

---

# Feudalism

## Middle School, 7<sup>th</sup> Grade

---

Project READI Curriculum Module  
Technical Report CM #14

Lynn Dillon, Anneka Harper  
and Gayle Cribb  
WestEd

# PROJECT **READi**

inquirium

  
Northern Illinois  
University

  
NORTHWESTERN  
UNIVERSITY

UIC  
UNIVERSITY  
OF ILLINOIS  
AT CHICAGO

WestEd 

Citation for this Report: Dillon, L., Harper, A., & Cribb, G. (2016). *Feudalism, 7<sup>th</sup> Grade. WestEd*. READI Technical Report CM #14. Retrieved from URL: [projectreadi.org](http://projectreadi.org)

With acknowledgement to members of the Project READI History Team: Cynthia Shanahan, Susan R. Goldman, MariAnne George, Michael Bolz, Johanna Heppeler, Jodie Hoard, Michael Manderino and Jackie Popp.

Please send us comments, questions, etc.: [info.projectreadi@gmail.com](mailto:info.projectreadi@gmail.com)

Project READI was supported by the *Reading for Understanding (RFU)* initiative of the Institute for Education Sciences, U. S. Department of Education through Grant R305F100007 to the University of Illinois at Chicago from July 1, 2010 – June 30, 2016. The opinions expressed are those of the authors and do not represent views of the Institute or the U. S. Department of Education.

Project READI operated as a multi-institution collaboration among the Learning Sciences Research Institute, University of Illinois at Chicago; Northern Illinois University; Northwestern University; WestEd's Strategic Literacy Initiative; and Inquirium, LLC. Project READI developed and researched interventions in collaboration with classroom teachers that were designed to improve reading comprehension through argumentation from multiple sources in literature, history, and the sciences appropriate for adolescent learners. Curriculum materials such as those in this module were developed based on enacted instruction and are intended as case examples of the READI approach to deep and meaningful disciplinary literacy and learning.

# Feudalism Module Overview

---

This module was developed by two teachers, Anneka Harper and Lynn Dillon, who participated in the California READI Teacher Inquiry Network, in collaboration with a member of the READI Research Team, Gayle Cribb. Anneka and Lynn taught in a highly diverse middle school serving low income students and English Learners in the San Francisco Bay Area. Their 7<sup>th</sup> grade course was World History and Geography of Medieval and Early Modern Times. Given the opportunity to work with the support of the READI Research Team, they set out to tackle what they felt were their least successful units, betting that a READI design would make a difference. Those units were the Reformation and the Enlightenment. Upon reflection, they realized that part of what was challenging about those units was that many Reformation and Enlightenment ideas are part and parcel of the fabric of their students' daily lives. For example, individuals reading the Bible for themselves, the separation of church and state, and religious tolerance are status quo in their students' contemporary experience. How could such familiar ideas be tremendously controversial or enlightening?

The solution, they realized, was to give their students the opportunity to develop historical empathy by inquiring into the context from which the Reformation and Enlightenment sprang. Hence, they turned their attention to the previous unit, on Feudalism in Medieval Europe, in order to lay the groundwork for the Reformation and Enlightenment. This unit, then, was a way for students to build enough knowledge of the feudal context that the Reformation and the Enlightenment would seem like the big, significant changes they were. They chose to focus the study of feudalism on daily life for ordinary people, in particular, for serfs. As a conceptual tool that would allow their students' developing ideas to cohere and engage their historical imaginations, they developed two figures, Serf Thomas and Serf Anne. This device would anchor students as they explored the foreign land of the past, considered religious and philosophical ideas, and tracked change over several centuries.

In keeping with the READI Student Learning Goals, students would build knowledge by reading multiple texts. Students would do the intellectual work of making sense of each text and making sense across the texts. They would create a synthesis of what they would learn, by embodying the synthesis in their drawing of the two serfs. Serf Thomas and Serf Anne would then provide a touchstone for students as they progressed through the course, for them to consider how the Renaissance, Reformation and Enlightenment would have seemed from the perspective of these serfs, and how, if implemented, those ideas would have changed their lives.

Lynn and Anneka's students by this point in the year were accustomed to interacting with texts through annotations (Talking to the Text<sup>1</sup>) and having metacognitive conversations about how they were making

---

<sup>1</sup> Schoenbach, R., Greenleaf, C., & Murphy, L. (2012). Engaged academic literacy for all. In *Reading for Understanding: How Reading Apprenticeship Improves Disciplinary Learning in Secondary and College Classrooms*, 2nd edition (pp. 108 -110). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

sense of texts. In those conversations, they would share reading processes, surface confusions and, work together to clarify. New to their students were the routines Lynn and Anneka introduced in this unit, the routines of creating claims, noting possible textual evidence for those claims, citing the source of that evidence, and explaining “how you know” that the evidence supports the claim.

Students read five tertiary<sup>2</sup> texts in order to answer the inquiry question, “What was life like for a medieval serf and how do you know?” The definition we had developed of historical argumentation in READI is included below. Descriptive arguments answer the question “What is the case?” Our inquiry question asked students to determine what was the case during feudal times: “What was the case of everyday life for a medieval serf?” The text set provided evidence from the historical record and the work of historians. The second part of our inquiry question, “... and how do you know?” required students to articulate their reasoning. While the module did not include students writing a complete argument, it gave students many opportunities to engage in the smaller units of argumentation, creating a claim, providing evidence and explaining reasoning. These are the stepping stones students need to approach larger arguments and more formal argumentation. Moreover, the module gave students multiple opportunities and reasons to read for understanding.

The READI History Learning Goals are listed in the table below. This unit foregrounds READI History Learning Goal 3: Construct claim-evidence relations, using textual evidence and explaining the relationship among the pieces of evidence and between the evidence and claims. It addresses Goal 1, in that it supports students to read a set of tertiary history texts closely. The unit provides students with the opportunity to corroborate across the texts and synthesize what they are learning, which advances Goal 2. Since the texts are tertiary sources, they do not afford rich sourcing opportunities. (In Anneka and Lynn’s course, primary sources would be emphasized in the following units.) In this unit, the focus is on creating claims based on textual evidence and explaining how the evidence supports one’s claim, which is part of Goal 3. These practices are building blocks for evidence-based argumentation from multiple texts. The unit serves as an introduction to those practices. Also introduced is the embedded routine for citing the source of information. Students create claims, note potential textual evidence, keep track of the citation for the source of that the information, reason through the connection between the evidence and the claim, and revise their claims iteratively. Given that the students are learning about the societal structure of feudalism and how that affected the lives of serfs, they are advancing Goal 4. To the extent that they are considering and evaluating each other’s claims, evidence and explanations, they are addressing Goal 5. To the extent that students are making their own interpretations, grounded in textual evidence, by imagining what daily life would be for Serf Thomas and Serf Anne, they are developing an awareness of the epistemology of history, and advancing Goal 6.

Serf Thomas and Serf Anne remained a part of the class for the rest of the year, embodied in a class poster that consolidated many of the claims created and the evidence provided by the students. The

---

<sup>2</sup> Primary sources form the historical record. They include written documents and artifacts from the period of study. Historians write their interpretations of primary sources in secondary sources, citing the primary sources they use as evidence and explaining their reasoning. Tertiary sources are based on secondary sources. One example of a tertiary source is a history textbook.

imagined historical figures were referenced often by both teachers and students. Lynn and Anneka continued the routines throughout the next units on the Renaissance, Reformation and Enlightenment. In those units, both primary sources and tertiary sources were included in the text sets. New figures of ordinary people were introduced and used as conceptual tools for argumentation in each unit. These new routines and provided students opportunities to develop historical imagination by envisioning what life was like for the ordinary person in these periods of history, grounded in textual evidence from multiple sources.

Lynn and Anneka implemented the module in their classrooms in January. In an interview at the end of April, Lynn reflected on the growth she saw in her class.

“Some of what was surprising is just that something, frankly, as silly as a little cartoon character, Serf Thomas and Serf Anne, could have such a huge impact. Just having students thinking through how an everyday person, not someone in the book, not a famous person, but an everyday person is affected in their real life was huge. I’m surprised by how much that has just changed everything. We still refer back to the class poster, even now that we have moved on, in the unit on Islam, where we have had to rewind time and are in a different part of the world, we refer to that poster and they get it right away. The idea that religion impacts a whole society is not a foreign idea to them. It’s not just a poster. It’s the fact that my kids created it, that it was a class effort. My students have really grasped the historical contexts more than they have ever before because we were slowing down and using primary sources.

