

HISTORY OF BRITAIN
PART TWO

By Harry
Jivenmukta

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INTRODUCTION

The History of Britain is a five pack series which in total considers 101 topics from British history. The format for pages is mostly one page one topic, with a short description of a particular event, followed by questions and exercises. It would be easily possible to have covered more than 200 topics and to have devoted several pages to each topic. This would probably have left the packs too big and difficult to use. This selection, therefore, represents 'snapshots' rather than being comprehensive. Teachers are advised to use the sheets as an introduction from which students may develop the topic in one of several different ways. They can be asked to answer one or more of the questions posed, or the teacher may direct the student in a specific way. The topics are suitable for use as classroom material, homework, or as a basis for longer project type assignments.

Teachers are advised at all times to link the topics back to the events which precede and forward to the implications and effect that the event had on related matters. It is also important to link the topics to the underlying trends in the history of the time. Many of the events happened as a result of the complicated accession claims made by the aristocracy, or as a result of religious competition between Protestants and Catholics. There is also the link between the Scottish and English fight for independence and/or supremacy.

One of the difficulties in teaching British history, especially before 1900, is the ability to keep the interest of the student in a topic which seems to have little relevance to their needs and expectations today. It is important, therefore, to try to maintain interest by direct comparisons to events today or to the historical implications that the events had which can be seen today. An example of this could be the Roman road networks which are still visible today, or the Union with Ireland, the effects of which still cause friction today. Another highly recommended tool is the building of short biographies of historical figures. A number of biographies can be built up which can then be displayed or used as a reference resource.

The History of Britain pack has been widely tested and comes highly recommended for use with students between the ages of 11 and 16. The language may be difficult for some students but in an attempt to cater for a wide ability range and in order to explain the topics fully it has been necessary to use quite complicated language at times. Teachers are reminded to assess whether their students are likely to be confused by some words. The development of a classroom glossary may be of use here.

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VIKING NORMAN MEDIEVAL TUDOR STUART GEORGIAN **VICTORIAN** 20TH CENTURY

Please note: in the date line which appears at the bottom of each page, the Victorian era is omitted except for the period for which it is relevant. This is only because in this series it features only a few times and should be noted by teachers and students as an important era in British history study generally.

Feudalism was a system of political organization which started in Europe from the 9th to about the 15th centuries having as its basis the relation of lord to vassal. It was a hierarchical system where the king was at the top with his tenants in chief below him. There were several other classes below them until at the very bottom were the peasants. The system was based on land ownership and control with those owning most at the top.

The Conquest resulted in the subordination of England to a Norman aristocracy. William probably distributed estates to his followers on a piecemeal basis as lands came into his hands. He granted lands to fewer than 180 men, making them his tenants in chief. Their estates were well distributed, consisting of manors scattered through a number of shires. In unstable regions compact blocks of land were formed, clustered around castles. The tenants in chief owed homage and fealty to the king and held their land in return for military service. They were under obligation to supply a certain number of knights for the royal feudal host; a number that was not necessarily related to the quantity or quality of land held. Early in the reign many tenants in chief provided knights from their own households to meet demands for service, but they soon began to grant some of their own lands to knights who would serve them just as they in turn served the king. In addition to drawing on the forces provided by feudal means, William made extensive use of mercenary troops to secure the military strength he needed. Castles, which were virtually unknown in pre-Conquest England and could only be built with royal permission, provided bases for administration and military organization. They were an essential element in the Norman settlement of England.



