Essential Question for TP #1

What were the economic, political, and cultural effects of the Black Death/Bubonic Plague on the citizens of Europe?

- Geography:

- Economy:

- Politics:

- Culture:
Directions: Please follow the directions given in each section. Much of this homework should be done in the first 5 minutes of each class period as an entry task. If you are not finished with the homework by Thursday night you must have it finished before Friday morning.

Grading: **SCORE:**______/2

**Vocabulary:** Define each word using the information contained in this packet. Please find the words using articles, text from the world history book, or notes and then write those definitions in the section provided.

1. **Feudalism** -

2. **Serf** -

3. **Market Economy** -

**ESSENTIAL IDEA:**

Please read the following fact, person, place or idea and use the space provided below to write a concrete detail (CD) and a commentary (CM) for each. CDs should be facts about the item listed below. CMs should explain why that item is important in the course of world history.

4. **The Black Death**
   - **CD** -

   - **CM** -
Life in the Middle Ages

I. Feudalism
   A. Political system of local government based on the granting of land in return for loyalty, military assistance, and other services

   B. 

   C. 

   D. 

II. The Church
   A. 

   B. 

   C. Bible is written in, and church services held in Latin

   D. 

   E. 

   1. 

   2. Non-religious individuals gaining positions within the church

   3.
III. Government
A.
B. Rich people = small # = the most land =
   Poor people = large # = no land =
C.

IV. The People
A.
B. VERY uneducated - most people are illiterate (3 - 5% can read) and superstitious (belief in witchcraft, spirits, etc...)

C.

V. Conclusion
A.
B. The Church is VERY powerful throughout Europe

C.

D.

Citation: VanDerPuy, Abraham. "Life in the Middle Ages." Auburn High School. 4 Feb. 2013. Lecture.
Throughout history, the world has endured huge death rates caused by plagues, and the most notorious was arguably the bubonic plague. It began in central Asia and spread through China along trade routes and reached Europe in October of 1347 when a fleet of Genoese merchant ships from Caffa landed in Sicily. Named the Black Death in Medieval Europe, it wiped out one-third of the population of Europe, with the majority of deaths occurring between 1348 and 1351.

Once the plague reached Sicily, the most remote corners of Europe were infected in less than three years. During that period everyone lived in terror of becoming its next victim and all knew someone who had succumbed to the plague. No one knew how to prevent or cure it. Fleas were the primary carriers of the bubonic plague and initially rats served as their hosts. Rats, however, were as susceptible to the disease as humans - or any other animal. As rats began to die the fleas sought new hosts from which to feed. Eventually, fleas found new human hosts who were in turn infected by the plague.

That 20-25 million people died, with a death rate around 33% during the four years of the plague may seem staggering, however the death rates in cities were even greater. A 33% death rate was the average in Europe as a whole; but because cities hold the greatest concentration of people, they were hit hardest. The average death rate in cities during the plague, estimated at around 50%, meant that so many died that there were usually not enough people alive to bury the dead.

The table below shows major cities and their death rates at different times during the epidemic:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>European City</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Death Rate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Constantinople, Turkey</td>
<td>4 months in 1347</td>
<td>10,000 deaths per day average</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Florence, Italy</td>
<td>March of 1348</td>
<td>45-65,000 dead = 50-75% of residents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Avignon, France</td>
<td>April of 1348</td>
<td>50% of residents dead at its peak; 1,312 in one day alone</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paris, France</td>
<td>June-July of 1348</td>
<td>50,000 of 180,000 residents dead at its peak; 800 deaths per day average</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Venice, Italy</td>
<td>1348 (entire year)</td>
<td>60% of residents dead at its peak; 500-600 deaths per day average</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The plague had a devastating effect on every aspect of life and it would take Europe's population over 150 years to return to pre-plague levels. Besides a massive decline in population, economic, political, social and cultural effects continued to disrupt and influence European life throughout the next century.

