eleanor

b. Chart paper

c. Resource books from library on Henry II, Thomas a Becket, Eleanor of Aquitaine, and King John

d. Manila paper, calligraphy charts and pens

3. Prior Knowledge for Students

Review the Bill of Rights from the Core Knowledge sequence study of the Constitution in 2nd grade

4. Key Vocabulary

a. Trial by combat-settling problems using physical combat

b. Social peers-people of the same social level

c. Impartial-fair

d. Jury-twelve peers questioned by the judge in the Middle Ages

e. Pilgrim-a person who makes a trip usually for a religious purpose

f. Pilgrimage-a trip usually made for a religious reason

g. Annulled-canceled

h. Magna Carta-means "Great Charter"; a famous English document

i. Parliament-Great Council

j. Representative government-government by the people

5. Procedures/Activities

a. Teacher uses visual (transparency or wall chart) of family tree to present information on Henry II and Eleanor.

b. Teacher makes a T-chart as he/she explains the differences in trial by combat (might makes right) and trial by jury.

c. Students hold a mock trial by jury. Teacher explains the case, names the student accused of the crime of poaching, and appoints the judge. The judge picks twelve jurors, questions them about the accused, and decides the verdict.

d. Students role play the slaying of Thomas a Becket at the Canterbury Cathedral.

e. Teacher reviews difference between fact and opinion. Explain that facts can be proved while opinions are feelings or beliefs. Remind them to watch for words that signal opinions, such as should, I, think, best, or worst.

f. Students use library resources to research and write a biographical sketch of one of the following historical figures: Henry II, Thomas a Becket, Eleanor of Aquitaine, King John. Students must include at least one opinion in their biographical sketch. All opinions must be underlined.

g. Teacher reviews the importance of the Magna Carta. Students create an "aged" document of the Magna Carta's major points.

6. Evaluation/Assessment

a. Observe student performance in mock trial and role playing.

b. Evaluate student biographical sketches.

c. Standardized test connections-distinguish fact and opinion.

H. Lesson Seven: The Black Death (Bubonic Plague)

1. Objective/Goal:

a. Concepts

(1) The learner will develop an understanding of the hygiene and health practices of the medieval lifestyle.

(2) The learner will understand how unsanitary conditions contributed to the spread of disease.

b. Skills

(1) Students will become familiar with the health and hygiene practices during the Black Death and write a friendly letter explaining them. Midway Benchmark 16.22

(2) Compare and contrast Midway Benchmark 15.11

(3) Understand meanings of words Midway Benchmark 15.2

2. Materials

a. World map

b. Overhead projector

c. Paper and pencils for students

d. What Your Fourth Grader Needs to Know

3. Prior Knowledge for Students

4. Key Vocabulary

a. Apothecary-a druggist

b. Plague-disease

c. Feudalism-government existing during the Middle Ages in Europe, under which owners of their land held it as a gift from the king or a lord. They could keep it as long as they and their heirs served the king faithfully.

d. microbe-a germ that can be seen only with a microscope

e. serf-a person bound to serve an estate

5. Procedures/Activities

a. Introduce the hygiene habits of the time by first having students compose a class list of healthy hygiene habits we use today. Using this list compare each to the habits of the medieval times. Emphasize that immunization, sanitary practices for disposal of food, garbage and refuse, ratproofing of buildings, and the reduction of rat breeding places keeps the disease under control today.

b. Locate the continent of Europe on the map, where the Black Death took place during medieval times. Locate South America, where the largest area of the plague exists today. Other areas are western third of the USA, central and southern Africa, in the Near East, and in parts of Southeast Asia.

c. Review vocabulary with students.

d. Review parts of a friendly letter: heading, greeting, body, closing, and signature.

e. Ask students to imagine that they are writing a letter to a friend during the medieval times to tell them about the Black Death. Encourage them to use as much factual information about the lifestyles and attitudes regarding health and hygiene practices as they can.

f. Have students choose an event that might have occurred during the time of the Black Death and role-play. Examples: the physician comes to the victim of the plague, carrying away the dead, fleeing to another house or village and explaining what is taking place, being a time traveler reporter, etc.

6. Evaluation/Assessment

a. Assessment of student letters

b. Teacher observation of students role-playing

c. Standardized test connections

(1) Compare and contrast

(2) Compose a friendly letter

H. Lesson Eight: The Legend of King Arthur

1. Objective/Goal:

a. Concept Develop an understanding of real and mythical characters

b. Skills

(1) Understand meaning of words and phrases Midway Benchmark 15.2

(2) Recall details Midway Benchmark 15.5

(3) Compare and contrast Midway Benchmark 15.11

2. Materials

a. The Sword in the Stone, The Sword Excalibur and the Lady of the Lake, and Guinevere from

What Every Fourth Grader Needs to Know.

b. Teacher made chart

c. Paper for accordion book

d. Poster board or cardboard

e. Paint, crayons, or markers

f. Construction paper

g. Glue

3. Prior Knowledge for Students

Review myths and mythical characters from 2nd and 3rd grade Core Knowledge

4. Key Vocabulary

a. Emblem-symbol

b. Seer-one who can see the future

c. Cathedral-church

d. Anvil-large iron object used by a blacksmith

e. Inscription-engraving

f. Jousts-competition between knights

g. Squire-a knight's helper

h. Lance-spear

i. Realm-kingdom

j. Destiny-future

k. Scabbard-covering for a sword

l. Dowry-wedding gift from the bride's family

m. Transformed-to change from one form to another

5. Procedures/Activities

a. Using a chart with the headings Fantasy and Reality, review the characteristics of a myth and legend.

b. Read The Sword in the Stone. Ask the following questions: Who is the main character? What conflict did Arthur face? What was the significance of the sword?

c. Read *The Sword Excalibur and the Lady of the Lake*. Ask the following questions: What did the Lady of the Lake give to Arthur? What was Excalibur suppose to be able to do? What was the purpose of the scabbard?

d. Read *Guinevere*. Ask the following questions: Why did Arthur disguise himself before Guinevere? Why did Guinevere want to trick Arthur? Where did Arthur get the round table?

e. Introduce accordion book. Assign vocabulary to first section of the book. Children are to give a dictionary definition and use it in a sentence correctly. Assign comprehension questions to second section of the book. Third section of the book will be evidence of a myth or legend found in the stories.

f. Extension: students will design their own Excalibur. (See Feb/Mar 1997 issue of *Mailbox* for directions/example.)

g. Students will design their own code of arms. (See *Encarta* for example.)

6. Evaluation/Assessment

a. Assess student knowledge by efforts put into booklet.

b. Standardized test connections

(1) Understanding meanings of words and phrases

(2) Recall details

(3) Compare and contrast

VI. CULMINATING ACTIVITY

Medieval Festival-Students will display "guild" arts and crafts created throughout the unit. Students will teach the games played by the children of the middle age period. Foods typical of this period will be prepared for the festival. Dress will be simulated, and mannerisms adopted for the festival.

VII. HANDOUTS/STUDENT WORKSHEETS

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