ROMAN SAXON VIKING **NORMAN** MEDIEVAL TUDOR STUART GEORGIAN 20TH CENTURY

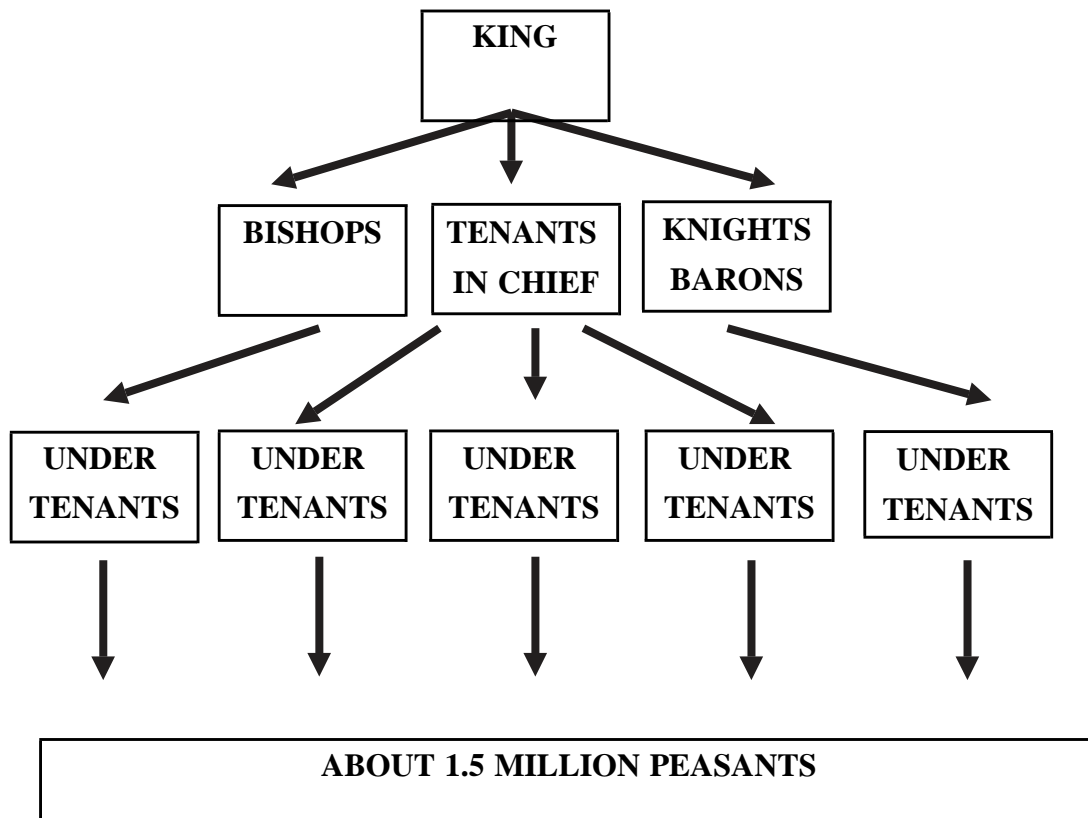
Using less than 50 words explain what Feudalism is.

How did Feudalism differ from the way things were organised before the Norman Conquest?

Why did Feudalism eventually disappear in Europe?

FEUDALISM - STRUCTURE

TOPIC
24



In the Feudal system people were very unlikely to move out of their class, and those above them were sometimes very demanding. Peasants had a very hard life.

ROMAN SAXON VIKING ~~NORMAN~~ MEDIEVAL TUDOR STUART GEORGIAN 20TH CENTURY

Imagine you are a peasant in Feudal society. Write a letter to friend describing what life is like.
Imagine you are a Knight. How would your life be different from the life of a peasant?

HENRY was king of England from 1154, who greatly expanded his Anglo-French territories and strengthened the royal administration in England. His quarrels with Thomas Becket, archbishop of Canterbury, and with members of his family (his wife, Eleanor of Aquitaine, and such sons as Richard the Lion-Heart and John Lackland) ultimately brought about his defeat.

Early in his reign Henry obtained the restoration of Northumberland, Cumberland, and Westmorland from the king Malcolm 111 of Scotland, and later in the reign (1174) homage was exacted from William the Lion, Malcolm's brother and successor. In 1157 Henry invaded Wales and received homage, though without conquest. In Ireland, reputedly bestowed upon him by Pope Adrian IV, Henry allowed an expedition of barons from South Wales to establish Anglo-Norman supremacy in Leinster (1169), which the King himself extended in 1171.

The quarrel with Becket, Henry's trusted and successful chancellor (1154-62), happened soon after Becket became the archbishop of Canterbury (May 1162). Most dangerous were the domestic quarrels, which spoilt Henry's plans and even endangered his life and which finally brought him down.

Normally an approachable and faithful person, he could behave with unreasonable inhumanity. He was always self-centred. Both as man and ruler he lacked the stamp of greatness that marked Alfred the Great and William the Conqueror. He seemed also to lack wisdom; and he had no overall view of the country's interest, no ideals of kingship, no sympathetic care for his people. But if his reign is to be judged by its consequences for England, it undoubtedly stands high in importance, and Henry appears among the most notable of English kings.



ROMAN SAXON VIKING **NORMAN** MEDIEVAL TUDOR STUART GEORGIAN 20TH CENTURY

How did Henry unite Britain during his reign?

What was Henry's relationship with Thomas Becket?

Find out about and write a short biography of Henry Plantagenet.

THOMAS BECKET

TOPIC
26

Also called THOMAS OF LONDON Chancellor of England (1155-62) and archbishop of Canterbury (1162-70) during the reign of King Henry II. His career was marked by a long quarrel with Henry that ended with Becket's murder in Canterbury cathedral.

To King Henry, Thomas was at first a welcome companion and intimate friend, helping the King in his policy of gathering all power into the hands of the monarchy.

The archbishop Thomas soon changed both his outlook and his way of life. He became devout and embraced the policy of the papacy and its canon law as laid down by Rome. Henry had been in Normandy since 1158, and on his return in January 1163 Thomas began the struggle by opposing a tax proposal.

Good relations between Thomas and Henry were now at an end; the Archbishop was summoned to trial by the King. Henry intended to ruin and imprison or to force the resignation of the Archbishop. Thomas fled in disguise and took refuge with Louis VII of France.

Thomas' exile lasted for six years (Nov. 2, 1164- Dec. 2, 1170). Henry seized the properties of the Archbishop and his supporters and had all Thomas' close relatives exiled. In the following years several attempts were made at reconciliation, but new acts of hostility by the King and declarations of excommunication by Thomas to his opponents embittered the struggles.

