



# Empires in the Middle Ages

Lesson 12: Two Views on King Henry II



# Chapter 7: “Henry II and Law and Order”

## Review the Chapter

Name some of the positive things King Henry II did during his reign.



# Chapter 7: “Henry II and Law and Order”

## Review the Chapter

Name some of the positive things King Henry II did during his reign.

- Helped restore the power and authority of the English monarchy
- Reformed the court system
- Found a new way to raise an army



# Chapter 7: “Henry II and Law and Order”

## Review the Chapter

Name some of the negative things King Henry II did during his reign.



# Chapter 7: “Henry II and Law and Order”

## Review the Chapter

Name some of the negative things King Henry II did during his reign.

- He had all castles built without royal approval torn down.
- He treated anyone who questioned his authority mercilessly.
- He might have led to the murder of Thomas Becket.



# Chapter 7: “Henry II and Law and Order”

## The BIG Question

Why was King Henry II such an important English king?



# Chapter 7: “Henry II and Law and Order”

## Chapter 7

### Henry II and Law and Order

THE BIG QUESTION  
Why was King Henry II  
such an important  
English king?

*He died 21 years after his incredible victory at the Battle of Hastings. William I had ruled England with an iron fist. He punished anyone who refused to be loyal to him. To defend his newly **acquired** kingdom, he built great castles. He kept a close eye on finances. After his death, England experienced a period of turmoil and unrest. As a result, power-hungry nobles fought each other, and some even challenged the ruling kings.*



White Tower within the Tower of London, built by William the Conqueror



Henry II holding model of the abbey church he founded

Finally, in 1154 CE, 67 years after William's death, his great-grandson, Henry II, became king. Just like his great-grandfather, Henry II became the Duke of Normandy. Bright and determined, he made major reforms in justice, finance, and the armed forces. The first thing he did was to challenge the nobles who had been fighting among themselves for years. By this time, many nobles had acquired great wealth. They built castles for themselves. They formed their own armies, led by knights. Henry II ordered

The author begins this chapter with a short but powerful sentence to capture the reader's attention.

Why do you think the author does not name the conqueror in the first two sentences of the paragraph?

What do you think the idiom “ruled with an iron fist” means?



# Chapter 7: “Henry II and Law and Order”

## Chapter 7

### Henry II and Law and Order

THE BIG QUESTION  
Why was King Henry II  
such an important  
English king?

*The great conqueror is dead. He died 21 years after his incredible victory at the Battle of Hastings. William I had ruled England with an iron fist. He punished anyone who refused to be loyal to him. To defend his newly **acquired** kingdom, he built great castles. He kept a close eye on finances. After his death, England experienced a period of turmoil and unrest. As a result, power-hungry nobles fought each other, and some even challenged the ruling kings.*



White Tower within the Tower of London, built by William the Conqueror



Henry II holding model of the abbey church he founded

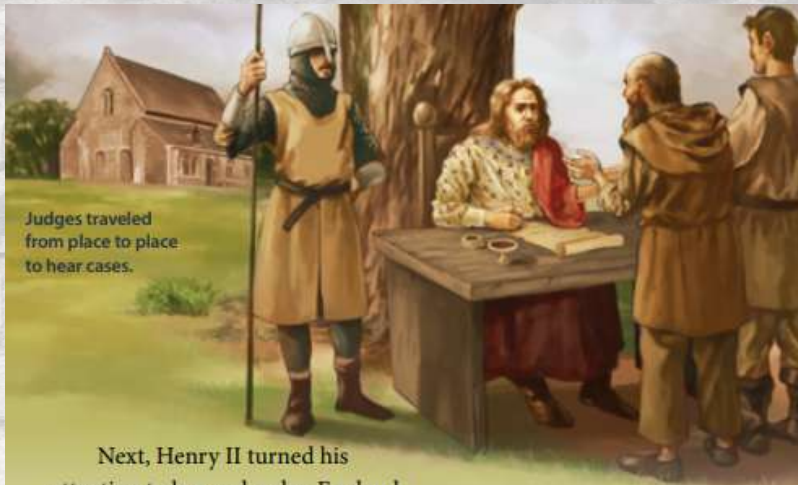
Finally, in 1154 CE, 67 years after William's death, his great-grandson, Henry II, became king. Just like his great-grandfather, Henry II became the Duke of Normandy. [redacted] [redacted]. The first thing he did was to challenge the nobles who had been fighting among themselves for years. By this time, many nobles had acquired great wealth. They built castles for themselves. They formed their own armies, led by knights. Henry II ordered

The word **bright** has several different meanings. What are some meanings of **bright**?

What does it mean in this sentence?



# Chapter 7: “Henry II and Law and Order”



Judges traveled from place to place to hear cases.

Next, Henry II turned his attention to law and order. England had different courts assigned to deal with various crimes. For example, local lords held manor courts to deal with local affairs. There were also Church courts. The king's court took care of serious crimes such as murder and **treason**.

