

## History 10

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"The goal of this course is to help students understand that humans establish various kinds of organizations as a means of systematically meeting their needs and wants. These organizations may be political or economic. Additionally, this course is about a lot of "isms", (conservatism, liberalism, socialism, imperialism) or philosophical viewpoints that underlie how people think about society in unique ways.

The ideas of this course are far-reaching, and while complex at times, certainly the basis for understanding almost everything about the makeup and the conflicts of our world.

There are five core concepts which figure prominently in Grade 10 History.

- **Interdependence:** The concept of interdependence underlies the study of social organizations.
- **Social Institution:** Students will explore the organizations which have been established to organize our social or common lives.
- **Decision-Making:** Students will study how political and economic decisions are made at the national and international levels.
- **Power:** Students will further develop their understanding of this concept by exploring political and economic decision-making.
- **Ideology:** Students will examine the role ideology plays in the economic and political decision-making processes of social organizations.

The concepts of this course can be quite challenging, but for those who read broadly before undertaking to answer questions in the assignments, the rewards of studying this course and the 18<sup>th</sup>, 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century events that are used to illustrate the unit concepts, can be substantial and thought-provoking.

Due to the demanding nature of this course, it is recommended for students who have excellent independent study and research skills."

### Unit 1 (Political Decision Making)

- i. *Lesson 1 (Feudal Paradigm)*  
(CURRICULUM: Social Organizations – Knowledge 1.1 - 1.3; Skills 1.1 – 1.5; Values 1.1, 1.4, and 1.5)
- ii. *Lesson 2 (Absolutist Paradigm)*  
(CURRICULUM: Social Organization – Knowledge 1.1 – 1.3; Skills 1.3 – 1.5; Values 1.1, 1.3 – 1.5)
- iii. *Lesson 3 (Enlightenment Paradigm)*  
(CURRICULUM: Social Organization – Knowledge 1.2 and 1.3; Skills 1.4 and 1.5; Values 1.1, 1.2, and 1.4)
- iv. *Lesson 4 (French Revolution)*  
(CURRICULUM: Social Organization – Knowledge 1.2 and 1.4; Skills 1.3 – 1.5; Values 1.1, 1.2, 1.4, and 1.6)

## History 10

### Welcome to History 10

Why bother studying history? The answer to that is it helps us understand our world today! Just as we learn from our own experiences, parents, and role models, so we can also learn from the patterns of the past. Whether you live today or in the middle ages, people experience the same struggles and conflicts, and if we're smart we'll learn from them. Not only that, but by studying what the people before us went through, we can understand our own lives better! As you study Social Organization in this course, hopefully you'll start to realize that the decisions and events of the past have greatly affected the world we live in today.

The goal of this course is to help you understand that humans have established several different kinds of organizations to meet their needs and wants. These groups may be political so that people can govern themselves, or they may be economic to help people and businesses provide the goods we all need to have a reasonable standard of living.

However, this course is also about a lot of 'isms', or philosophies, that define how people and society think; often in very unique ways! Whether conservatism, liberalism, socialism, or imperialism, all of these philosophies focus on who should govern, who should have a voice in governing, how nations should act, and even what makes a country. As you'll learn, wars and debates have raged over these very questions - and sometimes those conflicts continue to this very day. That's what makes this course and the ideas in it so important and relevant for each of us.

### Five Main Concepts

Over the 19 lessons in this course, there are five main concepts that you'll explore and learn more about. Several of these concepts can be challenging, but if you read and study before answering the questions, the events of the 18<sup>th</sup>, 19<sup>th</sup>, and 20<sup>th</sup> century that you'll be looking at can be extremely thought-provoking and rewarding.

To begin with, one of the concepts you'll explore is that of **Interdependence**, which forms the foundation for everything you will study. Without the belief that people are connected together, there would be no desire for the social institutions we have today. Further, if we remember that how we act affects other people, than we also can see how there needs to be laws and limits on what individuals and nations do, to ensure that everyone can live in a just and fair society. In essence, we're all tied together working for the common good!

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Another important concept is **Social Institutions**, which exist to organize our social communal lives. These groups can be about politics, governance, economics, or even leisure, but they all work to bring order. Tied with this, is the concept of **Decision-Making** and how small groups, nations, and even groups of nations, make the choices that affect each of us. As you'll learn, these decisions can be made by one person, a committee, or even by the entire community.