Thomas returned to Canterbury later, when it seemed that he and the King had come to some agreement about matters. But Some violent words of Henry were taken literally by four leading knights of the court, who cut Thomas Becket down with their swords.

For almost four centuries, Becket's shrine was one of the most famous in Europe.



ROMAN SAXON VIKING NORMAN **MEDIEVAL** TUDOR STUART GEORGIAN 20TH CENTURY

How did Thomas Becket's relationship with King Henry change over time?

How important was the Pope's role in the way the English church behaved?

Find out about and write a short biography of Thomas Becket

CASTLES AND KNIGHTS

TOPIC
27

The art of building castles was not a Norman invention, but the Normans became masters in the use of the motte-and-bailey castle, a mound (motte) topped by a timber wall made of stakes and tower, surrounded by a ditched and palisaded enclosure (bailey). These fortifications, which were complementary to the warfare conducted in open country by small units of cavalry, became the hallmark of Norman conquest. The Normans soon became masters of cavalry warfare as it was then practised in continental Europe. Mounted on a breed of war horse, wearing the heavy mail armour that was standard among the warriors of northwestern Europe, protected by a conical helmet and a kite-shaped shield, and armed with a long, broad-bladed sword and a slim lance, the Norman cavalryman proved on countless occasions that he could outfight the most powerful forces. To some extent this was due to the importance which the Norman knightly class attached to the training of young warriors. They adopted the cult of knighthood which had grown up in the 10th and 11th centuries. But Norman knights were also fierce and brutal soldiers who had received a tough training that left little room for the feelings of humanity and mercy with which Christian teaching was later to endow the concept of chivalry.



Draw a picture of a Motte-and-Bailey Castle.



Henry II died in 1189, a bitter old man. He was succeeded by his son Richard I, nicknamed the Lion-Heart. Richard was a renowned and skilful warrior who was mainly interested in the Crusade to recover Jerusalem and in the struggle to maintain his French holdings against Philip Augustus. He spent only about six months of his 10-year reign in England. During his absences he left a committee in charge of the country. The most important and able of Richard's ministers was Hubert Walter, archbishop of Canterbury, chancellor from 1199 to 1205. With the king's mother, Eleanor, he put down a revolt by Richard's brother John in 1193 with strong and effective measures. But when Richard returned from abroad, he forgave John and promised him the succession.

This reign saw some important new ideas in taxation and military organization. Warfare was expensive. Various methods of raising money were tried: a tax on plow lands; a general tax of a fourth of revenues and chattels (this was a development of the so-called Saladin Tithe raised earlier for the Crusade); and a seizure of the wool crop of Cistercian and Gilbertine houses. Richard was remarkably successful in mustering the resources, financial and human, of his kingdom in support of his wars. It can also be argued that his demands on England weakened the realm and that Richard left his successor a very difficult job.



Was Richard a good King?

What did Richard concentrate most on during his reign?

Find out about and write a short biography of Richard The Lionheart.

The crusades were a series of European military expeditions, often counted at eight in all (with five main crusades), although numbering many more than that, which were directed against Muslim control of Jerusalem and the Christian shrine of the Holy Sepulchre and that took place from 1095 to 1270.

During the 11th century, feudal Europe underwent revivals of both commerce and religion. Pilgrimages to Jerusalem and other holy places in the East became increasingly popular. At the same time, the Byzantine Empire, with its capital at Constantinople (now Istanbul), was being threatened by the rising power of the Seljuq Turks. The Byzantine emperor Alexius I Comnenus turned to Europe, specifically to the pope of the Roman church, for aid.

In 1095, Pope Urban II called for a Christian army to aid Alexius and to recapture the Holy Sepulchre.

The First Crusade. Over two years the Christian forces assembled in and around Constantinople and prepared to march south across what today is Turkey. After a long siege they captured the heavily fortified town of Antioch in 1098. On July 15, 1099, Jerusalem fell to the crusaders, and its Muslim and Jewish inhabitants were slaughtered. In the following decades the crusaders gained control of a narrow strip of the Palestine coast and established the kingdom of Jerusalem, the county of Tripoli, the principality of Antioch, and the county of Edessa, the so-called crusader states, under various European rulers.

The Second Crusade. In 1144 the city of Edessa fell to the Muslims. When news of Edessa's fall reached Europe, Pope Eugenius III called for the Second Crusade. During this Crusade, armies from Germany and of France joined forces in Jerusalem in the spring of 1148. They began a siege at Damascus but were forced to retreat and the Second Crusade ended in humiliating failure. Nureddin occupied Damascus in 1154, and his nephew Saladin gained control of all of Egypt in 1169 and occupied Aleppo in 1183, encircling the crusader states. In 1187 Saladin destroyed most of Jerusalem's army in a battle at Hattin near the Sea of Galilee and on October 2 captured Jerusalem and most of the other European strongholds.



