



# Empires in the Middle Ages

Lesson 1: The Middle Ages



# Prior Knowledge

- What does *ancient* mean?



# Prior Knowledge

- What does *ancient* mean?
  - Existing a very long time ago



# Prior Knowledge

- What is an *empire*?



# Prior Knowledge

- What is an *empire*?
  - A group of nations or territories controlled by the same leader.
  - The leader is usually called an emperor or empress.



# Prior Knowledge

- What is an *empire*?
  - Emperors are more powerful than a king. A king rules a kingdom. An empire contains many different kingdoms. All kings must obey the emperor, who rules over the entire empire.



# Prior Knowledge

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



# Prior Knowledge

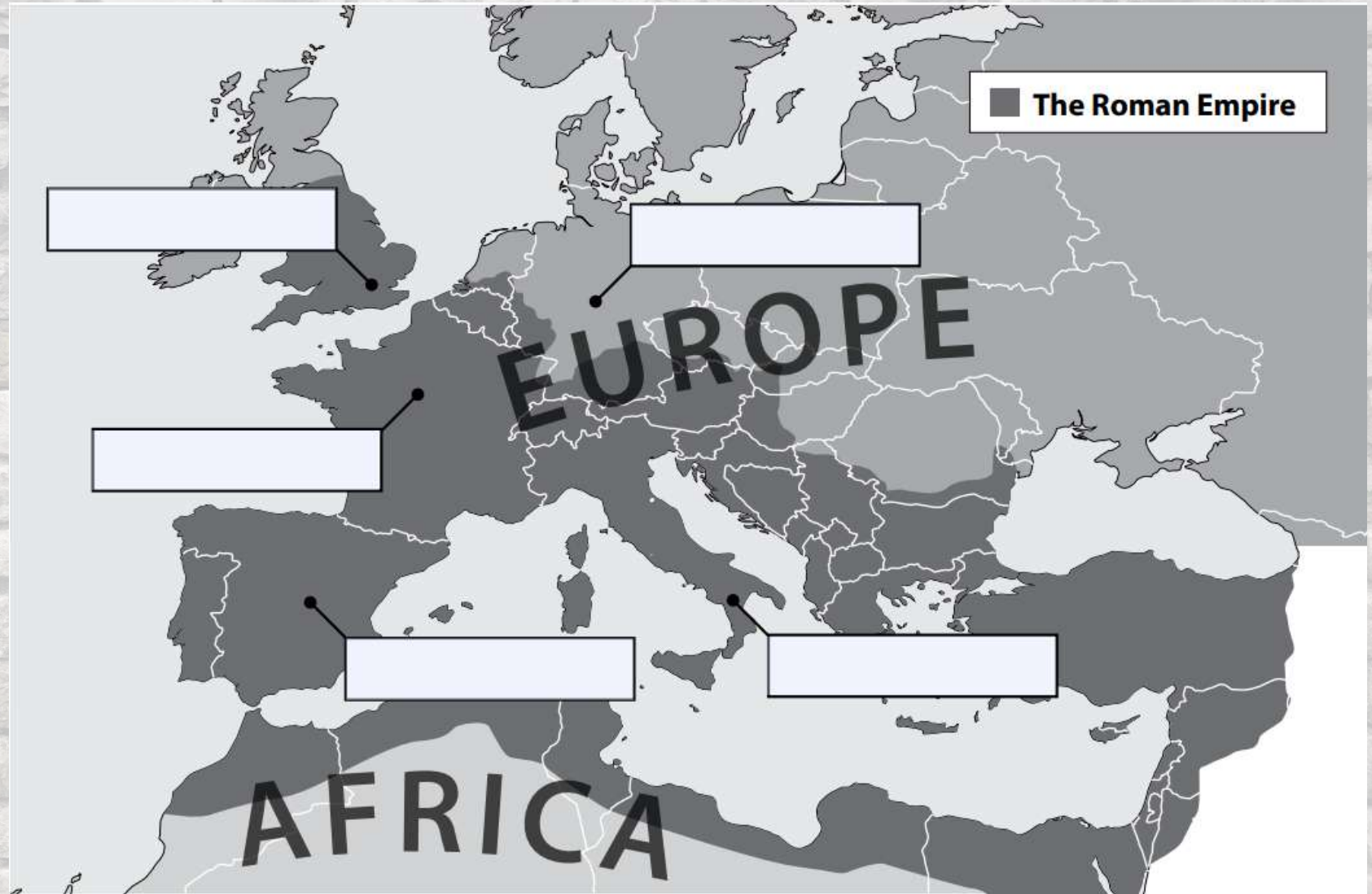
- What is the Roman Empire?



# Label a Map

## Activity Page 1.1

The shaded areas were part of the ancient Roman Empire – covering parts of 2 continents!



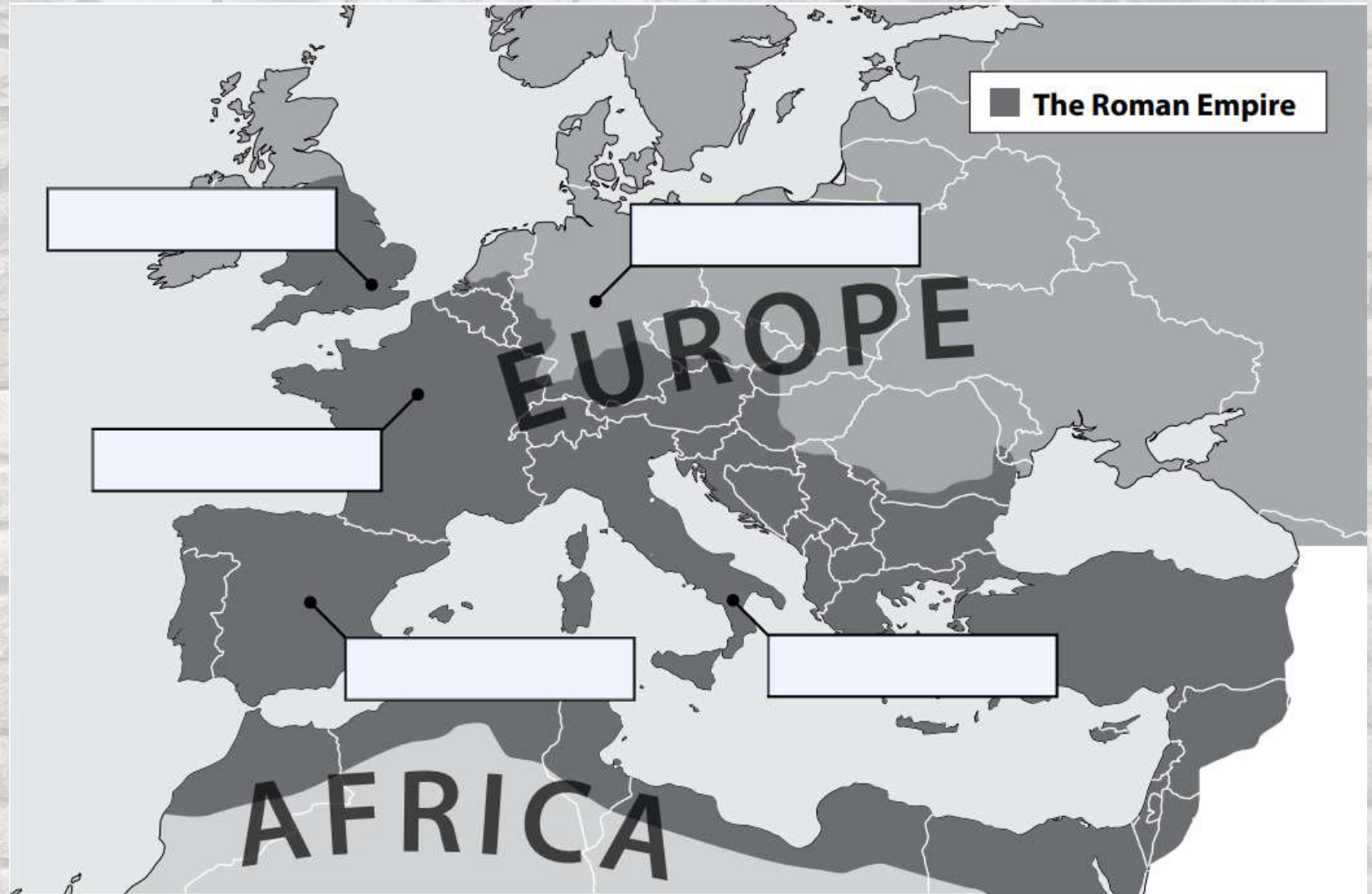


# Label a Map

## Activity Page 1.1

Label the modern-day countries of:

- Spain
- France
- England
- Germany
- Italy



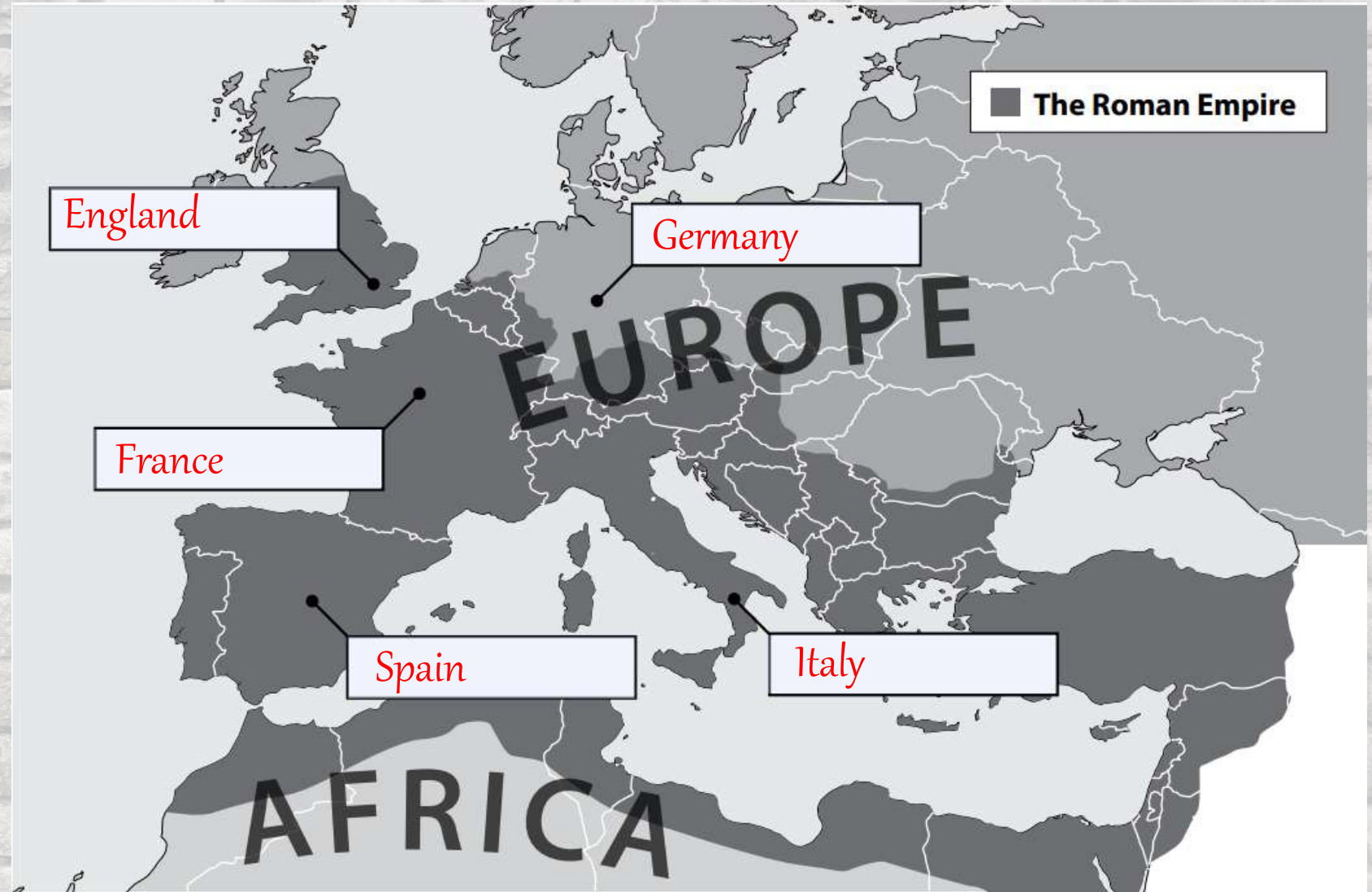


# Label a Map

## Activity Page 1.1

During the time of the Roman Empire, a new religion, known as Christianity, began.

Over time, Christianity grew and the church became a very important part of the lives of many people in Europe.

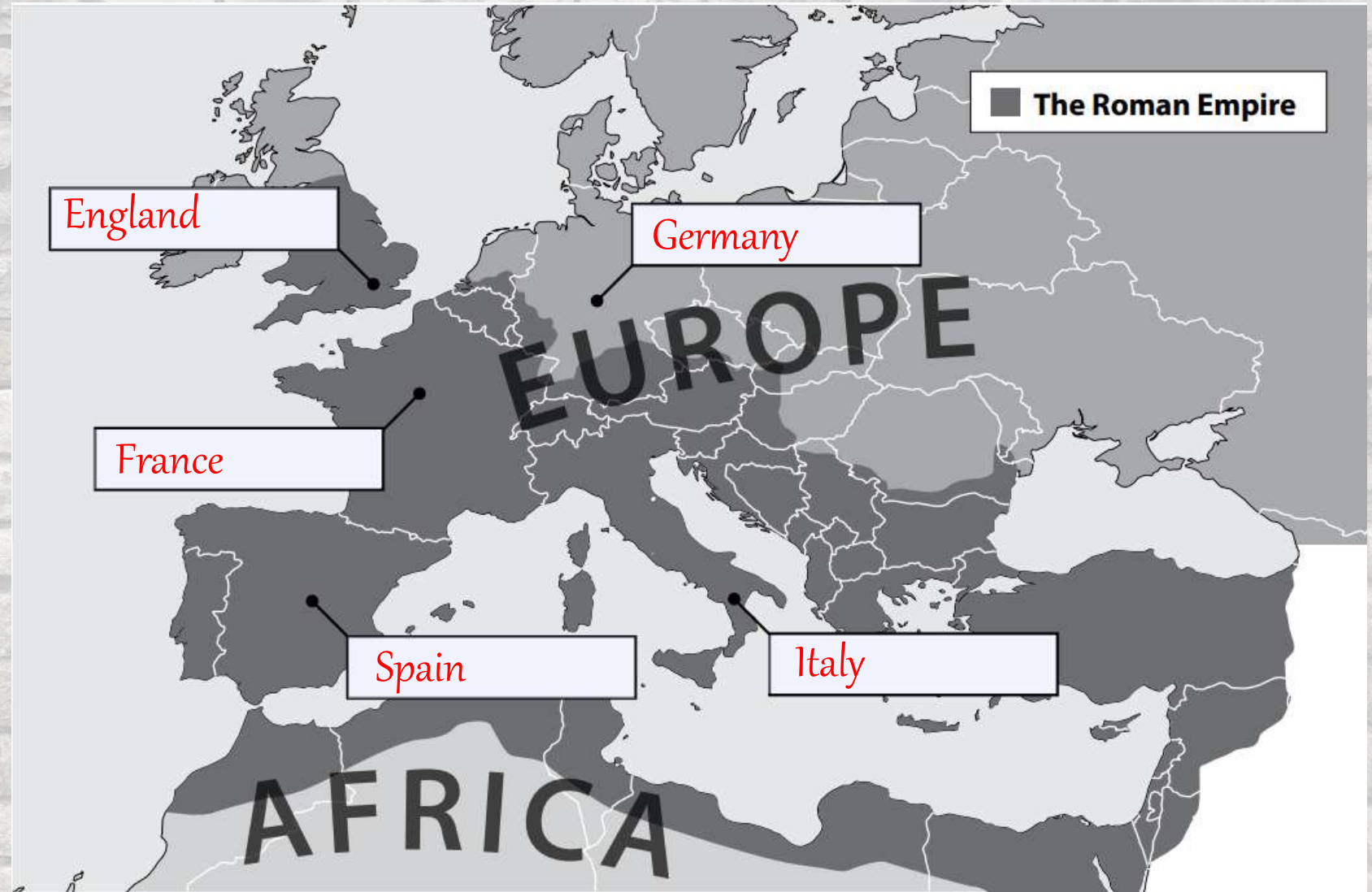




# Label a Map

## Activity Page 1.1

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

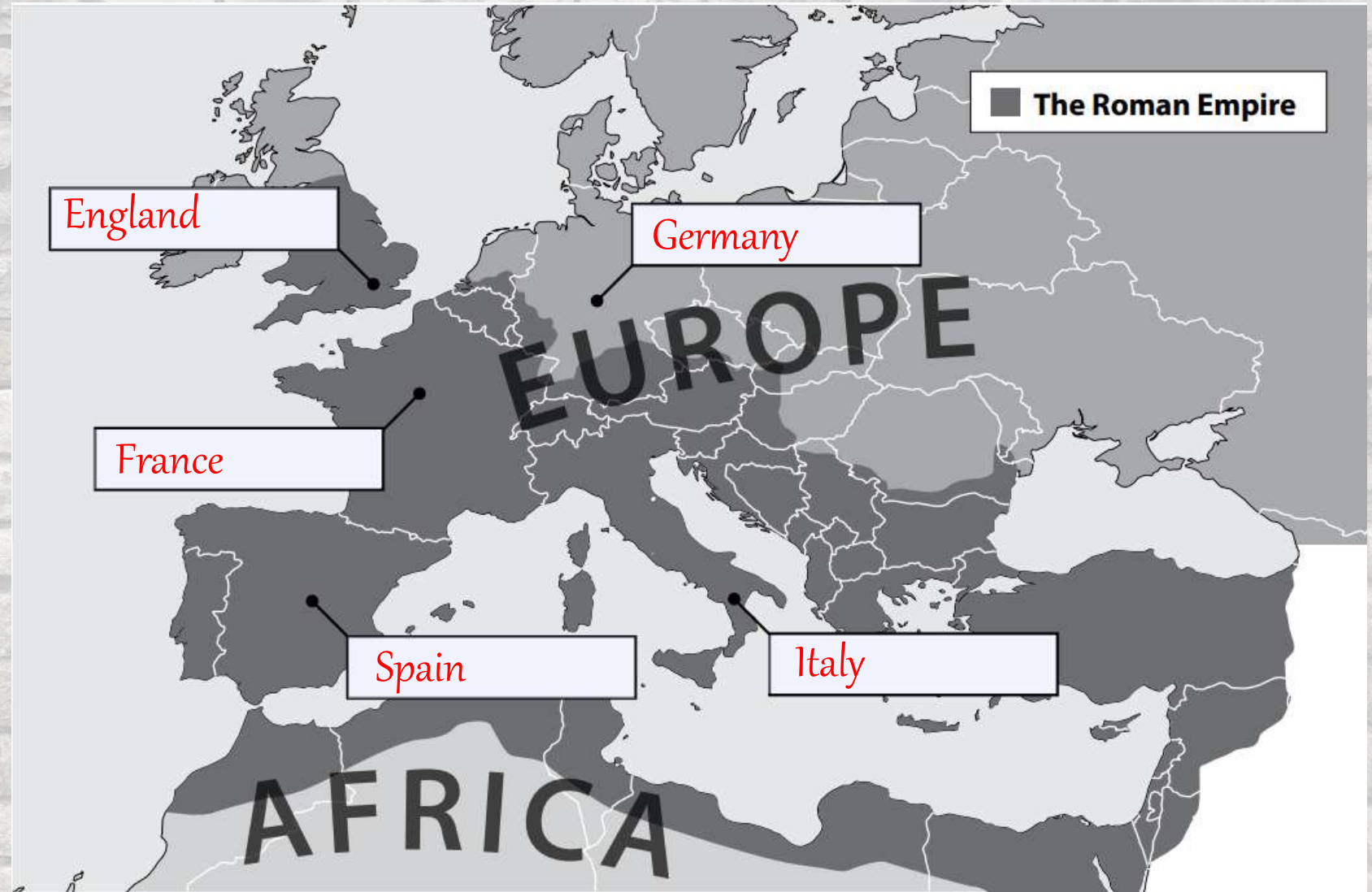




# Label a Map

## Activity Page 1.1

The Roman Empire grew so large, it became difficult for one emperor to rule over the entire empire.