I feel like, especially in the Enlightenment unit, it was this really nice balance of students feeling like they were doing a lot of work-- so much reading and thinking and getting it down. The way that it was set up, they got to know all of these Enlightenment thinkers and recognize their ideas and were able to Talk to the Text and kind of get to the bottom of really some hard texts and really actually understand. In all of my previous years, the kids have looked at me like, ‘Tell me what I’m supposed to write ‘cause I don’t know. I don’t understand this Thomas Hobbes guy. I don’t understand what this says.’ They would be waiting with their pens for me to give them the answer. Instead, this year, they were able to grasp the concepts. They felt empowered, they felt smart, they felt like they were doing a lot of work and that they had something to say. By the end, they were feeling successful. They walked away every day knowing what was happening that day in class, knowing who the Enlightenment thinkers were and what their ideas were--not closing the book and feeling confused, but understanding.”

This is the second iteration of the module. It includes a text set, a student interactive notetaker and a teacher’s version of the notetaker with notes for the teacher.

## READI Learning Goals for History Inquiry

1. Engage in close reading of historical resources to construct domain knowledge, including primary, secondary and tertiary sources. Close reading encompasses metacomprehension and self-regulation of the process.
2. Synthesize within and across historical resources using comparison, contrast, corroboration, contextualization, and sourcing processes.
3. Construct claim-evidence relations, using textual evidence and explaining the relationship among the pieces of evidence and between the evidence and claims.
4. Use interpretive frameworks developed by historians, such as societal structures, systems and patterns across time and place, to analyze historical evidence and argument, and to address historical questions.
5. Evaluate historical interpretations for coherence, completeness, the quality of evidence and reasoning, and the historian's perspective.
6. Demonstrate understanding of epistemology of history as inquiry into the past, seeing history as competing interpretations that are contested, incomplete approximations of the past, open to new evidence and new interpretations.

## READI Definition of Historical Argument

Historical arguments interpret the past. These arguments can take the form of descriptive, explanatory or narrative accounts. Historical arguments are composed of claims that are based on evidence and the reasoning that connects them. Historical claims are grounded in evidence from the historical record (primary sources: written documents, eyewitness testimonies and artifacts from the period of study) and informed by the work of historians on the subject.

## Feudalism Module Objectives

1: Introduce claims, evidence and reasoning to middle schoolers and how to create claims, consider evidence, use evidence to support claims and explain reasoning.

(This advances READI Learning Goals for History Inquiry #1, 2 and 3.)

2: Build knowledge about feudalism as context for understanding the Enlightenment.

(This advances the content goals for the course.)

3: Lay the groundwork for students to be able to develop historical empathy—for students to develop an understanding of life from a medieval point of view.

(This advances READI Learning Goal for History Inquiry #3 in that historical empathy emerges from contextualization.)

## Feudalism Module at a Glance

<p><b>Lesson One</b>  <i>TN: pp. 1-5</i>  <i>S: pp. 1-5</i>  <i>T: pp. 1-2</i></p>	<p>Introductory Questions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Think-Write/Pair/Share</li> </ul> <p>“Feudalism” and “The Peasant’s Life, The Serf’s Life,” Texts A &amp; B</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Think-Write/Pair/Share</li> <li>● Peasant/Serf Chart &amp; Initial Claim</li> </ul>
<p><b>Lesson Two</b>  <i>TN: pp. 6-8</i>  <i>S: p. 6</i>  <i>T: pp. 3-4</i></p>	<p>“Life in the village,” Text C</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Teacher Think Aloud</li> <li>● Reading Strategies List</li> <li>● Individual/Pairs Read</li> <li>● Pair/Share</li> </ul>
<p><b>Lesson Three</b>  <i>TN: pp. 9-13</i>  <i>S: p. 7-10</i>  <i>T: pp. 3-4</i>  <i>H: p. 3</i></p>	<p>Notetaker--What was life like for a medieval serf? Text C, cont.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Teacher models creating a possible claim and adding to 3-column notetaker: Potential evidence/Citation/Insights, Thoughts and Questions</li> <li>● Pair work</li> <li>● Whole Class share</li> </ul> <p>Start Serf Thomas/Serf Anne picture: Think and Draw</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Teacher models</li> <li>● Pair/Share</li> <li>● Finish for homework</li> </ul>
<p><b>Lesson Four</b>  <i>TN: pp. 14-15</i>  <i>S: p. 11-12</i>  <i>T: pp. 5-7</i></p>	<p>“Feudal Peasants,” Text D</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Individual Read</li> <li>● Pair/Share</li> <li>● Revise/and or add to claims and drawing</li> </ul>
<p><b>Lesson Five</b>  <i>TN: pp. 16-17</i>  <i>S: pp. 13-14</i>  <i>T: p. 8</i></p>	<p>“The Medieval Church,” Text E</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Individual Read</li> <li>● Pair/Share</li> <li>● Revise and or add to claims and drawingit</li> </ul>
<p><b>Lesson Six</b>  <i>TN: pp.18-19</i>  <i>S: p. 15</i>  <i>H: pp.5-6</i></p>	<p>Final Assignment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Individuals Add to the Picture</li> <li>● Pair share and claim creation</li> <li>● Whole Class Share</li> <li>● Diary Entry</li> </ul>
<p><b>Lesson Seven</b>  <i>TN: pp. 19-21</i>  <i>S: pp. 16-17</i></p>	<p>Share and turn in Diary Entry</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Partner/ Share</li> </ul> <p>What I learned/Final reflection</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Individual Think/Write</li> </ul>

*TN: Teacher Notes, S: Student Interactive Notebook, T: Texts, H: Handout*



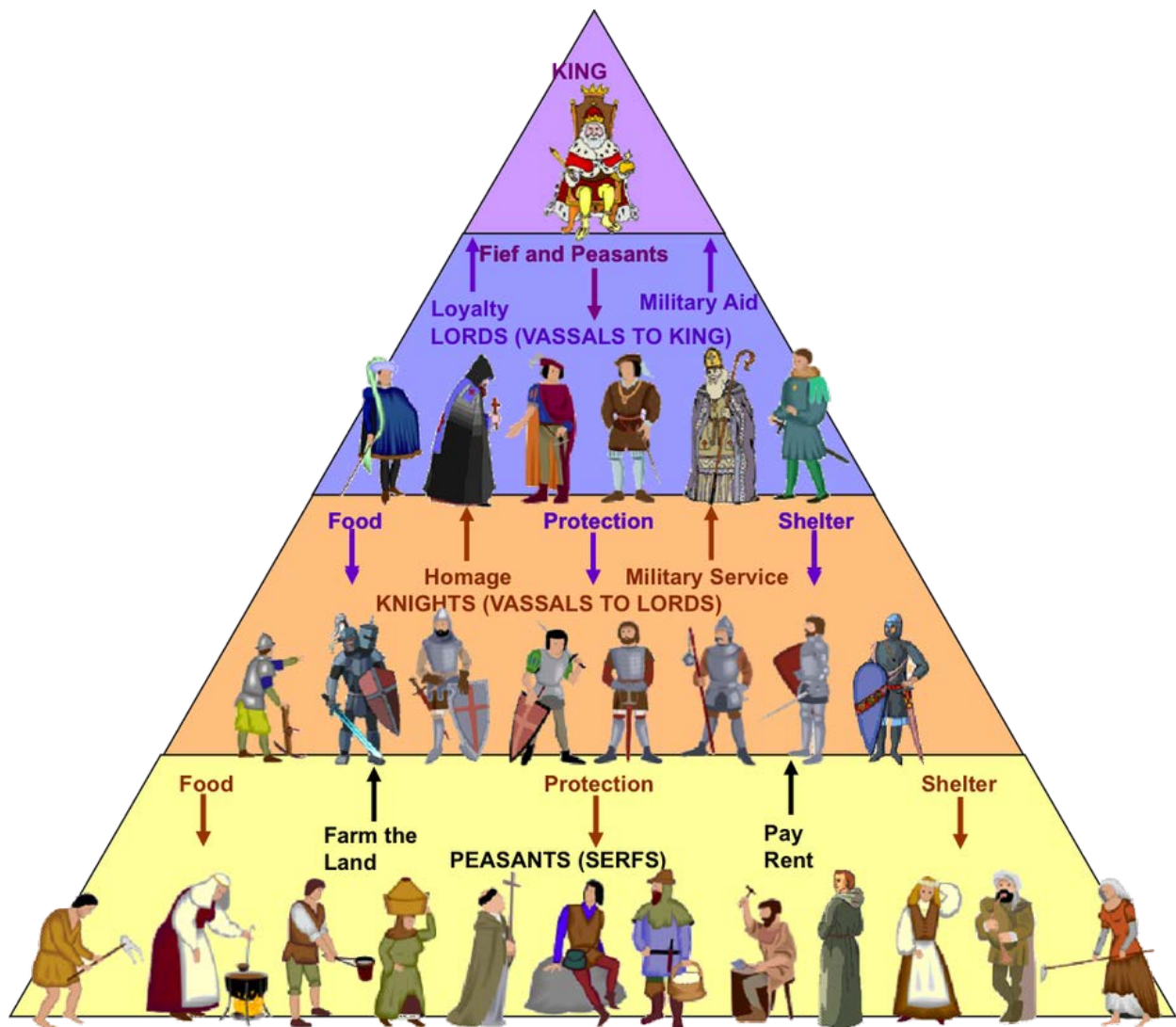
*The intended use of these materials is in tandem with ongoing professional development focused on supporting reading as historical practice. This work is funded by the Reading for Understanding Initiative of the Institute for Education Sciences, U.S. Department of Education, through Grant R305F100007 to University of Illinois at Chicago. The opinions expressed are those of the authors and do not represent views of the Institute or the U.S. Department of Education.*

# Feudalism Texts

What was life like for a medieval serf and how do you know?

