

Objectives

- Explain how feudalism shaped medieval society.
- Describe the lives of knights and nobles.
- Analyze how the economic system of the manor worked and how it affected peasants and nobles.

Terms and People

- **feudalism** – a loosely organized system of rule in which powerful local lords divided their landholdings among lesser lords
- **vassal** – a lesser lord in the system of feudalism
- **feudal contract** – an exchange of pledges that created the political and economic relationship between lords and vassals
- **fief** – an estate
- **knight** – a mounted warrior

Terms and People (continued)

- **tournament** – a mock battle fought by knights
- **chivalry** – a code of conduct adopted by knights which required them to be brave, loyal, and true to their word
- **troubadour** – a wandering musician
- **manor** – a lord's estate
- **serf** – peasant on a manor



How did feudalism and the manor economy emerge and shape medieval life?

Medieval society was a network of mutual obligations.

It was part of a new political and economic system called feudalism that guided European life during the Middle Ages.

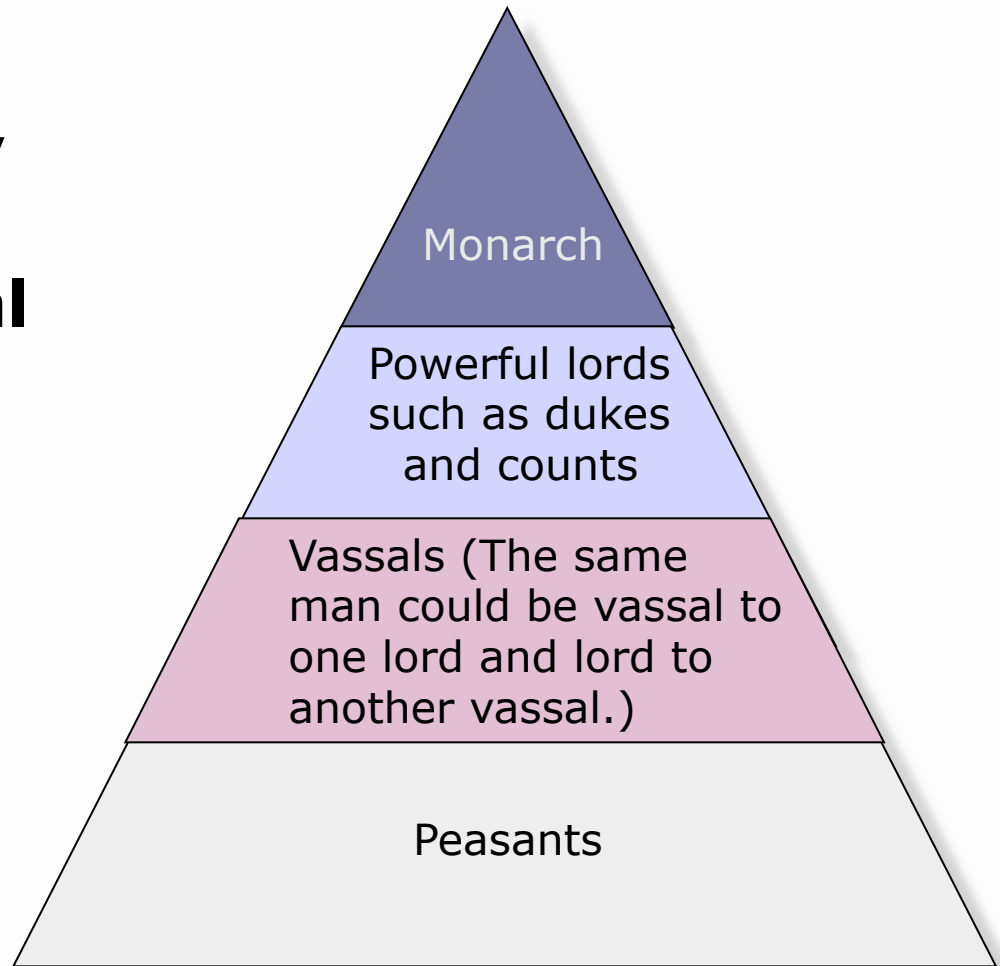
Feudalism developed in Europe in response to the need to protect against outside invasion and maintain order.

- Local lords divided their landholdings among **vassals**.
- In exchange for a **fief**, these vassals pledged service and loyalty to the lord.
- This system of mutual obligations was set by an exchange of pledges known as a **feudal contract**.

Under the feudal arrangement, both lords and vassals had obligations to each other.

Obligations of the lord	Obligations of the vassal
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Protect the vassal• Grant the vassal a fief, or estate	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Pledge loyalty to the lord• Provide the lord with forty days of military service per year• Provide money payments and advice

Society was very structured. Every individual had a place in the social pyramid.





Warfare was a way of life in the feudal age.

Warfare often involved trying to seize a castle.

These fortresses housed lords and knights and gave refuge to peasants in time of war.

Castles were fortified with high walls, towers, and water-filled moats.

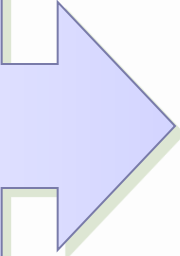
At a young age, nobles began training to become **knights.**

Boys as young as seven went to the castle of their father's lord to learn to ride and fight.

When training was done, the young man was made a knight in a public ceremony.

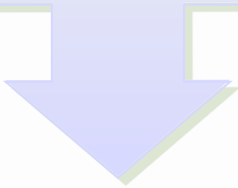
Knights wore armor and fought with swords, axes, or lances. They also engaged in mock battles called **tournaments**.

Noblewomen took over the duties of the lord when he went off to war.



- The “lady of the manor” supervised vassals and managed the household.
- Some noblewomen, such as **Eleanor of Aquitaine**, played a role in politics.
- **Women’s rights of inheritance were restricted**, but some did inherit fiefs.
- Wives were expected to bear many children.

In the later Middle Ages, knights adopted a code of ideal conduct called **chivalry**.



- It required them to be brave, loyal, and true to their word, as well as to fight fairly and protect the weak.
- In theory, chivalry put women on a pedestal. **Troubadours** sang about brave knights and their devotion to their loves.

The **manor** was the heart of feudal life.

It included a village or two and surrounding lands. The manor system worked by mutual obligation.

Most of the population were **serfs**, who were bound to the land.

THE MANOR SYSTEM	
Lord of Manor to Peasants	Peasants to Lord
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Use of land for farming• Protection• Could not be forced off land	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Money or crops as rent• Labor on lord's lands• Certain fees

Most manors were self-sufficient, producing everything the people there needed.



Manors included fields, a mill, a church, peasant huts, and the lord's manor house.

Most serfs never traveled farther than a few miles away during their entire lives.

Life was harsh and short for peasants.



- Everyone worked long hours, and few lived past age thirty-five. They ate a simple diet of bread and vegetables and slept in huts with their livestock.
- Peasants had a week off at Christmas and Easter. They celebrated by dancing and playing rough sports.