Year 5: History Peasants, Princes and Pestilence Knowledge Organiser

Subject Specific Vocabulary	
chivalry	The rules that knights lived by, based on courage, kindness and honour
merchant	A person who sells or buys goods
noble	A person who belongs to the highest social class
plague	A disease caused by bacteria that spreads very quickly
serf	A servant or labourer how had to obey and work on the land of a lord
villein	A peasant who pays a lord or manor for land

How the plague spread to Europe

During the first half of the 14th century, the cities of Europe were bustling centres of trade. These cities were near to major trade routes, such as the Silk Road, which opened the door for trade with Asia and the Far East. However, these trade routes also opened the door to foreign invaders and disease.



Bubonic Plague: This was the most common form of the plague and got its name from the swollen areas (called buboes) that develop when a person is infected. These buboes appear in the groin, armpit, and neck. They can be the size of a golf ball or as big as an apple. The bubonic plague would typically kill its victim within a week but some people were able to recover from the disease (although not very many). A flea that was infected with the disease would bite a person. Around six days after being bitten, a black blister would appear around the bite. Shortly after this, the buboes would appear followed by purple blotches on the skin. These blotches were caused by bleeding under the skin of the infected person. Bubonic plague killed around 50 to 60 percent of people who have been infected.



A plague doctor was a physician who treated victims of bubonic plague during epidemics mainly in the 16th and 17th century. These physicians were hired by cities to treat infected patients regardless of income, especially the poor that could not afford to pay.



The Feudal System

At the beginning of the 14th century, society was organised into a feudal system, which split people into groups based upon their roles. The king was at the top of the feudal system and peasants, serfs and villeins were at the bottom.

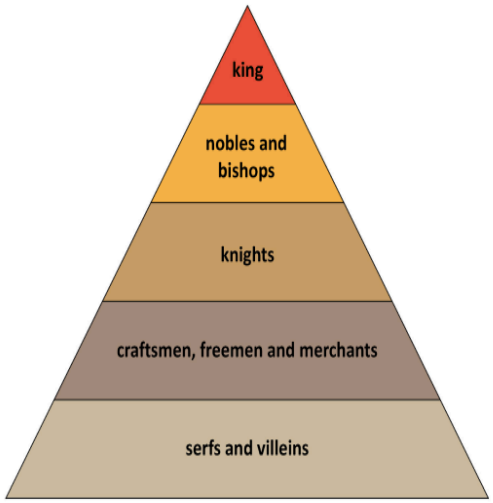
The king rules and protected the county

Nobles and bishops were rich landowners who helped the king to rule England

Knights were brave fighters who worked for the nobles and fought for the king. They followed special rules called the code of chivalry.

Craftsmen, freemen and merchants were skilled workers who owned small pieces of land

Peasants, serfs and villeins worked the land and had very few rights



The Flagellants



In 14th century Europe, an extreme religious practice was spreading across towns and villages. It was called Flagellantism and they were radically devout Catholics who used to whip themselves in public. Many people believed God was angry and so by whipping themselves, the Flagellants thought they were pleasing God, believing he would forgive their sins and end disasters. The ritual began with the reading of a letter, claimed to have been delivered by an angel. The Flagellants would be bare-chested, wearing cloth caps marked with a red cross. They would walk in procession from place to place. chanting hymns. Although it was popular in Europe flagellation did not catch on in England. The pope had banned the ritual and it was a serious offence to ignore the rulings of the Pope and the church.



Medieval knights

The Code of Chivalry listed qualities that knights should have and how they are suppose to behave. The code was never written down in a single document but people expected knights to follow these expectations. Knights who did have these qualities, especially bravery. were punished.

Links to prior learning: Great Fire of London, Ancient Rome, Shang Dynasty