Text A

The Feudal System



<http://thefeudalsyste.blogspot.com>

## Text B

### **The Peasant's Life**

Villages consisted of from 10-60 families living in rough huts on dirt floors, with no chimneys or windows. Often, one end of the hut was given over to storing livestock. Furnishings were sparse; three legged stools, a trestle table, beds on the floor softened with straw or leaves. The peasant diet was mainly porridge, cheese, black bread, and a few home-grown vegetables. Peasants had a hard life, but they did not work on Sundays or on the frequent saints' days, and they could go to nearby fairs and markets. The lot of serfs was much harsher.

### **The Serf's Life**

Although not technically a slave, a serf was bound to a lord for life. He could own no property and needed the lord's permission to marry. Under no circumstance could a serf leave the land without the lord's permission unless he chose to run away. If he ran to a town and managed to stay there for a year and a day, he was a free man. However, the serf did have rights. He could not be displaced if the manor changed hands. He could not be required to fight, and he was entitled to the protection of the lord.

*Feudalism and Medieval Life* by David Ross, published on [britainexpress.com](http://www.britainexpress.com).

[http://www.britainexpress.com/History/Feudalism\\_and\\_Medieval\\_life.htm](http://www.britainexpress.com/History/Feudalism_and_Medieval_life.htm)

## Text C

### Life in the village

Even in the later Middle Ages, the medieval peasant's life was hard and the work back-breaking. It followed the seasons – ploughing in autumn, sowing in spring, harvesting in August. Work began at dawn, preparing the animals, and it finished at dusk, cleaning them down and putting them back into the stalls.

A peasant's hut was made of wattle and daub, with a thatch roof but no windows. Inside the hut, a third of the area was penned off for the animals, which lived in the hut with the family. A fire burned in a hearth in the centre of the hut, so the air was permanently eye-wateringly smoky. Furniture was maybe a couple of stools, a trunk for bedding, and a few cooking pots.

Many peasants' huts included a simple loom. The daughter would spin wool using a distaff and spindle, and the wife would weave it into rough cloth.

Peasant food was mainly vegetables, plus anything that could be gathered – nuts, berries, nettles. The usual drink was weak, home-brewed beer. Honey provided a sweetener. If he ate bread, the peasant did not eat white wheat bread, but black rye bread.

The most difficult time was late spring, when food stores were running out, and new food was not yet growing. A poor harvest meant that some of the villagers would starve to death.

A male peasant would wear a rough tunic, with a hood and gloves, and leather shoes with wooden soles. Women wore a coarse gown over a sleeveless slip.

Towards the end of the Middle Ages, when some peasants were growing quite rich, 'sumptuary laws' forbade them to wear clothes above their class.

Village life was not all misery. Holy days meant a day off work. Peasant fun was rough – wrestling, shin-kicking and cock-fighting. The ball was almost unnecessary to a medieval ball game, which was basically a fight with the next village. Occasionally a travelling musician or bear-baiter would pass through.

## Text D

### Feudal Peasants

#### Peasants

In the Middle Ages, there was a definite structure in society. You were born into a class of people and generally stayed in that class for your entire life. Working hard did not change your status. Your clothing, food, marriage, homes, etc., were determined for you. After the rank of king, the hierarchy was the nobles, the knights, the clergy (religious people), the tradesmen and the peasants.

For peasants, life was hard. They worked long hours every day just to ensure that their family had a roof over their head and food to eat. If your parents were peasants, you probably would be a peasant as well. Most of the peasants were farmers, but some were tradesmen, such as millers or tavern owners. The farmers leased their land and also paid taxes to the lord and to the king. Most farmers were not free, but rather were serfs. They were required to stay with the land and had to work several days a week for the lord of the manor. There were some free peasants, but most did not leave their lord.

#### Clothing

- Because they were poor, their clothing was usually rough wool or linen. The women wove the fabric and made the clothes. Peasants generally had only one set of clothing and it almost never was washed.
- Men wore tunics and long stockings.
- Women wore long dresses and stockings made of wool.
- Some peasants wore underwear made of linen, which was washed “regularly.”
- The most common colors for peasant clothing were brown, red or gray.
- Both men and women wore clogs made of thick leather.
- In cold weather, both men and women wore cloaks made of sheepskin or wool. They also wore wool hats and mittens.
- Children basically dressed in the same style as the adults.

## **Food**

- Peasants generally lived off the land. Their diet basically consisted of bread, porridge, vegetables and some meat.
- The main crops were corn, wheat and beans.
- Near their homes, peasants had little gardens that contained lettuce, carrots, radishes, tomatoes, beets and other vegetables. They also might have fruit and nut trees.
- If the peasant was wealthy enough to have cows or goats, the family would have cheese and milk.
- Many peasants died when the weather was too wet or too dry. If their crops didn't grow, they didn't have food to eat.

## **Homes**

- Peasants lived in towns on the lord's manor.
- Houses were constructed of stone or of branches covered with mud and straw.
- The roofs were thatched.
- There were generally two rooms in the home.
- The rooms had dirt floors and a few furnishings in the common room, such as stools, tables, chairs and chests.
- The second room contained the beds for the whole family.
- Often in the winter, the animals also lived in the common room.
- An open fireplace was in the common room.
- There were small windows without glass.
- Candles were used to light the inside of the house.

## **Childhood**

- Often, children were named after a close relative or a saint.
- In a peasant household, everyone was needed to work in the fields. Often children as young as age 2 were left alone. Many accidents happened.
- Peasant children were poor and did not have many toys.
- Children did not go to school or have tutors, so few knew how to read.

## **Marriage**

- Virtually all marriages were arranged by the parents.
- Peasants generally married people from their own village.
- Men were the head of the household and the wife was his property — to be treated in any way he wanted.
- Men were allowed to divorce their wives, but women were not allowed to divorce their husbands.
- Adultery and divorce were less common among the peasants.

## **Religion**

- Religion was very important to the peasants.
- They believed that faith could take them to a world that was certainly easier than the one in which they lived.
- Peasants generally observed the Sabbath and celebrated church holidays.

[http://westernreservepublicmedia.org/middleages/feud\\_peasants.htm](http://westernreservepublicmedia.org/middleages/feud_peasants.htm)



## Text E

### **The Medieval Church**

The Medieval Church played a far greater role in [Medieval England](#) than the Church does today. In [Medieval England](#), the Church dominated everybody's life. All Medieval people - be they village [peasants](#) or [towns](#) people - believed that God, Heaven and Hell all existed. From the very earliest of ages, the people were taught that the only way they could get to Heaven was if the Roman Catholic Church let them. Everybody would have been terrified of Hell and the people would have been told of the sheer horrors awaiting for them in Hell in the weekly services they attended.

The control the Church had over the people was total. [Peasants](#) worked for free on Church land. This proved difficult for peasants as the time they spent working on Church land, could have been better spent working on their own plots of land producing food for their families.

They paid 10% of what they earned in a year to the Church (this tax was called tithes). Tithes could be paid in either money or in goods produced by the peasant farmers. As peasants had little money, they almost always had to pay in seeds, harvested grain, animals etc. This usually caused a peasant a lot of hardship as seeds, for example, would be needed to feed a family the following year. What the Church got in tithes was kept in huge tithe barns; a lot of the stored grain would have been eaten by rats or poisoned by their urine. A failure to pay tithes, so the peasants were told by the Church, would lead to their souls going to Hell after they had died.

[http://www.historylearningsite.co.uk/medieval\\_church.htm](http://www.historylearningsite.co.uk/medieval_church.htm)

# Feudalism

## Reading like a Historian: Life as a Serf

---

### Interactive Notebook & Teacher Notes, S1\*

Inquiry Question:

What was life like for a medieval serf and how do you know?

