

Middle Ages to Renaissance (Set 2)

SS130

Introduction

These activities are designed to make history more interesting by involving students, challenging them intellectually, and encouraging them to be creative.

The activities may be used with both advanced and slow students. The two short plays, for example, work well with students who do not read well. Advanced students do well in inferring about the values and attitudes of the common people. All students will benefit from an opportunity to exercise their creativity.

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This title is part of a series:

*Creative Activities for Teaching
Ancient Civilizations, Sets 1 & 2
Middle Ages, Sets 1 & 2
Modern Times, Sets 1 & 2*

Middle Ages Set 2

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Activities

Creative Design

These activities allow students to use their imaginations and creativity. You might organize contests to see who can come up with the best designs. These make interesting room decorations, as students learn from each other.

Fantastic Helmets & Armor (6 pages)

There are pictures of helmets and armor to provide students with an idea of the elaborate designs that existed in the Renaissance. Two pages show outlines of a helmet and a suit of armor so that students may design their own.

Siege Engine (1 page)

Siege engines, rather mundane in reality, took a more fantastical appearance in the minds of some Renaissance inventors. This is an example. Students may design their own.

The Hair-Do (1 page)

During the Enlightenment elaborate hair styles were the rage among the aristocrats. Have the students design their own.

Values and The Common Person

History texts tend to concentrate on political events and the lives of the well-to-do. The following activities provide insight into the attitudes and values of the common people and how they lived.

Cat Bashing (3 pages)

A play based upon an actual incident in 18th Century France that reveals the attitudes of French workers and peasants toward cats and their superiors. There are six parts.

Feline Fancies (1 page)

Attitudes towards cats have changed over the centuries. The Egyptians, for example, held them in high esteem. However during the "Age of Enlightenment" there were many superstitions about cats that were held by the common man. The cruel treatment of cats reflected these beliefs.

Little Red Riding Hood (1 page)

Nearly every student knows the story of Little Red Riding Hood. This is the original story as told by French peasants in the 17th century. Students are asked to explain why they think the story changed.

The Real Mother Goose (1 page)

Many of the Mother Goose stories originated in France. The Brothers Grimm learned them from a neighbor. Students are asked to explain on the basis of these tales what life was like for the French peasant.

French Proverbs (1 page)

Based upon these proverbs, students are asked to tell about the attitudes of French peasants.

Love & Kisses (1 page)

A description of how some courtship rituals developed.

Anglo Saxon Times (1 page)

Proverbs, medical advice and a poem from 9th Century England. Have students compare the two pieces of medical advice, one Moslem in origin the other Anglo Saxon. Have students memorize the poem, or compare the attitudes about cats expressed in it with those of the French peasants.

The Vikings

The Vikings are usually given short mention in history books. These activities help amplify the culture and role of the Vikings.

The Vikings – A Play (3 pages)

A short play about the Viking invasion of England that illustrates the reasons for the Viking invasions. The play has 15 parts.

Viking Proverbs (2 pages)

Textbooks usually describe the Vikings from the point of view of their victims. These proverbs provide some insight into what the Vikings were really like. Students are asked to describe what Vikings valued.

Viking Names (1 page)

Vikings had colorful, descriptive nicknames. Students are encouraged to come up with their own nicknames in the Viking mold.

Puzzles

Two of the puzzles require the students to remember the path of the object. A good visualization exercise. The third puzzle requires students to make educated guesses to identify the objects.

Medieval Tournament (1 page)

A paper and pencil visual memory game. Students have to hit the bull's eye from memory.

Medieval Battle (1 page)

A paper and pencil visual memory game. Students have to hit the opposing soldiers.

What Is It? (1 page)

Students have to figure out what these medieval objects are. Answers (in actual book)

Directions

Below are proverbs of French peasants of the 15th and 16th Centuries.
What can you tell about the values and attitudes of the French peasants at the time?

French Proverbs

Against the clever, the clever by half.

Against a good cat, a good rat.

You don't make an omelette without cracking eggs.

A famished stomach has no ears.

Where the goat is tied it must graze.

It's not his fault frogs don't have tails.

Everyone has to make a living, thieves and the rest.
