

ACTIVITIES

1. Why did the Hundred Years' War last so long? Consider both the strategy required for defeating castles (see page 147) and France's failures on the battlefield.
2. What could the long-bow do? How could this capability turn metal armour into a worthless technology?
3.
 - a) In the fifteenth century, powerful cannons were developed and widely used in sieges. With this new technology, castles could no longer provide the protection they once had. Why did gunpowder and cannons make both knights and castles out of date?
 - b) Think of two modern examples of technology making an institution or practice useless.
4. In war, countries use military might to get their way. Just as in a scuffle on the school ground, the best fighter usually wins. The justness of a cause is irrelevant. Write a brief paper outlining the benefits and drawbacks of war as a way to settle disputes between countries. In a small group, brainstorm other ways to settle disputes and outline the benefits and drawbacks of these.
5. Why do you think Joan of Arc was able to rally the French in the Hundred Years' War? How did she help the French see themselves as a nation?
6. Despite her powerless station as a shepherd's daughter, Joan of Arc beat the odds.
 - a) What enabled Joan to succeed? Do some research to find a Canadian who came from humble circumstances to make a mark on history. Describe an imaginary situation in which you achieve a similarly remarkable achievement.
 - b) By becoming a military leader, Joan took on a traditionally male role. Do you think this contributed to her fate? How? Describe the difficulty some women face when they take on traditionally male roles in Canadian society.

TRADE AND TOWN

TRADE BEGINS

During the Crusades, western Europeans' eyes were opened to the possibilities of trade with distant lands. Tempted by goods such as silk, spices, tapestries, and sugar, a few brave individuals with the money to pay for the expenses of a trip went into the trading business. Over time, western Europeans began sending ships on trading expeditions to distant lands in search of the goods they desired.

At first, traders sold their goods in regular local markets, or fairs, held in towns and villages and sponsored by the feudal lords. The fairs were fabulous events where people gathered to socialize and browse, not just to buy. Through exposure to the



Figure 5-10 Medieval towns were busy places with all kinds of goods for sale. Identify four activities in this street scene.



Figure 5-11 Cities such as Oxford, Hamburg, and Frankfurt developed in the Middle Ages because of their location on trade routes. What trade did the Italian city-states of Venice and Genoa control? What trade did the Hanseatic League control?

many goods brought from faraway lands, ordinary people realized that they could make things and sell them in exchange for money. Here was their escape from serfdom. All over Europe, people began learning and perfecting the skills needed to produce the goods that were coming from distant lands. Fairs were soon filled with finely crafted goods—such as copper pots, gloves, and cutlery—made in western Europe as well as in far-off lands.

TRADE LEADS TO TOWNS

After some time, the fair could not satisfy all the needs of traders and consumers. First, they were seasonal, so no one could buy or sell in winter. Second, people would sometimes have to travel great distances to reach the fairs. Travel was dangerous, so many just didn't go. Out of this emerged the need for the stability that could be provided by a town, where permanent shops could be set up and protected by a wall surrounding the town.

TO MARKET, TO MARKET

The appearance of a market in a society marks the beginning of organized **commerce**: the buying, selling, and bartering (trading) of goods and services. In the countryside, the market usually appears on a set day of the week

or month. Goods may be sold, as well as various foods. Sometimes a hairdresser or letter writer offers services for sale. In larger towns and cities, the market usually occupies one area, with different squares or streets dedicated to various products.

The market has emerged in virtually every civilization. For example, Bernal Diaz del Castillo, a Spaniard who travelled to Mexico

with Hernàn Cortéz in 1519, saw the great Tlatelolco marketplace in Tenochtitlàn, capital of the Aztec Empire. He called this market a marvel of organization, with areas for jade, lumber, limestone, salt, and more, as well as streets for herbalists, barbers, and wild animal dealers.

The ancient fair, or market, survives in Canada in amusement parks, trade fairs, and farmers' markets. We even buy and sell bonds and company shares on the "stock market."



Figure 5-12 A young vendor sells her wares in a market in Gujarat, India. Goods and services are sold in markets in virtually every civilization.

WHAT DO YOU THINK?

1. Name a nursery rhyme, song, or story that features a fair or market.
2. a) Identify another form of market (such as the farmers' market) that exists today in Canada.
- b) Why do you think the market in all its forms has become such an important feature of Canadian culture? What does this tell you about Canadian society?

THE CRAFT GUILDS

The emerging towns were populated with people specializing in trades of all sorts. There were bakers, tailors, sword and armour makers, **tanners**, and tavernkeepers, to name a few. Every trade, or craft, was controlled by the experts in that particular trade, who together were called a **guild**.