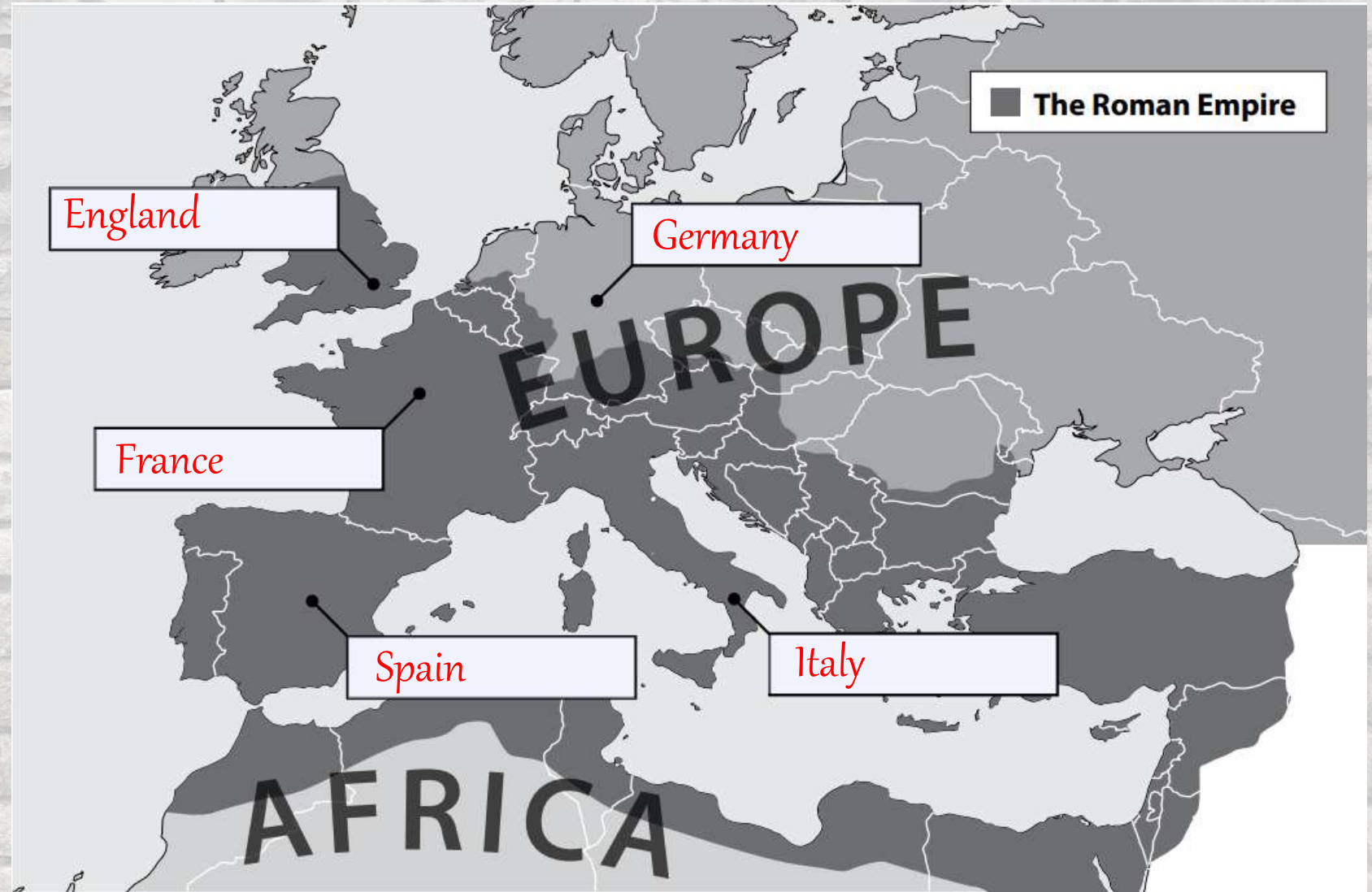




# Label a Map

## Activity Page 1.1

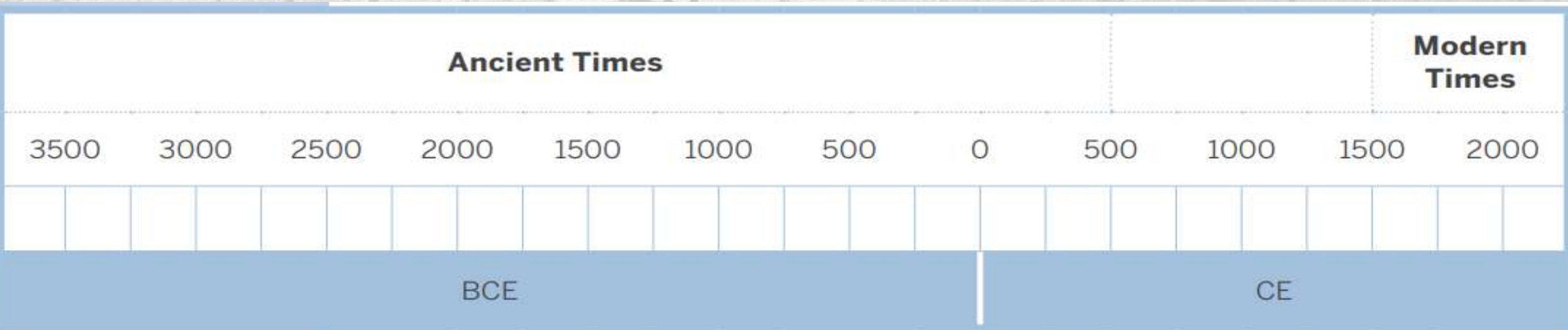
The Roman Empire grew so large, it became difficult for one emperor to rule over the entire empire.





# Create a Timeline

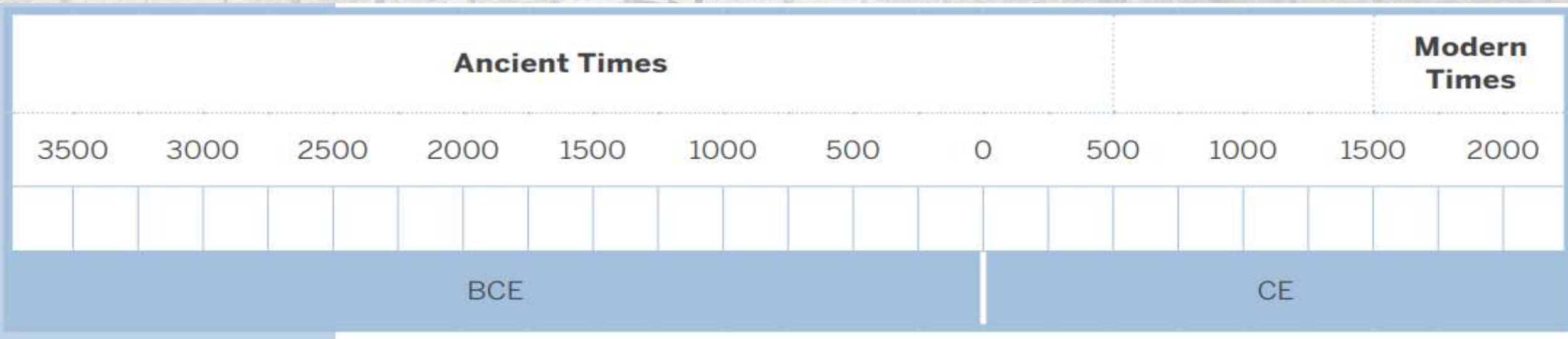
Describe what you see on this timeline.





