



4

# The Hundred Years' War and the Plague

**MAIN IDEA**

**RELIGIOUS AND ETHICAL SYSTEMS** In the 1300s, Europe was torn apart by religious strife, the bubonic plague, and the Hundred Years' War.

**WHY IT MATTERS NOW**

Events of the 1300s led to a change in attitudes toward religion and the state, a change reflected in modern attitudes.

**TERMS & NAMES**

- Avignon
- Great Schism
- John Wycliffe
- Jan Hus
- bubonic plague
- Hundred Years' War
- Joan of Arc

**SETTING THE STAGE** The 1300s were filled with disasters, both natural and human-made. The Church seemed to be thriving but soon would face a huge division. A deadly epidemic claimed millions of lives. So many people died in the epidemic that the structure of the economy changed. Claims to thrones in France and England led to wars in those lands. The wars would result in changes in the governments of both France and England. By the end of the century, the medieval way of life was beginning to disappear.

**TAKING NOTES**  
**Analyzing Causes and Recognizing Effects** Use the chart to identify causes and effects of major events at the end of the Middle Ages.

	Cause & Effect
Split in Church	.....
Plague	.....
100 Years' War	.....

## A Church Divided

At the beginning of the 1300s, the Age of Faith still seemed strong. Soon, however, both the pope and the Church were in desperate trouble.

**Pope and King Collide** In 1300, Pope Boniface VIII attempted to enforce papal authority on kings as previous popes had. When King Philip IV of France asserted his authority over French bishops, Boniface responded with an official document. It stated that kings must always obey popes.

Philip merely sneered at this statement. In fact, one of Philip's ministers is said to have remarked that "my master's sword is made of steel, the pope's is made of [words]." Instead of obeying the pope, Philip had him held prisoner in September 1303. The king planned to bring him to France for trial. The pope was rescued, but the elderly Boniface died a month later. Never again would a pope be able to force monarchs to obey him.

**Avignon and the Great Schism** In 1305, Philip IV persuaded the College of Cardinals to choose a French archbishop as the new pope. Clement V, the newly selected pope, moved from Rome to the city of **Avignon** (av•vee•NYAWN) in France. Popes would live there for the next 69 years.

The move to Avignon badly weakened the Church. When reformers finally tried to move the papacy back to Rome, however, the result was even worse. In 1378, Pope Gregory XI died while visiting Rome. The College of Cardinals then met in Rome to choose a successor. As they deliberated, they could hear a mob outside screaming, "A Roman, a Roman, we want a Roman for pope, or at least an Italian!" Finally, the cardinals announced to the crowd that an Italian had been chosen: Pope Urban VI. Many cardinals regretted their choice almost immediately. Urban VI's passion for reform and his arrogant personality caused

the cardinals to elect a second pope a few months later. They chose Robert of Geneva, who spoke French. He took the name Clement VII.

Now there were two popes. Each declared the other to be a false pope, excommunicating his rival. The French pope lived in Avignon, while the Italian pope lived in Rome. This began the split in the Church known as the **Great Schism** (SIHZ•uhm), or division.

In 1414, the Council of Constance attempted to end the Great Schism by choosing a single pope. By now, there were a total of three popes: the Avignon pope, the Roman pope, and a third pope elected by an earlier council at Pisa. With the help of the Holy Roman Emperor, the council forced all three popes to resign. In 1417, the Council chose a new pope, Martin V, ending the Great Schism but leaving the papacy greatly weakened.

**Scholars Challenge Church Authority** The papacy was further challenged by an Englishman named **John Wycliffe** (WIHK•lihf). He preached that Jesus Christ, not the pope, was the true head of the Church. He was much offended by the worldliness and wealth many clergy displayed. Wycliffe believed that the clergy should own no land or wealth. Wycliffe also taught that the Bible alone—not the pope—was the final authority for Christian life. He helped spread this idea by inspiring an English translation of the New Testament of the Bible.

Influenced by Wycliffe's writings, **Jan Hus**, a professor in Bohemia (now part of the Czech Republic), taught that the authority of the Bible was higher than that of the pope. Hus was excommunicated in 1412. In 1414, he was seized by Church leaders, tried as a heretic, and then burned at the stake in 1415. **A**

#### MAIN IDEA

#### Contrasting

**A** According to the different beliefs of the time, what was the true source of religious authority?

## The Bubonic Plague Strikes

During the 1300s an epidemic struck parts of Asia, North Africa, and Europe. Approximately one-third of the population of Europe died of the deadly disease known as the **bubonic plague**. Unlike catastrophes that pull communities together, this epidemic was so terrifying that it ripped apart the very fabric of society. Giovanni Boccaccio, an Italian writer of the time, described its effect:

#### PRIMARY SOURCE

This scourge had implanted so great a terror in the hearts of men and women that brothers abandoned brothers, uncles their nephews, sisters their brothers, and in many cases wives deserted their husbands. But even worse, . . . fathers and mothers refused to nurse and assist their own children.