**Teacher Notes:** When we first started looking at a unit to work on with the READi California Teacher Inquiry Network, we wanted to choose something we had struggled to teach 7th graders, so we choose a daunting topic from our curriculum: The Enlightenment. This topic seemed to baffle our students. The ideas of the Enlightenment thinkers were revolutionary at the time; however this concept was lost on our 7th graders who looked at these figures through 21<sup>st</sup> Century eyes, what historians might call “presentism.” They could not understand why different oppressed groups in their history books didn’t just “speak up” or “fight back.” We wanted our students to understand how people thought, felt and acted within their historical context, to develop historical empathy. In order to do this, they needed to build knowledge about feudalism so that they could see how life for the common person in Europe changed over time, starting with feudalism.

In this module, students read a set of five texts, practice identifying potential textual evidence, noting citations for that textual evidence, corroborating across documents, creating claims and finally creating touchstone characters from the time period (Serf Thomas and Serf Anne). For students, this turned out to be a tremendous support for our students understanding the time period. We chose a historical fiction writing piece at the end of the module because we felt that would help students get a feel for the life of a serf...walking around in the serf’s shoes for a little while. For the first time in our experience of teaching this topic, students could quickly answer why you wouldn’t talk back to your lord and who was in charge of a serf’s life. They saw that a serf was not a person who was “pushed around,” but a human who was “pushed down” by the structure of their society.

When we started this module toward the end of first quarter, our students had already been introduced to and practiced several Reading Apprenticeship routines: Think Aloud, Talking-to-the-Text, Think-Write, and working with partners. Our students did not, however, have experience with argumentation. For more about Reading Apprenticeship and routines to support students’ reading, see *Reading for Understanding*, by Ruth Schoenbach, Cynthia Greenleaf, and Lynn Murphy, ©2012

*\*S1 indicates page 1 of the student interactive notetaker. The Teacher Notes has smaller text boxes in some spots than the student version of the notetaker.*

READI Reading History Module

**Reading like a Historian: Life as a Serf, S2**  
**Student Interactive Notebook**  
Iteration 2, Fall 2014

**Developed by READI History Inquiry Network Teachers and Researchers**

Lynn Dillon, History Teacher, Bohannon Middle School, California

Anneka Harper, History Teacher, Bohannon Middle School, California

Gayle Cribb, Professional Development Associate, WestEd, and READI History Research Team member

Illustrations by Mateo Fabersunne

*The intended use of these materials is in tandem with ongoing professional development focused on supporting reading as historical practice. This work is funded by the Reading for Understanding Initiative of the Institute for Education Sciences, U.S. Department of Education, through Grant R305F100007 to University of Illinois at Chicago. The opinions expressed are those of the authors and do not represent views of the Institute or the U.S. Department of Education.*

### Hard Work, S3

#### Individual Think-Write

Think about the hardest job you have ever had to do. Why did you have to do this job? What were your responsibilities? What were you expected to do? What made it so hard? Write about this experience below.

#### Pair Share

Now you are going to share your experience with your partner. You may either read what you wrote in the above box or just tell them about your experience. Notice the commonalities and differences between your experiences.

#### Whole Class Share

Be ready to share something you wrote or heard with the class when the teacher asks you for your ideas.

**Teacher Notes:** We start off by introducing Think-Write/Pair-Share, a routine we use throughout this unit. The Think-Write time gives students 1-2 minutes to reflect and silently record their ideas. This encourages students to make thinking time a habit and allows all voices to be recorded and documented. The pair time provides an opportunity for students to “try out” their answers in a pair or trio. This oral practice fosters positive or constructive feedback within pairs, and structures support for listening attentively to another person’s ideas. Before students begin talking with their partner, we recommend reviewing classroom norms and expectations for partner talk (e.g. look at the person talking, leaning in to hear them, listen attentively, lower your voice; SOLAR—Silent, Orient (your body toward your partner), Lean in/Listen, Affirm, and Reflect/Respect).

We like to take the partner-share time as an opportunity to listen in on student conversations and to give a few students, who may not have participated yet, a heads up that they will be called on. I might say, “That’s a question I’ve heard from other students as well. Can I call on you to share that one?” or “You seem to have a different idea than your partner. May I have you share your thought and then she can add her own?” When we’re able to do this pre-selecting first, we start off the whole class sharing by saying, “I’ve heard a lot of your thinking. We’re going to start by hearing from \_\_\_ and \_\_\_, and then I’ll take hands.” This gives another reminder to these students, sets the tone that their contribution is important, and lets the rest of the class know when their turn is coming.

We have also found that by taking the extra 3-5 minutes this strategy requires, we get more participation when we come back together for the whole class share. If you call on a student who didn’t know what to write, they can always share what their partner shared. This validates what their partner said and keeps an “I-don’t-know” student included in the conversation.

This particular Think-Write asks students to think about their own experiences and prior knowledge, activating their schema.

### **Text A: The Feudal System, S4**

### **Text B: The Peasant's Life and The Serf's Life**

We will be investigating the life of the commoner in Medieval Europe under feudalism. Common people were called peasants and serfs, but there were definite differences between these two groups.

#### **Individual Think-Write**

Read Text A and Text B. Try to identify what makes someone a peasant and what makes someone a serf. While reading, make your thinking visible by Talking to the Text. Your teacher will tell you which one to use.

**Teacher Notes:** The terms peasant and serf are often used interchangeably in texts, but we wanted students to understand that there is a difference. We also chose to provide two texts in order to encourage students to connect information between texts and to make use of a diagram often seen (but often not read) in the feudalism section of textbooks. Giving students a focused task while analyzing a diagram teaches students to use text features, a skill that can translate to their independent reading.

#### **Pair Share**

Before talking to your partner, star three ideas in your Talking to the Text that you want to share. These ideas might be questions, comments, connections, or predictions. With your partner, go through Text A and Text B, discussing your thinking. Take turns sharing and listening.

#### **Whole Class Share**

Be ready to share something you wrote or heard with the class when the teacher asks you for your ideas. The teacher will chart your responses on the board. Take notes, following along with your teacher on the graphic organizer on the next page. When the discussion is over, you will be making a statement about the life of a commoner.

**Teacher Notes:** At this point in the share out, teachers may want to start with clarifying questions. It is important that students feel comfortable asking questions, particularly identifying and revealing where they were confused during their reading process. Then, move on to words, phrases, or pieces of the picture that held an understanding for students. Be sure to emphasize or revisit those classrooms norms that allow students to feel safe to share in your classroom.

**Text A and B, S5**

<b>Peasants</b>	<b>Serfs</b>

Pull the information together. Make a statement about the life of a common person based on your notes above. Explain how you know and then highlight at least one piece of a text that you used to come to this conclusion.

**Teacher Notes:** Creating these statements can be a first step toward creating a claim. When students make claims about the life of a common person, they can practice backing up their claims with evidence. Students are making a claim, explaining their reasoning (how they know x is the case) and providing evidence— practicing the elements of argumentation. In this instance, the evidence is textual evidence.

## Text C: Life in the village, S6

Your teacher will briefly model strategic reading (by using Think Aloud) with the first paragraph of Text C. Pay close attention to the ways in which he/she makes sense of the text. Write down any reading strategies you notice that help your teacher read more deeply.

### Reading Strategies List

**Teacher Notes:** Strategies you might model include: asking questions, making connections, identifying confusions, using prior knowledge and using word parts to understand unfamiliar words. Turn this list into a poster for the classroom and reference it often. Add to the list as students discover other strategies. We call the poster our "Reading Strategies List" and it serves as a reminder for students as they read difficult texts throughout this unit.

We use Think-Aloud to model what we want our students to do. As reading apprentices, students observe the expert reader and writer in the room (the teacher) do the thinking work first. This gives students a clear picture of what they should do when it is their turn. They also learn new strategies for approaching texts.

Start by reading the first sentence. What comes to mind? This should be a short one-to-two-sentence model, not a lecture. For instance, after reading the first line, I might think-aloud, "What makes their work 'back-breaking?'" or "Are they really getting hurt or is 'back-breaking' just an expression?" Though students will not be annotating the text when they do their Think Aloud, we often annotate as we are talking, projecting the text so that there is a record of the Think Aloud for students to reference. Stop after the first or second paragraph and have students share out what they saw you do. List what they say as the strategies on your list.

If you are creating a Reading Strategies List for the first time, record all of the students' contributions. If you have already started a list, you can add any new strategies to the Reading Strategies List. This task should take no longer than 8 minutes, including the teacher's model.

You may want to ask your students to number the paragraphs for easy reference.

### Whole Class Discussion

How is your teacher making sense of what she is reading?

## Individual/Pairs Read, S6

Continue reading the text. While reading, make your thinking visible by Talking to the Text

### Pair Share of Your Reading

With a partner, go through the text sentence by sentence (or paragraph by paragraph) discussing your reading. Take turns sharing and listening.

