Late Middle Ages (1000 C.E.-1350 C.E.)
You Mean Europe’s Borders Changed in the Past?

Beginning of Nations
The late Middle Ages was a time of progress. Lords expanded their power and territory and became kings of separate nations. This position gave kings the power to challenge the influence of the Roman Catholic Church.

England: In 1066 C.E., William of Normandy in northern France invaded England and united it under his rule. William’s great-grandson, Henry II, introduced common law, a system of judges and juries which we use today in the United States. Henry’s son, King John, wanted greater power, but his nobles and officials rebelled. John was forced to sign the Magna Carta and give up power to a parliament, a group of representatives who make the laws for the nation.

France: Hugh Capet ruled over lands near Paris. Eventually, he took control of other areas and in 987 C.E., he was crowned the King of the Franks. His descendants were called the King of France, but a large area of France was controlled by England. England and France fought the Hundred Year’s War (1337 C.E.–1453 C.E.) to see which would rule France. A peasant girl named Jeanne d’Arc, Joan of Arc in English, convinced the French that God wanted her to lead the French army. Jeanne unified the French under her leadership, and the English were defeated and forced to leave France.

Spain: Spain had been under the control of Islamic rulers since 711 C.E. For 700 years, the natives of Spain fought the Muslims in the Reconquista, or reconquest. In 1492 C.E., King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella defeated the last Muslim ruler and expelled the Moors, the word used for Muslims by the Spaniards. Ferdinand and Isabella also expelled the Jews in an effort to create a unified, Christian nation. They authorized Columbus to sail west and claim much of the Western Hemisphere for Spain.

Russia: Ivan, the Grand Prince of Moscow, expanded control over Russia. Ivan used the title tsar, the Russian word for “Caesar” because he thought himself the descendant of the greatness of the Roman Empire. The Russian people were strongly attached to Christianity and the Russian Orthodox Church created an identity for the Russian people.

Other areas of Europe: Not all Europeans nations developed in the late Middle Ages. Germany and Italy were controlled by local leaders and city-states until the late 19th century.

Crusades
Europeans began to look beyond Europe. In 1095 C.E., the head of the Roman Catholic Church, Pope Urban, called on Christians to conquer the Holy Land, the land around Jerusalem where Jesus had lived. Jerusalem was important too for Jews and Muslims who controlled the Holy Land. Pope Urban called for a crusade against the Muslims. Christians of Europe organized nine crusades. Only the first crusade was successful, and the Europeans captured Jerusalem. However, the Muslim warrior Saladin later reconquered Jerusalem. In the fourth crusade, Europeans traveled to Constantinople, capital of the Byzantine Empire, and sacked the city. Despite the failure to capture the Holy Land from the Muslims, the crusades had important results for Europe. Europeans were amazed at the wealth and knowledge of Muslim civilization and began to trade goods and ideas with the Middle East. Europeans began to think of themselves as belonging to a particular nation or fighting for their own king. The Pope lost some influence. The Byzantine Empire, too, lost wealth and power. The crusades left a legacy of hatred among Christians, Muslims, and Jews.
**Black Death**

Just as life was improving in Europe, a mysterious and deadly illness, known as the Black Death, appeared. The Black Death or bubonic plague was spread by fleas, small insects which lived in the fur of animals such as rats. It was called the Black Death because fingers and toes turned black due to lack of circulation in the body. Scientists believed the Black Death started in China and spread to Europe on trading ships. By 1350 C.E., the Black Death killed 20 – 25 million people in Europe and 25 million in Asia. Historians estimated that 1/3 of the population of Europe died. People were frightened and thought God was punishing them. As the death spread, trade stopped, and the feudal system began to fall apart. Remember, the feudal system depended on nobles giving land and protection in exchange for labor and taxes from the serfs. The nobles could not protect the serfs from the Black Death, so serfs no longer served the nobles. Likewise, the Roman Catholic Church’s influence also waned.

**Key Vocabulary**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nation</th>
<th>Magna Carta</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Nation:</strong> community of people living in a defined territory and organized under a single government</td>
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<td><strong>Magna Carta:</strong> the document signed by King John which gave freedoms and rights to his people</td>
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<tr>
<th>Common Law</th>
<th>Estimate</th>
<th>Waned</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Common Law:</strong> A system of law developed by judges through court decisions</td>
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<td><strong>Expel:</strong> to remove</td>
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<td><strong>Sack:</strong> to destroy a city and to steal the wealth and valuables from it</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Estimate:</strong> to make a guess based on facts and data available</td>
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<td><strong>Waned:</strong> To decrease in size or degree</td>
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<td><strong>Sanitation:</strong> removal of garbage and sewage (from toilets)</td>
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**Quick Review**

1. What is the best title for the chart (below)?

   ![Chart Image]

   A. Causes of the crusades  
   B. Results of the crusades  
   C. Reason for the crusades  
   D. Failure of the crusades

2. These events relate to the development of what country?

   A. France  
   B. Spain  
   C. Russia  
   D. England

3. The Black Death spread from China to Europe through:-

   A. Trade  
   B. War  
   C. Ignorance  
   D. Knowledge

4. Pretend you are a Christian crusader. What are two reasons you think the Crusades were a good idea?

   Pretend you are a Muslim warrior. What are two reasons why you think the Crusades were a bad idea?

**Connection to Today**

Since the Middle Ages, we have learned that cleanliness and sanitation is necessary for healthy living. What are some sanitation practices performed in your home, community, state, and nation that promotes healthy living?

**Resources**

Learn 360
- Crusades  
- Bubonic Plague

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