

CHAPTER 14 Section 2 (pages 387–392)

Changes in Medieval Society

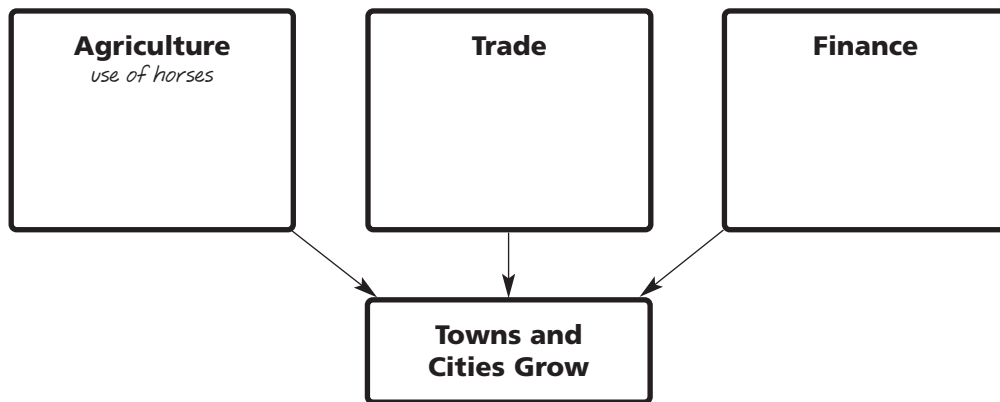
BEFORE YOU READ

In the last section, you read about the Crusades.

In this section, you will read about the rise of towns and trade.

AS YOU READ

Use the diagram below to take notes on changes occurring in towns and cities during the Middle Ages.



TERMS AND NAMES

three-field system Farmland divided into three equal-sized fields, in which crops were rotated

guild An organization working to get the best prices or working conditions

Commercial Revolution The expansion of trade and changes in business practices

burgher Merchant class person who lived in a town

vernacular Everyday language

Thomas Aquinas Scholar who argued that the most basic religious truths could be proved by sound reasoning

scholastics Scholars who gathered and taught at universities

A Growing Food Supply (page 387)

Why did the food supply increase?

The climate in Europe became warmer between the years 800 and 1200. This helped farming. Farmers also developed better ways to produce crops. Horses pulled plows. Horses could do twice the work of oxen. A new harness made the use of horses possible.

Farmers also used a new method of rotating the crops planted in an area. They planted two-thirds of their fields, leaving one-third unplanted. This **three-field system** help farmers grow greater amounts of food.

1. Give three reasons why the food supply increased.

The Guilds (page 388)

What were the guilds?

Changes in the way goods were produced and sold happened in the medieval period. Merchants banded together in an organization called a **guild**. A merchant guild worked to get the best prices for their goods. Later, workers formed craft guilds.

They were made up of groups of workers who did the same job. These included bakers, tailors, and glassmakers. Members set standards and prices for their products. They also made rules for young people learning the craft.

2. What were the two kinds of guilds?

The Commercial Revolution

(pages 389–390)

Why did trade and finance increase?

Along with the growth in the food supply, trade and finance increased. Craft workers began to make more goods. These goods were traded all over Europe. Towns held fairs each year. There merchants sold cloth, food, leather, and other wares.

With more trade, merchants needed more cash. They had to borrow money to buy goods to sell. They needed new ways to get cash and loans and to exchange different types of money. The Church had rules against charging a fee for loaning money. Jews, who were outside the Church, became the chief sources of loans. Later, the Church relaxed its rules. Then Christians began to form banks. The expansion of trade and changes in banking practices was called the **Commercial Revolution**.

3. How did ways of doing business change?

Urban Life Flourishes (pages 390–391)

Why did towns grow larger?

In the early 1100s, the population of western Europe grew quickly. Trade was booming. Towns grew larger and more important. Towns were dirty places, with narrow streets. Wooden houses in the towns were fire hazards.

Many peasants fled to the towns. After living there a year and a day, they became free. Other town *dwellers*, known as **burghers**, organized themselves. The burghers were of the merchant class. Merchants helped change the social order. They demanded more rights for town dwellers.

4. Why did peasants move to the towns?

The Revival of Learning (pages 391–392)

Why did learning spread?

Growing trade and wealth helped lead to a growing interest in education. New centers of learning arose in Europe. They were called universities.

At this time, most writers were still using Latin. However, some began to use the **vernacular**. This was their native, everyday language. Dante Alighieri wrote *The Divine Comedy* in Italian. Geoffrey Chaucer wrote *The Canterbury Tales* in English. These writers brought literature to many people.

During the Crusades, contact with Muslims helped increase learning. Muslim scholars had preserved books from ancient Rome and Greece. These works then became available in Europe.

Ancient writings influenced Christian thinkers, such as **Thomas Aquinas**. He reasoned that the most basic religious truths could be proved by logic. Aquinas and his fellow scholars met at the great universities. They were known as schoolmen, or **scholastics**.

5. How did the use of the vernacular help spread learning?
