

# Student Handout #1: Critical Attributes of the Concept of Worldview

## A Worldview

- Provides a fairly complete picture of reality.
- Meets the needs of people (survival, security, friendship/love, respect, self-fulfillment).
- Helps people feel more secure with each other.
- Makes people less confused by or afraid of things they cannot directly control.
- Defines an individual's relationship to the surrounding world.
- Defines what is important for maintaining or improving life, as it is understood.
- Provides "natural" and "believable" knowledge that is accepted and shared by members of the cultural group.

## Questions to Ask About Your Worldview

- Does your generalization about a worldview provide a fairly complete picture of reality?
- Does it meet the needs of people (survival, security, friendship/love, respect, self-fulfillment)?
- Does it help people feel more secure with each other?
- Does it make people less confused by or afraid of things they cannot directly control?
- Does it define an individual's relationship to the surrounding world?
- Does it define what is important for maintaining or improving life, as it is understood?
- Does it provide a "natural" and "believable" knowledge that is accepted and shared by members of the cultural group?

## Student Handout #2: Types of Change

1. Change occurs in two basic ways:

- Evolutionary change comes about as the result of gradual development or growth and often is the result of a design or plan.
- Revolutionary change is sudden and often chaotic and violent.

2. Consider the following:

- Which type of change is more likely to be accepted in the short term and in the long term? Why?
- Which type of change would cause the least disruption in society? Why?

As a conclusion to your analysis, classify the areas where society will find change easy, difficult or impossible to accept.

<b>The Change</b>	<b>Easy (Why is it easy?)</b>	<b>Difficult (Why is it difficult?)</b>	<b>Impossible (Why is it impossible?)</b>

1. Draw some initial inferences about the change process that can be tested against experiences in other societies at other times in history.

## **Student Handout #3: Gibbon's Theory on the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire**

Edward Gibbon was a great admirer of classical civilizations. He believed that the Roman Empire was one of the most glorious, if not the most glorious, empire in history. How then, he wondered, could such a great empire fall into ruins?

Gibbon grew up in the 18<sup>th</sup> century during the Enlightenment, a period of history that celebrated reason and despised religion. Gibbon thought Christianity was not based on reason at all, but was merely foolish superstition.

Gibbon combined his love for Rome and his scorn for Christianity, and proposed an answer to his question of why Rome fell. He argued that Christianity promoted weak values such as humility, gentleness, non-retaliation and forgiveness. These were hardly the qualities necessary for an empire that depended on military power to stay together. In addition, Gibbon argued that Christians are more concerned about a future life in heaven than they are about life on Earth, so naturally their contribution to earthly life is minimal.

According to Gibbon, Christianity also had the effect of drawing people's energies and attention away from Roman society and toward the church. People gave their time and money to the church. The lives of many individuals were devoted to the church, preventing them from being part of the economic, political or military life of Rome. As a result, the church flourished but the state began to weaken. Eventually, the Roman Empire began to support the church financially. This took even more resources away from the government bureaucracy and the military.

Gibbon argued that Christianity caused Rome to lose its pride, vigour and strength because it promoted weak values and drew attention and resources away from the important aspects of Roman society. Christians, Gibbons argued, were "the secret enemies of their country."

## **Student Handout #4: Lot's Theory on the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire**

Ferdinand Lot, a 20th century French scholar, argued that Rome fell because of economic troubles. Lot believed that the abundance of slave labour in Rome prevented the economy from developing. The availability of cheap labour in the form of slaves discouraged the development of labour saving methods.

Although the Romans possessed technological skill, they never developed an industrialized economy. The Roman aristocracy owned land and was content to earn its money by having slaves farm the land. As a result, Rome had to purchase most of its manufactured goods from other countries. Rome traded natural resources in return for manufactured goods but, according to Lot, the Romans eventually had to import more and more, while at the same time they had less and less to export.

The invasion of Germanic tribes hastened the fall of Rome. According to Lot, these invasions cut Rome off from its sources of imports. A large number of people in Roman cities were traders and middlemen. Without trade, these people had no work to do. They were forced to leave the cities and look for work elsewhere, perhaps on a farm. Many of these former city dwellers knew little about agriculture, and were only concerned about growing enough for their own needs. As a result, Rome's economy became increasingly rural and isolated from the rest of the world.

With the cities and the countryside producing only enough food for its own needs, the government was unable to collect the taxes it needed to support its bureaucracy and army. With the economic base destroyed, it was only a matter of time until the empire fell altogether.

## Student Handout #5: Unstable Government Theory on the Decline of the Roman Empire

Many historians have argued that Rome collapsed because its government was weak and unstable. Most of the government's power was centered in one person—the emperor. This system worked well when a competent emperor was in power. But when the emperor was incompetent, the whole empire suffered, and incompetent emperors were not uncommon. There is even evidence that several Roman emperors were insane. There were a number of other problems associated with the emperors.

