Power and Progress

Trace how law, technology, and trade reshaped medieval Europe.

AWH.C.10.5 "Examine religious, intellectual, cultural, technological, and economic developments in medieval Europe from the Norman Conquest to 1300. Describe the clash between papacy and empire with regards to the development of law..."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline one struggle over authority, circle three developments that helped resources or ideas move, and draw arrows from two developments to effects they helped produce.

A Changing Medieval World

1 After the Norman Conquest of England in 1066, castles and mounted knights helped rulers hold territory. Yet force was not the only source of power. Popes and emperors fought over who could appoint bishops and whose authority reached church affairs. Their dispute over investiture pushed leaders to argue in legal terms. Scholars at growing universities studied revived Roman law alongside canon law, the Church's body of rules. In debates called Scholasticism, they tested opposing arguments through questions and reasoned answers. Law became a tool for competing claims, not just a ruler's command.

2 On farms, heavier ploughs turned dense northern soil, while watermills and windmills ground grain with less human labor. Along with other changes, these improvements helped support growing towns, where merchants bought goods from distant places and sold them at markets and fairs. This trade increased the use of money and credit, though most people still farmed. Town wealth also helped pay for soaring Gothic churches, whose pointed arches and stained glass drew visitors' eyes upward. Worshippers heard sacred music there, while traveling performers shared songs and stories. In books, writers used local languages as well as Latin to reach wider audiences.

3 These developments crossed borders. Stone castles protected lords and controlled key routes; mounted knights offered speed and striking force, but their horses, armor, and training cost money. Between 1271 and 1295, the Venetian merchant Marco Polo traveled across Asia and spent years in China. On his journey home, he passed through parts of India. His account described Asian cities, trade, and unfamiliar goods to European readers. Its stories stirred curiosity about commerce farther east, although his book did not create a direct European sea route to China. Travel could spread ideas about markets even when armies could not control the distances involved.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. How did the dispute over appointing bishops make law important to both popes and emperors?

2. Trace one way a farming or milling improvement could help town commerce grow.

3. How did town wealth shape a church building, and what cultural activity took place inside it?

4. What was one possible effect of Marco Polo's account on European commerce, and what was one limit of its impact?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Imagine you advise a ruler in 1290. In four or five sentences, recommend funding a watermill or repairing a castle, explain how your choice could affect two groups named in the passage, and identify one drawback. Use at least two specific facts from the passage.

ANSWER KEY

Power and Progress

HIGH SCHOOL · AWH.C.10.5

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline one struggle over authority, circle three developments that helped resources or ideas move, and draw arrows from two developments to effects they helped produce. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How did the dispute over appointing bishops make law important to both popes and emperors?	**Both sides used legal arguments to support their competing claims to authority over church affairs.**
2	Trace one way a farming or milling improvement could help town commerce grow.	**Watermills and windmills ground grain with less human labor. Such improvements helped support growing towns, where merchants traded at markets and fairs.**
3	How did town wealth shape a church building, and what cultural activity took place inside it?	**Town wealth helped pay for Gothic churches with pointed arches and stained glass. Worshippers heard sacred music inside them.**
4	What was one possible effect of Marco Polo's account on European commerce, and what was one limit of its impact?	**His descriptions stirred interest in trade farther east, but his book did not create a direct European sea route to China.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

I would fund a watermill because mills grind grain with less human labor. Farmers could spend less time processing their harvest, and merchants could have more grain to sell at town markets. The mill might also help supply food to people in a growing town. The drawback is that the ruler would have less money to repair a castle, which protects territory and controls routes.

Accept either funding choice if the response uses two accurate passage facts, traces plausible effects on two named groups, and explains a drawback. Effects may be reasonable inferences rather than outcomes stated in the passage.