Medieval Minds and Makers

Identify achievements in medieval art, architecture, and thought

9-12.WC.23 "Identify key figures, artistic and intellectual achievements of the medieval period in Western Europe, (e.g. Thomas Aquinas, Hildegard von Bingen, Dante, Gothic architecture, scholasticism, etc.)."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline each named person or tradition. Circle a work, method, or feature linked to each one so you can identify what made it important.

Ways to Build and Share Ideas

1. Imagine entering a Western European town in the 1200s. Above the crowded streets rises a Gothic cathedral, built to make a stone church feel unusually tall and bright. Pointed arches channel weight toward supports, while flying buttresses support high walls from the outside. Large stained-glass windows fill the interior with colored light and show biblical stories to worshippers. Master builders directed teams of skilled workers who shaped such structures over many years. Gothic architecture joined engineering and religious art in a public space that could dominate the town skyline.

2. Beyond the cathedral, medieval thinkers also sought ways to explore faith. At universities in the 1200s, scholasticism used careful questions, objections, and reasoned replies to examine ideas, including Christian beliefs. Thomas Aquinas, a theologian, used this method in his *Summa Theologiae*, which brings arguments and replies together. A different voice came from Hildegard von Bingen, a twelfth-century abbess in the German lands. She composed music for religious communities and wrote accounts of her visions. Her work shows that medieval intellectual and artistic life extended beyond universities, even though women faced limits on formal study.

3. In the early 1300s, Dante Alighieri offered another way to consider moral and religious questions. His poem *The Divine Comedy* follows a traveler through Hell, Purgatory, and Paradise. Dante wrote it in the Tuscan variety of Italian rather than Latin, allowing readers outside Latin-trained circles to encounter its ideas. The poem draws on theology, politics, and the author's own experiences. Together, these works reveal different forms of medieval achievement: a cathedral shaped space and light, university debates tested arguments, Hildegard's music gave religious words a voice, and Dante's poetry turned a journey into a study of human choices.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. Identify two features of Gothic architecture and explain what one of them helped builders or worshippers do.

2. Identify Thomas Aquinas's major work named in the passage. What method did he use in it?

3. Identify two kinds of work Hildegard von Bingen produced. What does her work show about where medieval achievements took place?

4. Identify Dante's poem and explain how his choice of language affected who could encounter its ideas.

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Write a three-sentence museum label connecting one medieval person's work to a different artistic or intellectual tradition in the passage. Name a specific achievement by the person and a specific feature or method of the tradition, then explain a purpose they shared.

ANSWER KEY

Medieval Minds and Makers

HIGH SCHOOL · 9-12.WC.23

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline each named person or tradition. Circle a work, method, or feature linked to each one so you can identify what made it important. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	Identify two features of Gothic architecture and explain what one of them helped builders or worshippers do.	**Flying buttresses supported high walls from outside; stained-glass windows filled the interior with colored light and showed biblical stories.**
2	Identify Thomas Aquinas's major work named in the passage. What method did he use in it?	**In *Summa Theologiae*, Aquinas used scholasticism, examining ideas through questions, objections, arguments, and replies.**
3	Identify two kinds of work Hildegard von Bingen produced. What does her work show about where medieval achievements took place?	**She composed music and wrote accounts of her visions. Her work shows that achievements also came from outside universities.**
4	Identify Dante's poem and explain how his choice of language affected who could encounter its ideas.	**Dante wrote *The Divine Comedy* in Tuscan Italian rather than Latin, making its ideas available to readers outside Latin-trained circles.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Hildegard von Bingen composed music for religious communities. Gothic cathedrals used stained-glass windows to show biblical stories. Both achievements used art to help people experience religious ideas, though one used sound and the other used light and images.

Accept other accurate feature-function pairs and connections supported by the passage. For the museum label, the person and tradition should be distinct, and the shared purpose should not imply that the person created the tradition.