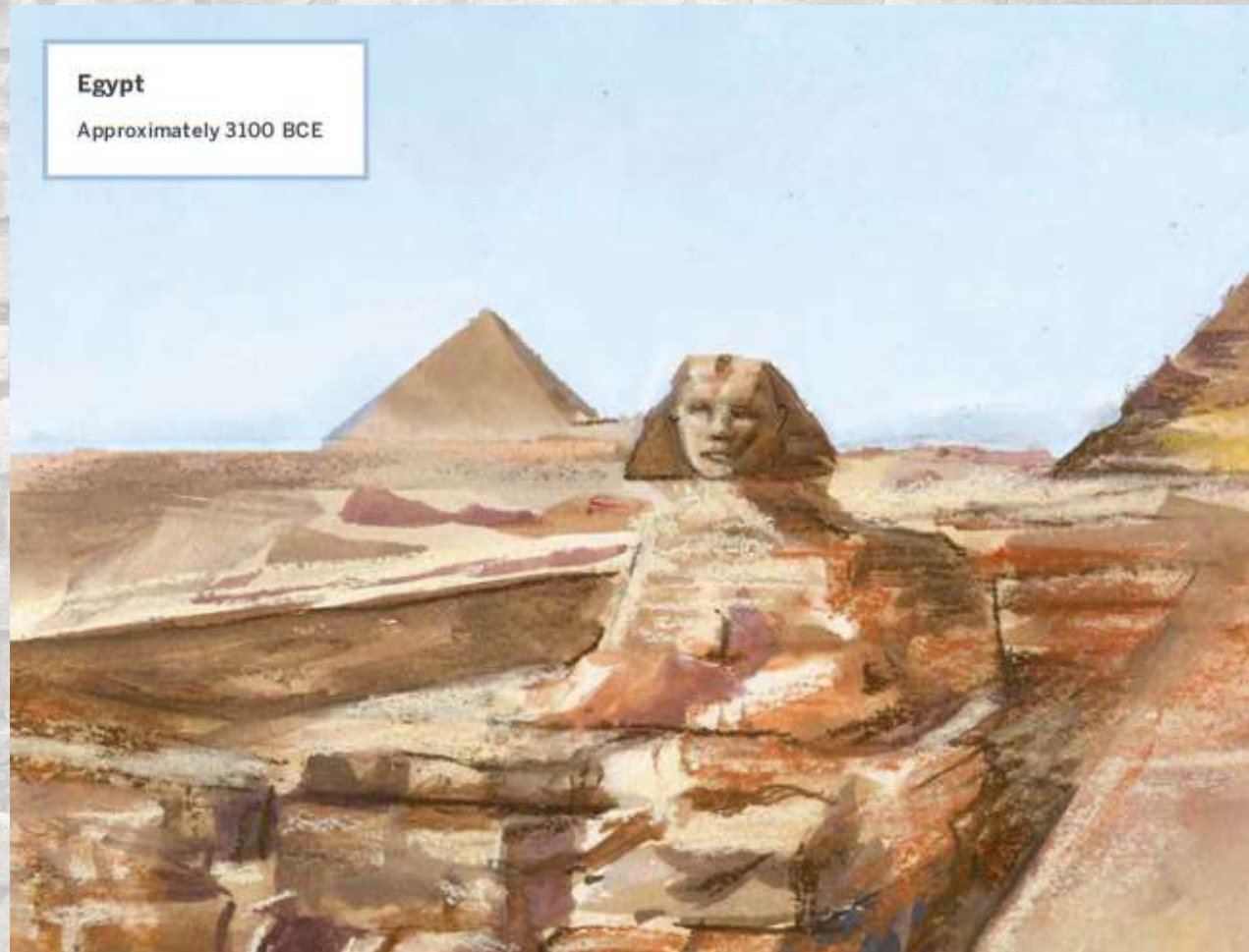
# Create a Timeline

- BCE and CE are terms applied to years.
  - BCE stands for “before Common Era”
  - CE stands for “Common Era”
  - The Common Era begins with 1 CE
  - Years prior to that are counted backwards from 1



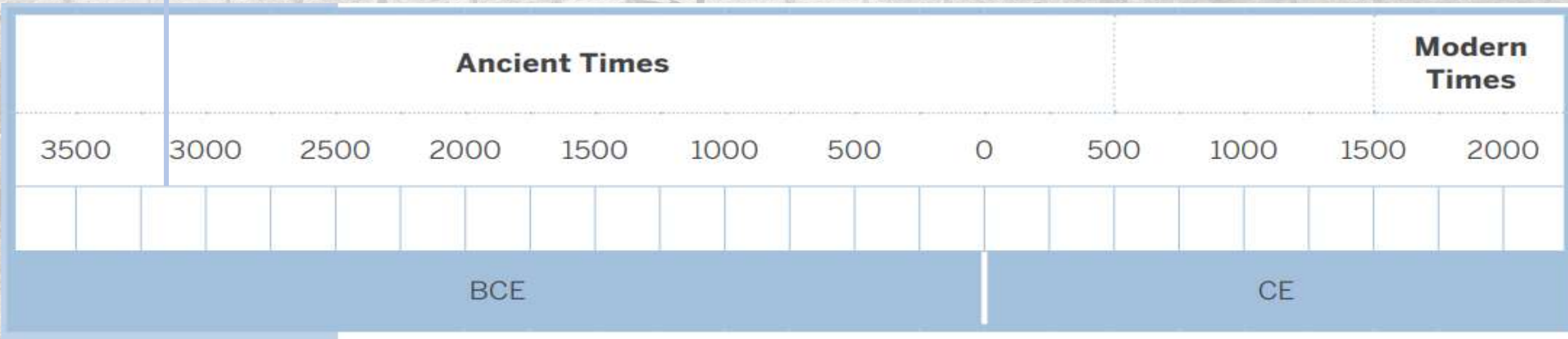
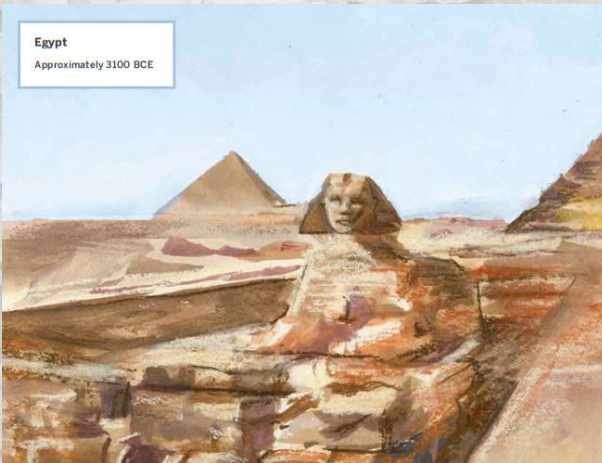


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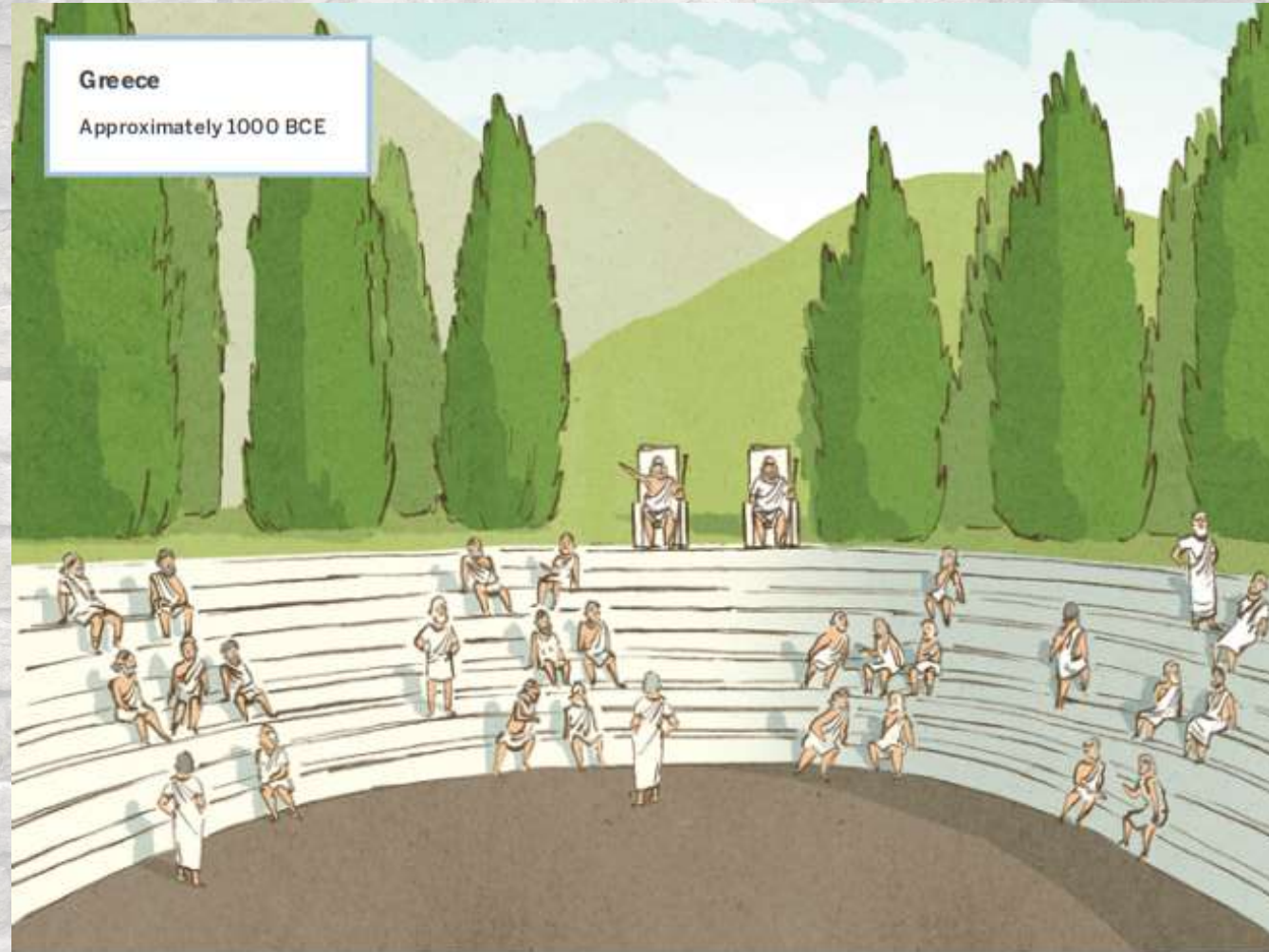