Often, many decisions that are made focus on the idea of **Power**. People seek power, for then they can control how decisions are made; whether to protect their own interests, or to better society as a whole. Power also gives organizations and nations the ability to chart their own course, and determine who gets to make the political and economic decisions. Finally, many times where the power resides is decided by **Ideology**, and what that teaches people about life. Ideology is a system of thinking that is based on a set of assumptions about human nature and how society should function, and can mean continually wanting change, or even seeking to make sure things never change! As a result, ideology is a very important force in all aspects of life, and each one of us carries our own piece with us every day.

## Unit 1: Political Decision Making

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This unit deals with the question of ‘who gets to make the political decisions in a country?’ While you may never have thought about this question, you probably still have a viewpoint on who should get to vote, who gets to make decisions, and how much power government should have? Each of these questions is fundamental to understanding how the world works, and the answers lay rooted in historical conflicts and events.

As you study this unit, you’ll explore how human societies in history have tried to meet their *needs*, provide for their *wants*, and protect the common good of the group or nation. In many cases, this pursuit led them to form *organizations* to provide the leadership in their struggle for a better way of life, and the decision making structures they developed have had a large effect on the world around us centuries later.

Throughout the next 4 lessons you’ll see how the Feudal system of the Middle Ages gradually transformed into the modern democracies that we see in the world today; though often with hiccups and bloodshed along the way. The first three lessons will deal with three specific paradigms (Feudalism, Absolutism, and Enlightenment), or ways of looking at the world, before turning to how all of these paradigms came together in a violent civil war called the French Revolution.

While you read through these lessons, try keep the following questions in mind:

- Should some people be given more power than others?
- Should men and woman of all classes of society have equal access to power and privilege?
- Should the rights of the individual, or the rights of group, be given higher priority?
- How much power should a government have to control people’s behavior?
- Is the use of force justified in a conflict over social rights?

## Lesson 1: Feudal Paradigm

### Key Learning Goals

By the end of this lesson you will:

- Understand how the Feudal System operated, and who benefited from it
- Discover what led to the end of the Feudal system



<http://history-world.org/feudalism.htm>

### Lesson Introduction

Have you ever felt like someone else was making decisions about your life, and you had to obey whatever they said? Maybe it was your parents or a teacher, or maybe a coach or even a friend. Maybe you yourself are in a position to make some choices that others have to follow, and they are counting on you to make good decisions. In any case, the power to make choices is a great responsibility; even more so when other people are effected.

Take a look at the chart below. One column contains several reasons why people may let others make decisions for them. Before reading the lesson, take a moment and rank each item (1 being most important) as to why you think people in the Middle Ages let kings and nobles make their choices for them. After the lesson, come back and redo your rankings, to see if they have changed.

Reasons why other people might let others make decisions for them	My Rank before the lesson as to why people let others make decisions for them	My Rank after the lesson as to why people let others make decisions for them
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<b>They weren't smart enough to make their own choices</b>		
<b>They needed protection</b>		
<b>They were forced to obey</b>		
<b>It benefited them</b>		
<b>They had no other option</b>		

## Life under Feudalism

### *A Dangerous Time*

Life in the Middle Ages was extremely dangerous, with many different invaders and raiders attacking towns and villages looking for wealth and land to conquer. Perhaps the fiercest group of raiders was the Vikings, who came from Scandinavia in northern Europe, and who took advantage of the fighting between other rulers to conquer large pieces of land. One such place they conquered was north France, a region that would come to be called Normandy. From there, they grew ever more powerful until in 1066 under a ruler named William, the Normans invaded England and quickly defeated all resistance. William, now known as 'the Conqueror', was crowned King of England, and immediately began designing a new system to protect his throne, and his lands.

### *Feudalism*

The first thing William did was take away all the land from any of the nobles that had supported the old king. He then gave this land to his friends who had fought with him, in exchange for a promise of their continued loyalty, support in war, and payment of taxes. This sort of agreement was known as becoming a **vassal**, and formed the foundation of the feudal system. Overall, there

were four different levels to the feudal system: monarch, noble, knight, and peasant - and individuals at each level were vassals to someone above them.

There were also expectations of each level, and they formed another crucial part of the feudal system.

Firstly, **monarchs** were expected to rule fairly, and see to the protection of the entire realm.