Guilds were co-operative organizations that set standards for the quality of their products,

controlled prices for them, kept out unskilled craftspeople, and eliminated competition. They controlled almost all the merchant and trade activity that took place within and between towns. Guilds also looked after their members in case of death or accident. For example, if a member of the candle-makers guild grew too sick to work, the other candle makers would pitch in to provide food for him and his family. Tradespeople could only operate if they belonged to a guild, and they could only belong to the guild for which they had been trained.

commerce: the buying, selling, and trading of goods and services

tanner: a person who makes hide into leather

guild: a union of persons practising the same craft

apprentice: one who learns a trade by working for a master

master: a certified expert

journeyman: one admitted to a guild but not yet a master

seamstress: a woman who makes a living by sewing

chamber pot: a pot used instead of a toilet before plumbing was invented

Becoming a Master of a Craft

Acceptance into a guild came at the end of a long and difficult apprenticeship. The **apprentice** learned the craft in stages, beginning with the most simple tasks. He or she would receive training, room and board, and a small allowance. Young people were sent to live and work under a particular **master** at a very early age, sometimes eight or nine. Many masters beat their apprentices for making mistakes.

After years of work and learning, apprentices would take a test to become a **journeyman** and would be admitted to a guild. They were called journeymen because they could now be paid by the day (*par journée*). After several more years of study and practice, the journeyman created a "master piece" to be judged by a panel of masters for quality. If the piece was considered acceptable, then the journeyman became a master, an expert in his or her craft.

Using The Written Rule as a Primary Source

CATALOGUE CARD

What is it? A set of rules called an ordinance

Who wrote it? High ranking masters of the **seamstresses'** guild in Memmingen, Germany

When? 1543

Why? To set guidelines about who can be a seamstress and what training is required

Concerning seamstresses: All seamstresses who are not citizens here are to be sent away and forbidden to do work as seamstresses in this city.

For those who are citizens, it is ordered that no one shall serve an apprenticeship of less than one year, and after this a period as a journeyman for at least one year, before she is allowed to become a master. She is also never to do anything which is limited to members of the tailors' or furriers' guild, and is to pay the guild five shillings [when she is taken on as a master]. She is to obey all regulations and ordinances. A woman who wants to become a master is to appear before sworn overseers [guild officers], who will test her on what she knows and explain the ordinances, which she is to follow from that point on.



Guild membership was not limited to men in the Middle Ages. Although barred from most guilds, women were active in others, especially guilds related to the brewing and textile industries. As you can see from the set of rules above, women could become masters of their craft.

Ordinances are rules written by towns, companies, or clubs to help them run their affairs. They do not deal with criminal offences, such as murder or theft. Instead they deal with such things as whether or not you can keep chickens within town limits or empty your **chamber pot** out your window.

Rules are important because they tell us what was important to ordinary people, especially rule makers. When assessing just one set of rules, always keep in mind that the townspeople probably had many other rules about other matters. Also, people in

other towns may have had different concerns. In other words, a set of rules gives us a snapshot of the concerns of one group.

WHAT DO YOU THINK?

1. Read the passage again to identify five things that were important to the seamstresses' guild in Memmingen.
2. Here is one clause from a by-law, or rule, for the city of Scarborough, Ontario. "Pinball machines and other electric or manually operated games shall be prohibited in ... commercial zones." What does this clause tell us? Analyze a by-law for your own community.



Figure 5-13 These three young people work in a German automotive plant as apprentice mechanics. After they complete their apprenticeships they will receive their journeyman papers. Identify another trade that uses apprentices.

prohibition: a ban

incentive: something that urges a person on

mandatory: required

LINK-UP

Guilds and Modern Unions

The guilds of the late Middle Ages brought together people working in the same field to achieve common goals. As such, guilds were the forerunners of modern associations of professionals, such as the Editors' Association of Canada. Craftspeople formed guilds for several reasons, one of which was to protect the rights of the guild members. Particularly in this area, guilds bear a striking resemblance to modern unions, such as the Canadian Auto Workers (CAW). The following excerpt from a newspaper article shows what

CAW won after a strike against General Motors of Canada (GM Canada) in the fall of 1996.

CAW leaders can pat themselves on the back for some short-term victories:

- ◆ A requirement that GM Canada hire someone to replace every job that goes to an outside supplier.
- ◆ A three-year **prohibition** on plant sales or closings.
- ◆ Attractive early retirement **incentives** for workers in Windsor and Oshawa to help compensate them for the sale of those two plants.
- ◆ A ban on **mandatory** overtime at the Oshawa operations.



WHAT DO YOU THINK?

1. For each of the four "short-term victories" noted above, what was the union trying to achieve? Examine the section "Apprentices and Guilds" to identify three goals of the guilds of the Middle Ages.

2. With your teacher, look up some modern business unions or associations in the telephone book. You may

even find that some of these organizations still use the word "guild" in their names. As a class, write to one of these groups and ask what the organization does for its members.

pageant: an elaborate entertainment displaying scenes from history

bear baiting: a public spectacle in which dogs torment a chained bear

DID YOU KNOW?