The immediate economic effect of the plague was that the huge death toll created a serious labor shortage that affected all aspects of the economy. In agriculture there was a shortage of workers to either plant or harvest the crops depending on the time of year. That meant that many crops simply rotted in the fields. Many small farming towns disappeared off the maps because of a lack of workers and residents. Building projects were left incomplete as well because of a lack of workers, and lords lost many serfs (Peasants who were bound to the land where they worked for a lord) who used to meet their needs. These labor shortages led to a rise in wages for those people who had not died from the plague. Serfs who for centuries had worked the land for little or no pay suddenly began to demand higher wages and, increasingly, revolted against the nobility that sought to work them for lower wages of the past.
Severe declines in population led to price reductions for all goods due to massive surpluses (extra goods). Commoners who survived the plague found that decreased prices, combined with increased wages, led to a higher standard of living than they had experienced before the plague. This would result later on in a European middle class and a market economy (Economy in which land, labor, and money are controlled by individual persons).

The greatest political impact of the plague was that the feudal system of the middle ages was dismantled. This system was based on the nobility controlling both the land and the people who worked it. As the plague spread, many of these nobles either died from the disease or fled the land entirely to escape the deadly effects of the plague. Entire estates were left abandoned and the once rich land left there for the taking. This meant that the primary source of wealth, which used to be land, was now being owned by more and more people, thus creating an emerging middle class. This breakdown of the nobility and feudalism also opened the door for powerful kings to claim thrones and establish strong nation states across Europe in the absence of small territorial lords. So great was the death toll and fear of the plague that many courts and legislative bodies on the local and state level were abandoned.

There was also a fascinating cultural effect of the plague on the belief system of the people of Europe. Because of the massive death rate and the church’s inability to counter the effects of the disease, many people lost faith in the established church and their explanations of the world. In the years following the plague it became much easier to question the church’s power and speak against church teachings. However, a majority of Europeans found that their faith in God was actually increasing. Many blamed the plague on the wrath of God, which showed his displeasure over humankind’s behavior. Kings built magnificent cathedrals and monuments dedicated to God’s glory, hoping he would allow the plague to pass over their city. Many commoners who could not make such grand and expensive gestures often did penance for their sins by beating themselves. Known as flagellants, they walked in succession through towns bare backed, whipping themselves and those who accompanied them. As they marched, the flagellants sang and prayed for mercy, believing that if they demonstrated to God that they were truly sorry for their sins, He would spare their lives.

SCORE: ________/4

1. What two creatures helped spread the plague to humans?

2. The death rate in Europe as a whole was ______% of the population.

3. The death rate in the crowded cities of Europe was usually around ______% of the population.
4. In your own words, DESCRIBE in detail the main economic effect of the Black Death.

5. In your own words, DESCRIBE in detail the main political effect of the Black Death.

6. In your own words, DESCRIBE in detail the main cultural effect of the Black Death.
History’s Turning Points: The Black Death
Score: ____/2

1. In just two years, this terrible plague was to claim over _____ million lives.

2. The plague was carried in the bloodstream of black rats and in the ____________ that fed on them.

3. In the city of Caffa in the year 1345 A.D. a Mongol army began to throw __________-infected corpses over the walls.

4. Within days, the people inside the walls of Caffa began to ________.

5. During the Middle Ages, churches were centers of ____________ with unquestioned authority over the population.

6. Fleas thrived in the filth and clung to the clothes of the dead which were then ____________ or passed on.

7. Plague victims’ sickness lasted _______ days and on the ________ day the plague had claimed another victim.

8. _______________, with their lethal cargoes of infected rats and fleas, were the surest and fastest means of spreading the plague.

9. While the plague raged through Avignon, France in 1348, the Pope sat between two large _____________ that were meant to purify the air.

10. The Black Death killed _____ of Europe’s population; over 20 million people.

Citation: “The Black Death.” History’s Turning Points. History Channel. Television.