



# Peasants, Princes and Pestilence



*Flee your fields, close your doors and pull up the drawbridge: the dreaded and deathly 'Great Pestilence' is here! Mount your steed and gallop through the dark and deadly world on 14<sup>th</sup> Century Britain, sword and shield at the ready, pledging your allegiance to King and country. Rouse your troops with promise of bloody battle and violent jousts. Read and write historical accounts, poems and tales and discover the grotesque effects of bugs and bacteria on the human body.*

*And if you smell a rat, my friend - get out of there!!*

## English Focus

Narrative using personification  
Journals  
English poetry  
Persuasive speech  
Letters  
Drama

*Class Read - Kiss of death  
by Malcolm Rose*

## Maths Focus

Place value to 1,000,000  
Addition  
Subtraction  
Multiplication  
Division  
Collecting and presenting data  
Position and Direction

## Science Focus

*Living things and their  
habitats*  
  
Process of reproduction  
Life cycles of plants, mammals,  
amphibians,  
Insects and birds

## Creative Curriculum

**History** - 14<sup>th</sup> Century England  
Peasants Revolt  
Black Death  
Knight's code of Conduct

**Geography** - Spread of the  
Plague across Europe  
Map Skills

**Art** - Printing  
London Landscapes



# Unit Glossary

## spread of the plague to Europe

### bacteria

Microorganisms that can cause disease.

### banquet

A huge, formal feast, often with extravagant food and entertainment.

### Black Death

The name given to the bubonic plague that killed nearly half of the population of Europe and Asia during the 14th century.

### Canterbury Tales

A famous collection of stories written by Geoffrey Chaucer that describe the journey of a group of people who travelled as pilgrims to Canterbury.

### chivalry

The rules that knights lived by, that placed a high value on courage, kindness and honour.

### contaminate

To make something poisonous or impure.

### Flagellants

A group of people who thought the plague was a curse from God. They whipped themselves in public to show God that they were devout believers.

### heraldry

A system that enabled knights to be identified on the battlefield by their coats of arms.

### illuminated lettering

Important letters in early manuscripts that were enlarged, decorated and coloured.

### infection

A disease caused by harmful microorganisms in a part of the body.

### jousting

A sporting contest from the Middle Ages where knights would fight on horseback with lances.

### knight

In the Middle Ages, a knight was a chivalrous man who held a special military rank and trained to fight as a soldier on horseback.

### medieval

A term used when referring to the Middle Ages.

### Middle Ages

A period in history lasting from the 5th to the 15th century.

### monastery

A building in which monks lived together as a religious community.

### peasant

A poor farm worker or tradesman who had a low social status and few rights.

### pestilence

A very serious and infectious disease, such as the Black Death, that spreads quickly and is often fatal.

### rodent

A type of small mammal with large, sharp front teeth, such as rats and squirrels.

### serf

A medieval servant or labourer who was bound to obey and work on the land of a lord, and was treated as part of his property.

### squire

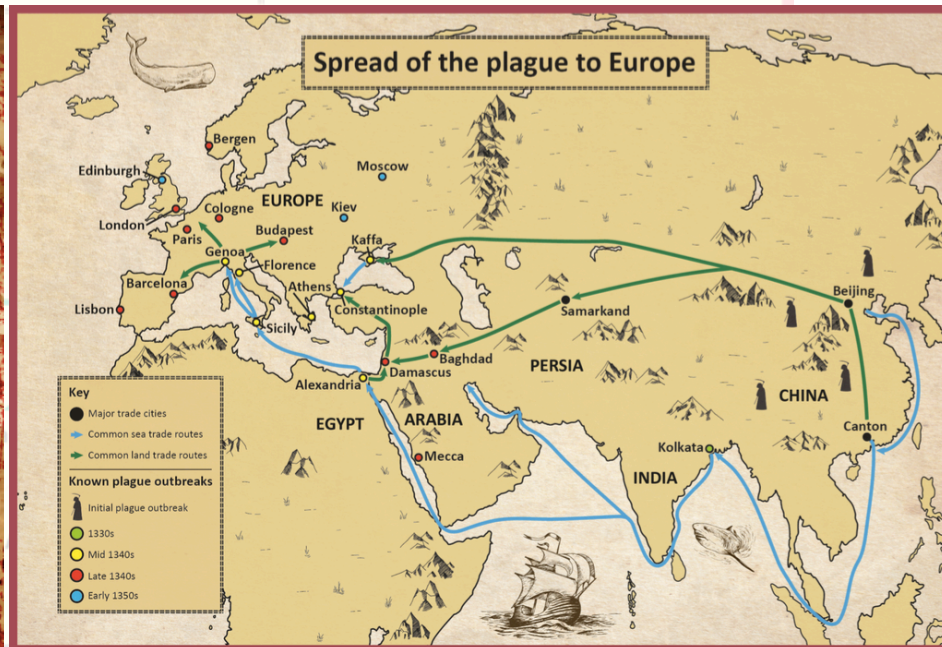
During the Middle Ages, a squire was a young servant to a knight who hoped to become a knight himself.

