



**The Middle Ages
History – Junior Cert**

Quick Notes

The Middle Ages

The Normans were Vikings who settled in Normandy, France. In 1169, MacMurrough and Strongbow arrived in Ireland with an army and recaptured Leinster. Wherever the Normans settled, they built stone castles e.g. Maynooth. The most important castle was Dublin castle as this was the headquarters of British control in Ireland. By 1250, most of the important towns and large stretches of the countryside were controlled by Norman families e.g. Butlers, Burkes. The Norman influence began to lessen, however and eventually, controlled only Dublin and the immediate area around it which became known as the Pale. The manor was the land controlled by the lord. In return for land and protection, a man promised to fight for his lord when needed. He became known as a vassal, and the plot of land he received became known as a fief. The system of vassals, fiefs and oaths was called the feudal system. The lord kept the best land for himself and this was known as the demesne. The other two parts of the manor were strip fields which was rented to serfs and the common which was a grazing area for livestock. The people who rented land from lords were known as serfs and the serfs could not leave the land without the lords permission. Boon work were the days they had to work on the lords land as part of their rent. Medieval people used an open-field farming system and crop rotation was practiced. Most serfs grew their own vegetables which were then used to make a type of soup called potage and the serfs made their own clothing from wool or hemp. Between the ages of 7 and 14 a young boy became a page, then he became a squire and at 21, provided he was suitable, he became a knight. Knights had to follow a strict law called chivalry. Lords built castles to serve as a home and protection. Methods of protection were wooden motte and bailey castles and stone square-keep castles. Banquets were huge feasts held in the lords castle or manor house. Most towns had a population of only a couple of thousand at this time.

Most towns were defended by high walls and many towns had a high street. Most medieval towns were granted a charter by the local lord or king. In towns, people who practiced a particular craft belonged to a guild. They were a form of trade union, but both employers and employees belonged. An apprentice lived in a masters house and agreed to work for him for a number of years (usually 7). The apprentice was not paid wages but was given a bed. When the apprentice was finished, he became a journey man working for a daily wage and if they wanted to become a master themselves they had to produce a master

piece. Priests were the most educated people in medieval times. Each town had a market day once a week. Entertainment was in the form of tournaments, hunting and falconry or hawking, boxing, board wrestling. Crime rates were high in most towns so the police force was set up to protect the townspeople and the streets were divided into districts called wards. Major crimes were punishable by death either by hanging or beheading. Lesser crimes were punishable by a sentence in jail or in stocks or pillory. The Black death AKA the bubonic plague was a killer plague which came from China and spread by black rats. About one third of the population of Europe died from the black death. Most people in Europe at this time were Christians. People who failed to obey the pope were known as heretics. The Christendom was the land on which the pope's subjects lived. The entire area of the Christendom was divided into dioceses, each of which was under the control of a bishop. There were two types of medieval cathedral – the Romanesque and the Gothic styles. Each diocese was divided into smaller areas called parishes which were controlled by parish priests. The monks in the monasteries provided education, hospital care and shelter for travellers. There were several types of prayer depending on the time of day. Monks were expected to perform many duties including abbot, prior, scribe, refectorian. The monastery building had several key features such as a cloister, infirmary and crafts room. Friars were monks who moved from place to place stopping to preach and help the poor e.g. the Dominicans.

For more comprehensive Revision Notes Visit.... [mocks.ie](https://www.mocks.ie) **Junior Cert
History Notes**