ROMAN SAXON VIKING NORMAN MEDIEVAL TUDOR STUART GEORGIAN 20TH CENTURY

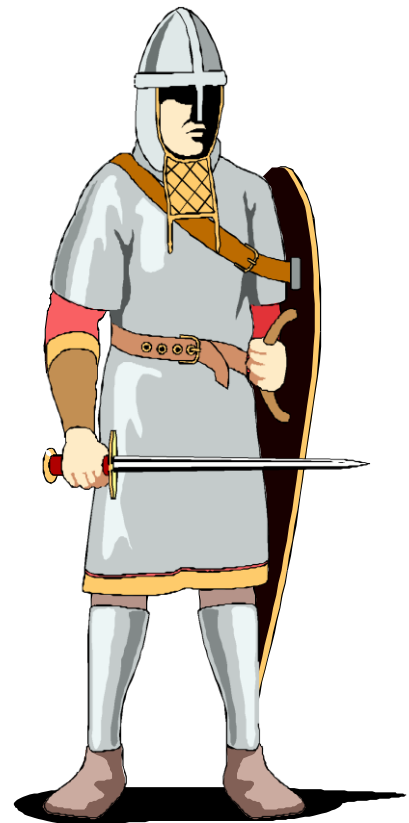
What were the Crusades?

Why did European nations become so involved in the Crusades?

The Third Crusade. Pope Gregory VIII called for the Third Crusade. The largest crusader army yet assembled set out under the command of Emperor Frederick Barbarossa in May 1189, but Frederick's death by a year later saved Saladin from having to confront him. In 1191 Richard I the Lion-Heart of England conquered the Byzantine province of Cyprus. In July Acre fell and its inhabitants were slaughtered. After failing to reach Jerusalem, in 1192 Richard I negotiated a five-year peace treaty with Saladin that permitted European pilgrims access to holy shrines.

The Fourth Crusade was called in 1198 by Pope Innocent III to strike against Egypt, but the crusader army was unable to pay for ships and so agreed to assist the Venetians in capturing the city of Zara, in Hungary and then moving against Constantinople. Constantinople fell on April 13, 1204, and the crusaders sacked the city. The crusaders and Venetians then established the Latin Empire of Constantinople, which was to last for about 60 years.

The Fifth Crusade. A wave of revived crusading fervour in Europe produced the Children's Crusade of 1212, in which thousands of children were lost or sold into slavery. Three years later Innocent III called for another strike at the Muslim world. The crusade ended indecisively with an eight-year truce. This was the last crusade organised by the papacy.



ROMAN SAXON VIKING NORMAN **MEDIEVAL** TUDOR STUART GEORGIAN 20TH CENTURY

Imagine you were a crusader. Write a letter to a friend describing what the crusade was like. How and why did the Crusades end?

THE MAGNA CARTA

TOPIC
31

The Magna Carta was the laying down of the law in a written form which made clear the rights and procedures to be carried out in the instance of disagreements, and most importantly clarified that the monarch had also to observe certain rules.

The solemn circumstances of its first granting have given to Magna Carta of 1215 a unique place in popular imagination which stated that "no free man shall be . . . imprisoned or [dispossessed] . . . except by the lawful judgment of his peers or by the law of the land."

Its contents may be divided into nine groups. The first concerned the church, asserting that it was to be "free." A second group provided statements of feudal law of concern to those holding lands directly from the crown, and the third assured similar rights to subtenants. A fourth group of clauses referred to towns, trade, and merchants. A large group was concerned with the reform of the law and of justice, and another with control of the behaviour of royal officials. A seventh group concerned the royal forests, and another dealt with immediate issues. The final clauses provided a form of security for the king's adherence to the charter, by which a council of 25 barons should have the ultimate right to start war against him should he seriously break the law.



ROMAN SAXON VIKING NORMAN **MEDIEVAL** TUDOR STUART GEORGIAN 20TH CENTURY

What was the Magna Carta?

Why was the Magna Carta such an important development for Britain?

How did the new legal framework affect the relationship between the Monarchy and the ordinary people?

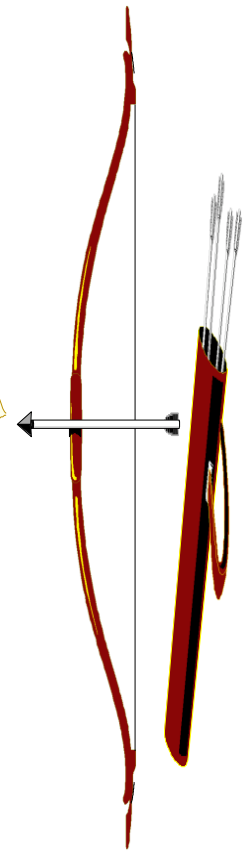
ROBIN HOOD

TOPIC
32

Robin Hood was a legendary outlaw hero of a series of English poems, some of which date from as early as the 14th century. Robin Hood was a rebel, and many of the episodes in the tales about him show him and his companions robbing and killing representatives of authority and giving to the poor. Their main enemy was the Sheriff of Nottingham, a local agent of the central government. Other enemies included wealthy landowners. Robin treated women, the poor, and people of humble status with courtesy. A good deal of the reason for his revolt against authority stemmed from popular resentment over those laws of the forest that restricted hunting rights. The early poems, especially, reveal the cruelty that was an inescapable part of medieval life.