- There was no peaceful and reliable way to choose a new emperor once the old one died. This led to a great many divisions within the empire.
- There were always people who envied the emperor's power. If they felt strong enough, they would attempt to assassinate or overthrow the emperor. This also created great instability. In a 50-year period during the 3<sup>rd</sup> century, more than 20 emperors came to power. Almost all of these were assassinated.

Although the emperor had a lot of power, there was one thing he could not always fully control—the military. Sometimes military leaders turned their troops against the emperor. Other times military leaders tried to establish their own countries in areas of the empire they were supposed to be defending.

Governments also failed to deal successfully with economic changes from the late third century on. As the empire became more expensive to govern, taxes were increased. However, the taxation system was extremely unfair; the burden of taxes fell mostly on the poor. In addition, the collection of taxes was corrupt. The job of tax collector was sold to the one who bid the highest for it. The tax collectors would then overcharge the taxpayers and keep the extra money for themselves. The government in Rome did nothing to discourage this practice. Eventually the tax burden became so difficult that people either stopped paying or stopped working. This was particularly true for farmers, who were taxed so heavily that many of them actually quit farming altogether.

According to many historians, Rome fell as a result of these and other economic and political factors.

## **Student Handout #6: Environmental Theories on the Decline of the Roman Empire**

There are a number of uncommon but interesting explanations about why Rome fell. Below are a few of them:

- One medical doctor has speculated that lead poisoning may have contributed to the downfall of Rome. According to this theory, eating and drinking from lead containers, and drinking water that flowed through lead pipes caused widespread lead poisoning.
- A few writers have argued that plagues and diseases were constantly afflicting Rome, resulting in hundreds of thousands of deaths. Rome was especially vulnerable to disease because it was a centre for trade; goods flowed into Rome from most parts of the known world. According to this theory, the resulting decline in population weakened the country militarily and economically to the point that Rome could no longer defend itself from barbarian invasions.
- Some have argued that environmental degradation led to the downfall of Rome. According to this argument, farmers know nothing about soil conservation. They planted crops on a continuing basis so that the fertility of the soil was eventually exhausted. This resulted in poor crops, food shortages and a breakdown in rural society.

## **Student Handout #7: Life in Fifth Century Europe After the Collapse of Rome**

The central authority that Rome represented has broken down and now no one else seems to have the power to do anything to change the situation:

- life is an unending struggle for enough to eat
- life expectancy is very short
- adult lives are on the order of 30 to 40 years
- life is violent and uncertain
- life seems to be controlled by superstitious forces
- serfs feel quite powerless to protect themselves against the world.

# Student Handout #8: The Major Characteristics of the Germanic Civilization

## Social Organization

The Germanic peoples were divided into many different social units called tribes or folks. The members of the tribes were united by the belief that they all descended from a common ancestor. Each tribe had its own set of customs and practices.

Chiefs or kings led the tribes. The king was recognized as the strongest and bravest warrior. He was elected by the male members of the most powerful families within the tribe. The king was served and protected by loyal group youths known as the "war band." This was made up of the bravest young men within the group. These young men pledged themselves to fight with the king, and never to leave the battlefield without him. Although the war bands began as groups of equals, ranks within the bands eventually developed so that some warriors had a higher rank than others. The high ranking warriors began to acquire land and wealth.

Most Germans were "freemen" who either owned a small plot of land that they farmed themselves, or were share croppers who rented land from a large land owner or noble, but retained their independence. The society also contained a class of serfs who were neither free nor slaves. These people were bound to a certain section of land and could not be sold apart from it.

## Value System

Every person within a German group had a particular monetary value that was based on the person's actual or potential military value. In general, men of fighting age had the greatest value, women of child-bearing age came second, children came third and the aged had the least value. Each person's monetary value was established for the purposes of law. The penalty for any crime committed equalled the victim's monetary value. Thus, if a warrior whose life was valued at \$100 was injured or killed, the accused had to pay \$100 to the victim or his family. If the accused refused to pay or if the victim or his family refused to accept the money, a blood feud was declared between the families of the victim and the accused.

## Power

People have the power to do what they wish when they have:

- control of resources (eg., money, food supply)
- control of numbers of people
- control of an organization
- control of information.

People can express this power through:

- the use of authority
- the use of influence and/or charisma
- the use of force.

## Student Handout #9: Benefits and Costs of Social Roles

Think about your choices realistically. Do a cost-benefit analysis of any change you are thinking of making.

