

Knights!

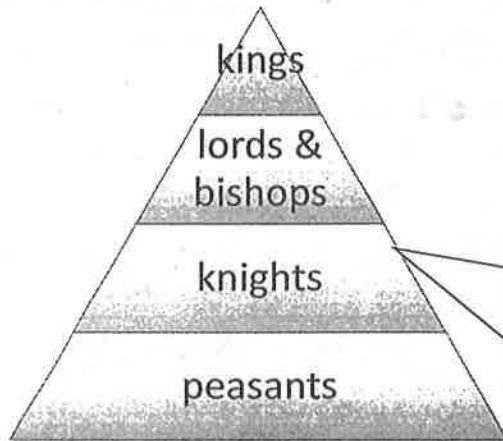
Name: _____

Div: _____

The medieval era was a time of constant warfare. The most significant person on the battlefield was the knight in his armour.



Who were the knights? Where did they sit on the feudal pyramid?



Knights were Sub-tenants! They received land from the Lords and bishops and in return they fought wars for the king. They also protected Lords, Bishops and their property. That means knights were warriors on horseback, who fought for their king, their lord or, in some cases, for whoever would pay for their services!

Source A- feudal pyramid

What process did men go through to become a knight? Could anyone become a knight?

Early on, even 'lowly born' men, who were rewarded for bravery and skill in battle could become knights. But by the thirteenth century, only men of noble birth were admitted to the knighthood and, even then, only after years of training in military skills, service to others and Christian teachings.

Training for knighthood began at the age of seven when a young boy left his own family to learn the skills of a **page**. He studied under the supervision of the noblewomen of another household and learned to be polite, to serve God, to read and write, and to ride and hunt for wild game. At 14 years of age he could become a **squire**. Through service to a knight, he would learn to look after armour, weaponry and horse and continue his training in military skills, social graces and cultural pursuits.

By the age of about 21, the young man was eligible for knighthood and expected to live his life according to the rules known as the code of **chivalry**.

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Squire- 14 years

Chivalry- 21 years

Source b. Stages to becoming a Knight

Code of Chivalry:

- To fear God and maintain His Church
- To serve the liege lord in valour and faith
- To protect the weak and defenceless
- To give succour to widows and orphans
- To refrain from the wanton giving of offence
- To live by honour and for glory
- To despise pecuniary (\$) reward
- To fight for the welfare of all
- To obey those placed in authority
- To guard the honour of fellow knights
- To eschew unfairness, meanness and deceit
- To keep faith
- At all times to speak the truth
- To persevere to the end in any enterprise begun
- To respect the honour of women
- Never to refuse a challenge from an equal
- Never to turn the back upon a foe

Unfortunately, the code only extended to other knights.

... He drank himself into a stupor with considerable regularity. His castle was usually filled with prostitutes. If he got annoyed with his opponent during a chess game, he was inclined to brain him with one of the massive pieces of the day. If his wife annoyed him, he beat her savagely. When a servant was slow to bring his wine, he threw a javelin at him to speed his steps.

S. Painter, *A History of the Middle Ages 284±1500*, Macmillan, London, 1976.

He is brave and courtly and skilful, and noble and of good family and eloquent, handsomely experienced in hunting and falconry; he knows how to play chess and backgammon, gaming and dicing. And his wealth was never denied to any, but each has as much as he wants ... He has never been slow to perform honourable deeds. He dearly loves God and the Trinity ... he has honoured the poor and lowly; and he judges each according to his worth.

Girart, in H. Middleton, *The Age of Chivalry*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1988.

Source c. *Descriptions of Knights*.

Knights when they weren't at war:

When not in battle, knights practised their skills. They did this individually in exercises called 'tilting the quintain' or in organised tournaments. Tournaments developed from the custom of teams of knights **jousting** or competing against one another on a local field. Some knights would get badly wounded and some even died competing at tournaments. Tournaments attracted large audiences that enjoyed the excitement of seeing who would be the hero of the day. People could differentiate between knights through their individual coat of arms.

Knights! Questions

Name: _____

Div: _____

Date: _____

The fall of Rome was partially due to the fact that the Roman Senate created rules to protect their station, and not allow others to rise to a Senate position. The fact that the leaders were not involved with the army any more, and only concerned with their wealth, led to the Roman army falling behind technologically. Other armies gained better tactics and weapons and were able to defeat Rome.

1. How did knighthood change in the 13th Century?
2. How does this change in knighthood reflect what happened in the Roman Senate?
3. Based on what we know about what happened to Rome, what can we assume may happen to knights?
4. What other factors may affect whether or not knights continue to be a major force?
5. Why do you think the two descriptions of knights are different, in source c?
6. How many points of the code did the knight in "the history of the middle ages" break?
7. What is the overriding theme of knightly free time?
8. Why might the combination of chivalry only relating to knights and the purpose/free time of knights cause problems?

Geoffrey, the knight

Look at the pictures. Put the pictures in the right order.

