

Modern European History  
Unit 2 – Crusades and Culture in the Middle Ages  
Black Death Economics

You are a minor noble in England during the middle 1300s. You have a modest estate, with 1,000 acres of farmland, a small castle, and cottages for peasant families who work your land. You can use your 1,000 acres of farmland to grow food or to graze sheep, or use some of the land for food and some for grazing sheep. You need to be sure to set aside enough land to grow food to feed you and your family and the peasant families who work for you. If you graze sheep on any leftover land, you can gain money by selling wool for weavers to make into cloth. If you grow more food than you need, you can gain money by selling the surplus to craftsmen and merchants who live in a nearby town. You have to decide how you are going to use the land before and after the coming of the Black Death

**Data** (*the money values are hypothetical*)

You have 1,000 acres of farmland.

Feeding each peasant and his family requires 30 acres of farmland.

Feeding you and your family requires 100 acres. (You eat better food than the peasants do.)

**In addition to producing food for himself, his family, and your family, each peasant can:**

Grow food for market on 30 acres of land, producing £2 of income for you

**-OR-**

Take care of sheep grazing on 150 acres of land, producing £5 worth of wool.

**CASE 1**

**In 1345, before the Black Death, you have 15 peasants and their families living on your estate.**

1. How many acres of land do you need to feed your family and the 15 peasant families? \_\_\_\_\_
2. How many acres of land are left for producing food or wool for market? \_\_\_\_\_
3. How should you allocate this land between food production and sheep grazing, so that you get the most income?

Acres of Food Production:	Income Produced:
Acres of Sheep Grazing:	Income Produced:
<b>Total Income:</b>	

If a peasant from a neighboring estate wanted to move to your estate, would it be economically worthwhile to you to let him move to your estate? (Remember it takes 30 acres of land to feed him and his family.) Explain.

## CASE 2

**In 1352, after the Black Death, you have only 10 peasants and their families still living on your estate; the other five peasants died from the Black Death.**

1. How many acres of land do you need to feed your family and the 10 peasant families? \_\_\_\_\_
2. How many acres are now left for producing food or wool for market? \_\_\_\_\_
3. How should you allocate this land between food production and sheep grazing, so that you get the most income?

Acres of Food Production:	Income Produced:
Acres of Sheep Grazing:	Income Produced:
<b>Total Income:</b>	

4. If a peasant from a neighboring estate wanted to move to your estate, would it be economically worthwhile to you now to let him move to your estate? After the Black Death, would it be profitable for you to **pay** a peasant to move to your land? Explain.