

0. MEDIEVAL EUROPEANS - Story Preface

1. HUMAN DEVASTATION

2. WHAT IS BUBONIC PLAGUE?

3. WHAT IS BLACK DEATH?

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5. MEDIEVAL EUROPEANS

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10. LIFE GOES ON

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This image depicts what it may have been like to be part of a medieval farming family. Included in *Kulturgeschichtliche Bilder no.5, Kempen* (Verlag Dr. te Neues), undated (c.1960). Online, courtesy [Dortmund, Westfaelisches Schulmuseum](#) (Westphalian School Museum in Dortmund, Germany).

Who were these Europeans killed by the raging pestilence? What did they look like? How did they live? How did they view each other? Manuscripts and art work created at, or near, the time of the Black Death still exist. They are the best source of primary information to answer these questions.

The BNF in Paris, one of the world's greatest national libraries, has placed some of its most interesting primary sources on-line. So have Oxford's Bodleian Library and the University of Chicago. Using these outstanding primary sources, we can learn about life in the Middle Ages.

It was a time when good hygiene was not part of everyday life. Taking a shower every day would have been unheard of. Dogs ate with people. People themselves had fleas.

Houses in the towns were crammed together. Usually made of wood, with thatched roofs, they were often home to insects and rodents. Roaming dogs were always nearby. Many people slept in the same room. There were no sewers and other health-oriented facilities. Life expectancy was about 45 years. Infant mortality rates were extremely high.

In rural areas, peasants worked the land. Their animals, even in the winter, were never far away. In fact, humans and animals practically shared the same living space.

Bows and arrows were used for protection. Men and oxen tilled the land and planted the fields in early spring. In June, the family gathered an early harvest. By July the wheat was ready and the sheep were sheared. In September, the grape harvest was an important event and by October the farmers were once again tilling and planting the fields.

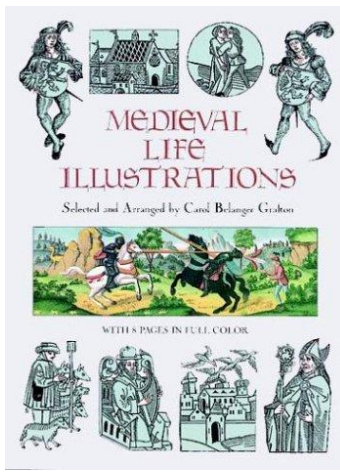
Peasants worked for aristocrats who owned the land and most of the wealth. Before the Black Death, workers had very few rights. The feudal system was still in place.

See [Alignments to State and Common Core standards for this story online at:](#)

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicAlignment/MEDIEVAL-EUROPEANS-Black-Death>

See [Learning Tasks for this story online at:](#)

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicActivities/MEDIEVAL-EUROPEANS-Black-Death>



Medieval Life Illustrations

Image online, courtesy amazon.com website.

View this asset at: <http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Medieval-Life-Illustrations>

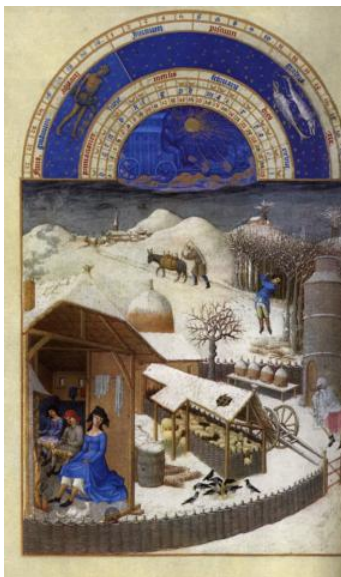


Medieval Life Depicted in Froissart's Chronicles

Image, BnF.

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Medieval Peasants and Their Animals

Image online, courtesy BNF.

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Medieval Peasants Working With Animals

Image online, courtesy BNF.

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Medieval Harvest Scene

Image online, courtesy [BNF](#).

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Shearing Sheep, from the Jean de Berry Book of Hours

Image online, courtesy [BNF](#).

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Tilling and Planting During the Middle Ages

Image online, courtesy [BNF](#).

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Celebrating the Month of May - Medieval Style

Image online, courtesy [BNF](#).

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Grape Harvest by Medieval Peasants

Image online, courtesy [BNF](#).

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