Power Across Kingdoms

Land, law, and the Church in medieval Europe

SS24.8.7 "Outline the social, cultural, economic, and religious developments of early medieval Europe. 7a Compare and contrast the growth of medieval societies in different geographic regions of Europe..."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline three changes in rulers' power, circle two ways the Church influenced society, and write 1 beside a sentence about Frankish lands and 2 beside a sentence about England. Use your marks to compare how power worked in the two regions.

Who Held Power?

1. In 800, Pope Leo III crowned Charlemagne emperor in Rome. The ceremony linked a ruler's power to the Catholic Church, although kings and church leaders did not always agree. Across Charlemagne's Frankish lands, in much of present-day France and Germany, many people lived on rural estates called manors. Farmers worked fields, while powerful landholders offered protection and claimed labor or rents. Lords also granted land to warriors in return for military service. These ties of land, service, and loyalty shaped political power, but customs differed from place to place.

2. England took a different path in 1066, when William of Normandy conquered it. He gave estates to his followers, replacing many English landholders with Norman lords who owed him service. This helped William tighten royal control over land and armed men. Yet the Church remained influential on both sides of the English Channel. People paid tithes to support churches, and monasteries owned farmland. Bishops advised rulers, while church schools and monasteries preserved learning. Thus the Church affected money, land, government, and daily life, not just worship.

3. In 1215, English nobles pressured King John to seal Magna Carta. It said the king must follow certain laws, including rules against taking a free man's land without lawful judgment. The charter did not grant equal rights to everyone, but it challenged unchecked royal power. Later, the Hundred Years' War (1337 to 1453) set English and French kings against each other. Warfare demanded taxes and armies. In England, Parliament gained influence when kings sought taxes; in France, victory helped kings strengthen royal government. Different pressures changed each kingdom's political system.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. How did Charlemagne's coronation and William's land grants build rulers' power in different ways?

2. How did the Church influence both the economy and government in these regions?

3. After the Norman Conquest, how did land-for-service ties change who held land and who controlled fighters in England?

4. How did Magna Carta and the Hundred Years' War affect royal power in England and France?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Imagine you advise a free tenant in England in 1220 whose field is threatened by a king's officer. Write four sentences explaining what the tenant could say to the officer, how a lord might help, and why Magna Carta offers a claim but not a guarantee.

ANSWER KEY

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GRADE 8 · SS24.8.7

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline three changes in rulers' power, circle two ways the Church influenced society, and write 1 beside a sentence about Frankish lands and 2 beside a sentence about England. Use your marks to compare how power worked in the two regions. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How did Charlemagne's coronation and William's land grants build rulers' power in different ways?	**Charlemagne's coronation linked his authority to the Church. William gave estates to followers who owed him service, strengthening his control over land and fighters.**
2	How did the Church influence both the economy and government in these regions?	**Tithes supported churches, and monasteries owned farmland. Bishops advised rulers, and the pope's coronation of Charlemagne linked the Church to a ruler's authority.**
3	After the Norman Conquest, how did land-for-service ties change who held land and who controlled fighters in England?	**William gave estates to Norman followers in place of many English landholders. Their service gave him greater control over armed men.**
4	How did Magna Carta and the Hundred Years' War affect royal power in England and France?	**Magna Carta limited the English king by requiring him to follow certain laws. During the war, English kings' need for taxes increased Parliament's influence, while French victory helped French kings strengthen royal government.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Tell the officer that Magna Carta says a free person's land should not be taken without lawful judgment. Ask your lord to speak for you, since ties of land and service give lords influence. The charter gives you a reason to challenge the officer's actions. Still, a written rule cannot guarantee that every powerful person will obey it.

Accept other passage-supported comparisons and Church roles. For the open task, look for a lawful-judgment claim, a plausible role for the lord, and recognition that the charter did not ensure obedience.