The Middle Ages

1066-1485
The Norman Conquest

- William the Conqueror invades England (Anglo-Saxons) and eventually rules over them.
- AS culture survives, but becomes woven with that of the Normans.
- Develops the Domesday Book
  - Inventory of property
  - 1st time in European history people could be taxed on what they owned.
- Feudalism became social system
Feudalism

- Caste System, property system, military system, and a system of social behavior.
- Based on religious concept of hierarchy.
  - God is supreme
  - King works for God and promotes people to work for him and so on and so on.
  - System did not work if overlord was weak.
Knighthood

- Primary duty of the male above the serf class was a military obligation to the King.
- Based in the feudal idea of loyalty and related to a system of social codes (chivalry).
  - Breaking a code would undermine the knight’s position and the institution.
Woman’s Place

- Peasant Woman
  - Childbearing
  - Housework
  - Hard field work

- Women of higher station
  - Household supervision
  - Childbearing
Woman’s Place

- A woman was always subservient to a male, whether husband, father, or brother.
- No political rights
- Depending on the standing of her father or husband she commanded a certain respect, especially under the chivalric system of the 11th and 12th centuries.
Chivalry

- System of ideals and behavior codes that governed both knight and gentlewoman.
  - Loyalty to overlord
  - Acceptance of certain rules of warfare (one did not attack an unarmed knight)

- Gave rise to romance literature (Sir Gawain)
Courtly Love

- Revering and acting in the name of a lady.
  - Wears colors of lady in battle
  - Glorify her in words and be inspired by her
  - Lady was above him (like the Virgin Mary)
The Crusades

- A series of wars in the 11th, 12th, and 13th centuries by Christian Europe against the followers of Muhammad with Jerusalem and the Holy Land as the prize.
- Began in 1096
Crusades

- Europeans failed to hold Jerusalem, but they benefited from the contact with the higher civilization of the Middle East.
  - Mathematics
  - Astronomy
  - Architecture
  - Crafts
    - Led to richer more varied life that we find in Chaucer
The New City Classes

- People living in towns and cities would eventually render feudal system obsolete.
  - Development of lower, middle, and upper class (evident in Canterbury Tales)
- Middle class people created art, ballads, miracle plays, and they built cathedrals.
Magna Cart

- Signed in 1215
- Became the basis for English constitutional law in which trial by jury and legislative taxation were established.
The Hundred Years War

- Fought by England and France
- Lasted 116 years
- Development of Yeomen (use longbow and arrows)
  - End of knights and castles as significant military power
- Two kingdoms at the beginning of the war; two nations at the end of it.
- Modern democratic England was born
The Black Death

- Bubonic Plague
- 1348-1349
- Spread by fleas from infected rats
- Reduced nation’s population by a third
- Freedom of the serfs because of labor shortage (last support of feudalism)