While all major political decisions would be made by the king or queen, they were expected to consult with the nobles and to listen to the advice and concerns that they raised. Also, since most monarchs did not have their own personal army, many allowed

the nobles to act as they saw fit, in exchange for the soldiers the nobles would provide in time of war.

Secondly, **nobles** were dependent on monarchs to give them land to rule. In return, they were expected to look after the knights and peasants who served underneath them, and to protect them from invaders and other danger. They were also to provide land for the peasants to farm on, and to ensure they had access to mills and water. Most importantly though, the nobles were to provide military service for the monarch and to bring their knights and peasants to his cause whenever summoned.

Thirdly, **knights** were expected to help fight the wars of the monarch and the nobles, and to protect the peasants. Most knights lived on small pieces of land that was given them by the nobles they had sworn vassalage to, and they were expected to help keep the peace and solve disputes among the peasants.

Finally, the **peasants** themselves were allowed to farm on the land owned by the nobles and knights they were vassals of. In return peasants would be able to grow enough food for themselves and their families, but they were expected to help fight in wars, harvest and plant the crops of the nobles and knights, and pay taxes

Regardless of your position in the feudal system, it was your duty to pay respect to those who were above you. In practical terms this was displayed by nobles bowing in the presence of monarchs, knights using proper etiquette and titles when speaking to nobles, and peasants showing gratitude for the land and protection provided to them. Outright complaints and rebellion were not tolerated, especially from the peasants who were completely dependent on the nobles and knights for their wellbeing. Over time though, many monarchs and nobles began to treat the peasants who worked for them very badly, using them as a free labour force without paying or providing for them. Most peasants lived in very poor conditions and were unable to protect their own rights against the rich, well-armed, lords who ruled over them.



**Stop and Think:** What were the 4 levels of Feudalism, and what were their responsibilities?

### *Women under Feudalism*

Under the feudal system, life for women was dependent not only on which level they occupied, but also on who their husbands were. While a woman could own land, upon marriage all her possessions became her husbands, and she became part of his household. For peasant woman this meant days of hard labour on the farm and taking care of the family. Those lucky enough to be born at a higher level would run their household, seeing that servants and peasants were working

at the jobs that needed to be done, and spinning and weaving clothes in their spare time. Finally, noble women would be expected to care for the sick, entertain any guests, and run the estate while their husbands were away. Often they had the opportunity to learn musical instruments, and often spent leisure time playing games.

### *The Church*

Religion was very important during the Middle Ages, with Christianity being the dominant faith in Europe at the time. The Roman Catholic Church was the central representative of Christianity in Western Europe and played a powerful role in shaping the political decisions of every monarch and noble. While the Church had its own hierarchy, or leadership, most church officials were held to be equal with the nobles in the feudal system; though they were not required to swear a vassal contract to any monarch. Instead, church officials were only required to serve the head of the Church, the Pope, who was placed above even kings and queens. As a result, all monarchs sought to obey the commands of the Church, and to follow any order that the pope issued.

**Stop and Think:** How did women fit into the Feudal System? Where was the Pope placed?

## **Feudalism Unravels**

### *The Black Death*

The mid 1300's brought a series of catastrophic events to Europe, which began to unravel the feudal paradigm, and the most revolutionary was the Bubonic Plague; or **Black Death**. Originating in China, the bubonic plague was brought to Europe by rats and fleas that carried it with them on ships and caravans loaded with trade goods. When it arrived in Italy in 1347, it found the dirty and cramped cities of Western Europe a perfect breeding ground, and within the next two years it spread across the entire continent.

One of the reasons that it found such a hospitable home in Europe was due to the poor personal hygiene that most people practiced. Many of the streets of European towns were filled with sewage and waste, and the majority of people did not believe in bathing more than once a year; if even that often! Adding to this was that most families, regardless of their position in the feudal system, all slept in the same room together. This meant that it became very easy for a single flea to bite an entire family, and since no one took baths, the dangerous fleas were easily able to infect an entire city or town quite quickly.

For those who were infected, the first sign of illness was the growth of a pus filled abscess in the neck, armpits, or groin – known as a bubo (hence the name Bubonic Plague). If this growth was not quickly lanced, it would continue to increase in size, and black spots would start to appear

under the skin as the victim would begin to bleed internally. Death usually followed after two or three painful days. In total it is estimated that over 75 million people died in the 50 years that the plague ravaged Europe.

