

CHAPTER 13 Section 3 (pages 364–369)

The Age of Chivalry

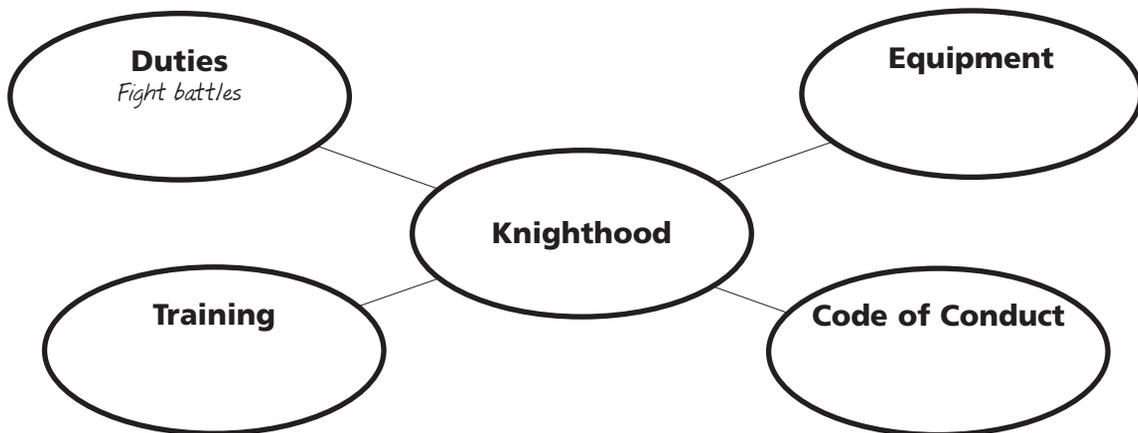
BEFORE YOU READ

In the last section, you read how feudalism shaped society.

In this section, you will read about the code of chivalry for knights and its influence.

AS YOU READ

Use the web below to take notes on knighthood during the Middle Ages.



TERMS AND NAMES

chivalry Code of behavior for knights, stressing ideals such as courage, loyalty, and devotion

tournaments Staged battles for entertaining audiences and training knights

troubadours Poet-musicians at the castles and courts of Europe

Knights: Warriors on Horseback

(pages 364–365)

What was the role of knights?

Nobles were constantly at war with one another. They raised private armies. The armies included knights, soldiers who fought on horseback. These knights became the most important warriors during the Middle Ages.

By the 11th century, nobles used their armies of *mounted* knights to fight for control of land. When nobles won battles, they gave some of the new land to their knights. The knights could use the wealth from this land to pay for weapons, armor, and horses. Knights devoted much of their time to improving their skill at fighting.

1. What was the main duty of knights?

Knighthood and the Code of Chivalry

(pages 365–367)

What was required of a knight?

By the 1100s, a new code of *conduct* for knights arose. This code of **chivalry** required that knights fight bravely for three masters: their lord, God, and their chosen lady. Knights were also required to protect the weak and poor. While the code set high standards, most knights failed to meet all of the standards.

The son of a noble began training to become a knight at an early age. At around age 7, his parents sent him off to the castle of another lord. There he would learn good manners. The boy would also practice fighting skills. At around age 14, he would become the servant of a knight. Then at age 21, he would finally become a knight himself.

Knights gained experience by fighting in staged combats called **tournaments**. These fights were fierce, but real battles, especially those fought at castles, were far more violent. To protect their lands and homes, nobles built stone castles.

2. Give two examples of training for knighthood.

The Literature of Chivalry

(pages 367–368)

What was the literature of chivalry about?

The literature about knights did not reflect real life. Many stories glorified castle life. Others centered on the code of chivalry. Songs and poems were often about a knight's loyalty to the woman he loved. Some long poems, called epics, told the story of legendary kings, such as King Arthur and Charlemagne.

Troubadours were poet-musicians at the castles and courts of Europe. They wrote and sang about the joys and sorrows of romantic love. Many

troubadours traveled to the court of Eleanor of Aquitaine. She was the rich, powerful ruler of a land in southern France.

3. Who were the troubadour's songs about?

Women's Role in Feudal Society

(pages 368–369)

What were the roles of women?

Most women in feudal society had little power. The Church taught that they were inferior. But they played important roles in the lives of both noble and peasant families.

Noblewomen could sometimes rule the land when their husbands were away from home. But they could not inherit land. It usually passed from father to son. In reality, most noblewomen, young and old, were limited to activities in the home or in convents.

The vast majority of women during the Middle Ages were poor peasants. They held no power. They worked in the fields and took care of their families. Poor women struggled to survive—just as they had for centuries.

4. How were noble and poor women alike?