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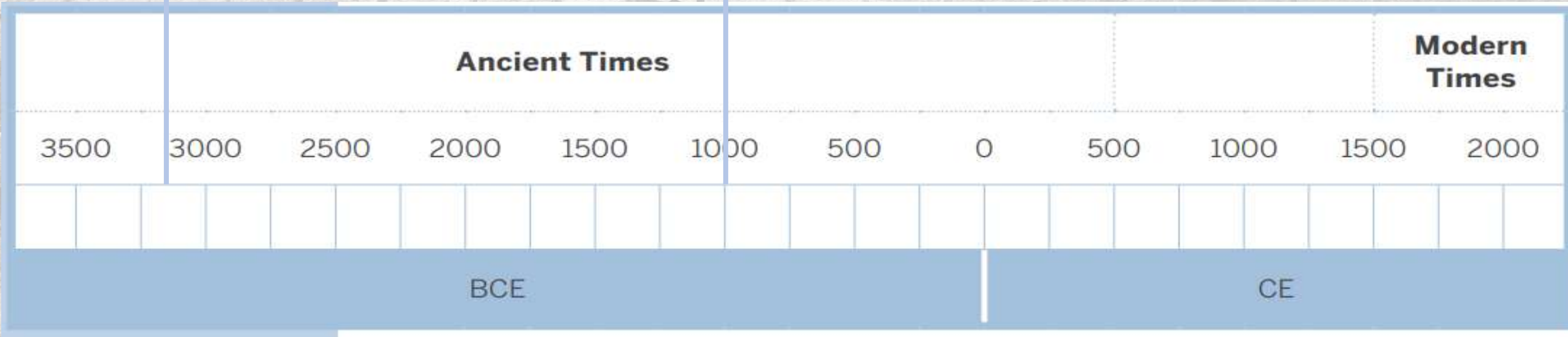
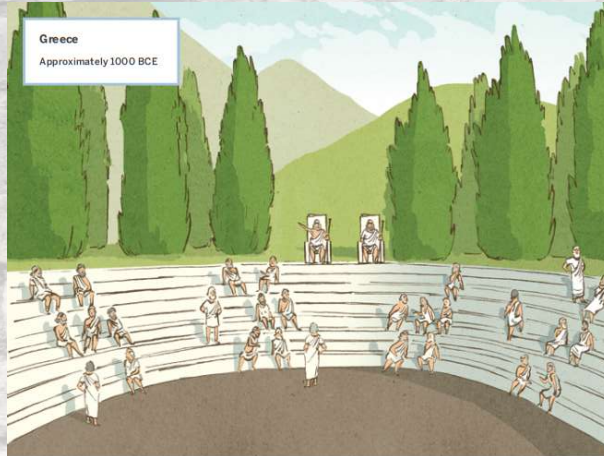
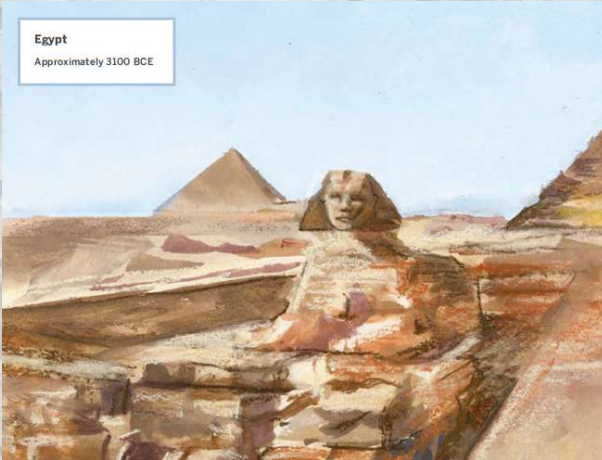


# Create a Timeline





# Create a Timeline



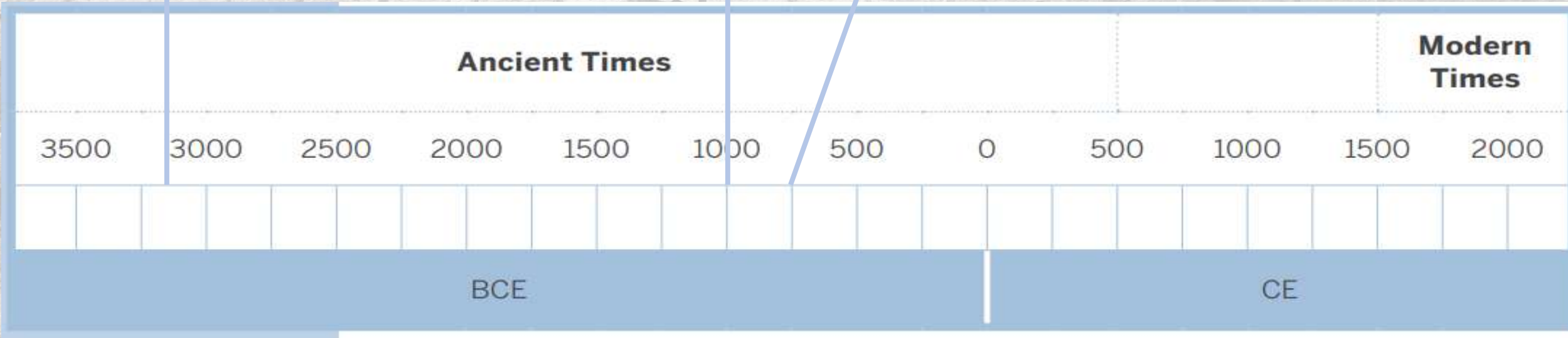
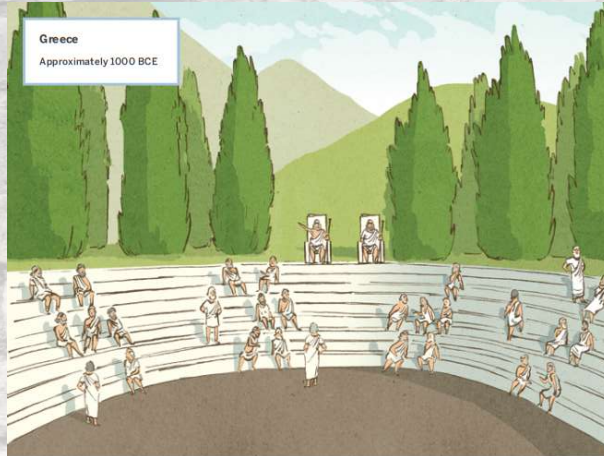
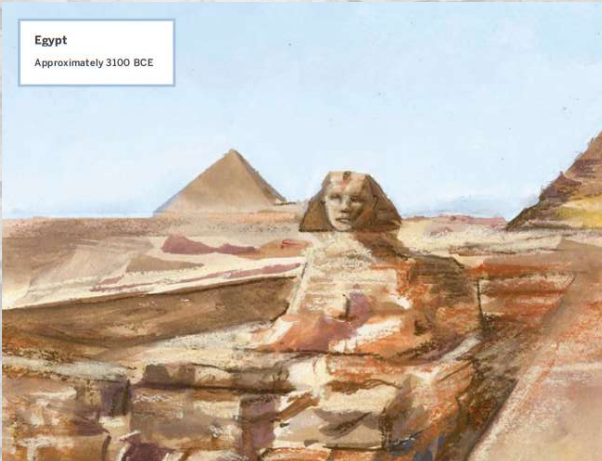


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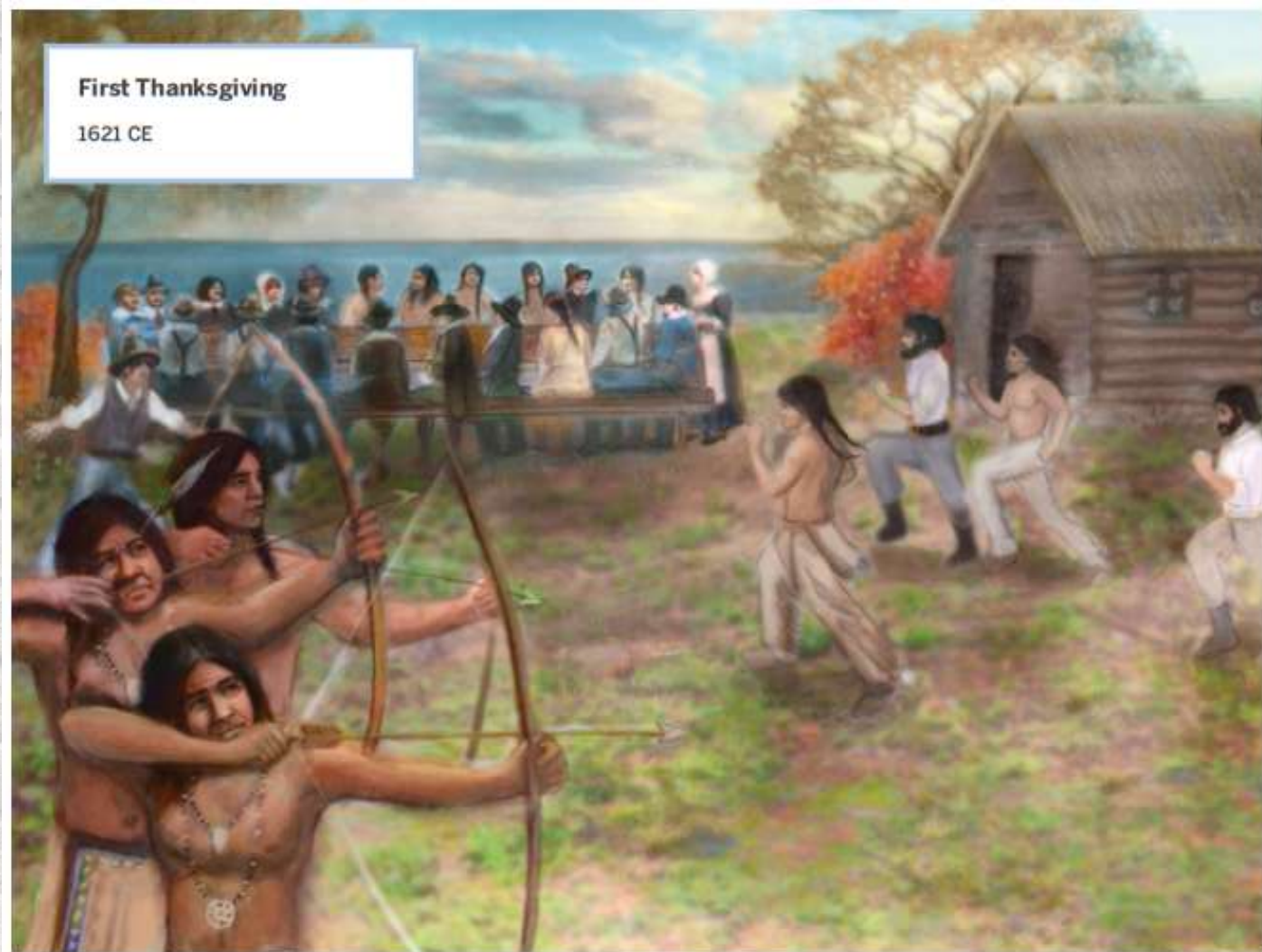


