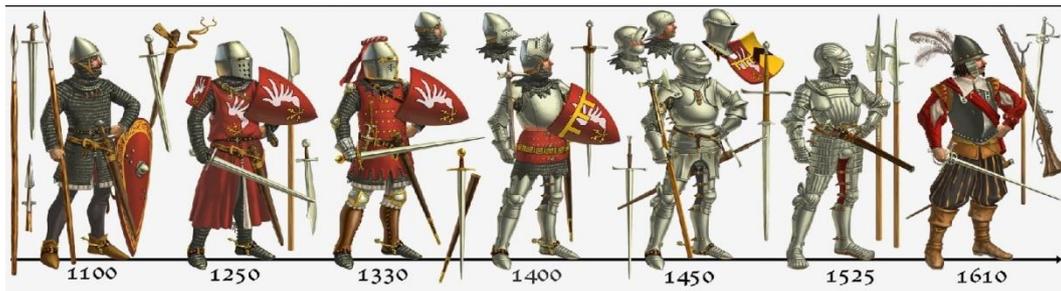


Knights Information and Reading Task

What was a knight?

The first knights were those of the First Crusade of 1099.

There were three main types of soldiers during the Middle Ages (from about the 5th-15th Century): foot soldiers, archers, and knights. The knights were heavily armoured soldiers who rode on horseback. Only the wealthiest nobles could afford to be a knight. They needed very expensive armour, weapons, and a powerful war horse because the armour was very heavy to carry. The armour knights were expected to wear changed as we can see below. This was because the way battles were fought and the weapons the enemy used also changed along with improvements in armour and metal technology.



In the Middle Ages Kings needed armies to defend their lands and it was a lord's job to serve his ruler as a knight. A knight had to have his own armour and a horse so had to be very rich! He also employed staff who followed him into battle. They helped him mount and dismount (get on and off) the horse and they took care of the horses and weapons. Not all knights were lords who owned their land. Some lived in a lord's castle as part of his garrison (the group of soldiers that protected the castle). The lord paid for the cost of their armour.



Becoming a Knight

To be a knight, a nobleman's (rich person) son had to first become a page (a servant to a knight) and then a squire (an apprentice to a knight). At around seven years old, the boy was sent away to another noble household. There he worked as a page until he was about 13 when he was made a squire. As a squire he learned how to fight and use weapons. He would be dubbed, or made a knight at around the age of 21. Both pages and squires served the lord's family at dinner.

Tournaments

During peacetime, the knights of the Middle Ages showed off their skills at contests called tournaments. These were mock battles designed to thrill the crowds and show off the knights' fighting skills. The joust was the main event. Two knights charged at each other and tried to knock the other knight off his horse with a lance. As well as jousting, a tournament included combat on foot and a 'tourney' which was a fight between two teams of mounted knights.



Questions

- Can you name two of the types of soldiers there were?
- Why did a Knight need to wear heavy armour?
- At what age did a boy start to become a Knight?
- True or false: a poor person could become a Knight?
- Name one thing that happened in a tournament.
- Do you think Knights lived for very long?
- Why do you think tournaments were held in peacetime?