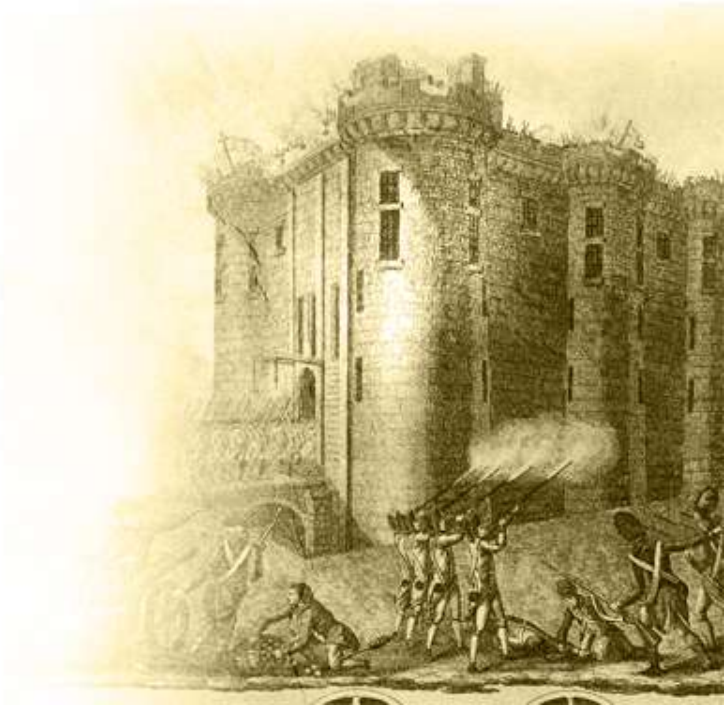
Unit 2, Lesson 1

Empires in the Middle Ages

Part 1

What is our Big Question?

THE BIG QUESTION
What are some of the events that led to the Middle Ages?



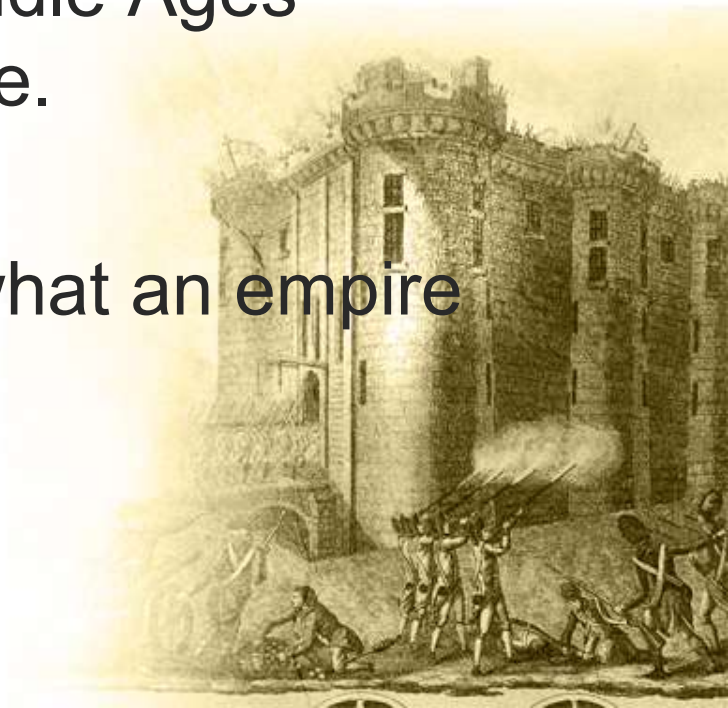
Review Prior Knowledge

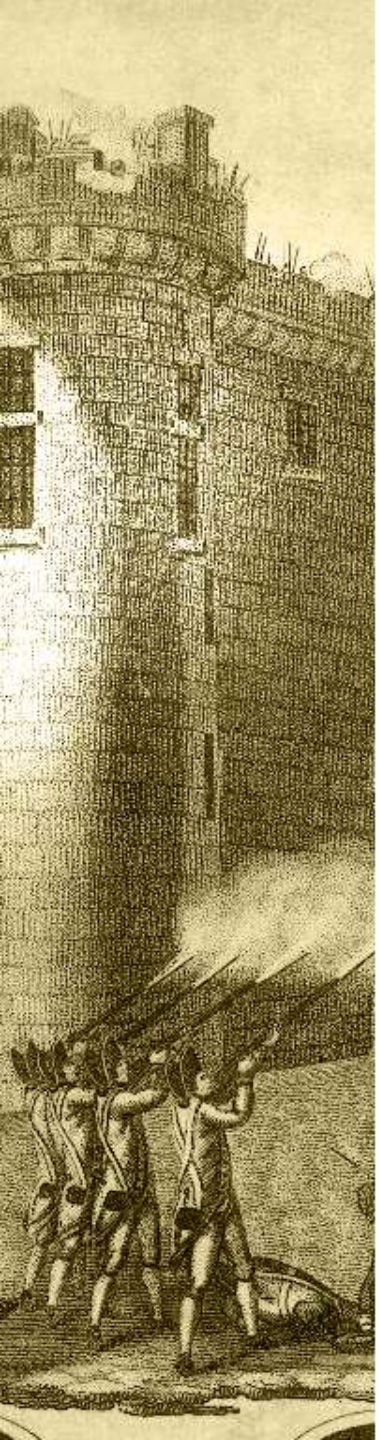
- We will begin a unit called Empires in The Middle Ages.

- What does the term ancient mean?

- The events leading to the Middle Ages began with the Roman Empire.

- Do you know or remember what an empire is?





An empire is…

A group of nations or territories controlled by the same leader. The leader is usually called an emperor (if the leader is a man) or an empress (if the leader is a woman).