Role	Benefits	Costs
Lord	admission closed	danger of expulsion or assassination
Knight	admission very limited	danger of war
Priest	admission limited ,security, free from harsh physical labour of peasants	chastity, church discipline, poverty
Monk	admission limited, security	chastity, personal and church discipline, poverty
Nun	admission limited, security	chastity, personal and church discipline, poverty
Banker	high standard of living	very risky
Trader	freedom	very risky
Freeman	independence	very risky, no military
Serf	safety	loss of freedom, poverty

Given the situation, ask yourself what the realistic alternatives are. Should you:

- do something to improve your standard of living in the belief that the future will get better shortly?
- look to your lord for protection because that is the surest source of security in your lifetime?
- look to the church for protection and support in the hope that the next life will be better for those who are obedient to the teachings of the church?

## Student Handout #10: Scarcity of Resources

Social Class	Resources/Needs	Power	Standard of Living on the Manor
<p><b>King</b></p>	<p>The king was really just an important lord. His resources included large landholdings, a small army, livestock, horses, etc., but he usually did not have any more of these resources than some other lords.</p> <p>In order to administer and defend the territory over which he was king, he required more of the following resources:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• horses</li> <li>• gold</li> <li>• grain</li> <li>• cattle</li> <li>• sheep</li> <li>• scribes (men who could read and write)</li> <li>• iron</li> <li>• iron craftsmen to make armour</li> <li>• blacksmiths</li> <li>• warriors.</li> </ul> <p>In order to run the government, the king would attempt to order his nobles to contribute warriors, horses, gold, grain, meat, wool, (plus the necessary carts to transport the goods) and educated people.</p> <p>Very few people at this time were able to read and write; almost all of those who could were monks or high ranking church officials. The scarcity of educated men made them very valuable.</p> <p>Good warriors may have been even more valuable than scribes. The invention of the stirrup signified a major advance in war technology. It forced the development of more sophisticated and more expensive armour, which turned the knight into the equivalent of the modern tank. The arms race that resulted meant that knights were very expensive to equip and maintain.</p>	<p>The king's power was very limited. He controlled:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• limited resources (whatever other nobles would give him)</li> <li>• limited numbers (the serfs on his land, his warriors, and any warriors the nobles would provide him with)</li> <li>• a limited organization.</li> </ul> <p>The king expressed his power through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• limited influence and charisma</li> <li>• limited authority</li> <li>• limited force.</li> </ul>	<p>Although the king was at the top of the feudal pyramid, his standard of living depended upon the size of the land area that he owned and controlled. Generally, however, the king and his family enjoyed a better standard of living of than other nobles did because, in order to remain in the king's court, it was the duty of the lords to protect and provide for the king's needs.</p>

Social Class	Resources/Needs	Power	Standard of Living on the Manor
<b>Nobles</b>	<p>The resources of the nobles were not much different from those of the kings; i.e. they had barely enough to look after themselves, let alone trying to supply the king. The nobles felt that if they supplied the king with what he was demanding, they would become too weak to feed and protect themselves; they needed everything they could produce. Moreover, the king was often some distance away and roads were extremely poor and hazardous.</p> <p>The nobles were more concerned about meeting their obligations to the church. Part of a Christian's duty was to give ten percent of his produce to the church. If this 10% donation, known as a tithe, was not given, the noble could be excommunicated from the church. This meant that the noble became a social outcast while alive and was damned to hell after death.</p>	<p>The power of the nobles was great within the areas they controlled, but minimal in other areas.</p> <p>On their own property, nobles had power over:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• numbers</li> <li>• resources</li> <li>• organization.</li> </ul> <p>This power was expressed through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• force</li> <li>• authority.</li> </ul>	<p>Although the nobles were privileged compared to the serfs, their standard of living was still very low according to modern standards. Regarding the quality and quantity of food, nobles had only a little more than the serfs; i.e. during a famine, the nobles would be the last to starve, but they would still starve.</p> <p>The nobles enjoyed houses that were somewhat larger and better constructed than those of the serfs. Nevertheless, nobles still had to suffer from drafty, uninsulated walls and leaky roofs.</p> <p>Hence, despite their status and wealth, nobles lived a pretty miserable life.</p>
<b>Church</b>	<p>The resources of the church were great:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It had a very strong organization, with strong central leadership.</li> <li>• Large numbers of people worked for the church, including most of the educated people.</li> <li>• Most people were loyal to the church.</li> </ul> <p>The needs of the church were just as great. The Pope declared that it was the Christian duty that all people should pay a tithe of 10% of their earnings or produce to the church. The church:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• had a small land base, so depended on the supply of produce and money brought in by tithing.</li> <li>• needed a constant supply of people to serve as priests and in the monasteries.</li> </ul>	<p>The power of the church was great:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It had control of numbers, as almost everyone in European society at this time belonged to the church.</li> <li>• It had a tremendous organization, with strong leadership and many levels of authority reaching out into all aspects of society.</li> <li>• It had control of information, as almost all of the educated people capable of reading and writing worked for the church.</li> <li>• It advised the king on political matters and took on many jobs of governing (e.g., made laws and set up courts to enforce the laws; collected taxes).</li> </ul>	<p>The standard of living for the church was good compared to other classes of people because of the great power it held over kings, nobles and serfs. The church accumulated land by taking it from lords in exchange for clerical services such as funerals and marriages. The monks and nuns, who dedicated their lives to serving the church, farmed this land. On this land, the monks and nuns tended livestock and developed better methods of growing crops. Therefore, they had their own food and produce in addition to that given to them as tithes.</p>