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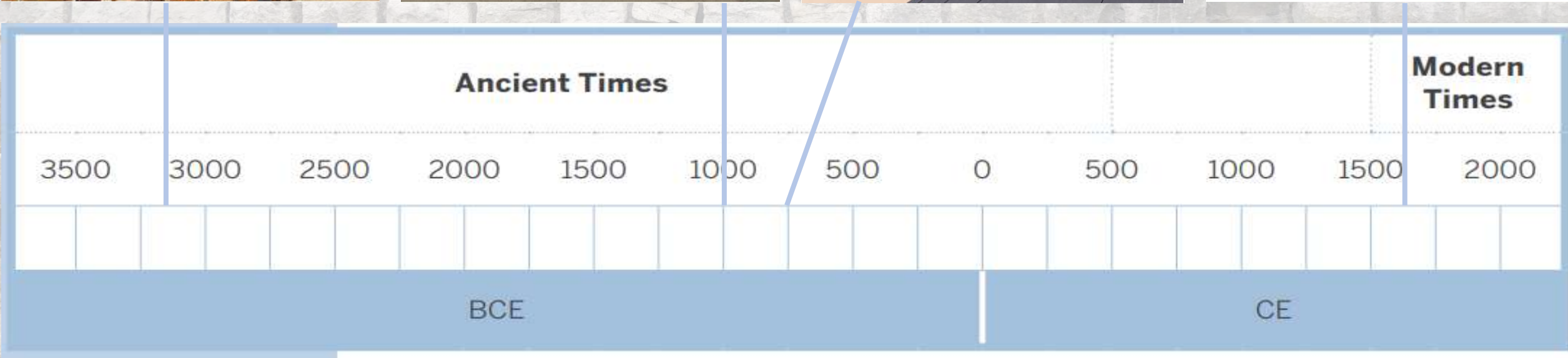
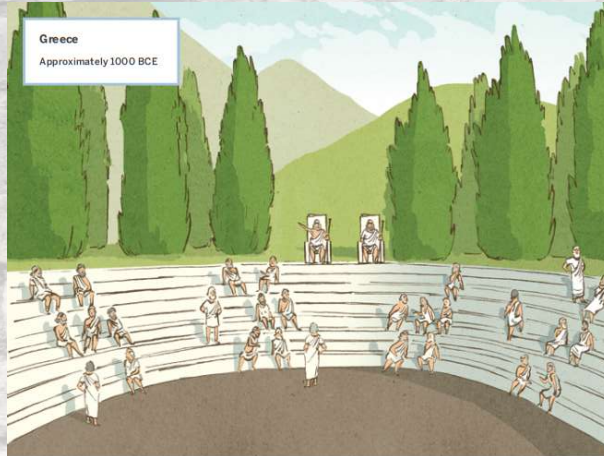
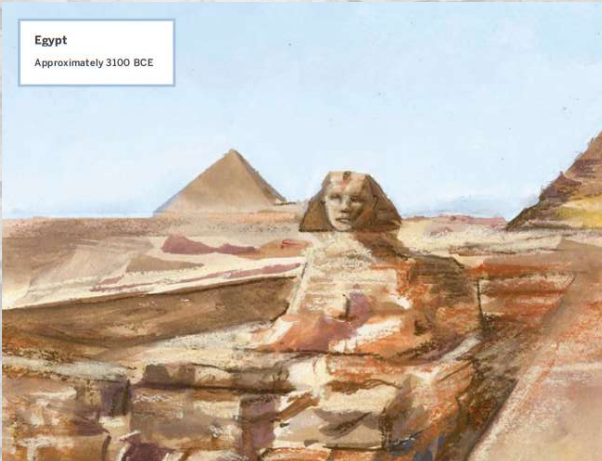


# Create a Timeline





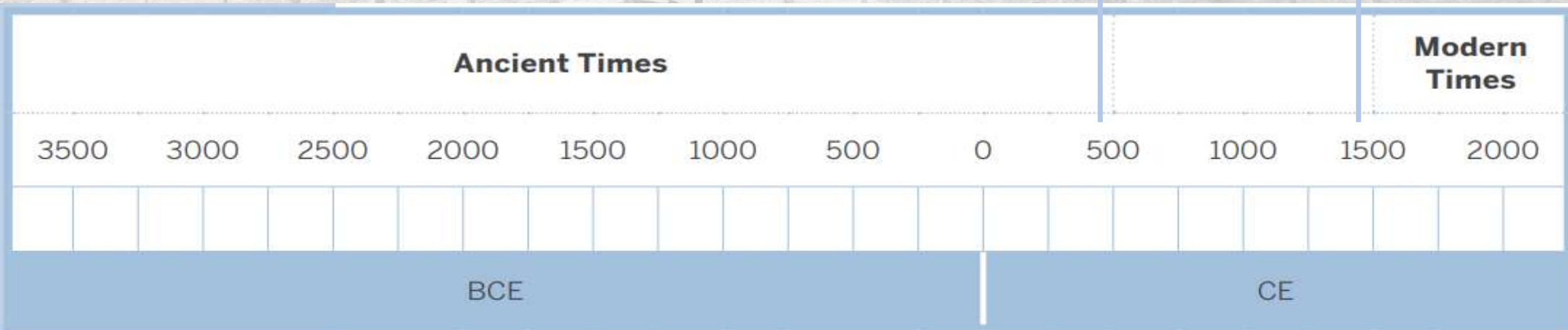
# Create a Timeline





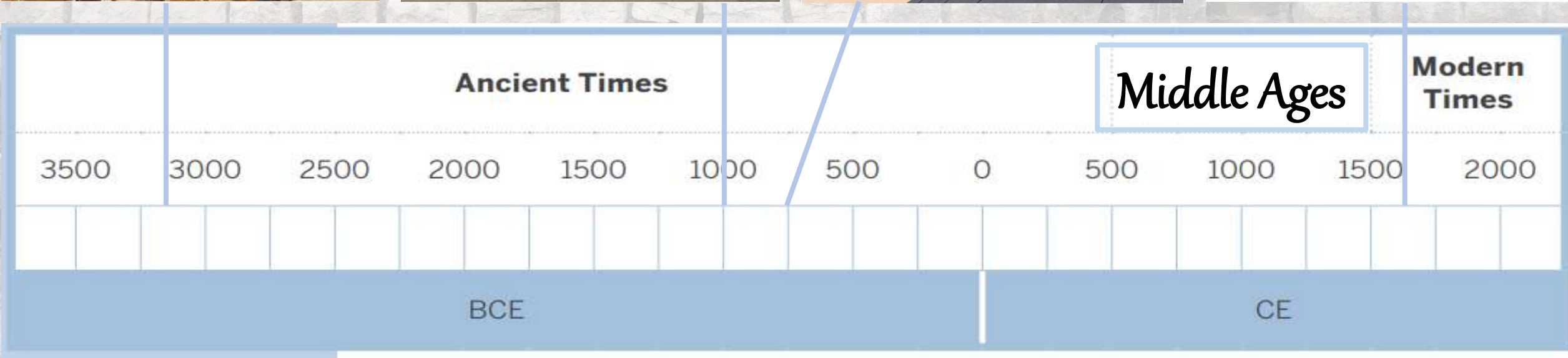
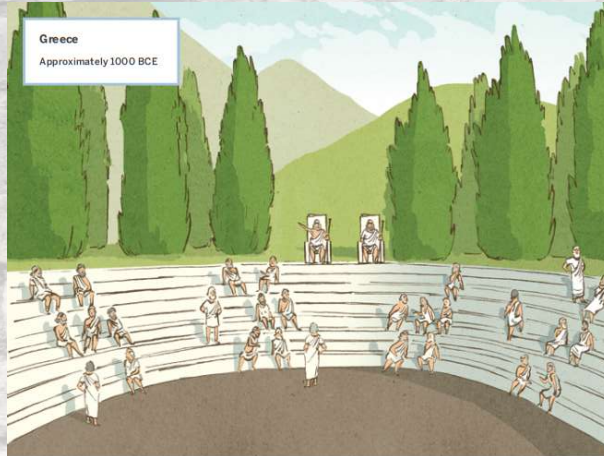
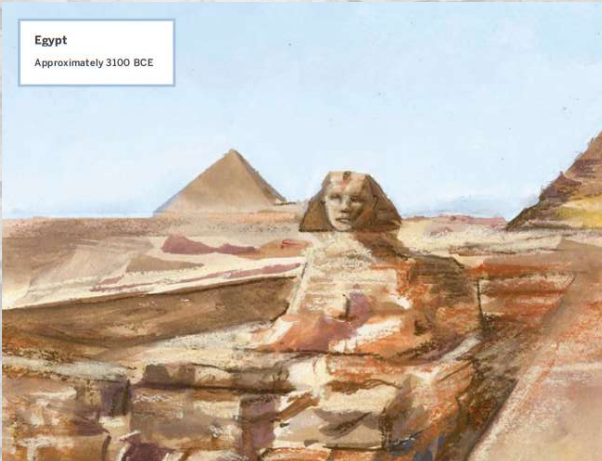
# Create a Timeline

Most historians use the term ***Middle Ages*** to refer to the time between the years 450 and the late 1400s CE.