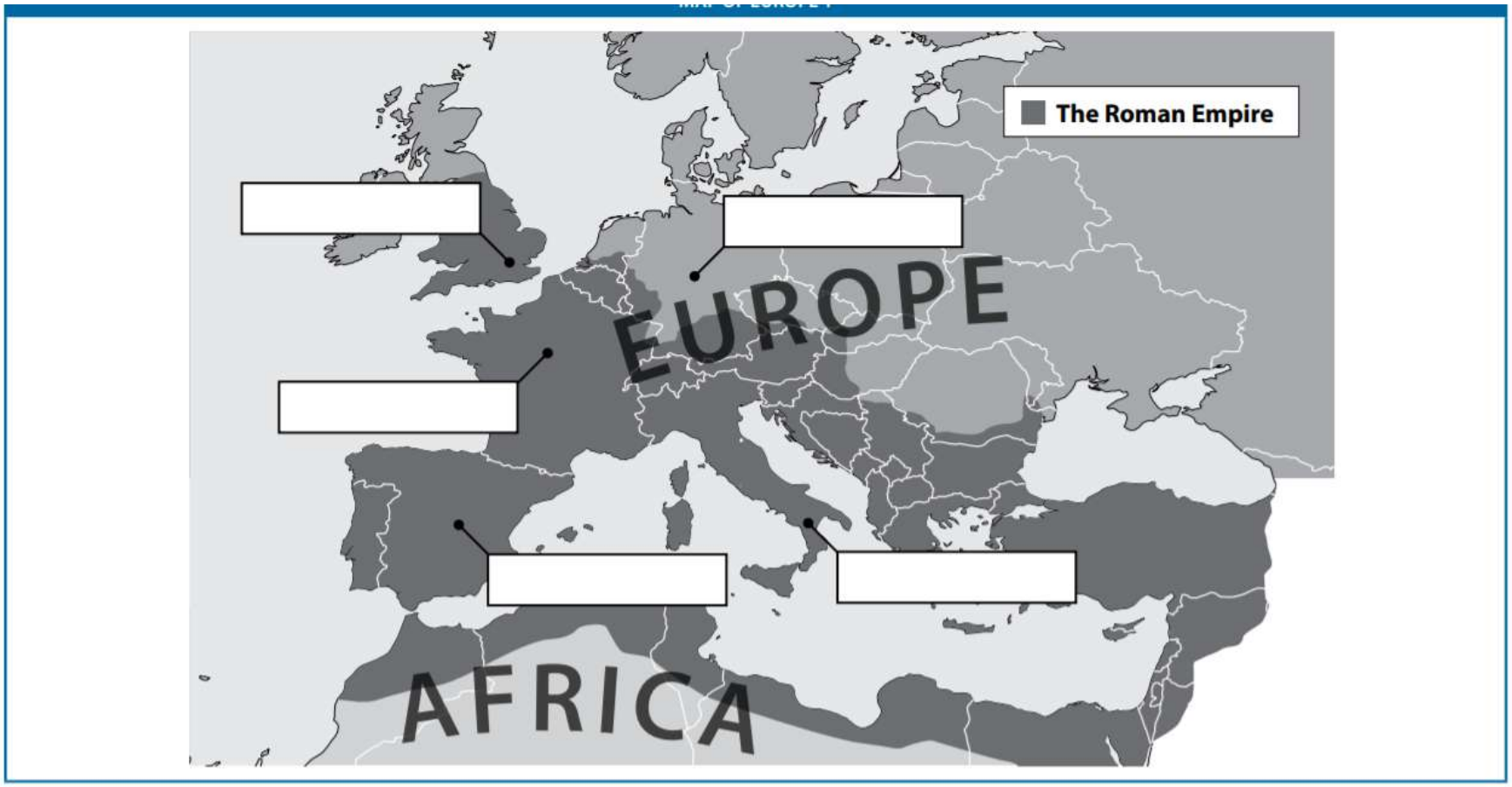
An emperor is somewhat like a king, but he may be even more powerful than a king.

A king rules a kingdom, but an empire may contain many different kingdoms, each with its own king. All the kings must obey the emperor, who rules over the entire empire.

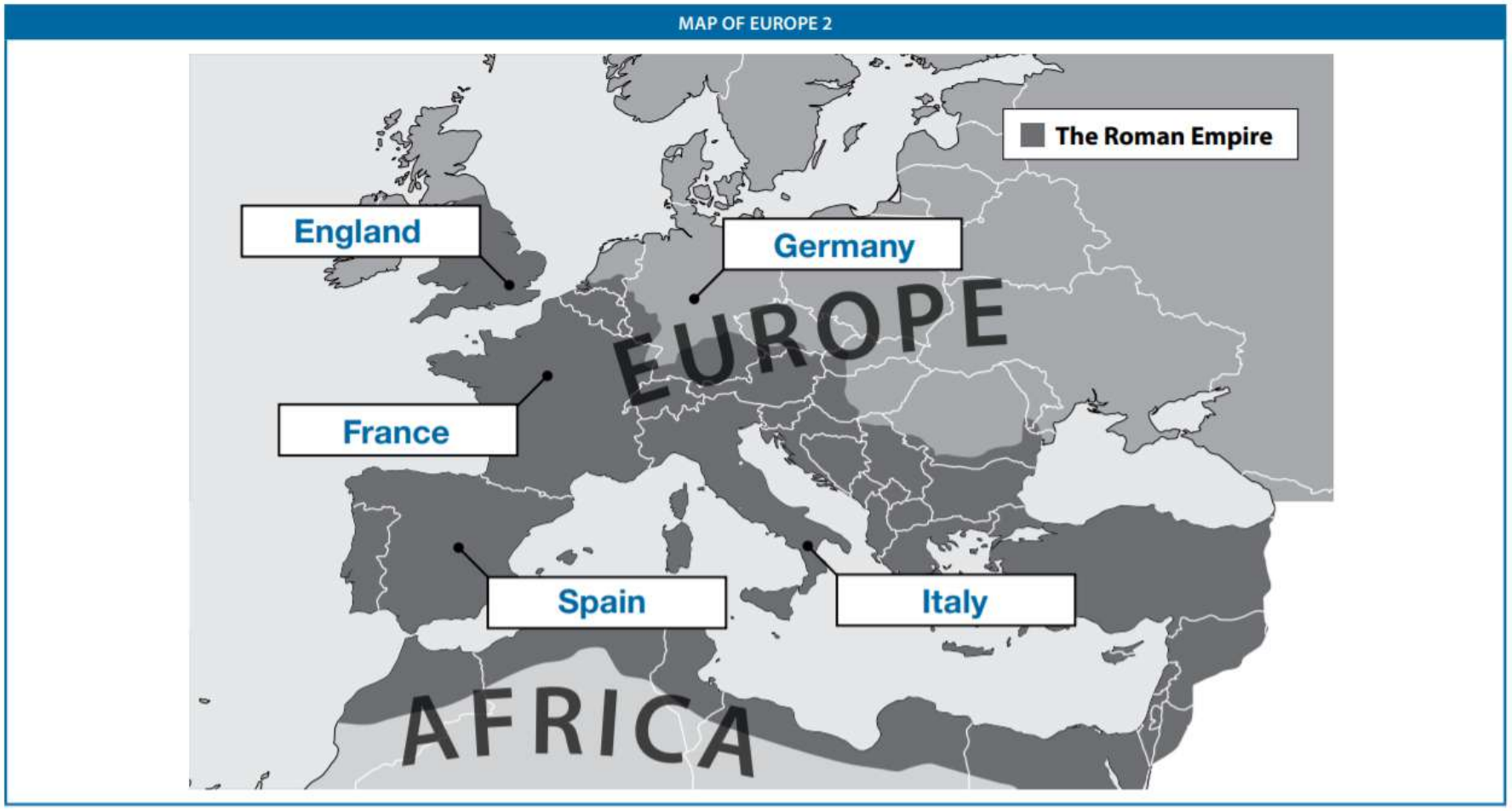
The Roman Empire was a great empire that began over 2,000 years ago. It lasted a very long time and spread over a very large area of land.