- Share comments, questions, understandings, roadblocks, reading processes--*how* you made sense of the text, how you built new understandings.
- Listen to your partners' thinking and elicit more thinking with questions such as:
  - What did you do?
  - How did that help you understand the reading?
- Help each other clarify roadblocks.
- Add good ideas from your discussion to your notes.

**Teacher Notes:** Here are a few notes on partnerships. When first starting out in the year, students need more explicit instructions about how to share their thinking in partnerships. Students will also need refreshers throughout the year, so this work is ongoing. You might want to write detailed directions on the board and use a timer. For example,

- Partner A shares two thoughts aloud. Partner B listens attentively. (60 seconds)
- Partner B asks one clarifying question. For example, "How did that help you understand the reading?" Or "Did you find an answer to your question?" Student A answers. (30 seconds)
- Switch. (90 seconds)
- Talk together and choose two ideas you'd be willing to share with the class. (30 seconds)

These are meant to be quick reminders for the teacher and student as to what should take place during this partner time. It can be helpful for the teacher to guide which partner should share first to help jump start the talking. When possible, teachers should be roaming around the student partnerships and listening in on conversations for potential bits to share with the class. This helps to manage your classroom and helps you gauge your students' roadblocks and understandings. It is an opportunity for you to formatively assess.

Creating partnerships can help structure this time and provide additional student motivation. Each section of this module requires partner-talk time. However, talking to the same partner can be repetitive for students and lead to off-task behavior. One strategy we use is to create Clock Appointments. Students are given a paper with a drawing of a clock with four times & slots (12:00, 3:00, 6:00, & 9:00). We give them 3-4 minutes to move around the room, and sign up a different partner for each slot. When students have filled in all four slots, we ask them to sit down to signal they've finished. You can also change this up by using academic vocabulary related to this module. For example, instead of clock slots, students can find a monarch, lord, knight and serf partners. Having the pre-arranged partners allows you to change the partnerships quickly. For example, "Meet with your 3:00 (or knight) partners and talk about..." Designate a central location for students who have empty slots to meet so that you can help them pair up and fill in their slot. Students who have absent partners go to this same designated spot and temporarily pair up with help from the teacher.

Another strategy is to use scores or what you know about students to create strategic partnerships in advance. Remind students to be respectful when unveiling your created partnerships.



### Whole Class Discussion, S6

Be ready to share your questions and understanding of this text with the class.

- What were the roadblocks and how did you get through them?
- Are there any words or phrases that you and your partner could not figure out?
- Is there something you still need to clarify?
- What does this text tell you about the life of a serf?

Add any new strategies to your Reading Strategies List.

**Teacher Notes:** The goal of this Whole Class Discussion is to make sure students understand the text. In other words, the purpose is to surface student's thinking and to help them identify roadblocks, clarify confusions together and make the clarification processes visible. If a student brings up a roadblock, ask guiding questions to see if he/she (or other classmates) can find an answer or create a hypothesis. For example, after reading the last sentence, "Occasionally a travelling musician or bear-baiter would pass through," a student may ask, "What's a 'bear-baiter?'" In response, you might ask:

- Is there any part of this term that you *do* understand?
- Can you make a guess or a prediction about this?
- What else do good readers do if they still don't understand a term?

Any strategies that come up can be added to your Reader's Strategy List (poster).

As a last resort, you may want to ask a student to do a quick Google search or offer the answer as an extra credit homework assignment. (If you are curious, bear-baiting is an arena-like blood sport where bears are tormented, usually by hunting dogs, for entertainment.)

## Creating a Claim, S7

### Teacher model

Now that we have learned something about life at this time, what claims can we make about what life was like for a medieval serf living in the feudal system? Based on Texts A, B and C, what do we think we can say about a serf's life?

### My Teacher's Possible Claims

--

In order to make a strong claim, you must find evidence in the text to support your claim and cite that evidence. Your teacher will briefly model how to consider evidence for his/ her claim by reading the first two paragraphs with you.

**Teacher Notes:** Use the same copy of the text that you used for your Think-Aloud model, so students can see your original thinking. This reinforces the idea that a second read can lead to a deeper understanding. The first time we read this text, we focused on understanding the text through metacognitive strategies. The second time--this time-- we read with a purpose of identifying important information that we might use as evidence later. The more times a student works with a text, the more chances they have to understand it and gain new knowledge.

Identify a direct quote or paraphrase the paragraph. Record this on the left side of the T-chart. Add a citation by including the text, page and paragraph number. Then write your insight, thought or question in the right column.

This is another opportunity to practice a Think-Aloud in front of students. Here is an example of what a Think-Aloud might sound like for the first paragraph:

*"When I read this the first time, I noticed that it described their lives as "hard" and "back-breaking". It also says that they worked from dawn--when the sun comes up-- to dusk--when the sun goes down. So, one claim I can make is that serfs were busy working hard all day long. That's what I'm going to write as my claim. Then, I need a citation, so I can prove that I found this information from a reliable source and didn't just make it up. So I'm going to add Text C, page 3 paragraph 1, in the middle column, and note my evidence from the text over here in the "Possible Evidence" column. What I wonder now is, "What did the children do?" I'm going to write that here in the right column.*

Possible Evidence from the Text (quotes and paraphrases that support my teacher's claims)	Citation (text, page & paragraph number)	Insights, Thoughts and Questions
<i>Example: "...followed the seasons--ploughing in autumn, sowing in spring, harvesting in August."</i>	<i>Text C, p.3, paragraph 1</i>	What did they do in the winter?

**Pair Work, S8**

With your partner, create a few claims that answer the Essential Question:

- What was life like for a medieval serf?

**Our Possible Claim(s)**

In order to make a strong claim, find evidence in the text to support your claim and cite that evidence.

<b>Possible Evidence from the Text</b> (quotes and paraphrases that support my teacher's claims)	<b>Citation</b> (text, page & paragraph number)	<b>Insights, Thoughts and Questions</b>
<i>Example: "...followed the seasons--ploughing in autumn, sowing in spring, harvesting in August."</i>	<i>Text C, p.3, paragraph 1</i>	What did they do in the winter?

Continue gathering evidence for your claim(s) on the next page.

**Teacher Notes:** Since you will have modeled with the first paragraph of Text C, encourage students to focus on the other topics. This is a good time to check in with students who haven't yet shared their thinking on this piece in the whole group and ask them to get ready to share.

S9

<b>Possible Evidence from the Text</b> (quotes and paraphrases that support my claims)	<b>Citation</b> (text, page & paragraph number)	<b>Insights, Thoughts and Questions</b>
<i>Example: "...followed the seasons--ploughing in autumn, sowing in spring, harvesting in August."</i>	<i>Text C, p.3, paragraph 1</i>	What did they do in the winter?

### **Whole Class Discussion, S9**

Your teacher will be calling on several student pairs to share a claim you are considering and evidence from the texts that you think support your claim. You will need to explain *how* the evidence supports your claim. How do you know? Be sure to cite the paragraph and page number where you found this information. Your teacher will add this to the class notetaker. Add notes and citations to your notetaker, too.

**Teacher Notes:** After recording a student's thought, ask the class if anyone found another place where the shared statement was corroborated or where the reader was given additional information. This helps students see that there is often information within the text that is connected.

For example, a student shares that peasants had to wear uncomfortable clothing, from paragraph 5 "rough tunic" and "coarse gown". Another student might notice that in paragraph 3, it states that "the wife would weave (the wool) into rough cloth" OR in paragraph 5, "'sumptuary laws' forbade them to wear clothes above their class".

There is also an opportunity to support argumentation by asking for different interpretations of the same piece(s) of evidence. *"Did anyone see that differently? Did anyone have a different interpretation?"* Follow up with, *"How do you know?"* or *"What made you think that?"*

### **Individual Think-Write**

Look back at your claim(s). Now that you have discussed more possible evidence, are there any changes (revisions) you want to make to your claim(s)? Is there a new claim you want to capture?

## Feudalism--Serf Thomas & Anne, S10

### Draw Your Claim and Evidence

Your teacher will give you a simple drawing of a medieval couple named Serf Thomas and Serf Anne. Using the evidence you have gathered on your notetaker so far, add detailed pictures and phrases showing Serf Thomas and Serf Anne's life. Show your claim(s) your drawing and make it come to life! Use the questions below to guide you.

- What was life like for a serf living in Medieval Europe?
- What did serfs do during the day?
- How were serfs treated by others?
- Where did they live?
- What might they be thinking?