Social Class	Resources/Needs	Power	Standard of Living on the Manor
<b>Serfs</b>	<p>Serfs had no resources and their needs were great. They lived with inadequate food, shelter and clothing. Serfs were peasants who:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• did all the labour on the manor</li> <li>• raised food for the entire manor, some of which was given to the king by the lord of the manor</li> <li>• farmed a small piece of land of their own in return for their services to the lord, however, they were required to give the lord a percentage of their harvest.</li> </ul>	<p>Serfs were virtually powerless. They belonged to the land, and in turn to the nobles and the king. They were considered to be part of the land, and were included when land was sold or bought. They had to have the permission of the noble in order to marry or leave the manor.</p>	<p>Most serfs had a very miserable life. Finding enough food to survive was a constant struggle. Of the food that was available, there was very little variety, such that most people did not get enough of the many important vitamins and nutrients they needed. As a result of this poor diet, illness and death were common.</p> <p>Not only was food inadequate, but so were clothing and shelter. Most serfs suffered from inadequate clothing, both in quality and quantity. Serfs lived in crude shacks along with their livestock. In winter, the livestock were a blessing because they contributed some body heat to the drafty, uninsulated shacks. However, livestock often had to be slaughtered during the winter because there was not enough food for them.</p>

## Student Handout #11A: The Life of a Lord

The lord had three basic duties:

- to give military protection to his land and its inhabitants
- to organize agriculture, industry and trade on his lands
- to serve the lord or lords above him (the highest lord being the king) in war.

The lord lived in a well protected dwelling. It was usually constructed on a hill or other high place, and was often surrounded by a moat (a ditch of water). Frequently, it was a wooden castle with separate rooms for servants, toilets, kitchen and storage. However, living quarters were usually not large compared to modern standards. For example, one large room usually served as a dining room, living room and bedroom. Windows were small and often covered to keep out the rain. However, lords could more easily afford candles or torches to provide some light.

The lord rose at dawn to attend to his work. This involved supervising the various operations of the manor. The main role of the manor was to produce food for the lord and his subjects. Because the lords needed food as much as the serfs, the lords were usually quite active in managing the agricultural output of the manor. If the manor produced a surplus of food, it was the lord's responsibility to find a market for it. Other tasks included organizing the construction and maintenance of bridges, roads, canals, etc. The entire burden of planning and organizing this work was the lord's, unless he could find a very able serf to whom he could entrust some of his authority.

The lord also served as judge of the village. Although often the serfs were allowed to stage their own trials, the lord remained the ultimate authority in these issues. He also profited from fines paid by offenders.

The lord's wife was equally busy organizing the household. She bore and raised many children, and made sure they developed proper manners. She also supervised the many tasks of the servants, such as making butter and cheese, doing laundry, preserving meat, preparing meals, making clothes, etc. If her husband went to war she took over the financial and military management of the manor, and was expected to supply his financial needs during the war. If her husband died and they had no son, she inherited the estate, but was expected to remarry within a short time in order to provide her estate with military protection.

## **Student Handout #11B: The Life of A Priest**

Priests played an important role in village life. Many of the activities of the manor centred on the church. For example, within hours of being born, babies were taken to the priest to be baptized. If the child survived, the priest would later confirm him or her as a Christian. People confessed their sins to the priest and received from him the Eucharist (eating of bread and drinking of wine to recall Jesus' death) at Easter and Christmas. The priest also conducted marriages. Finally, the priest gave funerals and buried the dead in the church cemetery.

The church was also the centre of social life, as the religious events of baptisms, weddings and funerals were cause for great feasts and parties. These and other celebrations were held in the church yard.

The priest held mass every Sunday and on Holy days. During the mass he taught Christian values and beliefs. A popular theme was the awful suffering that sinners would experience in hell.

Other duties of priests included such things as: blessing fields in the spring before seed time by sprinkling water on them; and reading orders and messages from the king and church authorities.