GIOVANNI BOCCACCIO, *The Decameron*

**Origins and Impact of the Plague** The plague began in Asia. Traveling trade routes, it infected parts of Asia, the Muslim world, and Europe. In 1347, a fleet of Genoese merchant ships arrived in Sicily carrying bubonic plague, also known as the Black Death. It got the name because of the purplish or blackish spots it produced on the skin. The disease swept through Italy. From there it followed trade routes to Spain, France, Germany, England, and other parts of Europe and North Africa.

▼ This painting, titled *The Triumph of Death*, depicts the effect of plague.



# Global Impact: The Spread of Epidemic Disease

INTERACTIVE

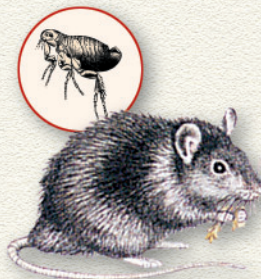
## The Bubonic Plague

The bubonic plague, or Black Death, was a killer disease that swept repeatedly through many areas of the world. It wiped out two-thirds of the population in some areas of China, destroyed populations of Muslim towns in Southwest Asia, and then decimated one-third of the European population.



### Disease Spreads

Black rats carried fleas that were infested with a bacillus called *Yersinia pestis*. Because people did not bathe, almost all had fleas and lice. In addition, medieval people threw their garbage and sewage into the streets. These unsanitary streets became breeding grounds for more rats. The fleas carried by rats leapt from person to person, thus spreading the bubonic plague with incredible speed.



### Patterns of Interaction




*The Spread of Epidemic Disease: Bubonic Plague and Smallpox*

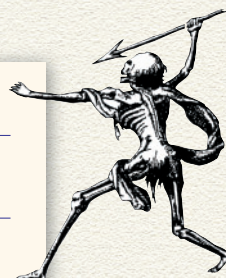
The spread of disease has been a very tragic result of cultures interacting with one another across place and time. Such diseases as smallpox and influenza have killed millions of people, sometimes, as with the Aztecs, virtually destroying civilizations.

### Symptoms of the Bubonic Plague


- Painful swellings called buboes (BOO•bohzh) in the lymph nodes, particularly those in the armpits and groin
- Sometimes purplish or blackish spots on the skin
- Extremely high fever, chills, delirium, and in most cases, death

### Death Tolls, 1300s

Western Europe	 20–25 million
China, India, other Asians	 25 million
	 = 4 million



### Connect to Today

- 1. Hypothesizing** Had people known the cause of the bubonic plague, what might they have done to slow its spread?  
 See Skillbuilder Handbook, page R15.
- 2. Comparing** What diseases of today might be compared to the bubonic plague? Why?

The bubonic plague took about four years to reach almost every corner of Europe. Some communities escaped unharmed, but in others, approximately two-thirds to three-quarters of those who caught the disease died. Before the bubonic plague ran its course, it killed almost 25 million Europeans and many more millions in Asia and North Africa.

The plague returned every few years, though it never struck as severely as in the first outbreak. However, the periodic attacks further reduced the population.

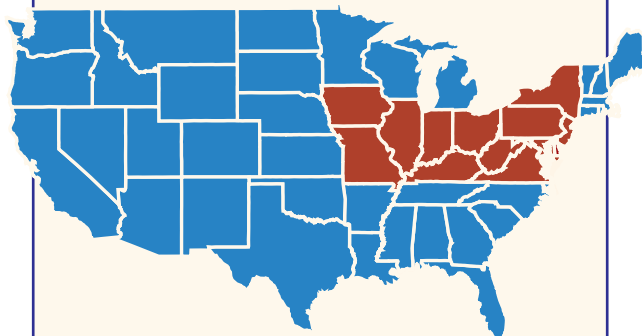
**Effects of the Plague** The economic and social effects of the plague were enormous. The old manorial system began to crumble. Some of the changes that occurred included these:

- Town populations fell.
- Trade declined. Prices rose.
- The serfs left the manor in search of better wages.
- Nobles fiercely resisted peasant demands for higher wages, causing peasant revolts in England, France, Italy, and Belgium.
- Jews were blamed for bringing on the plague. All over Europe, Jews were driven from their homes or, worse, massacred.
- The Church suffered a loss of prestige when its prayers failed to stop the onslaught of the bubonic plague and priests abandoned their duties. **B**

The bubonic plague and its aftermath disrupted medieval society, hastening changes that were already in the making. The society of the Middle Ages was collapsing. The century of war between England and France was that society's final death struggle.

