

CHAPTER  
**7**  
SECTION 2

# Note Taking Study Guide

## FEUDALISM AND THE MANOR ECONOMY

**Focus Question:** How did feudalism and the manor economy emerge and shape medieval life?

*As you read this section in your textbook, use the flowchart below to identify the main ideas for each red heading in the section.*

<b>Feudalism and the Manor Economy</b>	<b>The Manor</b>	
	<b>The World of Knights and Nobles</b>	
	<b>Feudalism</b>	

## CHAPTER

## 7

## SECTION 2

## Section Summary

## FEUDALISM AND THE MANOR ECONOMY

Medieval society was a network of mutual duties. Even kings and nobles exchanged vows of service and loyalty. These vows were part of a new political and legal system called **feudalism**, which was the basis of European life during the Middle Ages.

Feudalism was a structure of lords and lesser lords, called **vassals**. Lords and their vassals exchanged pledges, which was called the **feudal contract**. In this contract, lords expected military service, payments, and loyalty from vassals. In return, they granted vassals protection and parcels of land, called **fiefs**, or estates. By the 1100s, many nobles lived in castles, which served as fortresses.

All aristocrats had a place in this structured society. For nobles, war was a way of life. Many trained from boyhood to become **knights**. They learned to ride horseback, fight, and care for weapons. They competed in mock battles called **tournaments**. Noblewomen, too, participated in the warrior society. They took over estates while their husbands were at war, and might even fight to defend their lands. A few learned to read or write. All were expected to learn spinning, weaving, and the supervising of servants.

Knights were expected to follow a code of ideal conduct, called **chivalry**. It required them to be brave, loyal, and honest, to fight fairly, to treat captured knights well, and to protect the weak. **Troubadours**, or wandering musicians, often sang about knights and ladies. Their songs formed the basis for medieval romances, or epic stories and poems.

The **manor**, or lord's estate, was central to the medieval economy. Manors were self-sufficient, producing all that their people needed. Most peasants on manors were **serfs**, who were bound to the land. Although they were not slaves, serfs could not leave the manor without permission. They had to work the lord's lands several days a week, pay fees, and get permission to marry. In return, they were allowed to farm several acres for themselves and received protection during war. Their work was harsh, and hunger and disease were common. Yet they found times to celebrate, such as Christmas, Easter, and dozens of Christian festivals each year.

## Review Questions

1. Describe the feudal contract.

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2. What were serfs required to do?

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## READING CHECK

What was chivalry?

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## VOCABULARY STRATEGY

What does the word *aristocrats* mean in the underlined sentence? Reread the paragraph and ask yourself which group in society is being discussed. Use that context clue to help you figure out the meaning of *aristocrats*.

## READING SKILL

**Identify Main Ideas** On the lines below, write a sentence that states the main idea of the Summary.

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