Many attempts have been made to prove that there was a historical Robin Hood, though references to the legend by medieval writers make it clear that the poems were the only evidence for his existence available to them. The outlaw's existence may never have been anything but legendary.

The authentic Robin Hood ballads were the poetic expression of popular aspirations in the north of England during a turbulent era of rebellions and discontent, which ended in the Peasants' Revolt of 1381. The theme of the free but persecuted outlaw enjoying the forbidden hunting of the forest and outwitting the forces of law and order naturally appealed to the common people.



ROMAN SAXON VIKING NORMAN **MEDIEVAL** TUDOR STUART GEORGIAN 20TH CENTURY

Do you think that Robin Hood really existed, or was he just a character in poems of the time?

What does the story of Robin Hood tell us about life in medieval Britain?

Write a short story about one of Robin Hood's adventures.

THE STONE OF SCONE

TOPIC
33

King EDWARD, son of Henry III was king of England from 1272-1307. He strengthened the crown and Parliament against the old feudal nobility. He subdued Wales, destroying its independence and he sought the conquest of Scotland. His reign is particularly noted for administrative efficiency and legal reform. He introduced a series of laws that did much to strengthen the crown in the feudal hierarchy.

For more than 100 years relations between England and Scotland had been good and the border had been peaceful. Edward started 250 years of bitter hatred, savage warfare, and bloody border forays. The death of Alexander III of Scotland ended the line of succession. Many dubious claimants arose, and the Scottish magnates requested Edward's arbitration. Edward adjudged John de Balliol king (1292). Balliol under pressure from others in Scotland wanted to ally closer with France. Edward invaded and conquered Scotland (1296), removing to Westminster the coronation stone of Scone (pronounced soon).

The STONE OF DESTINY, that for centuries was associated with the crowning of Scottish kings, in 1296, was taken to England and later placed under the Coronation Chair. The stone, weighing 336 pounds (152 kg), is a rectangular block of pale yellow sandstone measuring 26 inches (66 cm) by 16 inches (41 cm) by 11 inches (28 cm). A Latin cross is its only decoration.

In 1996 the stone was eventually returned to Scotland by John Major, Prime Minister. The stone is now in Edinburgh after a series of claims and counter claims about where it should be kept.

Trace the history of the Stone of Scone.

Why is it so important in Scottish history?

Do all nations have symbols which they hold in respect?
Why?

Why did the British Government return the Stone to Scotland in 1996?



BATTLE OF BANNOCKBURN

TOPIC
34

This was a decisive battle in Scottish history (June 23-24, 1314), whereby the Scots under Robert the Bruce defeated the English under Edward II, regained their independence, and established Bruce on his throne as Robert I.

By the time of the battle, all Scotland had been cleared of English troops with the exception of Stirling Castle. To meet the large army that Edward II had collected for this purpose, Bruce assembled his smaller force a mile or two south of Stirling, where the trees would hamper attack by the superior English cavalry. He had taken up his position there when the English appeared on June 23.

The Scottish army, made up almost entirely of pikemen, was outnumbered by at least three to one by the English foot soldiers and cavalry; but, by masterly use of the terrain, the Scots were able to overcome the superior numbers of the enemy. The English army, had insufficient room for their cavalry and men to move around effectively. Bruce took advantage of the enemy's confusion and attacked. The defeated English army was finally put to flight by a charge of about 2,000 Scots who swept down from a Hill, which overlooked the battlefield to the west. The slaughter was great, and many of those who survived the wrath of the Scots perished in the Bannock Burn stream and beyond. Edward II escaped by a circular route to Dunbar and then to England.

Exact estimates of the numbers engaged are impossible, but the English had probably about 3,000 horse and 20,000 foot soldiers, the Scots about 10,000 altogether or even fewer. The Scots regard the battle as the culmination of their War of Independence.



ROMAN SAXON VIKING NORMAN **MEDIEVAL** TUDOR STUART GEORGIAN 20TH CENTURY

Why was there so much hostility between Scotland and England?

Write a letter to a friend describing what the event was like. Imagine you had a part in it.

Write a short biography of Robert the Bruce.

HUNDRED YEARS WAR

TOPIC
35

This was an ongoing struggle between England and France in the 14th-15th century over a series of disputes, including the question of the succession to the French crown. The struggle involved several generations of English and French claimants to the crown and actually occupied a period of more than 100 years. It is said to have started in 1337 and ended in 1453, but there had been periodic fighting going back to the 12th century.

Edward III considered himself a rightful claimant to the French throne. The other major claimant was the Count of Valois, a grandson of Philip III of France through a younger branch of the family. A French assembly called to settle the question chose the Valois claimant as Philip VI. Edward III seemed to accept the decision but later took an army to Flanders.