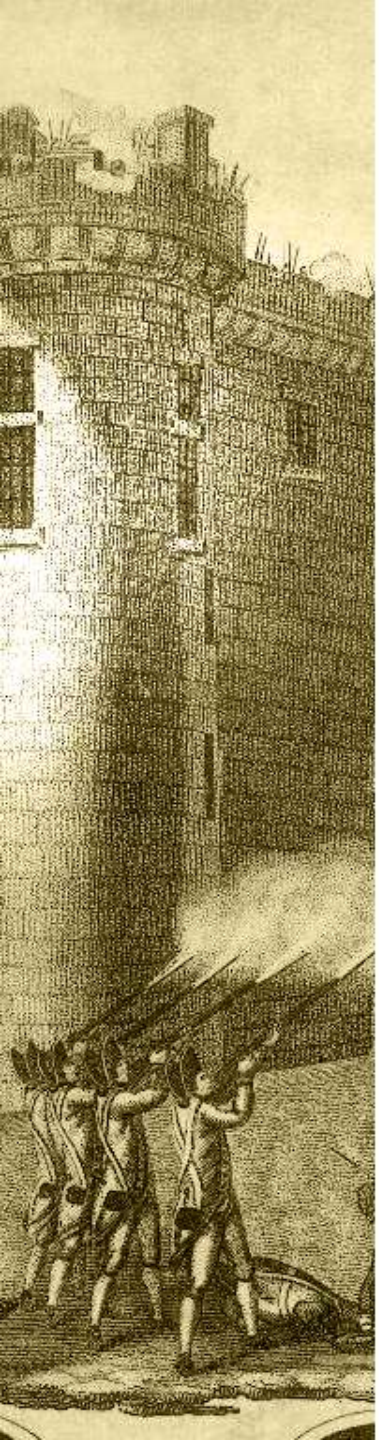
Label a Map

- Let's look at Activity Page 1.1 What continents are in this map?



How did we do? Change any labels we missed!





Many important developments occurred during the Roman Empire.

Let's discuss the following developments:

- The empire grew very large until it became difficult for one emperor to rule over the entire empire.

- During the time of the Roman Empire, a new religion, known as Christianity, began. Christianity is a religion based on the teachings of a man named Jesus Christ. Jesus's followers were known as Christians. Over time, Christianity grew and the Christian church became a very important part of the lives of many people in Europe.

- A language known as Latin was the official language of both the government and the church during and after the time of the Roman Empire.

Let's watch a video about the Roman Empire!

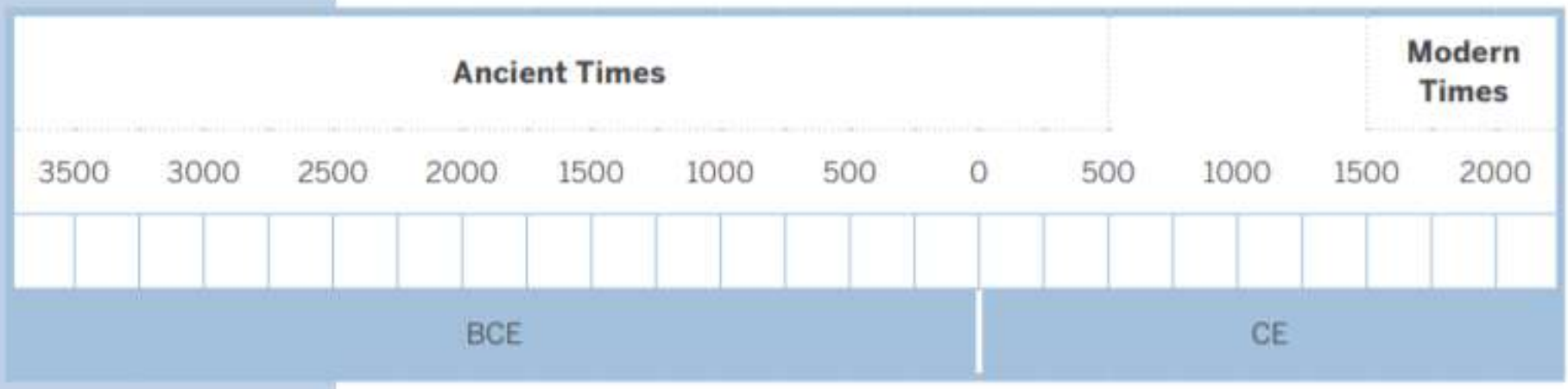
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=b9bcohqsTGk

During this unit on the Middle Ages, we will focus on the part of the world where the Roman Empire once existed.

We will also hear about the end of the Roman Empire, and the importance of Latin and the church in Europe in the years after the end of the Roman Empire.

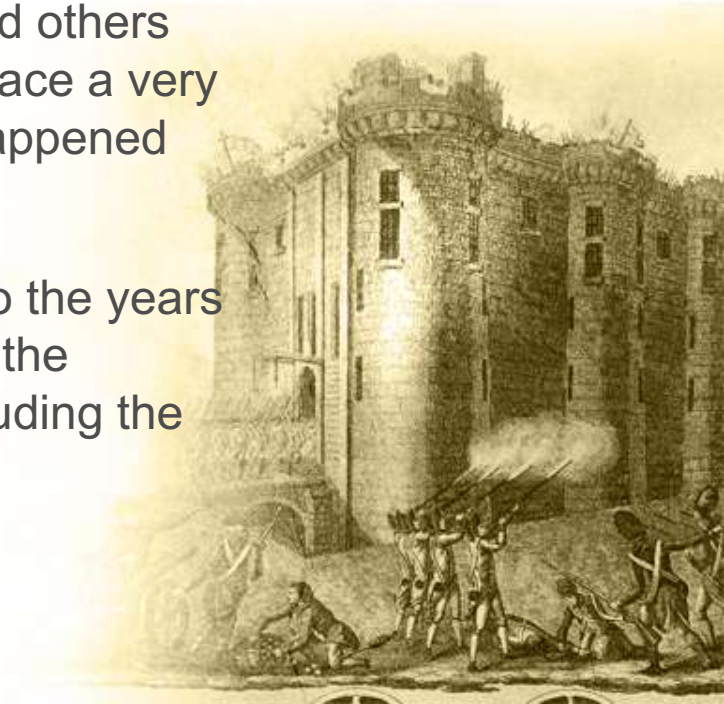
Create a Timeline

Can you describe what you see?



BCE and CE are terms applied to years. Historians and others use these terms to indicate whether something took place a very long time ago, including ancient times, or whether it happened more recently.

BCE stands for “before the Common Era” and refers to the years that happened a very long time ago. CE stands for “of the Common Era,” which refers to more recent years, including the current year.



- The Common Era begins with 1 CE; years prior to that are referred to as BCE.

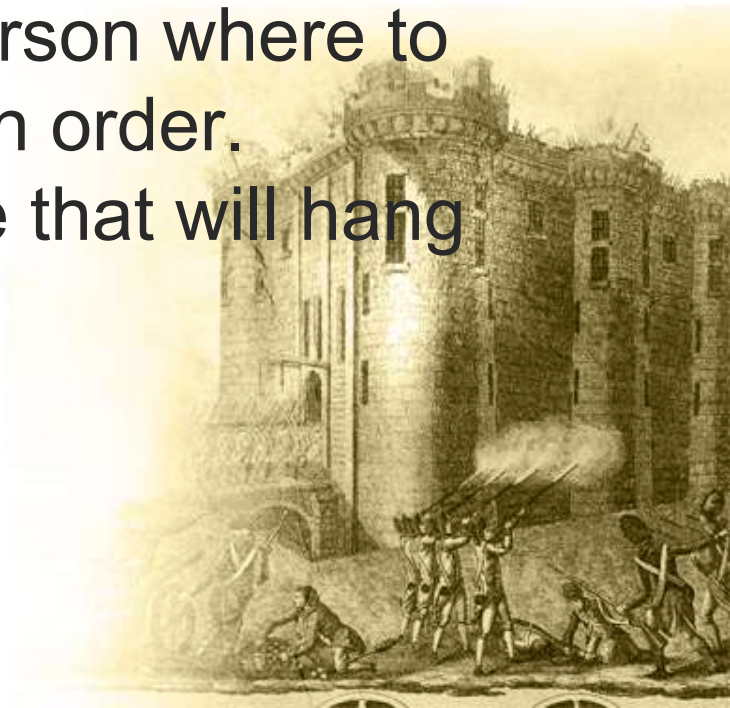
- The years in the Common Era are counted in the usual way: 1, 2, 3, and so on. Years in BCE, however, are counted backward from 1.

