

HISTORY · Y4–Y6

Medieval England

Knowledge Organiser — Y4–Y6

Key vocabulary

1

Norman Conquest (1066)

William of Normandy defeated King Harold at the Battle of Hastings and became William I. Changed English language, law, and society fundamentally.

2

Feudal system

The social hierarchy of medieval England: monarch → barons/lords → knights → villagers/serfs. Land in exchange for loyalty and military service.

3

Domesday Book (1086)

William I's survey of England — recording who owned what land and what it was worth. A census and tax record.

4

Magna Carta (1215)

Charter signed by King John, limiting royal power and establishing that the monarch must follow the law. Foundation of constitutional government.

5

Black Death (1348–49)

Bubonic plague that killed between a third and a half of England's population. Disrupted the feudal system by creating a labour shortage.

6

Peasants' Revolt (1381)

Uprising by English peasants against the poll tax. Led by Wat Tyler. Suppressed by Richard II but showed growing unrest with feudalism.



Feudalism — the feudal pyramid

Everyone owed loyalty and service

- MONARCH: owned all land; granted to barons in exchange for military service and loyalty
- BARONS/LORDS: held large estates; provided knights and troops to the king
- KNIGHTS: provided military service to their lord; received smaller estates (manors)
- VILLEINS (SERFS): worked the lord's land; could not leave without permission; not free
- THE CHURCH: sat outside this hierarchy but had enormous power — owned land, collected taxes
- A CASTLE served as: military fortress, local administrative centre, and symbol of power
- MEDIEVAL TOWNS grew near castles and cathedrals; merchants and craftspeople formed guilds