The English armies of Edward III kept both Philip VI (d. 1350) and his son John II (reigned 1350-64) on the defensive, but progress in expanding the area of English occupation was slow. Edward III's son Edward the Black Prince managed to capture John II at the crushing victory of Poitiers (1356). This forced the French to try to reach some agreement. The treaties of Calais (1360) gave Edward III full sovereignty over lands that he formerly held. However, when John II died in captivity, awaiting fulfilment of all the provisions of the treaties, his son Charles, crowned as Charles V, refused to respect the treaties and reopened the conflict. This time the French put the English on the defensive until Charles V's death in 1380 halted progress in the reduction of English territory.



ROMAN SAXON VIKING NORMAN **MEDIEVAL** TUDOR STUART GEORGIAN 20TH CENTURY

Find out more about why there was so much disagreement between Britain and France during this period of history.

Why did the war last so long?

Write a short biography of either Edward III or his son, The Black Prince.

THE BLACK DEATH

TOPIC
36

This was a pandemic of plague both bubonic and pneumonic, the first onset of which ravaged Europe between 1347 and 1351, taking a proportionately greater toll of life than any other known epidemic or war up to that time. Originating in China and Inner Asia, the plague was transmitted to Europeans (1347) when a Kipchak army, besieging a trading post in the Crimea, catapulted plague-infested corpses into the town. The disease spread from the Mediterranean ports affecting Sicily (1347); North Africa, mainland Italy, Spain, England, and France (1348); Austria, Hungary, Switzerland, Germany, and the Low Countries (1349); and Scandinavia and the Baltic lands (1350). There were recurrences of the plague in 1361-63, 1369-71, 1374-75, 1390, and 1400.

The French writer Jean Froissart's statement that about one-third of Europe's population died in the epidemic is fairly accurate. The population in England in 1400 was about half what it had been 100 years earlier; the Black Death caused the depopulation or total disappearance of about 1,000 villages. A rough estimate is that 25 million people in Europe died from plague during the Black Death. The population of western Europe did not again reach its 1348 level until the beginning of the 16th century.

The results of this violent catastrophe were many. The ending of wars and a sudden slump in trade immediately followed but were only of short duration. A more lasting and serious result was the drastic reduction of the amount of land under cultivation due to the deaths of so many labourers. This was the ruin of many landowners. There was also a general rise in wages for artisans and peasants.



ROMAN SAXON VIKING NORMAN **MEDIEVAL** TUDOR STUART GEORGIAN 20TH CENTURY

What was the Black Death?

What effect did it have on Britain?

How does it compare to other catastrophes or outbreaks of disease in British history?

THE PEASANTS REVOLT

TOPIC
37

This was the first great popular rebellion in English history. Its immediate cause was the imposition of the unpopular poll tax of 1381, which brought to a head the discontent that had been growing since the middle of the century. The rebellion drew support from several sources. The main grievance of the labourers and working classes was the Statute of Labourers (1351), which attempted to fix maximum wages during the labour shortage following the Black Death.

The uprising was centred in the southeastern counties and East Anglia, with minor disturbances in other areas. It began in Essex in May, taking the government by surprise. In June rebels from Essex and Kent marched toward London. On the 13th the Kentish men, entered London, where they massacred some Flemish merchants and razed the palace of the king's uncle. The government was forced to negotiate. King Richard met the men of Essex outside London, where he promised cheap land, free trade, and the abolition of serfdom and forced labour. During the king's absence, the Kentish rebels in the city forced the surrender of the Tower of London. The chancellor, Archbishop Simon of Sudbury, and the treasurer, Sir Robert Hales, both of whom were held responsible for the poll tax, were beheaded.

The king appealed to the rebels as their sovereign and, after promising reforms, persuaded them to disperse. The crisis in London was over, but in the provinces the rebellion reached its climax in the following weeks. It was finally ended when the rebels in East Anglia were crushed by the bishop of Norwich. The rebellion lasted less than a month and failed completely as a social revolution. King Richard's promises were quickly forgotten, and manorial discontent continued to find expression in local riots. The rebellion succeeded, however, as a protest against the taxation of poorer classes and prevented further levying of the poll tax.



ROMAN SAXON VIKING NORMAN **MEDIEVAL** TUDOR STUART GEORGIAN 20TH CENTURY

Why did governments increasingly need to look at new ways of taxation?

Why do Governments need to collect taxes?

Compare the Poll Tax riots with the riots caused by a similar tax introduced by the Conservative Government of Margaret Thatcher in the 1980s.

THE CANTERBURY TALES

TOPIC
38

Chaucer's great literary accomplishment of the 1390s was *The Canterbury Tales*. In it a group of about 30 pilgrims gather at the Tabard Inn in Southwark, across the Thames from London, and agree to engage in a storytelling contest as they travel on horseback to the shrine of Thomas à Becket in Canterbury, Kent, and back. Harry Bailly, host of the Tabard, serves as master of ceremonies for the contest.