- Because of this backward counting, something that happened in 1000 BCE occurred before something that took place in 500 BCE. Think of this timeline like a number line in math.

Practice!

- We will practice arranging events on a timeline.
- In your small group, arrange the events in order based on the dates/year indicated.

- Need 5 people to hold the timeline cards and the class will tell each person where to stand so that the events are in order.
- Let's put them on our timeline that will hang in the back of the room.



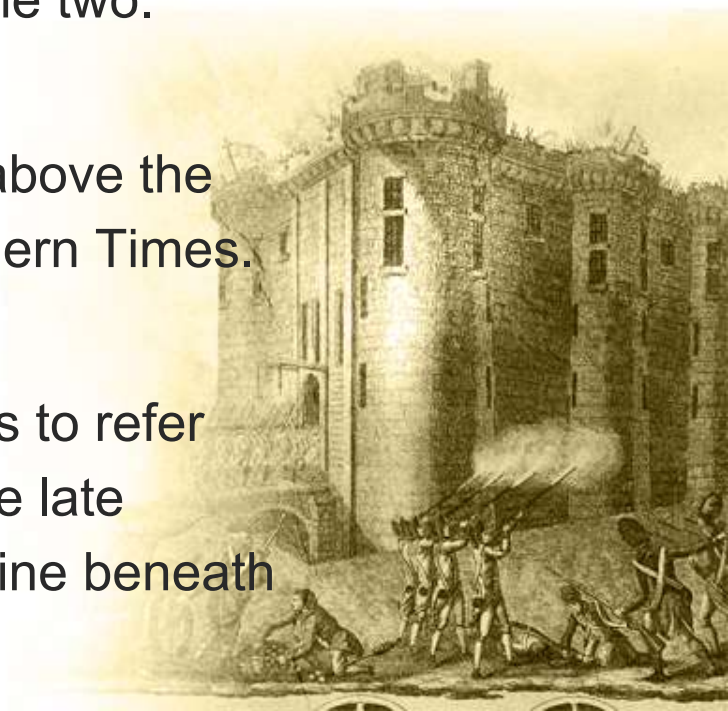
- Note the labels “Ancient Times” and “Modern Times” above the timeline.

- Some historians use those labels to divide history into general time periods so it is easier to study and talk about.

- Not all historians agree on the specific end date of ancient times and beginning date of modern times, but they generally agree that the Middle Ages occurred between the two.

- Let’s write the words “The Middle Ages” above the timeline between Ancient Times and Modern Times.

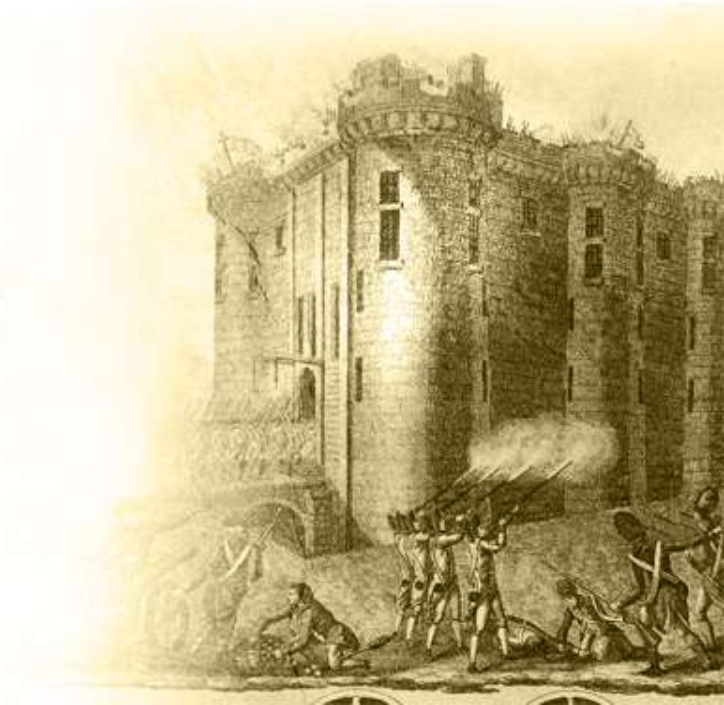
- Many historians use the term Middle Ages to refer to the time between the years 450 and the late 1400s CE. Write these years on the timeline beneath the label The Middle Ages.

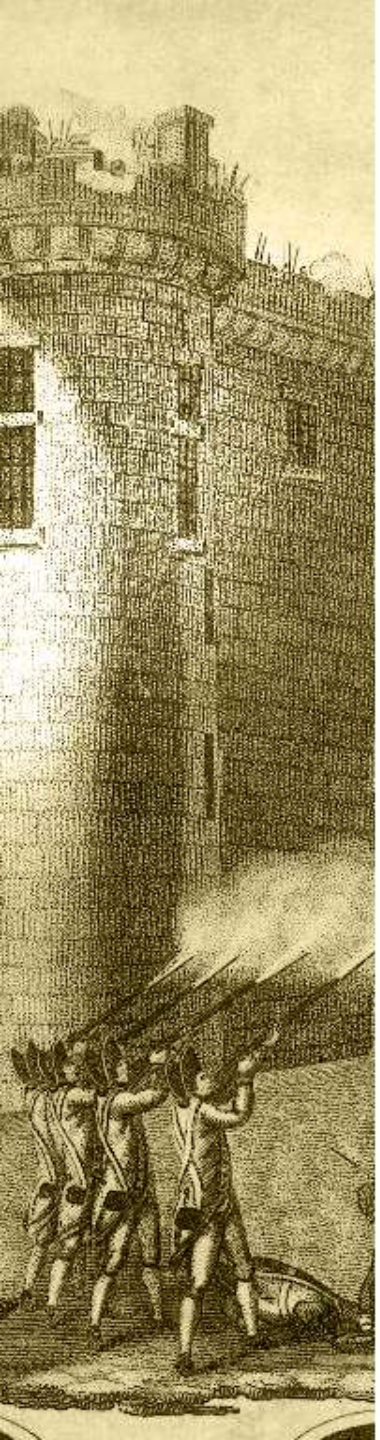


Wrap Up

- What continent or region of the world will we be studying in the Middle Ages unit?

- What ancient empire covered much of this land?



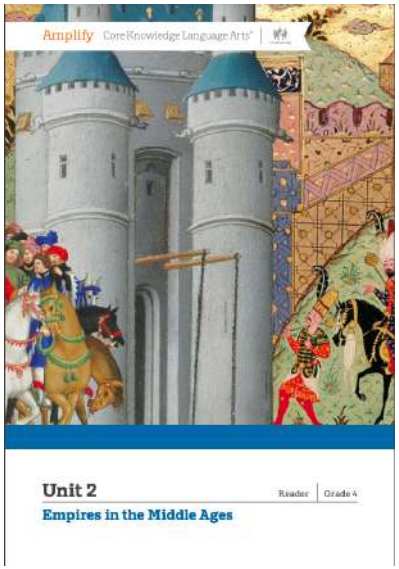


Let’s read the title First.