**Teacher Notes:** Figures of Serf Thomas and Serf Anne are in the student handouts. They are intentionally vague so that students can draw in details. A simple stick person also works well. The more information students share, the more detailed these drawings will become. We model this step by revisiting our triple-entry chart and adding 2-3 details based on the information we've found so far. For instance,

- adding a sun and moon across the sky to represent the serfs working all day.
- drawing a hooded tunic around Serf Thomas and a gown over Serf Anne. Adding some leather boot-like shoes and little lines on the edges of the clothing to make it look rough or coarse.
- drawing a scroll that says "sumptuary laws" and include a few beautiful outfits just out of reach of Serf Anne or Thomas.

This act of drawing may seem simple, but it can help students consolidate their learning and act as a catalyst for students to start or continue forming claims.

By adding a sun and moon to symbolize working all day, you can model asking new questions -- *How would a serf feel if they are working all day? Sad? Angry? Frustrated? Satisfied? What happens if they are sick or hurt and can't work? What about the kids--do they go to school or do they work all day, too?* This fosters the idea that even as we come to some understanding in history, there is always a search to know more.

### Pair Share

Turn to your partner and share at least two parts of your picture. Your teacher will ask for volunteers to share their drawings with the class and explain how they know.

**Teacher Notes:** Students will be adding more to these pictures after we read the last two texts. At this point, we encourage students to have at least 4-5 additions to their picture. When students share during the Whole Class Share, we ask them to describe exactly what they drew and how they know. If you have a document camera, they can project it to the class.

## Text D: Feudal Peasants, S11

### Individual Read

Read the Text C silently. Make your thinking visible as you read by Talking to the Text

### Pair Discussion

With your partner, go through the text discussing your reading bit by bit. Be sure to take turns sharing and listening.

- Share comments, questions, understandings, roadblocks, reading processes--*how* you made sense of the text, how you built new understandings.
- Listen to your partners' thinking and elicit more thinking with questions such as:
  - What did you do?
  - How did that help you understand the reading?
- Help each other clarify roadblocks.
- Note commonalities or differences between you and your partner in your reading process.
- 

**Teacher Note:** Take a few minutes to check in with students' metacognitive thinking. Add any new strategies to the growing class list.

- What reading strategies did you use with these texts?
- Are there some new strategies we can add to our list?
- Where did you get stuck? What did you do when you came to a roadblock or got confused?

At this point, to support students' metacognition, you might also want students to code their thinking. One option is to use the Metacognitive Bookmarks from *Reading for Understanding*. Students can read their own thoughts or their partners' and add tally marks to the appropriate strategy. We then ask students to reflect on their tallies with reflective questions, either orally or in writing.

- What was your most used reading strategy?
- Why do you think you used this strategy the most with this text?
- What strategy did you use the least?
- Why didn't you use this strategy as much with this text?
- What strategy would you like to use more in the future? Do you need more instruction on how to use this strategy? Or reminders to use it?

A second option is to create a coding system and ask students to place at least one code next to each thought. For example, a Q for questions, a P for predictions, a C for connections.

### Whole Class Discussion

Be ready to share your understanding of these texts with the class.

- What were the roadblocks and how did you get through them?
- Are there any words or phrases that you and your partner could not figure out?
- Is there something you still need to clarify?
- What does this text tell you about the life of a serf?

**Pair Work, S11 and S12**

- Now that you have learned more, what new claim do you want to make to answer our question?
- What claims do you now want to revise?
- What new evidence can you gather from this text to support your claims?

**New Claims and/or Revised Claims**

<b>Possible Evidence from the Text</b> (quotes and paraphrases that support my claims)	<b>Citation</b> (text, page & paragraph number)	<b>Insights, Thoughts and Questions</b>

**Draw Your Claims and Evidence**

Using your new or revised claims and the evidence you have gathered on your notetaker, add to your drawing of Serf Thomas and Serf Anne’s life.

**Pair Share**

Turn to your partner and share at least two parts of your picture. Your teacher will ask for volunteers to share their pictures with the class.



## Text E: The Medieval Church, S13

### Individual Read

Read the Text D silently. Make your thinking visible by Talking to the Text.

### Pair Discussion

With your partner go through the text discussing your reading bit by bit. Be sure to take turns sharing and listening.

- Share comments, questions, understandings, roadblocks, reading processes--*how* you made sense of the text, how you built new understandings.
- Listen to your partners' thinking and elicit more thinking with questions such as:
  - What did you do?
  - How did that help you understand the reading?
- Help each other clarify roadblocks.
- Note commonalities or differences between you and your partner in your reading process.

**Teacher Notes:** By this time, students have better understanding of the tasks we are asking them to do and more knowledge about the life of a serf. This is a good time to focus students on identifying new understandings and/or revising "old" ones. They can also notice the same or similar information in different texts.

This is a possible time to explain corroboration to students. *What happens if two sources agree with each other? Does that make it more likely or less likely that the information is correct?*

One way to explain is to give a short narration of how you use corroboration as a teacher in solving conflicts. Here is what you might say or write for students.

*It looks like we have found more than one place in our texts that says the same (or almost the same) thing. Historians would say that one text **corroborates** the other. They call this corroboration. Corroboration is also something teachers do where there is a conflict in class.*

*For example, when Joey hits Tommy, Tommy comes and tells me. Now I have one source that this event has occurred. Lisa was sitting behind Tommy and told me she saw Joey hit Tommy. Now I have two sources that this event happened. Does that make it more likely or less likely that what Tommy is saying is true?*

### Whole Class Discussion

Be ready to share your questions and understanding of this text with the class.

- What were the roadblocks and how did you get through them?
- Are there any words or phrases that you and your partner could not figure out?
- Is there something you still need to clarify?
- What does this section tell you about the life of a serf?

**Pair Work , S13 and S14**

- Now that you have learned more, what new claim do you want to make to answer the question?
- What claims do you now want to revise?
- What new evidence can you gather from this text to support your claims?

**New Claims and/or Revised Claims**

<b>Possible Evidence from the Text</b> (quotes and paraphrases that support my claims)	<b>Citation</b> (text, page & paragraph number)	<b>Insights, Thoughts and Questions</b>

**Draw Your Claims and Evidence**

Using your new or revised claims and the evidence you have gathered on your notetaker, add to your drawing of Serf Thomas and Serf Anne.

**Pair Share**

Turn to your partner and share at least two parts of your drawing. Your teacher will ask for volunteers to share their drawing with the class.

**Teacher Notes:** Collect the drawings at the end of this lesson. In preparation for the next lesson, make a composite picture from various students' drawings. Make a copy of the composite picture for each student for the following lesson. Also, make a big poster of Serf Thomas and Serf Anne to use as a reference point for feudalism as you continue your course of study.

## Feudalism--Final Assignment, S15

### Individual Talking-to-the-Drawing

Look at the copy of your classmates' Serf Thomas & Serf Anne drawing. You are becoming an expert on this time period. Show off your knowledge by Talking to the Text on this drawing. Write comments, questions, understandings, and connections. What more could you add using the evidence we collected? What thoughts or comments might Serf Thomas or Serf Anne have in this scene? Add these as thought or speech bubbles.

### Partner Share

Share what you have added to the class picture with your partner. Then, at the bottom of your picture, write a claim that sums up your answer to the essential question, based on everything you have learned.

- What was life like for a medieval serf and how do you know?

Life as a serf was \_\_\_\_\_ because \_\_\_\_\_.

### Whole Class Share Out

Your teacher will be calling on several student pairs to share the claims you have made about serf life. Be ready to cite your evidence and to explain how your evidence relates to your claim.

**Teacher Notes:** Now students are moving into making arguments. They are making a claim. As they support the claim with quotes from the text, those quotes (or paraphrases) become textual evidence. When they explain how the evidence is connected to the claim, *how* it supports their claim, they are articulating their historical reasoning.

Prompts to elicit student thinking in this discussion include:

- *What is your claim?*
- *How do you know?*
  - *What evidence supports your claim?*
  - *How is that evidence connected to your claim?*
  - *Explain the connection.*
  - *Explain your reasoning.*

## Writing Assignment: Serf Diary Entry, S15

You are going to write a diary entry as a medieval serf living under feudalism. Emphasize what occupies your mind, what you see and feel in your day-to-day life, and where you go throughout the day.

- Be sure your diary entry uses complete sentences.
- Include details from what you have studied in this inquiry. Only use claims that the class has supported with evidence.
- Your diary entry should be at least two paragraphs long.

### Teacher Notes:

There is a reproducible diary page in the student handouts. If your students don't bring it up first, acknowledge that most serfs did not know how to read and write, so they would have to imagine being one of the few who were literate.