In the Middle Ages, there was a method of proof called trial by ordeal. This meant that the accused might be asked to prove his innocence by going through a certain ordeal. For example, the accused might have to pick up a piece of red-hot metal, be tossed into a pond, or fight an opponent. People believed that if the accused survived the ordeal, it was a sign from God that he was **innocent**.

Henry II set up a fairer legal system. He created a circuit court system. This meant that royal justices or judges went out into the countryside to hear cases. Their decisions helped decide future cases and ultimately became the basis of common law, or the law of the land. By the time he died in 1189 CE, Henry II had done a lot to **restore** the power and authority of the English monarchy.

What is treason?

If someone was accused of treason during the reign of Henry II, in what court would they have their trial?

What details does the author provide to support the statement that Henry II set up a fairer court system?



# Chapter 7: “Henry II and Law and Order”

## Murder in the Cathedral



Thomas Becket, Archbishop of Canterbury

In the beginning of his reign, Henry II **appointed** a man he trusted named Thomas Becket to be his chief advisor. As well as controlling the nobles, Henry also wanted to limit the power of the Church in England. To help him do this, he appointed Thomas to the position of archbishop of Canterbury. This meant that Thomas had become the most powerful Church leader in all of England. Henry was confident that his friend would support

his decisions regarding the Church.

Thomas took his new job very seriously. When Henry wanted to reduce the power of the Church courts, Thomas disagreed with him. Furious, Henry thought about having his friend arrested. However, before this could happen, Thomas escaped to

France. The pope supported Thomas and threatened to excommunicate, or remove, Henry from the Church. In the Middle Ages, excommunication was a terrifying prospect. Many Christians believed that if they were not part of the Church, they would not go to heaven.



Henry II and Becket arguing

Based on the author’s use of foreshadowing in this sentence, do you think Henry’s plan to limit the power of the Church will work?

What happened when Henry tried to use Thomas Becket to limit the power of the Church?

How did the pope respond to Henry’s plan?



# Chapter 7: “Henry II and Law and Order”



Henry II and Becket arguing

Which of the two people in this image is Henry II? Which is Thomas Becket? How do you know?



# Chapter 7: “Henry II and Law and Order”

Eventually, Henry and Thomas reached an agreement and Thomas was allowed to return to England. Henry and Thomas's relationship did not improve, though. They continued to argue over Church matters. Henry became so frustrated that during a royal dinner, with many nobles in attendance, he is said to have uttered the words, “Will no one rid me of this troublesome priest?”



Knights murdering Becket in Canterbury Cathedral

Was Henry just **sulking**, or was he encouraging the **assassination** of Thomas? We will never know for sure. Four knights who heard these words murdered the archbishop while he was kneeling in prayer



Canterbury Cathedral

in Canterbury Cathedral. These knights may not have set out to kill the archbishop. The reasons behind the murder of Thomas Becket are still a mystery.

Three years after Thomas's death, the pope declared him to be a saint. Thomas Becket's tomb in Canterbury Cathedral became a holy shrine that many **pilgrims** visited during the Middle Ages. It is said that Henry never forgave himself for the death of his friend.

What eventually happened between Henry and Thomas Becket?

What clues from the text could lead the knights to think Henry was just sulking?

What clues from the text could lead the knights to think that Henry was encouraging them to assassinate Thomas Becket?



# Chapter 7: “Henry II and Law and Order”

## A Most Extraordinary Queen

In 1153 CE, Henry II married a woman named Eleanor of Aquitaine. Eleanor came from a noble family who controlled Aquitaine, one of the richest regions of France. She had been married previously to the king of France. Henry and Eleanor had eight children. In 1173 CE, two of their sons plotted against Henry.



Eleanor with her sons, Richard and John



Eleanor of Aquitaine's seal

Henry believed Eleanor had been involved in the plot to overthrow him, so he had her placed under house arrest. When Henry died in 1189 CE, Eleanor was released by her oldest son, Richard I. Richard was crowned king after the death of his father, Henry II. Eleanor helped to govern England during the years King Richard was away fighting in the wars known as the Crusades. Because he was so brave, Richard earned the name *Lion-Hearted*. Eleanor of Aquitaine is thought to have been one of the more influential women of her time.

The wife of Henry II, Eleanor of Aquitaine, was the queen of how many different countries?  
How did that happen?



# Word Work – *Acquire*

## Definition

To get

## From the Text

“By this time, many nobles had  
*acquired* great wealth.”

## Part of Speech

Verb

## Antonyms

\*Drop

\*Abandon

\*  
\_\_\_\_\_

## Sentence

By the time I was eight years old, I had  
*acquired* a large number of books about  
horses.



# Language – Writing Sentences

## Activity Page 10.3

PLANNING A PERSUASIVE PARAGRAPH CHART			
If I could choose to be someone who lived during the Middle Ages, I would choose to be a lord.			
	Reason #1	Reason #2	Reason #3
Text Evidence/Page(s)	Lords were in control of the land and people around them. (p. 11)	Lords had lots of money to build castles and organize an army of knights to protect what belonged to them. (p. 12–13)	
Sentence in My Own Words (using at least one transition at the beginning and the word <i>because</i> to introduce the reason)			

