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History/Writing

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## The Middle Ages

The Middle Ages were about 500AD-1500AD, between the end of the Western Roman Empire and the beginning of the Renaissance. Charlemagne was crowned by Pope Leo the III on Christmas Day in 800A.D. as the new leader of the “new Holy Roman Empire.” Charlemagne was nicknamed the “Father of Europe” and changed the Roman Empire’s culture to one that had a love for arts and learning. This led the empire back to Christianity and this was like when Saul was crowned by the high priest Samuel over two thousand years earlier. The government was changed to a feudal system, which means that the nobility controlled the lands and the armies by trading protection for labor from the peasants.

The Early Middle Ages had several civil wars. The Hundred Year war was between England and France, and it was from 1337 to 1453. It was started before 1340, but due to King Edward III claiming that he was “King of France and the French Royal Arms” in 1340 made the war peak. The war waged all over the ports around France and on land. Eventually, the war ended, and part of France was then controlled by England. The War of Roses went from 1455 to 1458 and this happened because both sides of King Edward’s family claimed rights to the throne. This created another civil war amongst the citizens and nobilities. In the end, Henry Tudor was named King Henry the VII, and was the first of the Tudor Kings. The knights and soldiers were very skilled hand-to-hand combat and the blades of their swords were very sharp. There were many skilled blacksmiths and metal was very important, like money.

Housing and churches were built in Romanesque design during the 10<sup>th</sup> to 13<sup>th</sup> centuries and they were very solid with curved archways and windows. During the late 14<sup>th</sup> century, a new style was formed called the Gothic style. It was made with lots of stained-glass windows, pointed vaults, and flying buttresses. There are two historical gothic cathedrals in France and England. They are the Abbey Church of St. Denis in France and the Canterbury Cathedral in England. Dungeons in the Middle Ages were sound proof, so the people outside would not hear screaming. Also, in the castles were great halls where the nobility often feasted after winning battles, weddings, holidays, and other ceremonies.

During the Middle Ages, people used Latin to write and record history. This was called illuminated manuscripts and they were made by skilled craftsmen in monasteries. The books were made of silver and gold, with lots of color, and detailed drawings with Latin writing.

The Crusades began in 1095 A.D. when Pope Urban sent the Christian Army to Jerusalem to fight in the Islamic Wars. This resulted in about four hundred years of Crusades and thousands of people died on both sides of the war. No side really “won” the war. The Christian soldiers were introduced to the Islamic practices, which would then eventually affect the thinking of the Christian followers in England.

The end of the Middle Ages happened because of widespread plagues and diseases like, the Black Death or Bubonic Plague. The Black Death was all over Europe. It spread quickly through rats and their waste. Only about a third to one half of the Europeans remained after the spread of the disease. This led to a new way of thinking, involving new ideas from Islam like medicine, doctors, scientists, philosophy, and technology. This new way of thinking was called the Renaissance or what means “rebirth.”

## Bibliography

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