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Activity Two – Reading Comprehension

Unit 4 – Reading

Life in the Middle Ages

The Middle Ages was a long period in European history that lasted from the 5th century to the 15th century. It began after the fall of the Western Roman Empire and ended with the beginning of the Renaissance. During these centuries, Europe experienced important political, social and cultural changes.

One of the main features of the Middle Ages was the **feudal system**. Society was organised into different social groups. The king granted land to powerful nobles, who became lords. In return, the lords promised to remain loyal to the king and provide soldiers when necessary. The lords also gave land to vassals, who managed parts of the land and offered military service. Most people were peasants, who worked on the land and produced food for the entire community.

Castles played an important role during the medieval period. They protected local populations during attacks and served as the homes of kings, nobles and knights. Knights were trained soldiers who followed a code of honour known as **chivalry**. They were expected to be brave, loyal and respectful.

The Church was one of the most powerful institutions during the Middle Ages. It influenced education, politics and everyday life. Monasteries became centres of learning where monks copied books, preserved knowledge and taught reading and writing.

Without their work, many classical texts from Ancient Greece and Rome might have been lost.

During the later Middle Ages, towns and cities began to grow. Trade increased, markets became more important and many people started working as merchants or craftsmen instead of farmers. These changes helped prepare Europe for the Renaissance, a period of cultural and scientific development.

Today, historians recognise that the Middle Ages was not only a time of wars and castles but also a period of innovation, learning and social change. Many institutions, traditions and buildings from medieval Europe continue to influence modern society.

Reading Comprehension

Choose the correct answer.

1. When did the Middle Ages begin?

- a) After the Renaissance.
- b) After the fall of the Western Roman Empire.
- c) After the Industrial Revolution.
- d) After the French Revolution.

2. What was the feudal system?

- a) A system of international trade.
- b) A way of organising medieval society based on land and loyalty.
- c) A religious movement.
- d) A military organisation created by the Romans.

3. What was the main job of peasants?

- a) To rule the kingdom.
- b) To copy books.
- c) To work on the land and produce food.
- d) To train knights.

4. Why were castles important during the Middle Ages?

- a) They were mainly used as schools.
- b) They protected people and served as the homes of nobles.
- c) They were only used for religious ceremonies.
- d) They were built for merchants.

5. What was chivalry?

- a) A type of medieval castle.
- b) A code of honour followed by knights.
- c) A religious law.
- d) A farming technique.

6. What role did monasteries play?

- a) They produced weapons for the army.
- b) They preserved knowledge and educated people.
- c) They collected taxes.
- d) They governed medieval towns.

7. What happened during the later Middle Ages?

- a) Towns and trade became more important.
- b) Everyone became a knight.
- c) Agriculture disappeared.
- d) The Roman Empire returned.

8. According to the text, why were monks important?

- a) They built castles.
- b) They discovered America.
- c) They copied and preserved important books.
- d) They ruled the kingdom.

9. Which period followed the Middle Ages?

- a) The Stone Age.
- b) The Renaissance.
- c) The Bronze Age.
- d) The Roman Empire.

10. What is the main idea of the text?

- a) The Middle Ages was only a period of wars.
- b) Medieval society was organised through the feudal system and experienced important political, social and cultural developments.
- c) The Romans created the feudal system.
- d) The Church had no influence on medieval society.

Answer Key

1. **b)** After the fall of the Western Roman Empire.
2. **b)** A way of organising medieval society based on land and loyalty.
3. **c)** To work on the land and produce food.
4. **b)** They protected people and served as the homes of nobles.
5. **b)** A code of honour followed by knights.
6. **b)** They preserved knowledge and educated people.
7. **a)** Towns and trade became more important.
8. **c)** They copied and preserved important books.
9. **b)** The Renaissance.
10. **b)** Medieval society was organised through the feudal system and experienced important political, social and cultural developments.