This Reader is a nonfiction, informational book. A nonfiction, informational book is explanatory, providing facts and information about real topics.

Let’s turn to the table of contents. Let’s read several chapter titles from the table of contents aloud. Reading chapter titles in a book can be very informative!

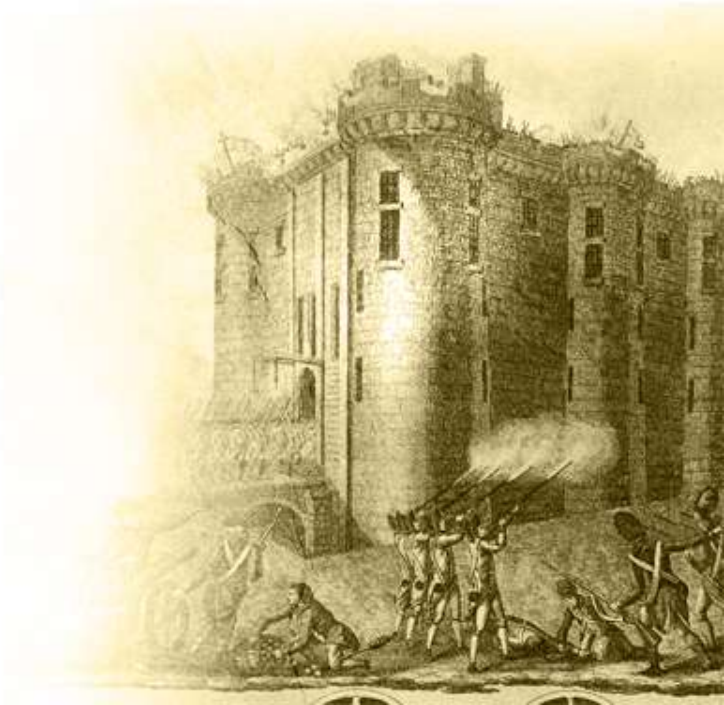
Can you describe what information you gather by reading the chapter titles in this table of contents?



Introduce the chapter

- I will read aloud Chapter 1, “Welcome to the Middle Ages.”

- First, let’s review some core vocabulary.



medieval, adj. of or relating to the Middle Ages

transform, v. to change something completely, usually in a positive way (transforming)

empire, n. a group of countries or regions controlled by one ruler or one government (emperor)

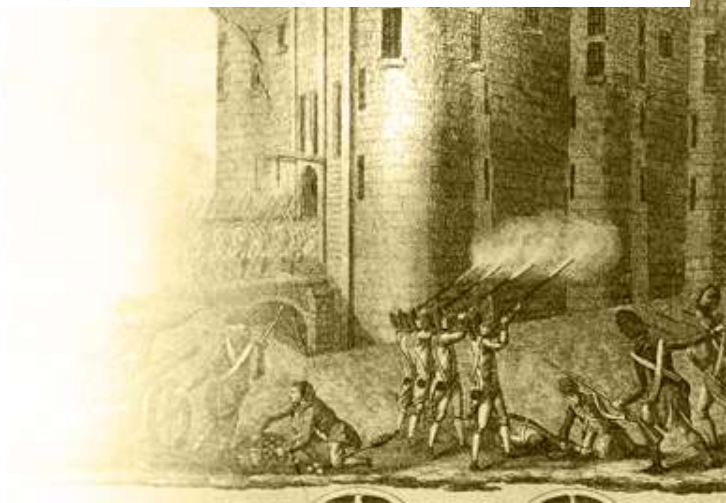
seize, v. to take

loot, v. to steal things by force, often after a war or destruction (looted)

infamous, adj. well known for being bad

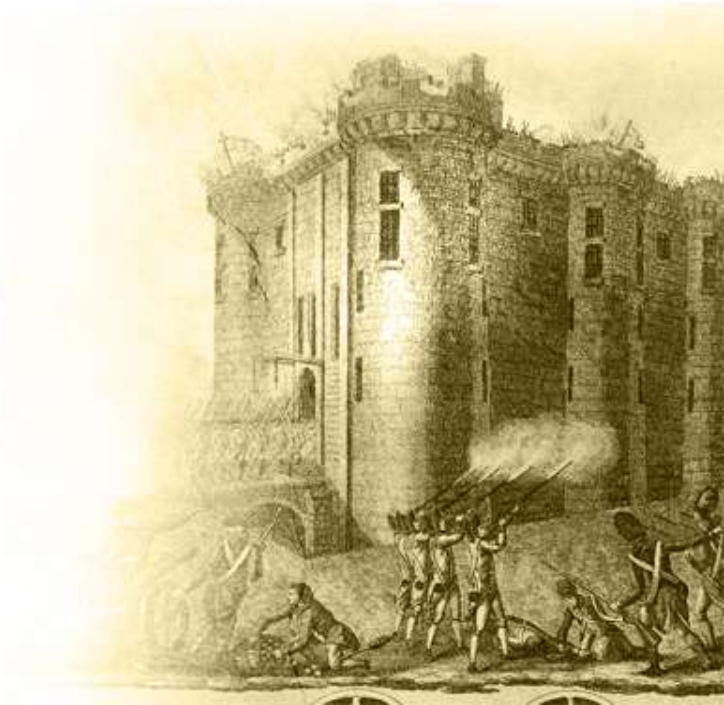
papacy, n. the office or the position of the pope

nobleman, n. a member of the highest social class (noblemen)



Remember our BIG QUESTION!

- **What are some of the events that led to the Middle Ages?**

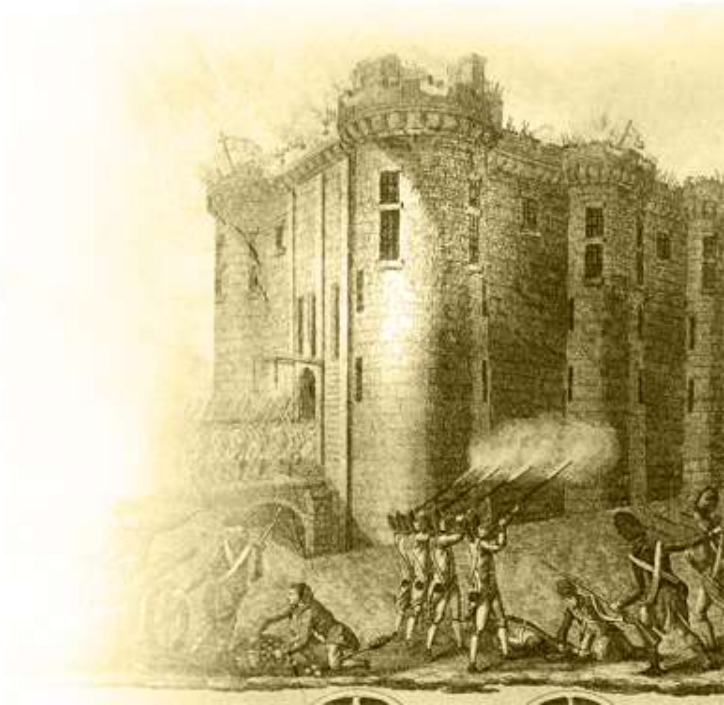


Read Aloud – Chapter 1

- Read pages 2 and 3…questions:

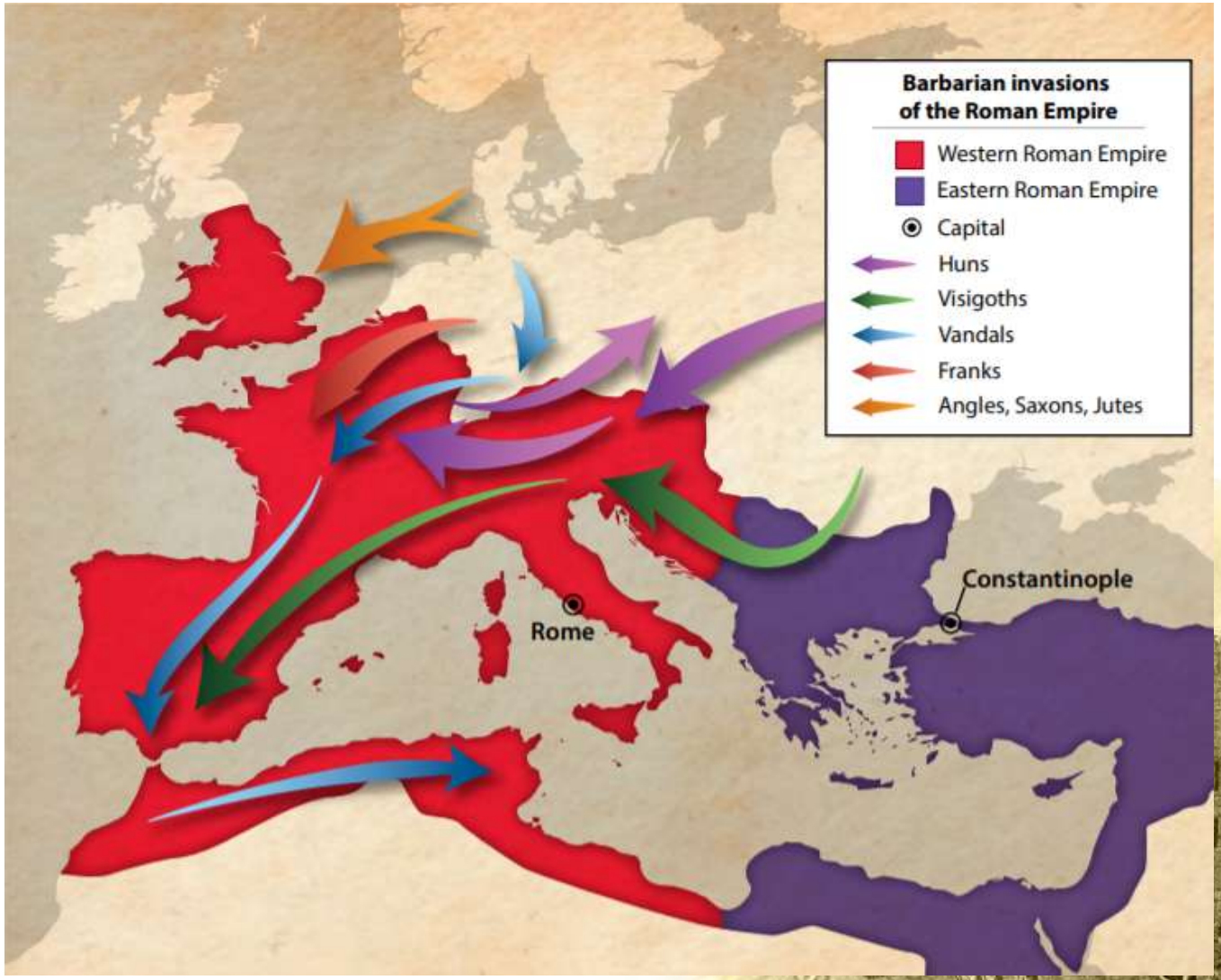
1. What does medieval mean?
2. What was the first major event that helped transform western Europe, leading to the Middle Ages?

Let's record this information on Activity Page 1.3



The Roman Empire

Let's look at the two regions of the Roman Empire and the different groups that invaded the regions.



- Now, let's read page 4 aloud.

  What are some events, described on this page, that helped transform Europe in the years leading up to the Middle Ages?

Let's record this information on Activity Page 1.3, noting that this information is found on page 4 of the Reader

- Now, let's read page 5 aloud.

  What is the papacy?

Let's record this information about the increasing power

of the church on Activity Page 1.3, noting that this information

is found on page 5 of the Reader.

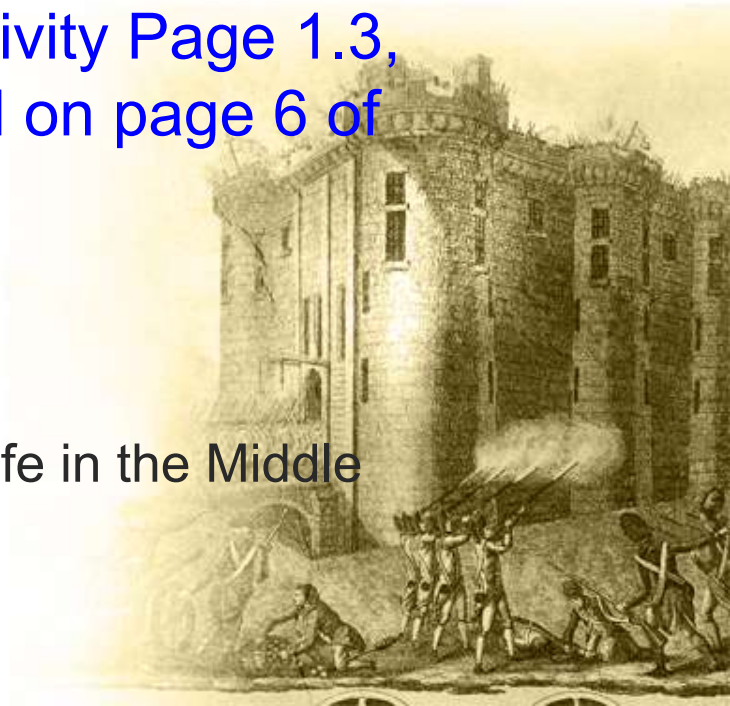
- Let's read the first paragraph of page 6 aloud.