### If the Plague Struck America Today

The bubonic plague reportedly wiped out about one-third of Europe's population in the 1300s. In the United States today, a one-third death toll would equal over 96 million people, or the number living in the states represented by the color ■.



Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census

#### SKILLBUILDER: Interpreting Charts

- 1. Clarifying** How many states on the chart would have lost their entire population to the plague?
- 2. Drawing Conclusions** How might the chart help explain why many Europeans thought the world was ending?

#### MAIN IDEA

#### Recognizing Effects

**B** Which of the effects of the plague do you think most changed life in the medieval period?

## The Hundred Years' War

Not only did the people in Europe during the 1300s have to deal with epidemic disease, but they also had to deal with war. England and France battled with each other on French soil for just over a century. The century of war between England and France marked the end of medieval Europe's society.

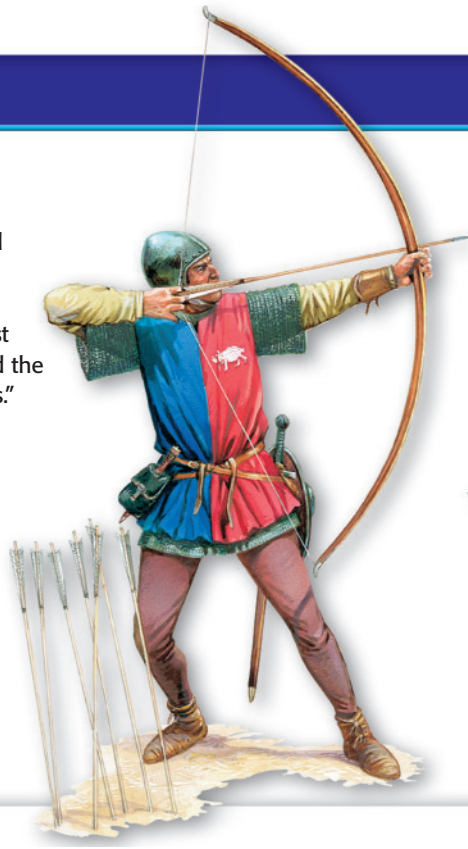
When the last Capetian king died without a successor, England's Edward III, as grandson of Philip IV, claimed the right to the French throne. The war that Edward III launched for that throne continued on and off from 1337 to 1453. It became known as the **Hundred Years' War**. Victory passed back and forth between the two countries. Finally, between 1421 and 1453, the French rallied and drove the English out of France entirely, except for the port city of Calais.

The Hundred Years' War brought a change in the style of warfare in Europe. At this time some combatants were still operating under medieval ideals of chivalry. They looked with contempt on the common foot soldiers and archers who fought alongside them. This contempt would change as the longbow changed warfare.

### The Longbow

The longbow was cheap, easy to carry, and deadly. It was powerful enough to penetrate armor, thus reducing the impact of mounted cavalry. Bowmen could fire so fast that the longbow has been called the “machine gun of the Middle Ages.”

► The longbow was as tall as a man, or taller. A six-foot-tall man might have a bow up to six and a half feet tall.



► English archers usually carried a case with extra bowstrings and a sheaf of 24 arrows. The arrows were about 27 inches long and balanced in flight by feathers.



▲ The arrows were absolutely fatal when shot within 100 yards. The average archer could fire 12 to 15 arrows per minute and hit a man at 200 yards away.



**The Longbow Changes Warfare** The English introduced the longbow and demonstrated its power in three significant battles: Crécy, Poitiers, and Agincourt. The first and most spectacular battle was the Battle of Crécy (KREHS•ee) on August 26, 1346. The English army, including longbowmen, was outnumbered by a French army three times its size. The French army included knights and archers with crossbows. French knights believed themselves invincible and attacked.

English longbowmen let fly thousands of arrows at the oncoming French. The crossbowmen, peppered with English arrows, retreated in panic. The knights trampled their own archers in an effort to cut a path through them. English longbowmen sent volley after volley of deadly arrows. They unhorsed knights who then lay helplessly on the ground in their heavy armor. Then, using long knives, the English foot soldiers attacked, slaughtering the French. At the end of the day, more than a third of the French force lay dead. Among them were some of the most honored in chivalry. The longbow, not chivalry, had won the day. The mounted, heavily armored medieval knight was soon to become extinct.

The English repeated their victory ten years later at the Battle of Poitiers (pwah•TYAY). The third English victory, the Battle of Agincourt (AJ•ihn•KAWRT), took place in 1415. The success of the longbow in these battles spelled doom for chivalric warfare.