## Student Handout #11C: The Life of a Knight

Knights were part of the nobility class. Most knights were children of lords. The knight was a professional fighter. His duty was to protect the weak, the poor and the church.

As the children of lords, knights had a fairly comfortable childhood. The children of lords, unlike peasant children, were not required to work until the age of seven or eight. At that time, they were usually sent to the house of a friend or relative. There the boy would act as a servant to the lord and would receive his training as a fighter. This was his period of education, and it was designed to teach him to be unquestioningly loyal to his lord, devoted to service to his lord, and to be courageous and fierce in battle, yet still be a gentleman. This was the code of chivalry. Knighthood was based on the ideas of chivalry, which included the belief that war is romantic and noble. Values such as loyalty, devotion, courage, and respect for the enemy were all part of chivalry.

When he reached the age of 18 or 19, a knight was sent out to travel with other young knights. Because their main object was to fight, these bands of knights would rove around in search of a conflict. When they found one, they would join the battle on whatever side seemed most appropriate to them. When they weren't involved in local wars, knights travelled to tournaments in which they could test their fighting skills. The tournaments lasted for days, if not weeks, and were marked by loud parties, gambling, drinking and prostitution.

As a fighter, the knight was equivalent to the tank of today. His armour was almost impenetrable, such that relatively few knights actually died in combat, even if the fighting was brutal. A small but very significant invention increased the fighting power of the knight considerably. That invention, which came from China, was the stirrup. The rider could brace himself by using the stirrups, and thus use his full strength as well as that of the horse for maximum advantage in battle. The stirrup made jousting with long lances possible. A good knight could gallop at full speed and use his lance to send other knights flying off their horses.

Although knights were to be the protectors of the poor, the weak and the church, they often terrorized as much as they protected. In the midst of drunkenness or battle, the code of chivalry was not always followed.

After travelling for two or three years, young knights returned home, still fully dependent on their father. Until his father died, a young knight could neither marry nor inherit property. This was a period of frustration for knights, because they could not get on with the business of marrying and setting up their own estate.

## **Student Handout #11D: The Life of a Trader**

The trader had a rough and uncertain life. He was almost always travelling in hostile territory, and constantly feared attack by roving bands of knights. On some occasions knights might pass by him and completely ignore him, intent as they were on bigger spoils. On other occasions, they might steal his goods, and beat or even kill him.

The trader had to get permission and had to pay a special toll to enter each manor. Other manors might charge him an extra toll for using their roads.

The trader survived from day to day on the food he could purchase with his goods. Very few traders prospered; most just survived. Being a trader was a dangerous occupation with few financial benefits. As a result, very little trade occurred, and most of the trade that did occur was localized.

## Student Handout #11E: The Life of a Serf

Serfs rose with the first morning light to begin their long day. A typical breakfast may have included bread, an onion, a piece of cheese and some beer. Bread was the main ingredient of the medieval diet. The bread was hard, coarse and black. It was usually made with barley, millet and oats. Beer was the main beverage and all female serfs had to know the proper proportions of barley, water, yeast and hops in making beer. During a hard day of work in the field, the average serf may have drunk fifteen litres of beer, or even more.

Both male and female serfs worked in the fields, but females took care of most of the household chores. These included raising the children, milking the sheep (or cows), taking care of the chickens, shearing sheep, spinning wool, making clothing for the family, tending the garden, baking, preparing meals and preserving food. Women also managed the household economy. The family depended on the mother's wise management of food supplies to keep them fed from month to month and year to year.

The average peasant family lived in a windowless, one room house with a dirt floor. Furnishings usually included a fireplace for cooking, one or two beds, a table, several stools and a chest for storing clothes. Not surprisingly, these houses were dark, drafty, sooty and had leaky roofs. A shed was sometimes attached to the house. This served as a storage place for tools and a shelter for animals. Sometimes animals had the run of the house.

A typical noon meal consisted of stew made with cabbage, onions, peas and turnips, seasoned with a bone or perhaps a bit of meat.

Male serfs worked in the fields most of the time. However, they were obligated to work part of the time for the lord of the manor. The lord would have other work for the serfs besides field work. This might include taking care of the lord's animals, cutting down trees for firewood, digging a well, and constructing or maintaining the lord's buildings and roads.

The male peasant would return home at sundown, after putting in ten or twelve hours of hard physical labour. The evening meal, which would usually be leftovers from lunch, would then be eaten. Following that, the family would retire for the evening.

Although the life of a serf was mostly one of hard work, there was some time for entertainment. Loud and boisterous dances were held with the aid of much liquor.