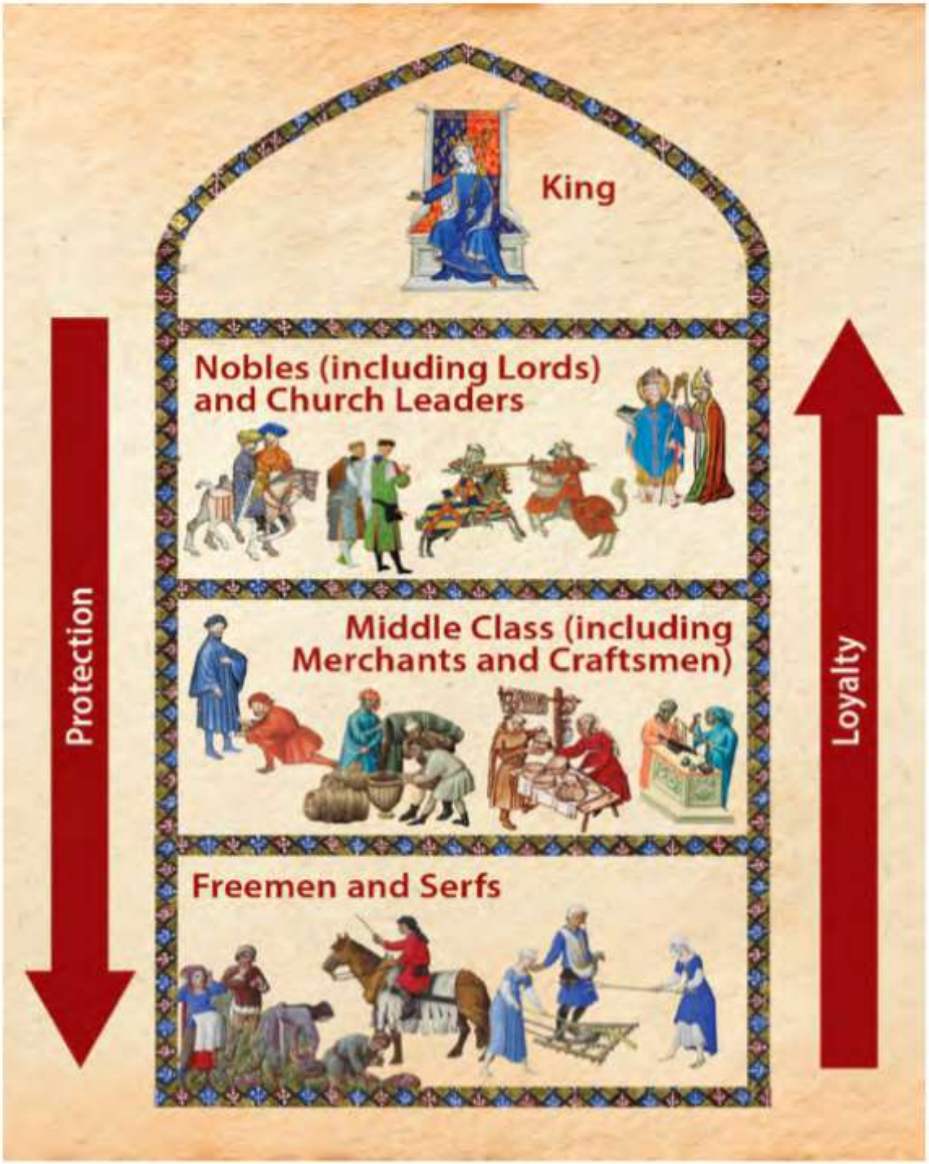
1. What are some examples from the text of things he did that made him great?
2. What are some events or developments, described in this paragraph, that helped transform Europe in the years leading up to the Middle Ages?

- Let's record this information on Activity Page 1.3, noting that this information is found on page 6 of the Reader.

- Read the rest of page 6 aloud.

1. What does this paragraph tell us about life in the Middle Ages?





Although this diagram does not include every aspect of medieval feudal society, it does show the people with the most power at the top, and the people with the least power at the bottom.

Reflect on the diagram on page 7.

The higher a category appears on this diagram, the more power and wealth people in that category had.

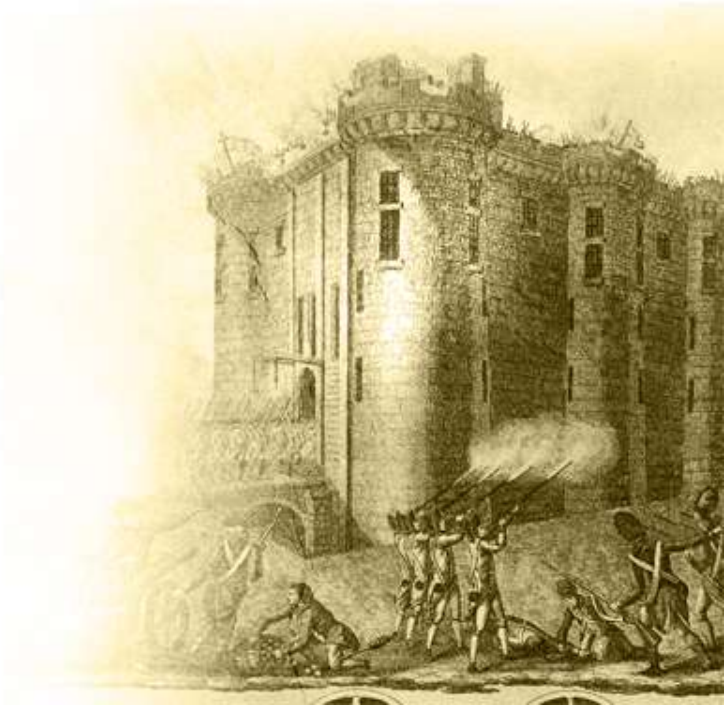
Let's read the caption beneath the diagram. Based on this diagram and the caption, what does the arrow on the left side of the diagram indicate? What does the arrow on the right side of the diagram indicate?

What was the name given to the system that is shown in this diagram?

Read the first paragraph on page 8.

What event described in this paragraph helped transform Europe in the years leading up to the Middle Ages?

Let's record this information on Activity Page 1.3, noting that this information is found on page 8 of the Reader.

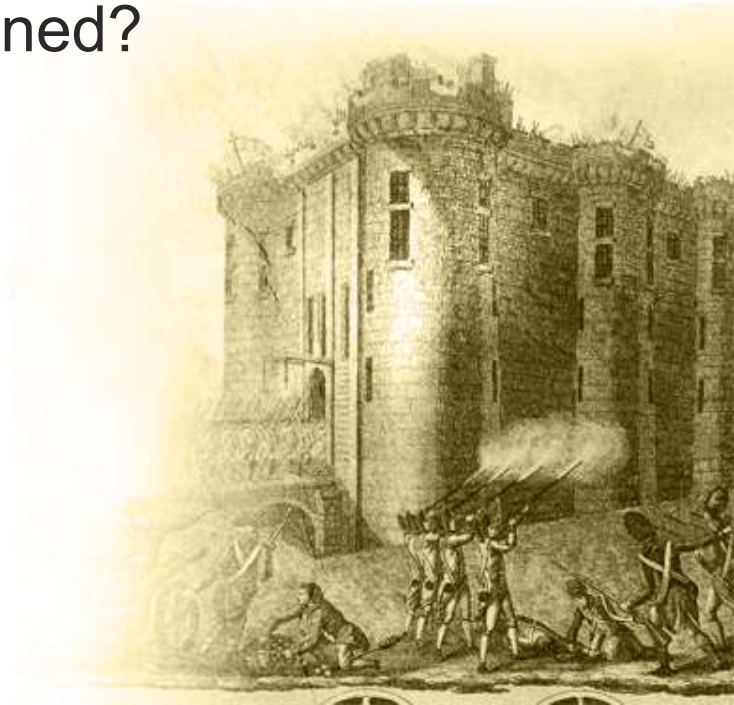


Read the next paragraph aloud.

