Objectives

- Explain how feudalism shaped medieval society.
- Describe the life of knights and nobles.
- Analyze how the economic system of the manor worked and how it affected peasants and nobles.
How did feudalism and the manor economy emerge and shape medieval life?

Medieval society was a network of mutual obligations.

It was part of a new political and economic system called feudalism that guided European life during the Middle Ages.
Feudalism developed in Europe in response to the need for protection from outside invasion.

- Local lords divided their landholdings among **vassals**.
- These **vassals** pledged service and loyalty to the lord for a **fief**.
- This system was set by an exchange of pledges known as the **feudal contract**.
Under the feudal arrangement, both lords and vassals had obligations to each other.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Obligations of the lord</th>
<th>Obligations of the vassal</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Protect the vassal</td>
<td>• Pledge loyalty to the lord</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Grant the vassal a fief, or estate</td>
<td>• Provide the lord with 40 days of military service per year</td>
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<td>• Provide money payments and advice</td>
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Society was very structured.

- Monarch
- Powerful lords such as dukes and counts
- Vassals and peasants. The same man could be vassal to one lord and lord to another vassal.
Warfare was a way of life during this time.

Castles were built for defense, and nobles began training at a young age to be knights.
Boys as young as seven went to the castle of their father’s lord to learn to ride and fight.

When training was done, the young man was made a knight in a public ceremony.

Knights engaged in warfare and mock battles called tournaments.
Knights adopted a code of conduct called **chivalry**.

- It required them to be brave, loyal, and true to their word, as well as to fight fairly.
- **Troubadours** sang about brave knights and their devotion to their loves.
Warfare at this time usually consisted of trying to seize a castle.

These fortresses housed lords and knights and provided refuge to peasants in time of war.
The manor was the heart of feudal life.

It included a village or two and surrounding lands. The manor system worked by mutual obligation.

Most of the population were serfs, who were bound to the land.
Most **manors** were self-sufficient, producing everything the people there needed.

Most peasants never traveled farther than a few miles away during their entire lives.
Life was harsh and short for the peasants.

- Everyone worked long hours, and few lived past age 35. They ate a simple diet of bread and vegetables and slept in huts with their livestock.

- Peasants celebrated at Christmas and Easter by dancing and playing rough sports.