## **Student Handout #11F: The Life of a Miller**

Around A.D. 1000, the profession of miller was just beginning to develop. An abundance of rivers in northern Europe helped to promote the use of the water mill as a source of power for grinding (milling) grain. Some windmills were also developed. When mills first began to be used, the miller was perhaps just an ordinary serf whose duties included running the mill. However, as mills became larger and more sophisticated, more specialized knowledge and skills were required to operate them. Thus millers were one of the first group of specialists to emerge during the medieval period.

Although in the Mediterranean world the mill was used only for grinding grain, in Northern Europe the mill became a source of power for numerous industries. Water power came to be used for forge hammers and forge bellows, which were used to make iron. It was also used to power saws and lathes.

## Student Handout #12: Changes

1. From the point of view of the medieval person you are representing, decide if you would be willing to accept changes in the following areas. (Review your sources of power and use them to achieve the end your group desires.)

Area of Change	Possible Changes
Technological	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Military technology - arming more knights, building castles</li><li>• Agricultural technology - making plows, creating a better harness, shifting land to raising sheep for wool, moving from a two field rotation to a three field rotation</li><li>• Milling technology - improving water and wind mills, new applications of mill power</li><li>• Transportation technology - stern post rudder, using magnetism for navigation</li></ul>
Social	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Rights for the serf</li><li>• Role and rights of women in society</li><li>• Usury - allowing people to lend money and charge interest on it</li></ul>
Economic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Encouraging trade - allow serfs to leave the land and go to towns to become craftspeople and traders, absolute right of free passage for traders buying and selling for a profit</li></ul>
Religious	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Building large cathedrals</li><li>• Changing the role of women in the church</li><li>• Having an inquisition to deal with heresies</li></ul>

2. What other changes can you or your group suggest? In what areas of life?

## Student Handout #13: Worldview Generalizations

<i>The Medieval Worldview</i>	<i>The Urban Worldview</i>
<p><b>Beliefs, Values and Ideas</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Human nature is evil and must be controlled or else chaos will result.</li> <li>• Everyone is born to a certain position and must retain it for life.</li> <li>• Society must be hierarchical because some are fitted to lead and others to follow.</li> <li>• Progress is not possible because of humanity's fall from grace.</li> <li>• Change always tends to be for the worse rather than the better.</li> <li>• The purpose of life is to prepare for the next life.</li> <li>• The church oversees the king who oversees the lords who oversees the peasants.</li> <li>• Everyone must be bound by vassalage for life.</li> <li>• Obedience is the most important value of life.</li> <li>• The best ideas are those that come from the traditions of the past.</li> <li>• Land is the source of all wealth.</li> <li>• Wealth should be used for the glory of God.</li> <li>• It is proper to set one's price according to the status of the buyer.</li> <li>• It is wrong to charge interest on money lent to someone else.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Beliefs, Values and Ideas</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Human nature is evil and must be controlled or else chaos will result.</li> <li>• Everyone is born to a certain position but may work to move to another position.</li> <li>• Society still must be hierarchical but should be based more on what one contributes and earns.</li> <li>• Progress may be possible if more wealth is created.</li> <li>• The purpose of life is to qualify for the next life.</li> <li>• The king should maintain law and order so trade can flourish.</li> <li>• Everyone should be bound by honour and loyalty.</li> <li>• Obedience is an important value but so is making a living.</li> <li>• The best ideas are those that come from the traditions of the past.</li> <li>• The source of wealth is the profit earned from trade.</li> <li>• Wealth should be used to create more wealth.</li> <li>• Charging interest on money lent to someone else is no worse than charging rent on something.</li> <li>• It is proper to set one's price at whatever someone is willing to pay in order to make a profit.</li> </ul>

## **Student Handout #14A: Disasters of Medieval Europe - The Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse**

After a period of considerable growth and relative prosperity from 1000 to 1300 A.D., Europe experienced a series of disasters that had a dramatic impact on European society. These disasters helped set the stage for the emergence of the modern world.

The four horsemen of the apocalypse, an image from the Bible in which angels of plague, war, famine and death plunder the world, became a popular theme in art and literature. No wonder, as Europe had plenty of plagues, wars, famine and death to go around in the 14<sup>th</sup> century.

## **Student Handout #14B: Disasters of Medieval Europe - Famine**

Early in the 14<sup>th</sup> century, weather patterns began to change. An unusual number of storms and other strange phenomena resulted in reduced harvests and, on several occasions, total crop failures. These environmental disasters led to severe famines in which thousands of people died of starvation. At the same time that people were being ravaged by crop failures and hunger, various epidemics began striking cities and dealing severe blows to the population. Livestock were not excluded from epidemics. In 1318, just one year after most of Europe had gone through a terrible three-year famine, sheep and cattle were struck with a disease that drastically reduced the size of flocks and herds. In a 47 year period from 1302 to 1348, there were 20 years in which Europe experienced either very poor harvests or else total crop failures.

