Power Beyond Kyoto

Trace the rise and effects of warrior government in Japan.

WH.3.8 "Examine the development of feudalism in Japan and its impact on Japanese society and government."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline two conditions that helped warrior rule develop, circle two changes in government, and number two effects on people or their land. Use your marks to trace how feudalism developed and changed Japan.

From Court to Warrior Rule

(1) In the late Heian period (794 to 1185), Japan's emperor and court governed from Kyoto, but their control weakened outside the capital. Powerful families gained private estates called shōen, many of which paid fewer taxes to the central government. Estate owners relied on armed retainers to protect fields and collect rents. Rival warrior families competed for influence as the court struggled to command them. During the Genpei War (1180 to 1185), the Minamoto defeated the Taira. The victory gave the Minamoto the military strength to build a new kind of government.

(2) In 1192, the emperor appointed Minamoto no Yoritomo shogun, a military commander. Yoritomo governed from Kamakura while the emperor remained in Kyoto. This arrangement did not erase the imperial court, but it shifted much practical power to a warrior government, the shogunate. Yoritomo appointed military stewards to oversee estates and provincial constables to keep order. Warrior followers served the shogun in return for protection of their land rights and the prospect of rewards. These ties were personal: loyalty and military service supported a government that could act across provinces even when court orders carried less force.

(3) For people working the land, the change in rulers did not mean freedom from demands. Farmers still cultivated fields and owed portions of their harvest to estate holders; armed stewards could press claims over land and rents. Warrior families gained status through service, and some women in these families could inherit property, though rights varied. The system also faced a test when Mongol-led forces attacked Japan in 1274 and 1281. The invasions failed, but defense was costly. Because the shogunate had little newly conquered land to distribute, some warriors felt their service had not been adequately rewarded.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. How did the growth of private estates help weaken the court and strengthen warriors?

2. How did Yoritomo's government change who held power without removing the emperor?

3. How did the exchange between the shogun and his warrior followers help the shogunate govern?

4. Why did the failed Mongol-led invasions strain the relationship between the shogunate and some warriors?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Write four or five sentences as a Kamakura-era estate steward reporting to a new official. Connect a cause of warrior rule to a change in government and an effect on farmers, using at least two specific details from the passage.

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PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline two conditions that helped warrior rule develop, circle two changes in government, and number two effects on people or their land. Use your marks to trace how feudalism developed and changed Japan. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How did the growth of private estates help weaken the court and strengthen warriors?	**Many estates paid fewer central taxes, while their owners relied on armed retainers. The court lost resources and struggled to command powerful warriors.**
2	How did Yoritomo's government change who held power without removing the emperor?	**The emperor remained in Kyoto, but Yoritomo governed from Kamakura. His shogunate gained much practical power and appointed officials across the provinces.**
3	How did the exchange between the shogun and his warrior followers help the shogunate govern?	**Warriors gave loyalty and military service in exchange for protection of land rights and possible rewards. Their service helped the shogunate act across provinces.**
4	Why did the failed Mongol-led invasions strain the relationship between the shogunate and some warriors?	**Defense was costly, but the shogunate gained little new land to reward warriors for their service.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Private estates paid fewer central taxes, and the court grew less able to control armed families. Now I serve the shogun's government from Kamakura while the emperor remains in Kyoto. As a steward, I oversee estate affairs and help enforce claims to land and rents. Farmers still work the fields and owe part of their harvest to estate holders, so this new government has not ended their obligations.

Accept other passage-supported cause-and-effect connections. The open response should distinguish the shogunate's practical power from the emperor's continued position and should not suggest that farmers were freed from estate obligations.