

The Medieval Period

1066 – 1485

England's Dark Ages

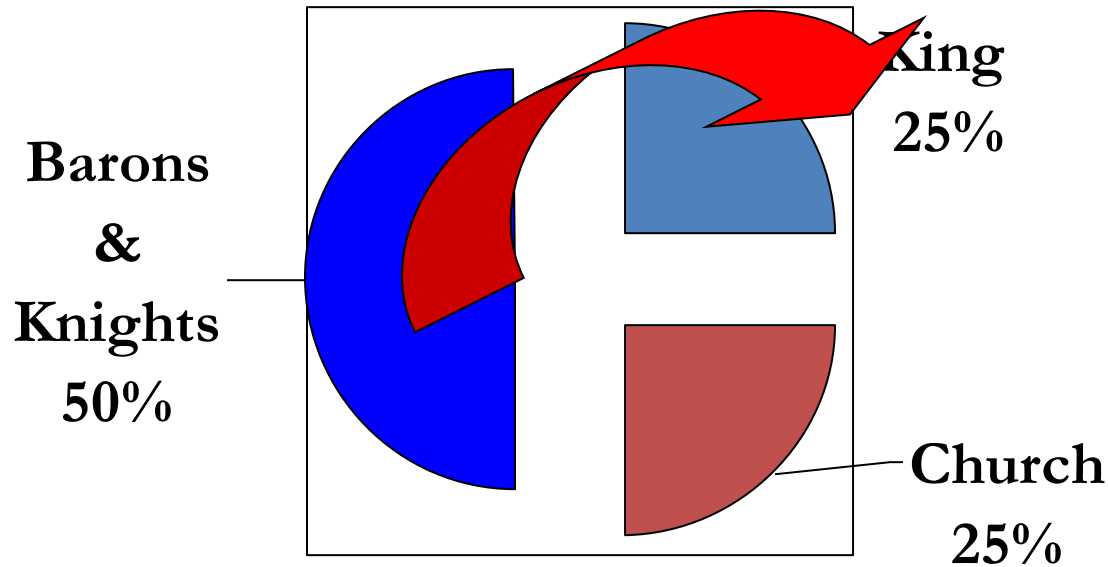
Normandy is on the Northern tip of France, separated from England only by the English Channel.

Normans were mainly Vikings and other “North Men” who settled in the region and adopted French customs.

William the Conqueror defeated the Anglo-Saxons in 1066 and became the first king of England.

He set up a system of government called feudalism which stated that everything belonged to the king.

Division of Land



Serfs worked the land and were paid with just enough food to survive.

KING

Provides money and knights

Grants land to

BARONS

Provide protection and military service

Grant land to

KNIGHTS

Provide food and services when demanded

Grant land to

VILLEINS

Great castles and cathedrals were built after the Norman Conquest and **Christianity** spread rapidly.

After the death of William's son, **Henry I**, there was a great deal of **anarchy** because there was no apparent heir to the throne.

1154 Henry II ascends to the throne and brings law and order to the land including:

courts

juries

common law

A code of honor and respectable behavior known as **chivalry** becomes a part of English culture.

Duties to **God, country, the king** and **women** are of great importance.

Richard I “the Lion-Hearted”



spent most of his
time fighting in the
Crusades in an
attempt to reclaim the
Holy Land for Christianity.

His brother, **John**, plotted to take the throne in his absence.



The **Robin Hood** legends are born in this time period.

John I became king after Richard's death and discovered that the royal treasury was empty. The Crusades were a costly venture.

In **1215** he was forced to sign the **Magna Carta** which limited the control of the king and distributed it more evenly among the barons.

In 1295 the Model Parliament was established and power was again distributed, now including some commoners.

The Crusades cost a lot of money and a lot of lives, but they opened up **new trade routes** that allowed merchants to prosper.

This was the beginning of the end of feudalism.

Guilds were formed and serfs learned trades through apprenticeships to become masters of their trade.



Blacksmiths, armorers, tanners, millers, cobblers are examples of professional guilds.

Towns and commerce began to grow and wealth was not solely based on ownership of land.



Overcrowding in some towns made for unsanitary and disease ridden conditions.

The Hundred Years' War

began in 1337 while Edward III was on the throne.

The battle was between England and France. When it ended in 1453 England lost control of all of its possessions on the continent.

The **longbow** was a particularly destructive weapon that was developed during this period.

The war also set up another difficulty for England as two families vied for possession of the monarchy.

The House of York
battled with the
House of Lancaster
for the crown.

A symbol from each family's
crest gave the conflict a
particularly colorful name.

The War of the Roses

Henry

Tudor

(Lancaster)

kills



Richard

III

(York)

Marking the end of the Middle Ages in England

Language and Literature

The **Norman Conquest** led to major changes in the English language.

Old French wove its way into **Old English** and the language shifted toward what we now call **Middle English**.

Geoffrey Chaucer was the first
great writer in English.

His most notable contribution is
The Canterbury Tales.

Folk Ballads were very popular among the common people. They are songs or brief narrative poems.

Miracle plays dramatized stories from the **Bible** like Noah's Ark.



Morality plays were used to instruct and teach positive moral behavior.

Romances were tales of chivalry and knights in shining armor.



The tales of **King Arthur** are important contributions to Medieval literature.