

## ***Decline of Feudalism***

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Block: \_\_\_\_\_

**What is feudalism?** System where goods, services and land are given in exchange for protection and loyalty

**What events caused feudalism in Western Europe to decline?**

*The Crusades:*

- decrease power of the nobles, increase power of the monarchy (kings)
- Increase exposure to new trade goods and routes

*Changes in government/law:*

- Magna Carta (England, 1215) – King John of England taxes nobles heavily, denies nobles rights; in 1215 nobles force meeting that ends with the agreement called the Magna Carta: king may continue to rule but must observe laws and rights of nobles and church; must ask them before imposing special taxes; habeas corpus
- Trial by Jury – replaces trial by ordeal
- Parliament – commoners, church officials and nobles become involved in the government (similar to Congress)
- Habeas Corpus – no free man can be jailed except according to law of land/jury of peers

*Plague: (1347-1351)*

- About one third of Europe's population dies
- Many laborers die, their value is increased-commoners get more power, nobles lose
- People move to cities looking for work
- Nobles start paying peasants to work land so they have some labor

*Hundred Years War: (1337-1453)*

- Between England and France over control of lands that are now in France
- English have many early victories – they fight with longbows instead of crossbows, used lightly armored knights instead of heavily armored knights on horseback, used commoners paid to fight
- French fight back more effectively after 1415 with more modern tactics; also inspired by Joan of Arc
- English eventually driven out of France
- Impact? Both sides collect taxes to hire armies, no longer relying on nobles to supply knights; castles less important with the use of cannons; feeling of nationalism – supporting your country instead of a noble

*Peasant Rebellions:*

- England, 1381 – rebels enter London and meet with King Richard II; leader of rebellion killed and the revolt is not successful
- Other revolts happen in France, Italy, Flanders; they, too were unsuccessful but showed the nobles that they were dissatisfied with taxes/the conditions of their lives in general

*Rise of Cities and Towns:*

- Serfs/peasants move to urban areas and buy their freedom
- Trade becomes more stable and economy changes from barter to currency based