## **Student Handout #14C: Disasters of Medieval Europe - The Black Death**

The living conditions in medieval cities were much worse than modern inner-city slums. The cities were extremely overcrowded and extremely filthy. There was neither a sewage system nor a garbage disposal system. As a result, waste from animals and people were left in the narrow streets to rot. These extremely unsanitary conditions made medieval cities a perfect breeding ground for disease. Given that there was a great deal of contact between cities through trade, the conditions were ripe for an infectious disease to spread, not just within a single city but throughout the cities of Europe.

The bubonic plague broke out in China in 1331 and was brought across the Asian caravan routes to southern Russia by 1346. In 1347 the plague went to Italy. In the next two years, it spread north throughout the rest of Europe.

The black rat was one of the main agents responsible for spreading this terrible disease. The plague was caused by bacteria that resided in the stomach of a flea. These fleas, in turn, lived in the fur of black rats. The rats lived on filth. They were also international voyagers, catching free rides on cargo ships and travelling from one port to another. When they stopped off to visit cities they brought their plague infested fleas with them. Flea bites were common and people thought nothing of them. But one bite from a plague infested flea resulted in almost certain death for that individual and for most of the family as well.

The disease started as a growth on the neck, groin or armpit, ranging in size from a nut to an apple. This boil caused agonizing pain. If it was lanced and the puss drained, there was a possibility of recovery. The second stage of the disease was the appearance of black blotches, caused by bleeding under the skin. This was followed by violent coughing and spitting up of blood. Usually within two or three days the person was dead. The horrid manner of death was made worse by the isolation of the victims. The disease was so disgusting and revolting that, with the exception of priests and nuns, few were willing to give compassionate care to the victims.

It is impossible to say how many people died from the plague. Within cities, anywhere from one third to two thirds of the population died from the disease. Since the rats did not spread to the countryside, most people in rural areas were not affected by the disease. Still, it is estimated that about one third of the population of Europe died.

As you can imagine, the plague had devastating effects on medieval society. Many people saw the plague as God's judgement on society. This led some to question why a good God would allow such a horrible disease to occur. Some abandoned their faith in God as a result. In short, there was much confusion and much questioning in society. Many felt that if the plague was God's judgement, then some serious changes needed to take place to make society more pleasing to God.

## **Student Handout #14D: Disasters of Medieval Europe - The Hundred Years War**

The Hundred Years War, a battle between England and France, was actually fought on and off for about 126 years (1337-1453). The war had a number of causes. When the war began, the people of England believed that they were fighting for the right of their king, Edward III, to secure the French crown. Through marriage Edward had become heir to the crown. However, the French royal family refused to allow Edward to become king. Although this was the reason given to convince the public to support the war, there were other causes as well, such as the economic competition between France and England over the wool trade.

During the medieval period, war was seen as being beautiful, glamorous and romantic. It made men noble and glorious. War was part of the aristocratic code of behaviour known as chivalry. Fighting skill, bravery and respect for the enemy were all part of the chivalric code and war was the perfect opportunity for an aristocratic knight to demonstrate his chivalry. Prisoners were released with the promise that they would return to pay their ransom. They usually did because honesty and respect for the enemy were aspects of the code of chivalry.

Aristocratic knights were mounted on horses and decked out in full suits of armour. Their weapons were usually swords and lances (long spears). Serfs also fought in wars as foot soldiers. Because of the cost of armour and the importance of mobility, they did not wear full armour. Their weapons were clubs and crossbows.

At the beginning of the Hundred Years War, aristocrats and knights flocked to the battlefield for another display of chivalric honour. However, this was to be a war that would eventually spell the end of chivalry and "knights in shining armour."

It was technological advancements that changed the way war was fought and perceived. The longbow was developed by the English in the 11<sup>th</sup> century and was used effectively against the French. Three arrows could be shot from a longbow for every one shot from a crossbow. The hail of arrows that English serfs fired at French knights did not penetrate their armour, but killed their horses and forced them to fight on the ground, which was both awkward and undignified for a knight. They made easy targets for the British knights atop their horses.

The other technological development that helped to destroy chivalry and knighthood was gunpowder. The British used cannons in battle against the French. This new weapon caused great fear and confusion, and ultimately made armour obsolete.

The drawn-out war had drastic impacts for both the English and the French. The scale of the war was enormous compared to most medieval battles. At least ten percent of the population from both countries was directly or indirectly involved in the war. This disrupted the economies of both countries. The war also proved to be extremely expensive. To pay for it, nobles and kings began to raise the taxes of the serfs and poor classes in the cities. This led to inflation, which became a serious problem in both France and England.