### symptom

A change that shows that a person is ill or becoming ill. For example, sneezing and a runny nose are symptoms of a cold.

### timeline

A line showing a period of time on which important events and dates are marked.



## The plague in Britain (1348–1350)



As the plague raged in Europe, it seemed inevitable that the deadly pestilence would eventually reach the shores of Britain.

### The plague arrives

The plague arrived in Britain early in the summer of 1348. A French sailor arrived in the port of Weymouth showing symptoms of the disease. Sickness then spread to the southwest of England, quickly reaching Bristol.

### The plague reaches London

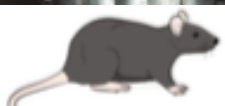
The plague then travelled east, arriving in London and the surrounding areas by the autumn of 1348. From London, the plague spread into the southeast and north of England.

### The plague heads north

The Midlands, Yorkshire and Wales all reported the effects of the disease in the spring of 1349, and it had crossed the Irish Sea by the time summer came. The plague continued its journey north and reached Durham and the northeast by the winter of 1349.

### The plague in Scotland

With northern England weak with sickness, the Scots decided it would be easy to raid and steal from the northern towns. This led to them taking the plague back with them into Scotland. By the spring of 1350, most of Scotland had been struck down with the plague as well.



Science Vocabulary I will need in this topic...

### Living Things and Their Habitats

The grid contains the following terms and illustrations:

- sexual**: Diagram of two people and a cell.
- asexual**: Diagram of a single cell dividing.
- reproduction**: Diagram of a cell dividing into two.
- cell**: Illustration of a green plant cell and a blue animal cell.
- fertilisation**: Illustration of a sperm cell meeting an egg cell.
- pollination**: Illustration of a sunflower.
- male**: Illustration of a lion.
- female**: Illustration of a lioness.
- pregnancy**: Illustration of a fetus in a womb.
- gestation**: Illustration of a pig.
- young**: Illustration of a rabbit and a chick.
- Jane Goodall**: Illustration of Jane Goodall with a chimpanzee.
- mammal**: Illustration of a dog.
- metamorphosis**: Illustration of a caterpillar, a pupa, and a butterfly.
- amphibian**: Illustration of a frog.
- insect**: Illustration of a scorpion.
- egg**: Illustration of a cracked egg and a nest with eggs.
- embryo**: Illustration of a developing animal.
- bird**: Illustration of a sparrow.
- plant**: Illustration of a small green plant with leaves.

My revered rats,

I am writing to thank you for your most impressive work in helping to spread the Black Death. Your contribution made it one of the most successful pestilence campaigns ever inflicted on mankind.

You showed immense stamina scampering along the Silk Road, infecting wretched humans from China to Russia. Not content with Asia, you showed marvellous ambition as you boarded the merchant ships to cross the Mediterranean and enter Europe, spreading the Black Death everywhere you scurried. Well done, indeed!

I appreciate that this could not have been easy for you, as you are not natural sailors. However, I am sure you will rejoice with me when I inform you that your diligent actions have resulted in a reduction of approximately fifty percent of the population of Europe!

I congratulate you in helping me achieve such a stunning statistic. I could not have done it without you and, to show my appreciation, I will send you all a truckle of cheese.

I am forever in your debt,

**PESTILENCE**

**Peasants' Revolt**, also called **Wat Tyler's Rebellion**, (1381), first great popular **rebellion** in English history. Its immediate cause was the imposition of the unpopular poll tax of 1381, which brought to a head the economic discontent that had been growing since the middle of the century.

**Personification** - Personification describes something as if it has human qualities.

The breeze *whispered* among the leaves.

Place Value Grid

M	HTH	TTH	TH	H	T	U	.	†	h
Millions	Hundred thousands	Ten thousands	Thousands	Hundreds	Tens	Units	.	Tenths	Hundredths

# Spread of the plague to Europe

**Key**

- Major trade cities
- Common sea trade routes
- Common land trade routes

**Known plague outbreaks**

- Initial plague outbreak
- 1330s
- Mid 1340s
- Late 1340s
- Early 1350s