The pilgrims are introduced by brief sketches in the "General Prologue." Between the 24 tales told by the pilgrims are short dramatic scenes presenting lively exchanges and usually involving the host and one or more of the pilgrims. Chaucer did not complete the full plan for his book: the return journey from Canterbury is not included, and some of the pilgrims do not tell stories. Use of a pilgrimage as a device for the collection of stories allowed Chaucer to bring together people from many walks of life: knight, prioress, monk; merchant, man of law, franklin, scholarly clerk; miller, reeve, pardoner; wife of Bath and many others. Also, the pilgrimage and the storytelling contest allowed presentation of a highly varied collection of literary styles; courtly romance, racy fabliau, saint's life, allegorical tale, beast fable, medieval sermon, and, at times, mixtures of these styles.



ROMAN SAXON VIKING NORMAN **MEDIEVAL** TUDOR STUART GEORGIAN 20TH CENTURY

Why are *The Canterbury Tales* a useful way of finding out about Britain in the 14th Century?

Make a list of other writers and artists who help us to understand British history.

Find out about and write a short biography of Chaucer.

BATTLE OF AGINCOURT

TOPIC
39

This was a bloody victory of the English over the French in the middle period of the Hundred Years' War. Invading France from the estuary of the Seine River in August 1415, Henry V of England took Harfleur in September and then decided to move through eastern Normandy to Calais. He had to march far inland to find a way over the Somme River. When he had done so (October 19), large French forces under Charles I d'Albret set out to intercept his retreat to the north. They finally caught the exhausted English army at Agincourt (Azincourt in the Pas-de-Calais); but the terrain there was thickly wooded, with only 1,000 yards of open ground, so that the French pursuers could not use the advantage of their numerical superiority. Initial attacks by the cavalry were repelled by the English archers; and, when the main French assaults were launched by armoured men across a muddy field, the lightly equipped and more mobile English archers attacked with swords and axes and cut the French down. Three hours of battle ended in disaster for the French. Some 1,500 knights, and about 4,500 soldiers were killed on the French side, whereas the English losses were very few.



ROMAN SAXON VIKING NORMAN **MEDIEVAL** TUDOR STUART GEORGIAN 20TH CENTURY

List the factors which led up to this event in British history.

Why is this event important in the history of Britain?

What were the immediate effects of this event?

Write a letter to a friend describing what the event was like. Imagine you had a part in it.

WAR OF THE ROSES

TOPIC
40

From 1455-85, this was a series of civil wars whose violence and civil strife preceded the strong government of the Tudors. Fought between the Houses of Lancaster and York for the English throne, the wars were named many years afterward from the supposed badges of the contending parties: the white rose of York and the red rose of Lancaster.

Both houses claimed the throne through descent from the sons of Edward III. Since the Lancastrians had occupied the throne from 1399, the Yorkists might never have made a claim but for the discontent prevailing in the mid-15th century.

King Henry VI lapsed into insanity in 1453, and the earl of Warwick (the "kingmaker"), installed Richard, duke of York, as protector of the realm. When Henry recovered in 1455 he reestablished his authority forcing York to take up arms for self-protection.

The first battle of the wars, at St. Albans (May 22, 1455), resulted in a Yorkist victory and four years of uneasy truce. Civil war was resumed in 1459. The Lancastrians killed Richard in a battle and marched on London. Richard's son went after them and beat the Lancastrians.

The next round of the wars arose out of disputes within the Yorkist ranks. In 1469 civil war was renewed. Warwick and Edward's rebellious brother George, duke of Clarence, started risings in the north; and in July, at Edgecote (near Banbury), defeated Edward's supporters, afterward holding the King prisoner. By March 1470, however, Edward regained his control, forcing Warwick and Clarence to flee to France, where they allied themselves with the French king Louis XI and their former enemy, Margaret of Anjou. Returning to England (September 1470), they deposed Edward and restored the crown to Henry VI. After some other minor battles Henry VI was murdered in the Tower of London. Edward's throne was secure for the rest of his life (he died in 1483). In 1483 Edward's brother Richard III, overriding the claims of his nephew, the young Edward V, upset many Yorkists, who then turned to the last hope of the Lancastrians, Henry Tudor (later Henry VII). With the help of the French and of Yorkist defectors, Henry defeated and killed Richard at Bosworth Field on Aug. 22, 1485, bringing the wars to a close. By his marriage to Edward IV's daughter Elizabeth of York in 1486, Henry united the Yorkist and Lancastrian claims.



ROMAN SAXON VIKING NORMAN **MEDIEVAL** TUDOR STUART GEORGIAN 20TH CENTURY

List the factors which led up to this event in British history.

Why is this event important in the history of Britain?

What were the immediate effects of this event?

Write a letter to a friend describing what the event was like. Imagine you had a part in it.

JOAN OF ARC

TOPIC
41

Joan of Arc (French Jeanne d'Arc) was a peasant girl who, believing that she was acting under divine guidance, led the French army in a great victory at Orléans that prevented an English attempt to conquer France during the Hundred Years' War.