# Create a Timeline





# Empires in the Middle Ages - Reader

- This book is a nonfiction, informational, and explanatory.
- It provides facts and information about real topics.



# Empires in the Middle Ages - Reader

- Look at the Table of Contents.
- Chapter titles can be very informative.
- What information can you gather by reading the chapter titles?



# Chapter 1 “Welcome to the Middle Ages”

## Vocabulary 1.2

1. **medieval**, *adj.* of or relating to the Middle Ages (3)
2. **transform**, *v.* to change something completely, usually in a positive way (**transforming**) (3)
3. **empire**, *n.* a group of countries or regions controlled by one ruler or one government (**emperor**) (3)
4. **seize**, *v.* to take (3)
5. **loot**, *v.* to steal things by force, often after a war or destruction (**looted**) (4)
6. **infamous**, *adj.* well-known for being bad (4)
7. **papacy**, *n.* the office or the position of the pope (5)
8. **nobleman**, *n.* a member of the highest social class (**noblemen**) (8)



# Chapter 1 “Welcome to the Middle Ages”

# Activity Page 1.3

## Welcome to the Middle Ages

*List important events that led to the Middle Ages. Identify the page(s) of the Reader where you found information about each event.*

Event	Page(s)



# Chapter 1 “Welcome to the Middle Ages”

## The BIG Question

What are some events that led to the Middle Ages?



# Chapter 1 “Welcome to the Middle Ages”

## Chapter 1

## Welcome to the Middle Ages

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



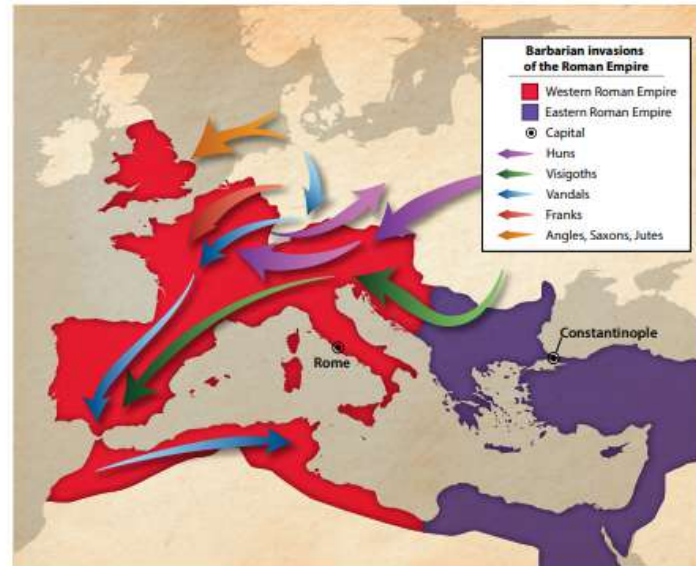
Medieval knights riding into battle

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.

We begin our journey into **medieval** Europe—another name for the Middle Ages—by examining some key events that happened long before this age began. The first major event that helped to **transform** western Europe occurred when the mighty Roman **Empire**, having grown too big for one emperor to rule, broke apart into the eastern and western parts of the empire. This division had a major impact on western Europe. With the Roman Empire split into two parts, different tribes took the opportunity to **seize** some of its lands. Interestingly, some of these people were given the name *barbarian* from the Latin word *barbarus*, meaning foreigner, or not Roman. The Romans may have considered these people to be uncivilized because they did not speak Latin, the language of the Roman Empire.



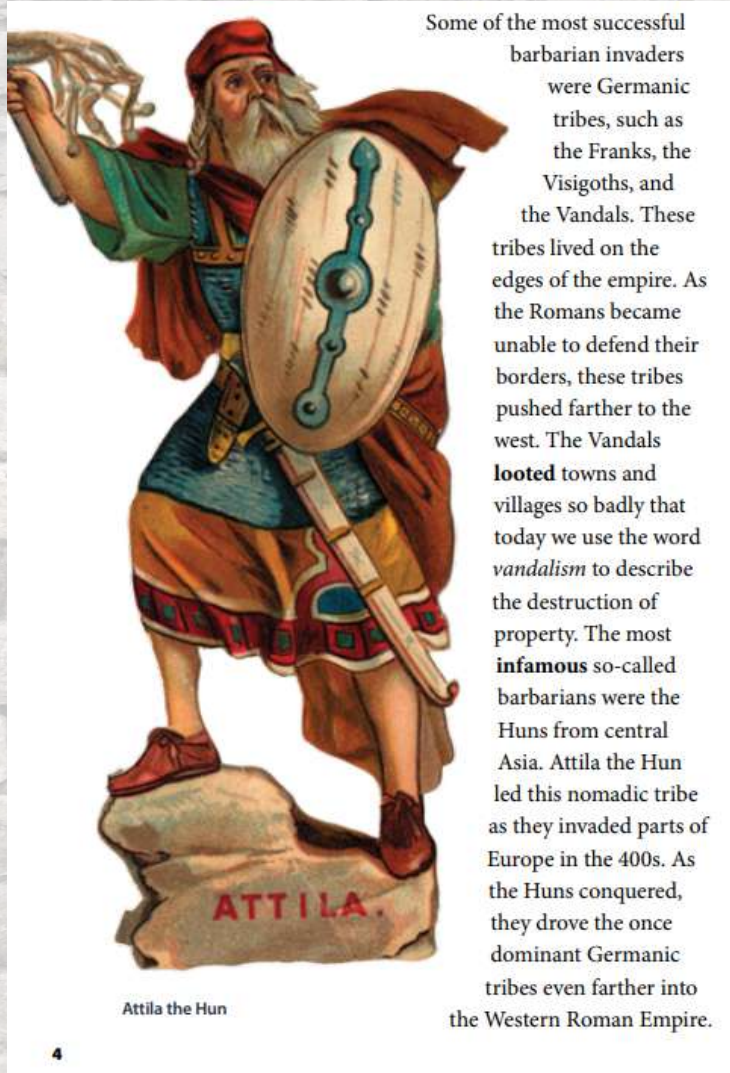
What does **medieval** mean?

What was the first major event that helped transform western Europe, leading to the Middle Ages?

\*Add this to the chart on Activity Page 1.3!



# Chapter 1 “Welcome to the Middle Ages”



Some of the most successful barbarian invaders were Germanic tribes, such as the Franks, the Visigoths, and the Vandals. These tribes lived on the edges of the empire. As the Romans became unable to defend their borders, these tribes pushed farther to the west. The Vandals **looted** towns and villages so badly that today we use the word *vandalism* to describe the destruction of property. The most **infamous** so-called barbarians were the Huns from central Asia. Attila the Hun led this nomadic tribe as they invaded parts of Europe in the 400s. As the Huns conquered, they drove the once dominant Germanic tribes even farther into the Western Roman Empire.

What are some events, described on this page, that helped transform Europe in the years leading up to the Middle Ages?  
\*Add this to the chart on Activity Page 1.3!



# Chapter 1 “Welcome to the Middle Ages”

As warlike tribes swept across western Europe, and powerful kings emerged, another transforming force appeared—the Christian Church. Throughout these years of change, many people turned to the Church because it offered them a sense of stability and hope. The heart, or center, of the Church was in Rome, the seat of the **papacy**. Slowly, more and more groups of people became Christians, including the Germanic tribes. Over time, the Church became even richer and more powerful than many kings and queens.

It is this time—when the Roman Empire was no longer the only powerful force in Europe—that many historians consider to be the start of the Middle Ages. Roman, Germanic, and Christian ideas, as well as powerful kings, began to shape western Europe.

In one of the Germanic regions, a great ruler emerged. His name was Charles, and he took control of much of the land that later became France. Charles ruled for more than 45 years. He increased the size of his empire by gaining land in areas that are now part of Germany, Austria, Italy, and Spain. As king, Charles defended the authority of the Church. He promoted the spread of Christianity. On Christmas Day, in 800 CE, he was crowned Roman emperor by the pope in Rome. His reputation was so great that, later, writers called him Charlemagne, which means “Charles the Great.”



Pope Leo III crowned Charlemagne Roman Emperor in 800 CE.

What is the papacy?

*\*Add information about the increasing power of the church on your chart on Activity Page 1.3!*



# Chapter 1 “Welcome to the Middle Ages”

Charles encouraged new ideas and promoted an interest in education and art. To help him rule his empire, Charlemagne also encouraged a system of government that we now call feudalism. He gave land, instead of money, to those who worked for him in the military or government. The practice of paying men with land spread throughout other countries in western Europe.