### *Continuous Warfare*

The other crippling blow to the Feudal system was the outbreak of several large conflicts during the late 1300's and the early 1400's. As the Black Death worked its way across Europe, many monarchs and nobles saw the chance to extend their power at the expense of their disease weakened neighbours. One of the largest of these conflicts was the Hundred Years' war (1337-1453) which was fought between the English and French over the English King Edward III's claim to the throne of France.

Under the feudal system, it was the job of the knights and nobles to fight the battles of the monarch, usually supported by large number of poorly armed peasants. These types of wars usually resulted with massive casualties to the peasants at the hands of the well-armed knights and nobles, who would very rarely kill each other in combat. Rather, a defeated knight or noble would surrender to the winning side, and be ransomed back to their families alive and healthy. As a result, it was only the lowest level of the feudal paradigm that bore the cost of wars that were declared by the nobles and monarchs.

However, the Hundred Years' war marked a change in this routine as the technological use of the English Longbow, which could pierce metal, made it possible for peasants to kill heavily armoured opponents. In the following century of warfare, thousands of noblemen and knights were killed, along with tens of thousands of peasants. As the war continued to drag on, more and more farmland was left deserted as greater numbers of peasants were dragged away from the fields to fight, with those left behind forced to pay higher taxes to finance the war.

**Stop and Think:** How did the Bubonic Plague, and continuous warfare, cause so many deaths?

## *Conclusion*

The continuous drain on manpower that both the Black Death and the constant state of warfare placed on the feudal system soon became too much for it to overcome. As greater numbers of peasants were killed through disease or fighting, farmlands soon became deserted and destroyed due to lack of workers to maintain them. Those peasants that remained were quick to recognize that since there were so few of them left, they were of greater value to the nobles and monarchs, and should be treated with better conditions and pay. Similarly, as knights and nobles began to die in war as well as from the Black Death, the rule of law started to break down, and the vassal commitments became harder to fulfill as well. As a result, town mayors and well-off merchant

families became increasingly important to monarchs for the role they could play in keeping the peace within a kingdom.

Overall, monarchs were increasingly forced to deal with destroyed lands, smaller labour forces, a breakdown in law, and fewer nobles to rely on in ruling their kingdoms. In some places this opportunity was used by local groups to assert their role in helping monarchs govern. However, as you will see in the next lesson, in other places the power of the monarchs grew until they ruled virtual unopposed.

## **Try it out!**

Think of three examples in your own life where you are part of a vassal-type relationship, and what the details of your relationship are. (For example, what do you get, and what are you expected to give?)

## Quiz

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1. In what year did William the Conqueror invade England?

1050|1099|1066|1069

2. Which of the following was NOT one of the four groups in Feudalism?

Monarchs|Merchants|Peasants|Nobles|Knights

3. How did the Pope fit into the structure of power in the medieval society?

Higher than nobles but below monarchs|Higher than monarchs|Equal to knights|Equal to monarchs

4. Why was the Black Death able to spread so quickly across Europe?

Cramped, Dirty Conditions|Not enough exercise|Poor eating habits|Too much junk food

5. What technological breakthrough changed the course of warfare in the middle ages?

Catapult|Rifle|Lance|Longbow

6. How many people died from the Black Death?

50 Million|65 Million|75 Million|100 Million

7. Which group was at the bottom of the Feudal System?

Monarchs|Peasants|Knights|Nobles

8. The Hundred Year's War was fought over \_\_\_\_'s claim to the French Throne.

Edward III|Edward II|Edward IV|Edward

## Assignment

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1. List the levels within the Feudal system, and what responsibilities each group had. (4 marks)
2. In 1 paragraph, explain how the Black Death spread throughout Europe, and list the symptoms of someone who had it. (5 marks)
3. Why were kings and nobles the only ones allowed to make political decisions? Who really had the most power between the two groups? Write your answer in 2 paragraphs. (10 marks)
4. Should one person be allowed to make choices that affect everyone else? Why or why not? Write your answer in a properly organized (intro, body, and conclusion) essay. (20 marks)

Total: /39 marks

## Database of Resources

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### UNIT 1 – POLITICAL DECISION MAKING

#### Lesson 1: Feudal Paradigm

<http://history-world.org/feudalism.htm> (Picture from start of lesson)

[http://youtu.be/bQ8A5gRe\\_Dw](http://youtu.be/bQ8A5gRe_Dw) (William the Conqueror Song)

Progressive Discover-E History 10 Course Sample