GUIDED READING

The Hundred Years’ War
and the Plague

A. Perceiving Cause and Effect
As you read this section, take notes to answer the questions about three events that led to the end of medieval society.

Factor 1: The Great Schism
1. When and how did the Great Schism begin?
2. When and how was the Great Schism resolved?
3. How did the Great Schism affect medieval life?

Factor 2: The Bubonic Plague
4. Where did the plague begin and how did it spread?
5. What were some economic effects of the plague?
6. How did the plague affect the Church?

Factor 3: The Hundred Years’ War
7. What was the primary reason for the war?
8. What was the outcome of the war?
9. How did the war affect medieval society?

B. Drawing Conclusions
On the back of this paper, explain how each of the following people challenged authority in the Middle Ages.

John Wycliff
John Huss
Joan of Arc
During the Hundred Years’ War, new weapons caused a revolution both in warfare and in society. The weapon that gave England its early victories in the war was the longbow. Before battle, skilled English bowmen arranged themselves, side by side, along a wide arc. As the French attacked, the English bowmen drew their six-foot longbows. The arrows were dangerous at a range of 300 yards and absolutely fatal within 100 yards. The result was disaster for the French. Horses were slain or wounded and threw off their riders. Dressed in heavy armor, French knights could not get up and were killed by English foot soldiers. The age of feudalism, based on the power of warriors on horseback, could not survive long.

The second weapon that battered down the feudal system was the cannon. The English fired small cannons at the Battle of Crécy, but these did little more than scare the horses. After 1400, however, European cannons grew huge and powerful. They could shoot stone balls 20 inches in diameter. In the last years of the Hundred Years’ War, both sides used cannons to batter down the walls of each other’s castles. Thus, the castle, like the knight’s suit of shining armor, became an outdated relic. The Hundred Years’ War had dealt a death blow to feudal warfare and the Age of Chivalry.
The mortality began in Siena in May [1348]. It was a cruel and horrible thing; and I do not know where to begin to tell of the cruelty and the pitless ways. It seemed to almost everyone that one became stupified by seeing the pain. And it is impossible for the human tongue to recount the awful thing. Indeed one who did not see such horribleness can be called blessed. And the victims died almost immediately. They would swell beneath their armpits and in their groins, and fall over dead while talking. Father abandoned child, wife husband, one brother another; for this illness seemed to strike through the breath and sight. And so they died. And none could be found to bury the dead for money or friendship. Members of a household brought their dead to a ditch as best they could, without priest, without divine offices. Nor did the death bell sound. And in many places in Siena great pits were dug and piled deep with the multitude of dead. And they died by the hundreds both day and night, and all were thrown in those ditches and covered over with earth. And as soon as those ditches were filled more were dug.

And I, Agnolo di Tura, called the Fat, buried my five children with my own hands. And there were also those who were so sparsely covered with earth that the dogs dragged them forth and devoured many bodies throughout the city.

There was no one who wept for any death, for all awaited death. And so many died that all believed that it was the end of the world. And no medicine or any other defense availed. . . . And it is found that at this time there died in Siena 36,000 persons twenty years of age or less, and the aged and other people [died], to a total of 52,000 in all in Siena. And in the suburbs of Siena 28,000 persons died; so that in all it is found that in the city and suburbs of Siena 80,000 persons died. Thus at this time Siena and its suburbs had more than 30,000 men [adult males]; and there remained in Siena [alone] less than 10,000 men. And those that survived were like persons distraught and almost without feeling. . . . I will not write of the cruelty that there was in the countryside, of the wolves and wild beasts that ate the poorly buried corpses, and of other cruelties that would be too painful to those who read them. . . .

The city of Siena seemed almost uninhabited for almost no one was found in the city. And then, when the pestilence abated [lessened], all who survived gave themselves over to pleasures: monks, priests, nuns, and lay men and women all enjoyed themselves, and none worried about spending and gambling. And everyone thought himself rich because he had escaped and regained the world, and no one knew how to allow himself to do nothing.

1349. After the great pestilence of the past year each person lived according to his own caprice [impulse], and everyone tended to seek pleasure in eating and drinking, hunting, catching birds, and gaming.


Activity Options
1. Perceiving Cause and Effect Draw a cause-and-effect diagram to illustrate the effects of the plague in Siena according to Agnolo di Tura.
2. Using Visual Stimuli Design a memorial—such as a statue, a historical plaque, or a monument—for the victims who died as a result of the plague in Siena in 1348. Share your design with classmates.
In 1429, 17-year-old Joan of Arc led French troops to victory over England. A year later, she was captured by English allies and sent to Rouen, a city ruled by the English king. She was tried by a Church court for heresy. Although given a chance to take back her testimony and live, she chose death. As you read this portion of the trial record, think why the judges gave her the sentence they did.

“...Therefore before us your competent judges, namely Pierre by divine mercy bishop of Beauvais and brother Jean Le Maistre, vicar in this city and diocese of the notable master Jean Graverent, Inquisitor of Heretical Error in the kingdom of France, and especially appointed by him to officiate in this cause, you, Jeanne, commonly called The Maid, have been arraigned to account for many pernicious [evil] crimes and have been charged in a matter of the faith. And having seen and examined with diligence the course of your trial and all that occurred therein, principally the answers, confessions and affirmations which you made, after having also considered the most notable decision of the masters of the Faculties of Theology and Decrees in the University of Paris, in addition to that of the general assembly of the University, and of the prelates, doctors and men learned in canon and civil law and in theology who were met together in a great multitude in this town of Rouen and elsewhere for the discussion and judgment of your statements, words and deeds; having taken counsel and mature conference with those zealots of the Christian faith, and having seen and weighed all there is to see and weigh in this matter, all that we and any man of judgment and law could and should observe: We, having Christ and the honor of the orthodox faith before our eyes, so that our judgment may seem to emanate from the face of Our Lord, have said and decreed that in the simulation [pretending] of your revelations and apparitions [ghosts] you have been pernicious, seductive, presumptuous, of light belief, rash, superstitious, a witch, a blasphemer of God and His saints, a despiser of Him in His sacraments, a prevaricator of the divine teaching and the ecclesiastical sanctions, seditious, cruel, apostate, schismatic, erring greatly in our faith, and that by these means you have rashly trespassed against God and the Holy Church.