A stone wall encircles the oldest part of Quebec City, just as walls encircle the centres of many European towns.

LIFE IN THE TOWN

Although medieval towns had many attractions, they were also crowded and smelly and rather small compared with modern cities. London, England, today has a population of more than eight million people, but in the year 1300 only 50 000 people lived there, only one-thirtieth the number living in modern Greater Vancouver.



Figure 5-14 The city of Carcassonne, France, is still surrounded by the wall built in the Middle Ages. What effect would such a wall have on the architecture of the houses in the town?

Most towns and cities were the centres for farm communities. They were surrounded by the farms of large manors or they grew around some sort of defensive structure, such as a castle, palace, or large monastery. Citizens usually built an encircling wall of stone to protect against raids from rival cities or feudal lords. The citizens also built gates, which they shut at night. As a village developed into a town and then into a city, ever larger rings of walls were built.

Because of the walls that surrounded medieval towns, space was limited, and houses for the poor and middle-class people were all crowded together. Town houses were often several stories high, with their upper floors overhanging the street. Unlike cities today, medieval towns did not have straight, planned streets.

Instead, streets were narrow and winding, and they usually had open sewers. As there was no plumbing, people routinely emptied chamber pots into the street and dumped their garbage there as well. In some places, swineherds drove pigs through the town at night to eat up the waste.

For all their faults, medieval towns also had their attractions. Compared with small manor villages, there was much more entertainment for people. Guilds and the local church organized many **pageants** and plays, and people could also see **bear baiting** and other blood sports. Life in town was exciting.

SOCIAL CHANGES THAT CAME WITH TRADE

Money had not been very important in the old feudal system, where a person's wealth and power were measured by the amount of land he or she held. With trade, all that changed. Now many people could become independent and even powerful because they could make money. The town was the home of the medieval middle class, most of whom were merchants and skilled tradespeople. These townspeople were called **burgesses** in England, **burgers** in Germany, and **bourgeois** in France. Some merchants grew wealthier than the feudal landowners in the country.

The feudal lords had a hard time adjusting to a system where money, and not position, was most important. Members of the nobility thought trade was beneath them, but they still wanted the finer things available only in the towns. Unknown to the feudal lords, the middle class, with its power, money, and desire for freedom, would spell the end of feudalism.

New Freedoms

The towns drew people longing for freedom. Although the town was walled and cramped, people had the freedom to do as they wished, marry whom they pleased, and make money as they could. According to the law, runaway serfs could gain their freedom by staying in town for a year and a day without being discovered. Because the towns were so small, this was actually quite difficult to do. Nonetheless, some were able to manage it.

Feudal lords could not control the people who lived in towns, nor could manor courts. Most medieval towns were chartered; that is, they paid for or were given the right to exist by the monarch or the local lord. The **charters** of many modern European towns can be traced all the way back to the Middle Ages. A charter gave a town certain privileges, one of which was that the town could govern itself. Wealthy citizens and the guilds usually controlled the town government.

New Powers

The most powerful citizens were those belonging to the merchant guilds. These guilds were for the people who bought and sold goods on a large scale, and who financed ships and overland caravans to trade in distant lands.

Sometimes merchant guilds became very powerful and well organized. By putting together their wealth, for example, the port cities belonging to the Hanseatic League (a merchant guild) were able to support their own army and build a navy. The league became so wealthy and powerful that by threatening to cut off all trade with a country it could force that country's ruler to do what it wanted. In Italy, the port cities of Genoa, Venice, and Naples grew into powerful city-states thanks to their merchant-traders.

DID YOU KNOW?

In modern times, people who run major businesses still have enormous influence over nations large and small. Their power, however, lies in their ability to bring business to a country, not in military might.

charter: a written order authorizing the right to operate as a town

ACTIVITIES

1. Examine the map showing trade routes. How were trade routes affected by major waterways? Referring to a relief map of Europe, explain how the physical features of Europe affected the trade routes.
2. With a partner, skim pages 149–50 to find the answers to the following two questions. When you skim, don't read everything. Instead look for just the information you need.
 - a) What factors led to the growth of trade?
 - b) How did the growth of trade lead to the need for towns?
3. Compare a medieval fair with a modern Canadian shopping mall. Consider the days and hours of operation, goods sold, type of consumers, and ownership of the shops/booths. What do the differences tell you about the two societies?
4. Explain how medieval guilds worked, why they were needed, and what they did for their members.
5. In a chart, compare the life of a serf and the life of a guild member working in a town. What are the benefits and drawbacks of each person's way of life?
6. Describe what you would see and experience as you entered a medieval town. What conclusions can you draw from the fact that medieval towns always had walls?
7. Define the term "middle class." How did this class fit into medieval society? Why did the middle class grow in size and importance during the Middle Ages? In what way would the growing middle class change feudal society?
8. Why was the Hanseatic League able to become more powerful than some rulers?