The first sentence of this paragraph begins with the word despite, which is a clue that we are going to read about something that happened even though other events might have prevented it from happening.

What positive thing happened in the Middle Ages despite some of the negative things that happened?

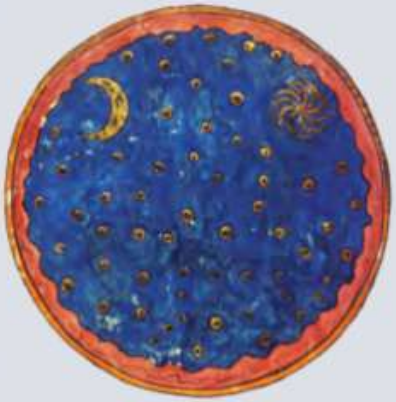
Now, let's read the rest of the page!



Medieval Musings

1. In the Middle Ages, people used a pleasant-smelling plant, sometimes used in cooking, to clean their teeth. What is the name of the plant? (Clue: The first letter is R.)

2. An instrument that helps us to see faraway objects, such as stars, was invented in the Middle Ages. What is the name of this instrument?



Picture of night sky from medieval manuscript

3. During the early part of the Middle Ages, the Angles, Saxons, and Jutes invaded an island nation and remained as settlers. The Angles gave their name to this land, or kingdom. What is this kingdom called?

1. Let's look at the title of the box "Medieval Musings." To muse over something means to think about it. What does medieval mean?

"Medieval Musings" boxes appear throughout this unit and present an opportunity for you to conduct independent research to learn more about the Middle Ages. As time permits throughout the unit, I will ask you to use both books and Internet resources to learn the answers to these questions.

Chapter Discussion/Wrap Up

1. The name of this unit is Empires of the Middle Ages. What is the Middle Ages and why is it called that?

1. Did the people who lived during that time use the name Middle Ages to talk about the time period in which they were living?

1. What were some of the important events or developments that took place in Europe and led to the Middle Ages?

1. What happened to the Roman Empire that had a major impact on western Europe?

1. What role did the Church play in the Middle Ages?

Chapter Discussion Cont.

6. Why might Charlemagne, as one of the early leaders during the Middle Ages, have set up the feudal system, in which people such as kings and lords offered protection to serfs and freemen in exchange for their loyalty?

7. How would you contrast life in the Middle Ages with life today?

8. Name one positive or one negative thing that happened during the Middle Ages.

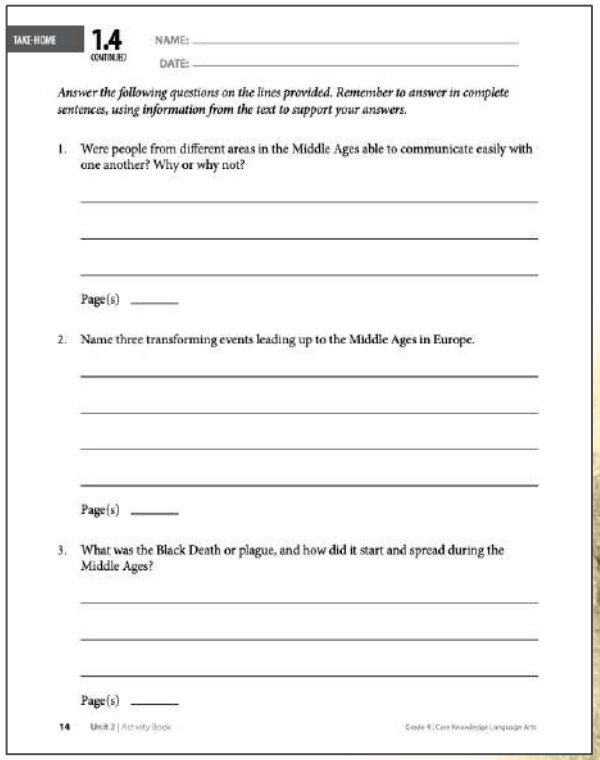
Homework

Take home Activity Page 1.4, an excerpt of the chapter, “Welcome to the Middle Ages,” read this excerpt, and answer the questions that follow.

NAME:
DATE:
1.4 TAKE-HOME

Chapter 1
Welcome to the Middle Ages

If you know anything about knights, castles, or Robin Hood, then you already know something about the Middle Ages in Europe. “The Middle Ages” may seem to be an unusual name for a historical period—especially one that lasted for more than 1,000 years. People in the Middle Ages did not know they were in the middle of anything. They thought they were modern—just as you and I do today. In fact, the Middle Ages was not a phrase used by the people who lived during that time period. It is a term modern historians use today to refer to that time period between ancient and modern times.


TAKE-HOME 1.4 (CONTINUED)
NAME:
DATE:

Answer the following questions on the lines provided. Remember to answer in complete sentences, using information from the text to support your answers.

1. Were people from different areas in the Middle Ages able to communicate easily with one another? Why or why not?

Page(s) _____

2. Name three transforming events leading up to the Middle Ages in Europe.

Page(s) _____

3. What was the Black Death or plague, and how did it start and spread during the Middle Ages?

Page(s) _____

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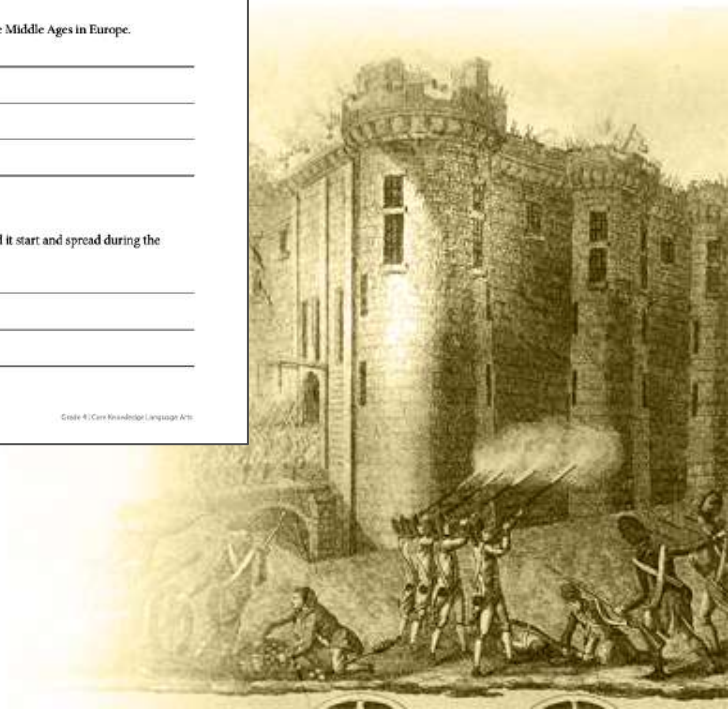

NORWAY
SWEDEN
FINLAND
RUSSIA
North Atlantic Ocean
North Sea
Tórshavn
Bergen
Oslo
Stockholm
Helsinki
Tallinn
ESTONIA
Tartu
LATVIA
Riga
Moscow
Edinburgh
Belfast
Dublin
IRELAND
UNITED KINGDOM
Liverpool
Birmingham
London
DENMARK
Copenhagen
LITHUANIA
Vilnius
BELARUS
Minsk
NETHERLANDS
Amsterdam
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