Moreover, although you have very often, not by Us only but also by certain learned expert masters and doctors full of zeal for the salvation of your soul, been duly and sufficiently admonished to amend and reform yourself, and to submit to the disposition, decision and correction of Holy Mother Church, you would not, and cared not to do so, and even in the hardness of your heart stubbornly and obstinately declared that you would not, and on many occasions expressly refused to submit to Our Holy Father the Pope and the holy General Council. Therefore, we declare you of right excommunicate and heretic, being stubborn and obstinate in your crimes, excesses and errors; and we pronounce it meet [necessary] to abandon you and do abandon you to the secular justice as a limb of Satan, infected with the leprosy of heresy, cut off from the Church, in order to prevent the infection of the other members of Christ; praying this same power on this side of death and the mutilation of your limbs to moderate its judgment towards you, and if true signs of penance appear in you to permit the sacrament of penance to be administered to you.”


Discussion Questions
Recognizing Facts and Details
1. What “learned expert masters” examined Joan?
2. Why did the judges accuse Joan of being a witch and a blasphemer?
3. Making Judgments Based on your reading of this excerpt, do you think Joan was more political than religious? Explain your answer.
One of the most remarkable stories in the history of Europe was the tale of Joan of Arc. In an age when men held political power, this girl inspired a people. In a time when nobles determined the fate of kingdoms, this peasant changed the course of history. Spurred by faith, Joan of Arc rescued France from domination by England. Subjected to a harsh trial and abandoned by the king she restored to the throne, she was put to death for heresy.

In the early 1400s, England was winning the bitter Hundred Years' War against France. Henry V of England forced the French to accept him as the heir to the insane Charles VI, the king of France. Charles VI's son was also named Charles and called the dauphin, the French title for the successor to the throne. He was dispossessed, though, with the acceptance of Henry V as the heir. However, in 1422 both Charles VI and Henry V died. The dauphin was able to control southern France. The English held the north, and the powerful French duke of Burgundy, who was allied to the English, held much of eastern France. Joan's hometown of Domrémy remained loyal to the dauphin, however.

The English hoped to gain control of southern France by capturing the city of Orléans. They laid siege to the city, and French soldiers were barely able to defend it. Then Joan arrived.

Born around 1412, she had led the life of a typical village girl until about 1425, when she began to have visions of saints who spoke to her. She said the saints “told me of the pitiful state of France and told me that I must go [help] the king of France.” After failing to gain an audience with the future ruler twice, she was finally accepted. She had to travel 11 days through enemy lines to reach the dauphin and was initially treated with suspicion. After being examined, she was found to be pious and sincere. Charles gave her the rank of captain, equipped her with a detachment of soldiers, and sent her to join the fighting at Orléans.

Joan reached the city and began to inspire hope. She made the French soldiers renounce their sinful practices and dedicate themselves to a holy fight. Her arrival also brought needed supplies, and her accurate predictions of what would occur in the battle won the soldiers’ confidence in her. On May 7, 1429, the French were about to be overrun. Joan, injured, cried “In God’s name, charge boldly!” She led a counterattack that brought a French victory. The English ended the siege, and soon French forces had defeated the English in many nearby towns.

On Joan’s urging, Charles’ forces moved farther north. They won many cities, either in battle or simply because the towns began to recognize the dauphin’s authority. On July 17, the heir was crowned as King Charles VII in the city of Reims.

In the fall, Joan was again wounded in a failed attack on the English army at Paris. During the following spring, she attacked the English again, this time against the wishes of Charles. He wanted to end the war through diplomacy. In May of 1430, she was surrounded and captured by the forces of the duke of Burgundy. He quickly gave her to the English, who put her on trial for heresy. Hearing the voices of saints, they charged, was a sign of witchcraft. Charles did nothing to gain her release.

Joan stood firm through most of the long trial. French church officials under control of the English questioned her honesty. The church officials threatened her with torture and produced false evidence. Finally, weakened, she signed a paper renouncing the voices she heard and was sentenced to life in prison. Soon, though, the church said she had resumed her sorcery and condemned her to death. On May 30, 1431, she was burned at the stake.

Questions

1. **Making Generalizations** Describe the political situation in France when Joan began to see visions.

2. **Recognizing Facts and Details** Give two examples of Joan’s courage.

3. Find examples to support the idea that Joan was devoutly religious.
Determining Main Ideas Choose the word that most accurately completes each sentence below. Write that word in the blank provided.

1. The movement of the papacy from Rome to ____________ greatly weakened the power of the Church.

2. The ____________ was a division in the Church with three popes ultimately vying for power.

3. The ____________ was a very deadly disease that had many social and economic effects on the European population.

4. ____________ persuaded the College of Cardinals to elect a Frenchman as Pope.

5. ____________ was a woman who helped rescue France from its English conquerors.

6. The use of the ____________ by the English army greatly revolutionized European warfare.

7. The ____________ was a great war between England and France, which began when the last Capetian king died without a successor.

8. ____________, a follower of Wycliffe, preached that the authority of the Bible was higher than that of the pope.

9. ____________ taught that Jesus Christ, not the pope, was the true head of the Church.

10. The Hundred Years’ War began when the English king, ____________, claimed the right to the French throne.