

Stamped:

1. Mongol Debate  
Evidence Sheet

# EUROPE & DARKNESS

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**Agenda:**

1. Notes
2. Dark Ages Inquiry

**What was happening in Europe during the Silk Road trading, innovation and collective learning?**

# Warm up

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- When you hear the term “Dark Ages” what comes to mind? What do you associate with the Dark Ages/Middle Ages?

# Today's Goal

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- Evaluate the period in Europe known as the “Dark Ages” and decide if was really “dark”

# AFTER ROME FALLS...

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- Civil Wars and chaos
- Decline of education, literacy & knowledge
- Decline of trade, taxes and functioning government
- Lots of people looking for safety and answers
- Expansion of Christianity and Islam



**Europe during this time can  
best be described as...**

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**STAGNANT**

**Think – Pair – Share:**

- What does stagnant mean?
- What things might have caused Europe to have been stagnant during this time?

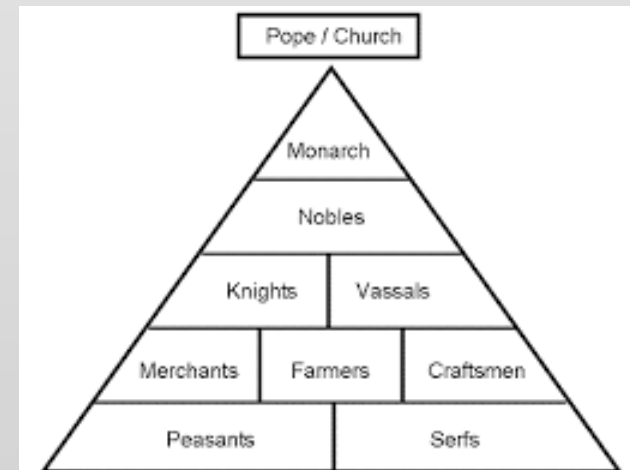
# Stagnation because of:

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- 1. Social systems (feudalism)**
- 2. Trade stagnation**
- 3. Warfare**
- 4. Crusades**

# Social Stagnation

- “**Feudalism**” sets in throughout Europe
- Europe breaks down into small isolated communities
  - Manor System: consisted of a castle, the church, the village and the surrounding farm land.
- Virtually **no middle class**
  - Society was made up of a king, lords, nobility who had massive land holdings and serfs, who were bound to the land



# Trade Stagnation

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- Europe was on the “tail” end of the Silk Road exchange
  - provided **mostly raw materials** to the civilizations to the East
    - Raw materials are **cheaper** and **less desired** than **finished goods**
- Money exchange limited.
  - **Coins and bartering**
- Wealthy and religious leaders desired merchandise not produced locally.
  - Trade didn't completely disappear





# Warfare

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- Feudal communities **fought each other**
  - Try to force other communities to join to make empires
- Communities were **attacked from outsiders**
  - The **Slavs** (from what is now Russia) attacked from the East
  - The Swedes, Danes and Norwegians [**Vikings**] attacked from the North
  - The **Magyars**, another group of nomads from Central Asia attacked from the East
  - The **Arab Muslims** in North Africa attacked from the South

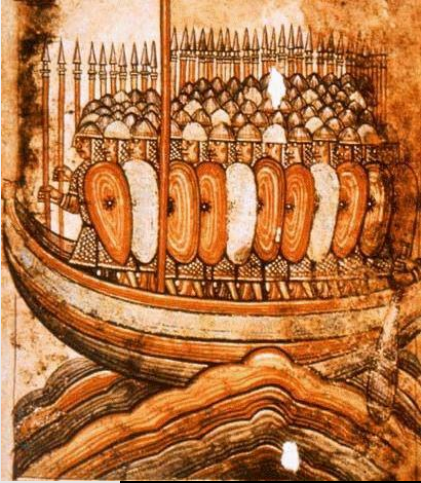


# Crusades

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- For about 200 years European Christians fought Arab Muslims.
  - Historians think about **3 million soldiers and civilians were killed in the fighting.**
- The Crusades were **disruptive** in Europe
  - many **acres** in Europe were **neglected**
  - Couldn't afford to go and fight? Support Crusades with **offerings** and **prayer**





# Summarize...

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“The Dark Ages is a term applied in its widest sense to that period of intellectual depression in the history of Europe from the establishment of the barbarian supremacy in the fifth century (400 AD) to the revival of learning at about the beginning of the fifteenth (1400 AD), thus nearly corresponding in extent with the Middle Ages.”

- *The American Cyclopaedia: A Popular Dictionary of General Knowledge, 1883*

# Background

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- The term implies that the time between the fall of the Roman Empire and the European Renaissance was a period of decline for Europe.

# Why “Dark”?

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Europe was in a state of cultural where. A time that:

- Did not support learning
- Created very little culture (art, literature, architecture, etc.)
- Was repeatedly invaded
- Had no central government
- Had a bad economy
- Was basically a miserable place to live

# Today

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- Today many historians disagree with this term.
- They think it is not the proper way to describe this period of time.
- But, people continue to use term “Dark Ages.”
- What do you think:

*Was Europe really in a “Dark Age” for almost 900 years?*

# Central Historical Question

*Was the time period between 400 AD and 1400 AD a “Dark Age” for Europe?*

*Was this a time of cultural decay and decline?*



# Dark Ages Inquiry

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- With your partner you will read several documents about the Dark Ages
  - Pay attention to the source!
- Then you will practice writing a claim to answer our question.
  - Remember no first person. Use the evidence from the documents