

Year 5 Topic

Peasants, Princes and Pestilence



Lock your doors and pull up the drawbridge: the dreaded 'Great Pestilence' is here.

At the start of this half term, we'll meet a strange character and use a range of source materials to research the symptoms of the Black Death. Our geography skills will help us understand how the black death came to Britain and why it spread so quickly. We'll investigate the effects of bacteria on the human body and find out about disgusting and dangerous plague 'cures'. Our personal plague journals will record the horror of the black death and we'll write poetry inspired by Geoffrey Chaucer. We'll learn about different social classes, understand the reasons for the Peasants' Revolt, take part in a mock battle and learn what it was like to be a knight.

At the end of the project, we'll find out about the Black Death through history and make a timeline of outbreaks around the world. Observing live domestic rats will help us to learn about their characteristics and life cycles. A medieval tournament will also be held to showcase our knowledge of medieval knights and demonstrate our jousting skills.

Help your child prepare for their project

This half term, we'll travel back to the dark and deadly world of 14th century Britain. Why not visit your local library or museum to see if the 14th-century plague affected your area? You could also look around your house with an adult to see how many products there are that are made to tackle germs. Would they have helped to prevent the spread of the plague? Alternatively, read a book together that is set during a plague. How were the characters' lives affected by the deadly disease?

What will you choose to do?

- Search your local library to find out if the plague of the 14th century affected a village or town near you. What information can you find out?
- Write a letter to a child of the 21st century, imagining you are a peasant child of the 14th century. What could you tell them about your life?
- Design a coat of arms for your family. What symbols would you use and what would they represent? What would be your family motto?
- Find out what happens when something decomposes. Place an apple core, orange or grape in a transparent container and watch as it decomposes. Document what happens.
- Use a map of the UK to identify castles of the Middle Ages. Make a scrapbook or journal to research facts about one of them. Be prepared to present your scrapbook to others.
- Make a model rat out of papier mâché. Paint it to make it look realistic. Take a picture of your rat in different places but try not to scare anyone!

