

ACTIVITIES

- In point form, explain how the code of chivalry guided a knight through life. Give examples.
 - Given the violent nature of a knight's skills, do you think society would benefit if knights followed a code of behaviour? How?
 - Write a code of chivalry for young Canadians.
- Design an organizing chart to show the various stages a young man would go through before becoming a knight. In one column list the stages. In the next column list what occurred at each stage.
- In Chapter 2 you learned that feudal society is structured into a series of ranks, with the monarch at the top. Draw an expanded diagram of the feudal **hierarchy**, including the king, knights, nobles, as well as squires, children, and pages.
 - How did a lack of money keep some young men from becoming a knight? Think of a similar situation in Canada today.
 - How does Canada attempt to help poorer Canadians achieve their goals? Why would this not be available in the fifteenth century?

THE HUNDRED YEARS' WAR

The Hundred Years' War was a struggle between the monarchs and nobles of France and England that lasted from 1338 to 1453. Today it is hard for us to imagine how a war could last so long. Warfare in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries was not like modern warfare with its terrible weapons of mass destruction. There were frequent long truces, and nobody fought during the winter months, when the roads were impassable. Even during an active military campaign, the armies spent much of their time manoeuvring for position, burning homes, trampling crops, and raiding farmers' food stores.

The war began, like the Norman invasion of England, as a war about who should be king. The French supported a French cousin of the dead ruler. The English king, Edward III, as a nephew of the old French king, believed he had a stronger claim, so he invaded France. Over the course of the war, the English, at various times, controlled vast areas of France but by

the end of the war held only the port city of Calais. King Henry V's victory at Agincourt, as told at the beginning of this chapter, was to be one of the last important English successes of the war.

TECHNOLOGY AND TACTICS

The English had one powerful weapon that the French did not have: archers. These archers were ordinary villagers skilled in the use of the longbow. They shot clothyard (metre-long) arrows from bows almost 2 metres in height. It was reported that an arrow from a longbow could penetrate a knight's plate armour and kill him. The thrust from such a bow was so powerful that it could send an arrow through the armoured leg of a mounted knight, the body of his horse, and the knight's leg on the other side.

Although the French knights could fight as well as the English,

hierarchy: the order of ranks in a system

DID YOU KNOW?

Japan, another military society, also had castles. Compare the castle on the opposite page with the one on page 196.

they were defeated many times during the Hundred Years' War. Many of the French refused to fight with anyone of "low birth," so they would not attack the archers. In three important battles, French knights tried to ride past the low-born archers to get at their social equals, the English knights. In each case, the volleys of arrows from the archers were so deadly that the battles turned into disasters for the French, who had to pay large sums to ransom the surviving knights. The lowly English archer made the knight and his armour **obsolete**.

obsolete: useless because it is out of date

siege: the act of surrounding a fortified place in order to capture it



Figure 5-6 At the age of twenty-eight, Henry V of England invaded France. You read about his great victory at Agincourt at the beginning of this chapter. Judging by this peace-time painting, what do you think Henry's character was like?

The Burghers of Calais

Early in the Hundred Years' War, in 1346, Edward III of England besieged the French port city of Calais.

Under the rules of war at the time, the inhabitants of a town or castle under **seige** would be treated mercifully if they surrendered. The rules of chivalry—which were tied to the rules of war—demanded it. The citizens could all be slaughtered, however, if they had not surrendered before the final assault. With this in mind, hold a class debate to decide who was the most chivalrous in the true story at right: the burghers, who volunteered to die to save their fellow-citizens; the Queen of England, who pleaded for the lives of her husband's enemies; or King Edward III, who granted his wife's request.

The story begins when the French king refuses to come to the city's aid, and the citizens finally ask Edward for terms of surrender.

Upon which the king replied: "You will inform the governor of Calais that the only grace he can expect from me is that six of the principal citizens of Calais march out of the town with bare heads and feet, with ropes round their necks, and the keys of the town and castle in their hands. These six persons shall be at my absolute disposal, and the remainder of the inhabitants pardoned."

When Sir Walter Manly had presented these six citizens to the king ... the king eyed them with angry looks ... and ordered that their heads be stricken off.

The queen of England, who at that time was big with child, fell on her knees, and with tears said, "Ah, gentle sir, since I have crossed the sea with great danger to see you, I have never asked you for one favour: now, I most humbly ask for a gift, for the sake of the Son of the blessed Mary, and for your love to me, that you will be merciful to these six men."

The king looked at her for some time in silence, and then said: "Ah, lady, I wish you had been anywhere else but here: you have entreated in such a manner that I cannot refuse you; I therefore give them to you, to do as you please with them." The queen had the six citizens conducted to her apartments, and had the halters taken from round their necks, after which she new clothed them, and served them a plentiful dinner; she then presented each with six nobles, and had them escorted out of the camp in safety.



JOAN OF ARC RALLIES THE FRENCH

dauphin: eldest son of the French king

hither: here

In 1429, seven years after the death of Henry V, a seventeen-year-old peasant girl named Joan of Arc appeared at the

French court claiming that angelic voices had commanded her to drive the English out of France. The **dauphin** was skeptical at first. In the end, however, he gave Joan a plain steel suit of armour, a white banner, and enough troops to battle the English.

Young Joan, brimming with confidence and flying her white banner, was an inspirational leader. After driving the English from

Orleans, she escorted the dauphin to the cathedral at Reims where she stood at his side as he was crowned Charles VII, King of France.

Joan of Arc enjoyed other triumphs, but two years after her victory at Orleans, she was captured. King Charles refused to pay her ransom, so she was put on trial for heresy and witchcraft. One piece of evidence considered important at her trial was that she dressed in armour, which was men's clothing. People of the high Middle Ages would have been highly suspicious of a woman who dressed as a man. On May 30, 1531, Joan was burned at the stake. She was just nineteen years old.

Joan's death proved to be as inspirational to the French as her life had been. By helping them rally together behind the French king against the English, she had forced them to start thinking of themselves as one nation rather than as a collection of fiefdoms always at war with each other. In her death, Joan became a heroine of all France. By strengthening the king at the expense of the nobles, she also contributed to the end of feudalism in Europe.



Figure 5-9 Although burned at the stake for heresy and witchcraft, Joan of Arc was eventually made a saint. What view of Joan does this portrait present? Explain.

Joan of Arc Writes to the English Invaders

Joan of Arc could not read or write herself but dictated this letter to be delivered to the English at the beginning of her campaign to drive them from France. After reading this letter, decide what qualities made Joan an inspiration to her troops.

Jesus Maria —

King of England, and you Duke of Bedford, calling yourself regent of France, you William Pole, Count of Suffolk John Talbot, and you Thomas Lord Scales, calling yourselves lieutenants of the said Duke of Bedford, do right in the King of Heaven's sight. Surrender to The Maid sent **hither** by God the King of Heaven the keys of all the good towns you have taken and laid waste in France. She comes in God's name to establish the Blood Royal, ready to make peace if you agree to abandon France and repay what you have taken. And you, archers, comrades in arms, gentles and others, who are before the town of Orleans, retire in God's name to your own country.

If you do not, expect to hear tidings from The Maid who will shortly come upon you to your very great hurt.