Model what this assignment might look like. Using a Think Aloud, show students how to look at their Possible Evidence chart and turn their notes into sentences from a diary. For example I might say, *"My notetaker says that many serfs were farmers and that they worked all day. I made a claim that the life of a serf was horrible and exhausting. I think I will start, 'Dear Diary, Today I got up before the sun and made a simple breakfast for my husband and two children. I wish I could get more sleep, but I have to work so hard all day long.'"* I would demonstrate the writing in real time in front of the students with a document camera or smartboard. DO NOT JUST SHOW THEM A FINISHED PRODUCT. Students need to hear and see how the sentences were created.

## What I Learned (Final Reflection), S16

**Teacher Notes:** We had three objectives for this module.

1. Introduce claims, evidence and reasoning to middle schoolers and how to create claims, consider evidence, use evidence to support claims and explain reasoning.  
(This advances READI Learning Goals for History Inquiry #1, 2 and 3.\*)
2. Build knowledge about feudalism as context for understanding the Enlightenment.  
(This advances the content goals for the course.)
3. Lay the groundwork for students to be able to develop historical empathy. Modern students struggle at times to develop and understanding of life from a medieval point of view. Stepping into the shoes of Serf Thomas and Serf Anne and being able to continually reference the poster can become a touchstone for a middle school class.  
(This advances READI Learning Goal for History Inquiry #3 in that historical empathy emerges from contextualization.)

This final reflection connects directly to the goal of developing historical empathy by calling attention to the differences between the students' historical context and the serfs' historical context. The poster serves as a touchstone of the serfs' context as the class moves into the study of the Enlightenment.

\*See the READI Learning Goals for History Inquiry on p.4 of the Overview.

### Individual Think-Write

Silently read and answer the questions.

1. What do you understand about life as a serf that you didn't understand before?

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

S 16, S17

2. Compare your life with what you now understand about Serf Thomas and Serf Anne's lives. How are their ways of thinking and their power to make choices the same or different from yours?

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

3. Think about how you read, created claims, cited evidence from the text, and revised your claims. What did you learn about reading history, historical claims and evidence?

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---



# Feudalism

## Reading like a Historian: Life as a Serf

---

### Interactive Notebook

Inquiry Question:

What was life like for a medieval serf and how do you know?



READI Reading History Module

**Reading like a Historian: Life as a Serf  
Student Interactive Notebook**

Iteration 2, Fall 2014

**Developed by READI History Inquiry Network Teachers and Researchers**

Lynn Dillon, History Teacher, Bohannon Middle School, California

Anneka Harper, History Teacher, Bohannon Middle School, California


Gayle Cribb, Professional Development Associate, WestEd, and READI History Research Team member

Illustrations by Mateo Fabersunne

*The intended use of these materials is in tandem with ongoing professional development focused on supporting reading as historical practice. This work is funded by the Reading for Understanding Initiative of the Institute for Education Sciences, U.S. Department of Education, through Grant R305F100007 to University of Illinois at Chicago. The opinions expressed are those of the authors and do not represent views of the Institute or the U.S. Department of Education.*

**Hard Work****Individual Think-Write**

Think about the hardest job you have ever had to do. Why did you have to do this job? What were your responsibilities? What were you expected to do? What made it so hard? Write about this experience below.

**Pair Share**

Now you are going to share your experience with your partner. You may either read what you wrote in the above box or just tell them about your experience. Notice the commonalities and differences between your experiences.

**Whole Class Share**

Be ready to share something you wrote or heard with the class when the teacher asks you for your ideas.

**Text A: The Feudal System****Text B: The Peasant's Life and The Serf's Life**

We will be investigating the life of the commoner in Medieval Europe under feudalism. Common people were called peasants and serfs, but there were definite differences between these two groups.

**Individual Think-Write**

Read Text A and Text B. Try to identify what makes someone a peasant and what makes someone a serf. While reading, make your thinking visible by Talking to the Text. Your teacher will tell you which one to use.

**Pair Share**

Before talking to your partner, star three ideas in your Talking to the Text that you want to share. These ideas might be questions, comments, connections, or predictions. With your partner, go through Text A and Text B, discussing your thinking. Take turns sharing and listening.

**Whole Class Share**

Be ready to share something you wrote or heard with the class when the teacher asks you for your ideas. The teacher will chart your responses on the board. Take notes, following along with your teacher on the graphic organizer on the next page. When the discussion is over, you will be making a statement about the life of a commoner.

## Text A and B

Peasants	Serfs

Pull the information together. Make a statement about the life of a common person based on your notes above. Then highlight at least one piece of a text that you used to come to this conclusion.

## Text C: Life in the village

Your teacher will briefly model strategic reading (by using Think Aloud) with the first paragraph of Text C. Pay close attention to the ways in which he/she makes sense of the text. Write down any reading strategies you notice that help your teacher read more deeply.

### Reading Strategies List

#### Whole Class Discussion

How is your teacher making sense of what she is reading?

#### Individual/Pairs Read

Continue reading the text. While reading, make your thinking visible by Talking to the Text

#### Pair Share of Your Reading

With a partner, go through the text sentence by sentence (or paragraph by paragraph) discussing your reading. Take turns sharing and listening.

- Share comments, questions, understandings, roadblocks, reading processes--*how* you made sense of the text, how you built new understandings.
- Listen to your partners' thinking and elicit more thinking with questions such as:
  - What did you do?
  - How did that help you understand the reading?
- Help each other clarify roadblocks.
- Add good ideas from your discussion to your notes.

#### Whole Class Discussion

Be ready to share your questions and understanding of this text with the class.

- What were the roadblocks and how did you get through them?
- Are there any words or phrases that you and your partner could not figure out?
- Is there something you still need to clarify?
- What does this text tell you about the life of a serf?

Add any new strategies to your Reading Strategies List.

## Creating a Claim

### Teacher model

Now that we have learned something about life at this time, what claims we can make about what life was like for a medieval serf living in the feudal system? Based on Texts A, B and C, what do we think we can say about a serf's life?

### My Teacher's Possible Claims

--

In order to make a strong claim, you must find evidence in the text to support your claim and cite that evidence. Your teacher will briefly model how to consider evidence for his/ her claim by reading the first two paragraphs with you.

<b>Possible Evidence from the Text</b> (quotes and paraphrases that support my teacher's claims)	<b>Citation</b> (text, page & paragraph number)	<b>Insights, Thoughts and Questions</b>
<i>Example: "...followed the seasons--ploughing in autumn, sowing in spring, harvesting in August."</i>	<i>Text C, p.4, paragraph 1</i>	What did they do in the winter?

**Pair Work**

With your partner, create a few claims that answer the Essential Question:

- What was life like for a medieval serf?

**Our Possible Claim(s)**

In order to make a strong claim, find evidence in the text to support your claim and cite that evidence.

<b>Possible Evidence from the Text</b> (quotes and paraphrases that support my teacher's claims)	<b>Citation</b> (text, page & paragraph number)	<b>Insights, Thoughts and Questions</b>
<i>Example: "...followed the seasons--ploughing in autumn, sowing in spring, harvesting in August."</i>	<i>Text C, p.4, paragraph 1</i>	What did they do in the winter?

Continue gathering evidence for your claim(s) on the next page.

<b>Possible Evidence from the Text</b> (quotes and paraphrases that support my claims)	<b>Citation</b> (text, page & paragraph number)	<b>Insights, Thoughts and Questions</b>
<i>Example: "...followed the seasons--ploughing in autumn, sowing in spring, harvesting in August."</i>	<i>Text C, p.4, paragraph 1</i>	What did they do in the winter?

**Whole Class Discussion**

Your teacher will be calling on several student pairs to share a claim you are considering and evidence from the texts that you think support your claim. You will need to explain *how* the evidence supports your claim. How do you know? Be sure to cite the paragraph and page number where you found this information. Your teacher will add this to the class notetaker. Add notes and citations to your notetaker, too.

**Individual Think-Write**

Look back at your claim(s). Now that you have discussed more possible evidence, are there any changes (revisions) you want to make to your claim(s)? Is there a new claim you want to capture?



## **Feudalism--Serf Thomas & Anne**

### **Draw Your Claim and Evidence**

Your teacher will give you a simple drawing of a medieval couple named Serf Thomas and Serf Anne. Using the evidence you have gathered on your notetaker so far, add detailed pictures and phrases showing Serf Thomas and Serf Anne's life. Show your claim(s) your drawing and make it come to life! Use the questions below to guide you.

- What was life like for a serf living in Medieval Europe?
- What did serfs do during the day?
- How were serfs treated by others?
- Where did they live?
- What might they be thinking?

### **Pair Share**

Turn to your partner and share at least two parts of your picture. Your teacher will ask for volunteers to share their drawings with the class and explain how they know.

## Text D: Feudal Peasants

### Individual Read

Read the Text C silently. Make your thinking visible as you read by Talking to the Text

### Pair Discussion

With your partner, go through the text discussing your reading bit by bit. Be sure to take turns sharing and listening.