**Joan of Arc** In 1420, the French and English signed a treaty stating that Henry V would inherit the French crown upon the death of the French king Charles VI. Then, in 1429, a teenage French peasant girl named **Joan of Arc** felt moved by God to rescue France from its English conquerors. When Joan was just 13 she began to have visions and hear what she believed were voices of the saints. They urged her to drive the English from France and give the French crown to France’s true king, Charles VII, son of Charles VI.

On May 7, 1429, Joan led the French army into battle at a fort city near Orléans. The fort blocked the road to Orléans. It was a hard-fought battle for both sides. The French finally retreated in despair. Suddenly, Joan and a few soldiers charged back toward the fort. The entire French army stormed after her. The siege of Orléans was

broken. Joan of Arc guided the French onto the path of victory.

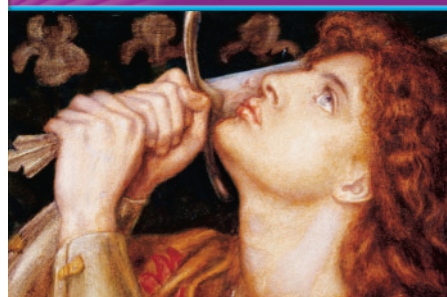
After that victory, Joan persuaded Charles to go with her to Reims. There he was crowned king on July 17, 1429. In 1430, the Burgundians, England's allies, captured Joan in battle. They turned her over to the English. The English, in turn, handed her over to Church authorities to stand trial. Although the French king Charles VII owed his crown to Joan, he did nothing to rescue her. Condemned as a witch and a heretic because of her claim to hear voices, Joan was burned at the stake on May 30, 1431.

**The Impact of the Hundred Years' War** The long, exhausting war finally ended in 1453. Each side experienced major changes.

- A feeling of nationalism emerged in England and France. Now people thought of the king as a national leader, fighting for the glory of the country, not simply a feudal lord.
- The power and prestige of the French monarch increased.
- The English suffered a period of internal turmoil known as the War of the Roses, in which two noble houses fought for the throne. 

Some historians consider the end of the Hundred Years' War in 1453 as the end of the Middle Ages. The twin pillars of the medieval world, religious devotion and the code of chivalry, both crumbled. The Age of Faith died a slow death. This death was caused by the Great Schism, the scandalous display of wealth by the Church, and the discrediting of the Church during the bubonic plague. The Age of Chivalry died on the battlefields of Crécy, Poitiers, and Agincourt.

## History Makers



### Joan of Arc 1412?–1431

In the 1420s, rumors circulated among the French that a young woman would save France from the English. So when Joan arrived on the scene she was considered the fulfillment of that prophecy. Joan cut her hair short and wore a suit of armor and carried a sword.


Her unusual appearance and extraordinary confidence inspired French troops. Eventually she was given command of troops that broke the siege of Orléans. In 1430, she was turned over to a Church court for trial. In truth, her trial was more political than religious. The English were determined to prove her a fake and to weaken her image.

#### INTEGRATED TECHNOLOGY

**RESEARCH LINKS** For more on Joan of Arc, go to [classzone.com](http://classzone.com)

#### MAIN IDEA

#### Drawing Conclusions

 How did the Hundred Years' War change the perception of people toward their king?

## SECTION 4 ASSESSMENT

**TERMS & NAMES** 1. For each term or name, write a sentence explaining its significance.

- Avignon • Great Schism • John Wycliffe • Jan Hus • bubonic plague • Hundred Years' War • Joan of Arc

#### USING YOUR NOTES

2. Which event had some economic effects? Explain.

	Cause & Effect
Split in Church	.....
Plague	.....
100 Years' War	.....

#### MAIN IDEAS

3. What was the Great Schism?  
4. What were three effects of the bubonic plague?  
5. What impact did Joan of Arc have on the Hundred Years' War?

#### CRITICAL THINKING & WRITING

6. **RECOGNIZING EFFECTS** Which event do you think diminished the power of the Church more—the Great Schism or the bubonic plague?  
7. **IDENTIFYING PROBLEMS** What problems did survivors face after the bubonic plague swept through their town?  
8. **RECOGNIZING EFFECTS** How did the Hundred Years' War encourage a feeling of nationalism in both France and England?  
9. **WRITING ACTIVITY** **RELIGIOUS AND ETHICAL SYSTEMS** Write a **persuasive essay** supporting the right of the pope to appoint French bishops.

#### CONNECT TO TODAY MAPPING AN EPIDEMIC

Research the number of AIDS victims in countries throughout the world. Then, create an annotated **world map** showing the numbers in each country. Be sure to list your sources.