

# Document-Based Question

## Feudalism

The following question is based on the provided documents (Documents 1–10). These documents have been edited for this exercise. You should allocate 15 minutes to organize and read the documents, and then use the remaining 35 minutes to write the essay response.

The question is designed to test your aptitude in working with historical documents.

Compose an essay that

- provides a comprehensive and provocative thesis that addresses the prompt.
- uses all the documents.
- analyzes, as opposed to merely summarizing, documents by grouping them according to overarching themes or topics.
- accounts for the point of view of those who authored the documents.
- identifies and provides a rationale for the use of at least one additional type of document.

You can refer to historical information that is not found in the documents.

1. Compare feudalism in western Europe and Japan.

**Historical Background:** The feudal structure had a dramatic impact on political, social, and economic forces in western Europe and Japan. A series of feudal relationships revolved around land holdings and exchange of service.

### Document 1

Source: A poem by Adalberon, Bishop of Laon, written in 945 C.E.

The ecclesiastical order forms one body, but society is divided into three orders. The nobles are the warriors and the protectors of churches. They defend all the people, great or small, and as a matter of fact, they protect themselves. The unfree is the other class. This unfortunate group possesses nothing without suffering. Therefore the City of God, which is believed to be one, is divided into three: some pray, others fight, and the others work. These three groups live together and could not endure separation.

Credit: Norton Downs, ed., *Medieval Pageant: Readings in Medieval History* (Princeton: D. Van Nostrand Company, Inc., 1964), 93.

**Document 2**

Source: Regulations regarding the Takama market [ichi] in 1415.

1. The four boundaries of the ichi shall be within the confines of one cho.
2. Anyone who is not a member of this ichi cannot sell or purchase within the confines of this one cho.
3. Within the marketplace, only samurai and officials connected with the temple shall be permitted to receive orders and perform their duties.
4. Every year, fees for exhibiting merchandise and rental for the houses and grounds must be paid.

Credit: David J. Lu, *Japan: A Documentary History* (Armonk, New York: M. E. Sharpe, 1997), 183–185.

**Document 3**

Source: Charter of donation written in 854 C.E. in the city of Winchester.

For which cause, I, Athelwulf, king of the West-Saxons, with the advice of my bishops and nobles, for a remedy thereof adopted the wholesome expedient of granting forever some portion of my kingdom to God and the holy Mary, and all saints; to wit, a tenth part of my land, free and quit of all secular services, king's tribute both great and small. And the taxations we call witeredden; and for the good of my soul and the remission of my sins, let it be wholly free for the service of God alone, exempt from military service, the building of bridges and castle-ward, to the end that prayers may ascend without ceasing unto God for us, and so much the more diligently as we in aught remit the services of those who offer them...

Credit: Ethelewulf, King of Wessex, "Grant of a Tenth of Public Land, 854" Fordham University Medieval History Sourcebook. <http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/source/854Grnttnth.html>

**Document 4**

Source: Geoffrey, Count of Essex, at Canterbury, circa 1214 C.E.

The King, etc. Know you that we have given license to Raun, a monk of Christ Church, Canterbury, that he may send from England, wheresoever he will, one hundred pounds of corn once within Easter week, in the seventh year of our reign. And we command you that on receipt of this you do not impede him.

Source: Joseph Hunter, ed., *Rotuli Selecti*, (London: Eyre & Spottiswoode, 1834), 4–5, 11; reprinted in Roy C. Cave & Herbert H. Coulson, *A Source Book for Medieval Economic History* (Milwaukee: The Bruce Publishing Co., 1936; reprint ed., New York: Biblo & Tannen, 1965), 412.

## Document 5

Source: Account of a samurai historian in mid-fourteenth century C.E.

"[After the civil war], it looked as though the emperor would truly rule over the country again as he had in the past. But Yoritomo's [first shogun] achievement was without parallel in history, and it was in fact he who came to exercise total power as he saw fit. Moreover, since the emperor delegated authority totally to Yoritomo, the emperor's own influence declined even more. When Yoritomo, assigned his own feudal supporters to the various provinces, the authority of the emperor's provincial governors was thereby reduced and became merely an empty designation. In addition, the appointment of the shogun's stewards to all estates and the other private landholdings virtually rendered the [centralized imperial] offices meaningless."

Credit: H. Paul Varley, trans., *A Chronicle of Gods and Sovereigns: Jinno Shotoki of Kitabatake Chikafusa* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1980), 219.

## Document 6

Source: English customs of the twelfth century.

To his dearest lord Henry, by the grace of God king of the English, William of London, greeting:

Know that I have no knight enfeoffed of old or recently, but I ought to defend my fief with the service of my body.

To Henry, by the grace of God king of the English, Peter de Mare, greeting:

Let it be known to you that I hold Lavington, by your grace, in domain, for the service of two knights. But I have no knight enfeoffed there, either by old or recent feoffment.

To every lord it is allowed to summon his man that he may be at right to him in his court; and even if he is resident at the most distant manor of that honor from which he holds, he shall go to the plea if his lord summons him. If his lord holds different fiefs the man of one honor is not compelled by law to go to another plea, unless the cause belongs to the other to which his lord has summoned him.

If a man holds from several lords and honors, however much he holds from others, he owes most and will be subject for justice to him of whom he is the liege man.