## **Student Handout #14E: Disasters of Medieval Europe - Fur Collar Crime**

The Hundred Years War had provided employment and adventure for thousands of aristocratic knights. After the war was over, many of these knights returned home and found they had nothing to do. Many turned to crime as a way of raising money to support their aristocratic lifestyle. This became known as "fur collar crime," so called because of the miniver fur that only the nobility were allowed to wear on their collars.

Knights rode around the countryside and terrorized rich and poor alike. They plundered villages, demanded protection money from defenceless serfs, and kidnapped the rich and demanded a ransom. Most of this crime went unpunished because there were few authorities strong enough to stop it. When they were arrested, knights used threats, bribes or connections to escape punishment.

## **Student Handout #14F: Disasters of Medieval Europe - Human Behaviour Under Stress**

The troubles of 14<sup>th</sup> century Europe were just too great for many people to handle. Many responded in bizarre ways to what seemed to be the end of the world.

Some who believed that the plague was a punishment sent by God whipped and beat themselves in an attempt to pay for the sins of themselves and society as a whole. Others took to heart the words "eat, drink and be merry, for tomorrow you die." Still others turned to a life of severe self-discipline and frenzied religious expression.

Overall, people became extremely pessimistic about life. The art and literature of this period reveals a morbid preoccupation with death. As well, people began to doubt and question all of the values and beliefs that were the foundation of medieval society.

## **Student Handout #15: The Situation Facing the Feudal Lords in the Fourteenth Century**

The desperate food shortages of the 14<sup>th</sup> century that were the result of crop failures introduced the medieval world to something it was unfamiliar with—inflation. Because there was less food to go around, what was available became more valuable; hence the price went up. The prices of other items rose as well.

In order to maintain their standard of living, the lords would have to find a way to earn more money. But the only form of income for most lords was the rent and duties paid to them by their serfs for the use of land, baking ovens, flour mills, etc. But, throughout the 14<sup>th</sup> century, the rent and other obligations owed to lords by serfs had been decreasing. The reason for this was a labour shortage caused by large numbers of deaths in the 14<sup>th</sup> century due to wars, plagues and famines. Lords needed to recruit new serfs to work their land. The demand for serfs meant that the serfs could negotiate better working conditions for themselves, with lower rent and fewer duties and taxes to pay to the lord. Thus, lords were losing money in two ways: they were paying more to buy goods and were earning less income.

The lords concluded that they had no choice in the matter. To maintain their standard of living they would have to begin raising their rent and charging the serfs some of the old duties and taxes they had previously paid.

## **Student Handout #16: The Situation Facing the Common People in the Fourteenth Century**

The chaos of the 14<sup>th</sup> century had a dramatic impact on the security of the common people. In the past, they had looked to the nobility to protect them. Now, knights and other nobles were terrorizing the countryside and the towns by raping, stealing and killing. Law and order collapsed. Serfs could no longer depend on their lords to protect them. Indeed, many lords were treating their own serfs in a brutal fashion, taking advantage of them in every possible way. People in towns could no longer depend on their walls to protect them. They were now being frequently attacked and were forced to use large amounts of manpower, money and resources to defend themselves.

The common people in France and England blamed the nobility for the long and futile Hundred Years War. It was the nobles' war, not their war; yet, the nobles expected them to pay for it.

Common people also suffered because of the restrictions on trade. Traders had to pay tolls and taxes to lords in order to trade on the lords' land. These regulations had a negative impact on both traders and serfs. If traders were allowed to work more freely, serfs would benefit from lower prices and greater access to a wider variety of goods.

## **Student Handout #17: Peasant Revolts**

Although the 14<sup>th</sup> century was one of extreme disruption and suffering, the serfs eventually benefitted because they gained more freedom. The lords were threatened by this freedom because they could no longer count on the serfs to work for them. As a result, the lords tried to reimpose the traditional duties and obligations of serfs. However, the serfs were unwilling to turn back the clock. Once they had experienced some freedom, they were unwilling to return to the serfdom of the past.

Kings and lords also tried to impose greater taxes on serfs in order to pay for wars and other expenses. Although the conditions that serfs experienced differed greatly from country to country as well as within countries, serfs throughout Europe began to rebel against the nobility. Bloody and violent peasant revolts broke out in many parts of Europe in the 14<sup>th</sup> century. The greatest number of revolts, as well as the largest, occurred in France and England. In many cases, artisans, traders and priests joined the peasants.

The brutality of the revolts demonstrated the resentment of the peasants towards the nobility. Serfs would sweep through the countryside killing nobles, raping their wives and daughters, destroying their livestock and burning their castles. In what was probably the largest of these revolts, approximately 100,000 English peasants rampaged through the countryside in 1381, killing and destroying with brutal savagery.