Life in the Middle Ages was not the same as it is now. For one thing, people who lived back then probably thought about time differently. Many people measured time by the rising and setting of the sun and the passing of the seasons. For this reason, life likely had a slower, steadier pace. In addition, there was a strong desire to honor God that appeared to transcend time. As a result, people undertook impressive, long-term projects such as building magnificent cathedrals that took centuries to complete.



Cologne Cathedral took 632 years to complete.

Language and location helped shape people's lives, too. Because travel was so difficult, many people didn't do it. Generally, only rich, educated people in Europe traveled. Almost everyone else stayed close to home. Although Latin was the language of both the Church and government, only select members of society could understand that language. Most people lived an isolated existence. They did not travel far from home. As a result, most people communicated using the language, or dialect, spoken in the place of their birth. As strange as it may seem to us, in certain parts of Europe villagers from places just 30 miles apart could not easily understand each other. For this reason, most people during the Middle Ages were concerned with the affairs of their village, what they owed the local lord in the way of payment, and how to ensure their place in heaven.

What are some examples from the first paragraph of things that made Charlemagne great?

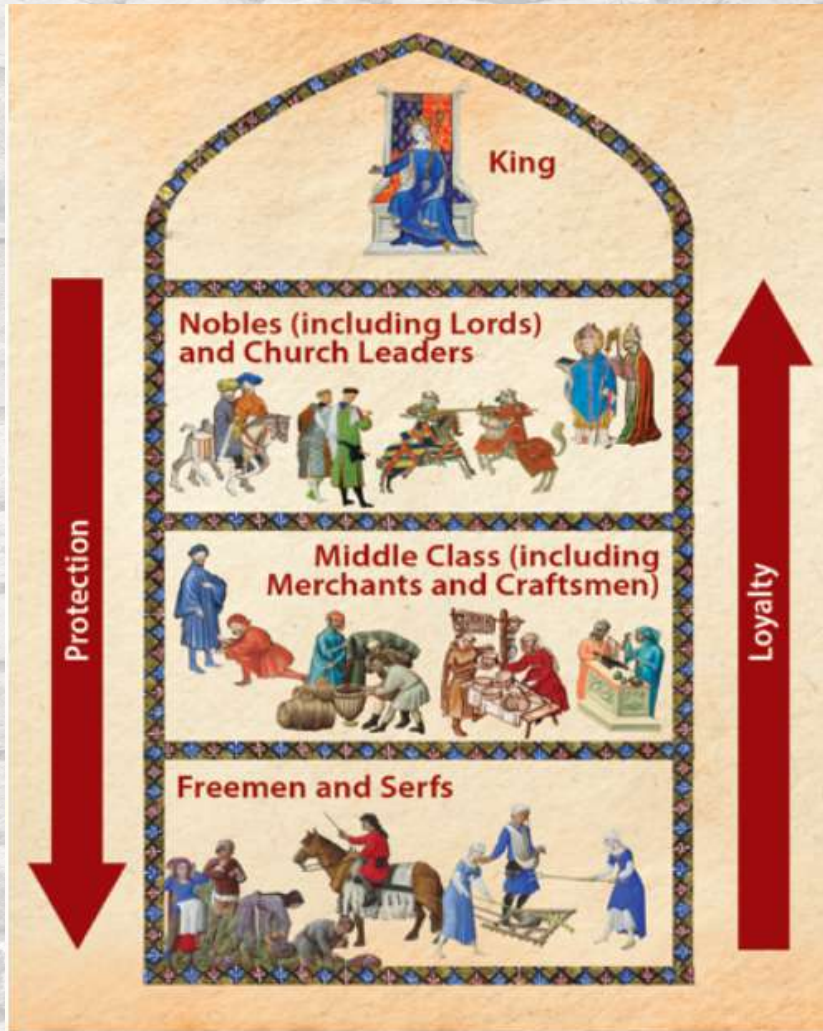
What are some events or developments in paragraph 1 that helped transform Europe in the years leading up to the Middle Ages?

*\*Add this to the chart on Activity Page 1.3!*

What does the rest of the page tell us about life in the Middle Ages?



# Chapter 1 “Welcome to 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.

Based on the diagram and the caption, what does the arrow on the left side of the diagram indicate?

What does the arrow on the right side indicate?

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



# Chapter 1 “Welcome to the Middle Ages”

There was another force that had a huge impact on western European society during the Middle Ages. This force came in the form of a deadly disease. The disease, called the Black Death or plague, certainly made its mark upon medieval Europe. This dreadful plague first appeared in the 500s. In the second half of the 1300s it swept through Europe once again. Spread by infected fleas that lived on rodents, the Black Death probably killed one-third of the population of western Europe.



Despite conflicts and hardships, this period in history was also a time when people created impressive and inspiring architecture. Great castles and churches began to adorn the landscape. Kings, queens, and **noblemen** held jousts, and court jesters entertained noble families.



In the Reader for this Unit, you will discover what it was like to work on the land for the local lord. You will learn about what life was like in the incredibly crowded towns of the Middle Ages. You will wander through a castle and find out how young men trained to be knights. Are you ready to explore this fascinating time in history?

What event described in paragraph 1 helped transform Europe in the years leading up to the Middle Ages?

*\*Add this to the chart on Activity Page 1.3!*

What positive thing happened in the Middle Ages?

Why was this a positive thing?

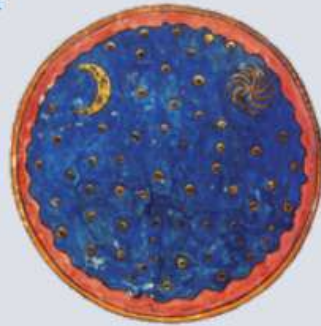


# Chapter 1 “Welcome to the Middle Ages”

## 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?

To muse over something means to think about it.

What does *medieval* mean?



# Chapter 1 “Welcome to the Middle Ages”

## Discuss the Chapter

The name of the unit is ***Empires of the Middle Ages.***

What is the Middle Ages and why is it called that?



# Chapter 1 “Welcome to the Middle Ages”

## Discuss the Chapter

The name of the unit is ***Empires of the Middle Ages***.

What is the Middle Ages and why is it called that?

- The Middle Ages is the approximately thousand-year time period between ancient and modern times.
- Modern historians gave it that name because it falls between those two periods in history.



# Chapter 1 “Welcome to the Middle Ages”

## Discuss the Chapter

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



# Chapter 1 “Welcome to the Middle Ages”

## Discuss the Chapter

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

- The people who lived during that time did not use the name Middle Ages because they did not consider themselves to be in the middle of anything.



# Chapter 1 “Welcome to the Middle Ages”

## Discuss the Chapter

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



# Chapter 1 “Welcome to the Middle Ages”

## Discuss the Chapter

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

- The Roman Empire grew too large to be ruled by one emperor, so it broke into 2 parts.
- Several Germanic tribes invaded parts of the Roman Empire.
- The power of the Church increased.
- The Black Death killed 1/3 of Europe's population.
- Impressive and inspiring architecture was created.



# Chapter 1 “Welcome to the Middle Ages”

## Discuss the Chapter

What happened to the Roman Empire that had a major impact on Western Europe?



# Chapter 1 “Welcome to the Middle Ages”

## Discuss the Chapter

What happened to the Roman Empire that had a major impact on Western Europe?

- It was divided into 2 empires – the Western Empire and the Eastern Empire.
- Various tribes of barbarians then took over some of these lands.



# Chapter 1 “Welcome to the Middle Ages”

## Discuss the Chapter

What role did the Church play in the Middle Ages?



# Chapter 1 “Welcome to the Middle Ages”

## Discuss the Chapter

What role did the Church play in the Middle Ages?

- The Church provided a sense of stability and hope in a time of great change.
- Over time, it became even richer and more powerful than many kings and queens.



# Chapter 1 “Welcome to the Middle Ages”

## Discuss the Chapter

Why might Charlemagne have set up a feudal system?



# Chapter 1 “Welcome to the Middle Ages”

## Discuss the Chapter

Why might Charlemagne have set up a feudal system?

- In the early years of the Middle Ages there were many groups invading western Europe, so there was a need for protection.
- In return for protection the kings and lords offered, they would want the serfs and freemen to be loyal to them.



# Chapter 1 “Welcome to the Middle Ages”

## Discuss the Chapter

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



# Chapter 1 “Welcome to the Middle Ages”

## Discuss the Chapter

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

- People in the Middle Ages thought about time differently.
- Their time was tied to the rising and setting of the sun, not the hours and minutes on a clock.
- People undertook long-term projects, such as building great cathedrals.
- Most people never traveled far from their houses.



# Chapter 1 “Welcome to the Middle Ages”

## Discuss the Chapter

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

- People in the Middle Ages thought about time differently.
- Their time was tied to the rising and setting of the sun, not the hours and minutes on a clock.
- People undertook long-term projects, such as building great cathedrals.
- Most people never traveled far from their houses.



# Chapter 1 “Welcome to the Middle Ages”

## Activity Page 1.4

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

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Page(s) \_\_\_\_\_

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

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Page(s) \_\_\_\_\_

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

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Page(s) \_\_\_\_\_



# Word Work - *Transform*

## From the Text

The first major event that helped to **transform** Western Europe occurred when the mighty Roman Empire, having grown too big for one emperor to rule, broke into the eastern and western parts of the empire.

## Definition

To change something completely, usually in a positive way

## Part of Speech

Verb

## Sentence

The town wanted to **transform** the old train station into a restaurant.