Joan travelled in May 1428 to the nearest stronghold where she asked the captain of the garrison, for permission to join them. He did not take the 16-year-old girl and her visions seriously, and she returned home. Joan went again in January 1429. This time her firmness gained her the respect of the people; and the captain allowed her to go to the Dauphin at Chinon. She left dressed in men's clothes and accompanied by six men-at-arms. Crossing territory held by the enemy, and travelling for 11 days, she reached Chinon.

The city of Orleans besieged since Oct. 12, 1428, was almost totally surrounded by a ring of English strongholds. On the evening of May 4, when Joan was resting, she suddenly sprang up, apparently inspired, and announced that she must go and attack the English. Her arrival roused the French, and they took a fort. On the morning of May 6 she crossed to the south bank of the river and advanced toward another fort. Joan attacked them there and took it by storm. Very early on May 7 the French advanced against the fort of Les Tourelles. Joan was wounded but quickly returned to the fight, and it was thanks in part to her example that the French commanders maintained the attack until the English were defeated.

The French and English armies came face to face at Patay on June 18, 1429. Joan promised success to the French, saying that Charles would win a greater victory that day than any he had won so far. The victory was complete; the English army was routed and with it, finally, its reputation for invincibility.

Joan of Arc fought in many other battles and proved to be both very effective and inspiring to others. Captured a year afterward, Joan was burned by the English and their French collaborators as a heretic. She became a great national heroine of her compatriots.



ROMAN SAXON VIKING NORMAN **MEDIEVAL** TUDOR STUART GEORGIAN 20TH CENTURY

Joan of Arc was French. What influence did she have on British history?

Was it unusual for women to fight in wars? How else did women help in time of war?

Make a list of other women who are famous in history, especially British history.

Find out about and write a short biography of Joan of Arc.

BATTLE OF BOSWORTH

TOPIC
42

The battle of Bosworth, (Aug. 22, 1485), was a battle in the English Wars of the Roses, fought 12 miles (19 km) west of Leicester and 3 miles (5 km) south of Market Bosworth, between the forces of the Yorkist King Richard III and the Lancastrian contender for the crown, Henry Tudor (the future Henry VII). It was the last battle of the wars, and it established the Tudor dynasty on the English throne. Henry, returning from exile, landed at Milford Haven (August 7) and marched toward Richard at Leicester. Early on August 22 Richard's army reached a good position on Ambien Hill. Richard's ally, John Howard, Duke of Norfolk, was killed in the initial skirmish. Though called to the area by the king, Thomas, Lord Stanley (later 1st Earl of Derby), and Henry Percy, Earl of Northumberland, failed to assist the Yorkists in battle. When Richard moved against Henry Tudor, Sir William Stanley, brother of Lord Stanley who had privately pledged support for Henry, attacked Richard's flank. The Yorkist army melted away, while Richard, preferring death, was unhorsed and killed in the bog.



ROMAN SAXON VIKING NORMAN **MEDIEVAL** TUDOR STUART GEORGIAN 20TH CENTURY

Why was this battle important in the War of the Roses?

Choose another battle in the War of the Roses and write an account of it as if you were actually there, in the thick of battle.

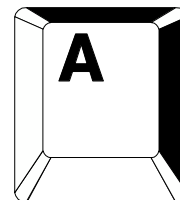
(b. c. 1422, Kent, Eng., d. 1491, London), he was the first English printer, who as a translator and publisher exerted an important influence on English literature.

In 1438 he was apprenticed to Robert Large who in the following year became lord mayor of London. Large died in 1441, and Caxton moved to Bruges. During the next 30 years he became increasingly prosperous and influential in Flanders and Holland.

In Cologne, where he lived from 1470 to the end of 1472, he learned printing. In the epilogue of Book III of the completed translation, entitled *The Recuyell of the Historyes of Troye*, he tells how his "pen became worn, his hand weary, his eye dimmed" with copying the book; so he "practised and learnt" at great personal cost how to print it. He set up a press in Bruges in about 1474, the first book printed in English, was published there in 1475. Caxton's translation from the French of *The Game and Playe of the Chesse* was published in 1476.

Caxton printed two or three other works in French, but toward the end of 1476 he returned to England and established his press at Westminster. From then on he devoted himself to writing and printing.

The first dated book printed in English, *Dictes and Sayenges of the Phylosophers*, appeared on Nov. 18, 1477. Kings, nobles, and rich merchants were Caxton's patrons and sometimes commissioned special books. His varied output, including books of chivalric romance, conduct, morality, history, and philosophy, and an encyclopaedia, *The Myrroure of the worlde* (1481), the first illustrated English book, shows that he catered also to a general public. The large number of service books and devotional works published by Caxton were the staple reading of most literate persons. He also printed nearly all the English literature available to him in his time including the *Canterbury Tales*. By the time of his death, he had published about 100 items of various kinds.



How important was the development of printing in British history? How has printing developed since the days of William Caxton? Find out about and write a short biography of William