

Troubadours provided entertainment and preserved traditional tales.



Overcrowding and Disease Medieval towns and cities were extremely crowded. Their lack of sanitation, or procedures for keeping the town clean, bred disease, and the overcrowded conditions meant that disease spread quickly. One disease, the bubonic plague, wiped out one third of Europe's population between 1347 and 1351. Called the Black Death, it was spread by fleas living on the rats that thrived in the unsanitary towns.

✓ **Reading Check** What was the Black Death?

Medieval Culture

Despite its hardships, medieval life was not all a struggle for survival. The growing cities attracted traveling scholars, and young men flocked to cathedral schools. Many of these schools became great centers of learning. Much of the beautiful artwork of the Middle Ages was displayed in churches where many could enjoy it.

Stories, poems, and songs about chivalry were also very popular. **Chivalry** is the code of honorable conduct by which knights were supposed to live. Throughout Western Europe, traveling poets and musicians called **troubadours** went from place to place singing about the brave deeds performed by knights to win the love of a beautiful and worthy woman.

✓ **Reading Check** Describe some advantages of living in a medieval city.

Prepare to Read

Objectives

In this section you will

1. Learn about the causes of the Crusades.
2. Find out about the different Crusades and what they accomplished.
3. Discover the effects the Crusades had on life in Europe.

Taking Notes

As you read this section, look for the ways various people or groups contributed to the Crusades. Copy the table below and record your findings in it.

Person or Group	Contribution

Target Reading Skill

Recognize Sequence Signal Words Signal words point out relationships between ideas or events. This section discusses the Crusades, which took place over many years. To help keep the order of events clear, look for words such as *first*, *then*, *finally*, and *in [date]* that signal the order in which the events took place.

Key Terms

- **Holy Land** (HOH lee land) *n.* Jerusalem and parts of the surrounding area where Jesus lived and taught
- **Crusades** (kroo SAYDZ) *n.* a series of military expeditions launched by Christian Europeans to win the Holy Land back from Muslim control
- **Jerusalem** (juh ROOZ uh lum) *n.* a city in the Holy Land, regarded as sacred by Christians, Muslims, and Jews
- **pilgrim** (PIL grum) *n.* a person who journeys to a sacred place

Section 2 Assessment

Key Terms

Review the key terms at the beginning of this section. Use each term in a sentence that explains its meaning.

Target Reading Skill

Identify and list in sequence three events or conditions that led to the growth of towns.

Comprehension and Critical Thinking

1. (a) **Recall** How was the Church important in everyday life?

(b) **Identify Effects** How did this importance contribute to the Church's power?

2. (a) **List** What factors led to the increase in trade in Western Europe?

(b) **Infer** How might the growth of trade have affected the life of an ordinary person?

3. (a) **Define** What were guilds?

(b) **Draw Conclusions** Why would someone join a guild?

4. (a) **Explain** What was chivalry?

(b) **Infer** Why was chivalry a popular topic for troubadours?

Writing Activity

During the Middle Ages, children began apprenticeships as early as the age of eight. Do you think that is too young an age to start such work? Write a paragraph that answers this question.

Writing Tip Begin your paragraph with a topic sentence that tells whether or not you think eight years old is too young. Use supporting sentences to give reasons for your position.

On November 18, 1095, a crowd gathered in the town of Clermont, located in present-day France. They came to hear an urgent message from the pope:

“You common people who have been miserable sinners, become soldiers of Christ! You nobles, do not [quarrel] with one another. Use your arms in a just war! Labor for everlasting reward.”

—Pope Urban II

The crowd roared its approval. They shouted, “God wills it!”

Pope Urban II was calling the people of Europe to war. The purpose of this war was to capture the **Holy Land**, a region sacred to Christians because Jesus had lived and taught there. It was a small region on the eastern shore of the Mediterranean Sea, in present-day Israel, Jordan, and Palestine. Now, said the pope, the Holy Land has fallen to an enemy. Christians must win it back.



Pope Urban II calling for a crusade to the Holy Land