- Share comments, questions, understandings, roadblocks, reading processes--*how* you made sense of the text, how you built new understandings.
- Listen to your partners' thinking and elicit more thinking with questions such as:
  - What did you do?
  - How did that help you understand the reading?
- Help each other clarify roadblocks.
- Note commonalities or differences between you and your partner in your reading process.

### Whole Class Discussion

Be ready to share your understanding of these texts with the class.

- What were the roadblocks and how did you get through them?
- Are there any words or phrases that you and your partner could not figure out?
- Is there something you still need to clarify?
- What does this text tell you about the life of a serf?

### Pair Work

- Now that you have learned more, what new claim do you want to make to answer our question?
- What claims do you now want to revise?
- What new evidence can you gather from this text to support your claims?

### New Claims and/or Revised Claims

Possible Evidence from the Text (quotes and paraphrases that support my claims)	Citation (text, page & paragraph number)	Insights, Thoughts and Questions

<b>Possible Evidence from the Text</b> (quotes and paraphrases that support my claims)	<b>Citation</b> (text, page & paragraph number)	<b>Insights, Thoughts and Questions</b>

**Draw Your Claims and Evidence**

Using your new or revised claims and the evidence you have gathered on your notetaker, add to your drawing of Serf Thomas and Serf Anne’s life.

**Pair Share**

Turn to your partner and share at least two parts of your picture. Your teacher will ask for volunteers to share their pictures with the class.

## Text E: The Medieval Church

### Individual Read

Read the Text D silently. Make your thinking visible by Talking to the Text.

### Pair Discussion

With your partner go through the text discussing your reading bit by bit. Be sure to take turns sharing and listening.

- Share comments, questions, understandings, roadblocks, reading processes--*how* you made sense of the text, how you built new understandings.
- Listen to your partners' thinking and elicit more thinking with questions such as:
  - What did you do?
  - How did that help you understand the reading?
- Help each other clarify roadblocks.
- Note commonalities or differences between you and your partner in your reading process.

### Whole Class Discussion

Be ready to share your questions and understanding of this text with the class.

- What were the roadblocks and how did you get through them?
- Are there any words or phrases that you and your partner could not figure out?
- Is there something you still need to clarify?
- What does this section tell you about the life of a serf?

### Pair Work

- Now that you have learned more, what new claim do you want to make to answer the question?
- What claims do you now want to revise?
- What new evidence can you gather from this text to support your claims?

### New Claims and/or Revised Claims

Possible Evidence from the Text (quotes and paraphrases that support my claims)	Citation (text, page & paragraph number)	Insights, Thoughts and Questions

<b>Possible Evidence from the Text</b> (quotes and paraphrases that support my teacher's claims)	<b>Citation</b> (text, page & paragraph number)	<b>Insights, Thoughts and Questions</b>

**Draw Your Claims and Evidence**

Using your new or revised claims and the evidence you have gathered on your notetaker, add to your drawing of Serf Thomas and Serf Anne.

**Pair Share**

Turn to your partner and share at least two parts of your drawing. Your teacher will ask for volunteers to share their drawing with the class.

## Feudalism--Final Assignment

### Individual Talking-to-the-Drawing

Look at the copy of your classmates' Serf Thomas & Serf Anne drawing. You are becoming an expert on this time period. Show off your knowledge by Talking to the Text on this drawing. Write comments, questions, understandings, and connections. What more could you add using the evidence we collected? What thoughts or comments might Serf Thomas or Serf Anne have in this scene? Add these as thought or speech bubbles.

### Partner Share

Share what you have added to the class picture with your partner. Then, at the bottom of your picture, write a claim that sums up your answer to the essential question, based on everything you have learned.

- What was life like for a medieval serf and how do you know?

Life as a serf was \_\_\_\_\_ because \_\_\_\_\_.

### Whole Class Share Out

Your teacher will be calling on several student pairs to share the claims you have made about serf life. Be ready to cite your evidence and to explain how your evidence relates to your claim.

### Writing Assignment: Serf Diary Entry

You are going to write a diary entry as a medieval serf living under feudalism. Emphasize what occupies your mind, what you see and feel in your day-to-day life, and where you go throughout the day.

- Be sure your diary entry uses complete sentences.
- Include details from what you have studied in this inquiry. Only use claims that the class has supported with evidence.
- Your diary entry should be at least two paragraphs long.

## What I Learned (Final Reflection)

### Individual Think-Write

Silently read and answer the questions.

1. What do you understand about life as a serf that you didn't understand before?

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

2. Compare your life with what you now understand about Serf Thomas and Serf Anne's lives. How are their ways of thinking and their power to make choices the same or different from yours?

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

3. Think about how you read, created claims, cited evidence from the text, and revised your claims.

What did you learn about reading history, historical claims and evidence?

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

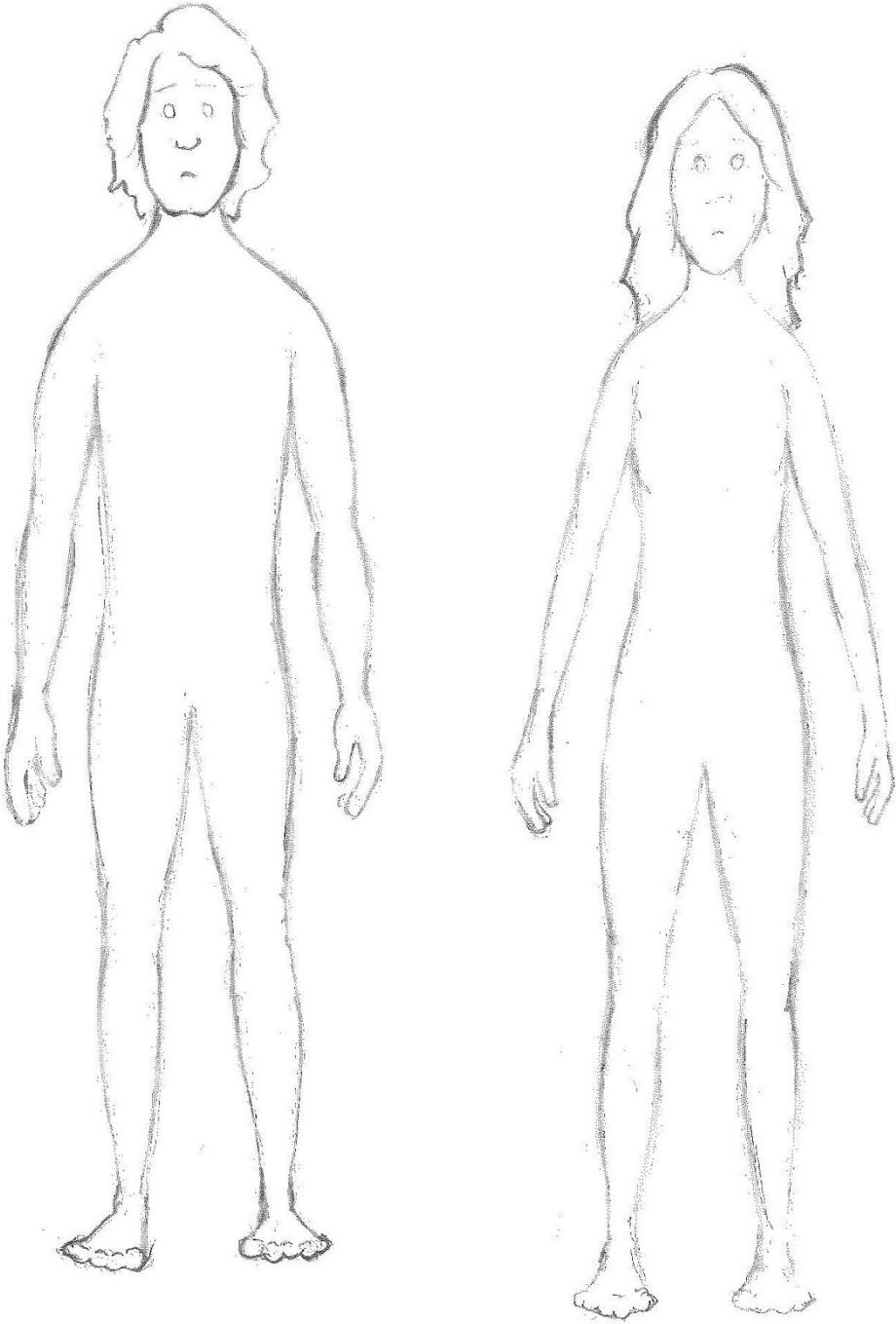


# Feudalism Student Handouts

---



Serf Thomas and Serf Anne





Serf Diary Entry

Lined writing area consisting of 25 horizontal lines.