Every vassal owes to his lord fidelity concerning his life and members and earthly honor and keeping of his counsel in what is honorable and useful saving the faith of God and of the prince of the land. Theft, however, and treason and murder and whatever things are against the Lord and the catholic faith are to be required of or performed by no one; but faith shall be held to all lords, saving the faith of the earlier, and the more to the one of which he is the liege. And let permission be given him, if any of his men seek another lord for himself.

Credit: J. H. Round, *Feudal England* (London, 1909), 236.

**Document 7**

Source: Japanese edict of change of status from 1591.

1. If there should be living among you men who were in military service, who have assumed the identity of a townsman or farmer, he must be expelled.
2. If any farmer abandons his fields and engages in trade or offers himself for hire for wages, not only is he to be punished, but also his fellow villagers. If there is anyone who neither serves in the military nor cultivates land. . . expel him.

Credit: Jeffrey P. Mass, *Lordship and Inheritance in Early Modern Japan: A Study of the Kamakura Soryo System* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1989).

**Document 8**

Source: The Hundred Article Code of Chosokabe (1597).

Lords and vassals, priests and laymen, noble and mean, high and low, must all keep from allowing the rules of [Buddhism] to suffer disgrace.

It should be the primary concern of everyone to train himself unceasingly in military accomplishment. Those who excel their fellows should be given additional income. The military code [Bushido] is contained in a separate document.

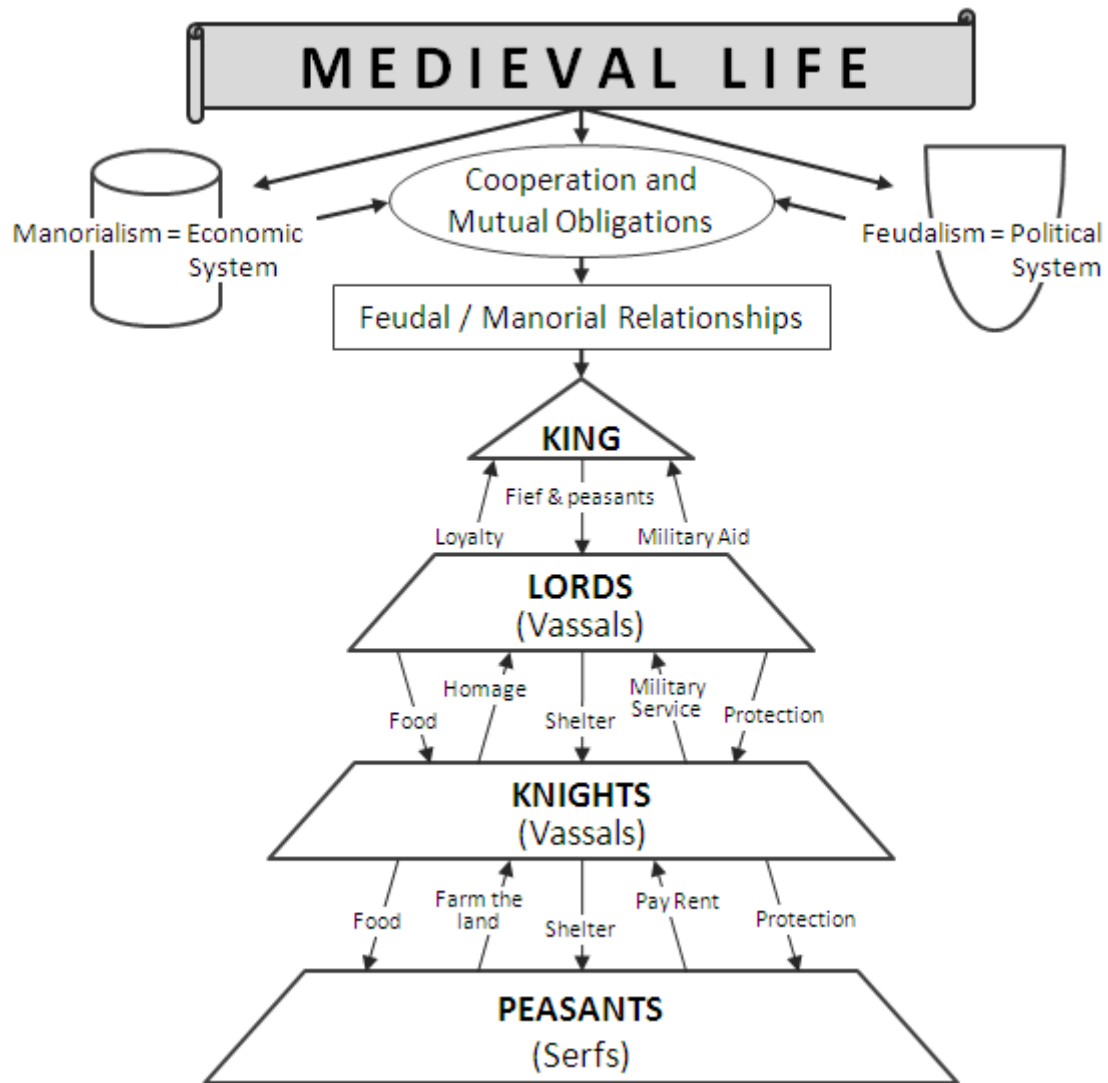
As to fiefs throughout the realm: the crop yield should be apportioned two-thirds to the vassal samurai and one-third to the farmer.

With regard to farmers, foster them solicitously in their official capacity. Do not require extra taxes and work in addition to the regular exactions from them. But if [the regular annual tax] comes even a little short, [village elders and landowners will receive prompt and severe punishment.

Credit: H. Paul Varley, trans., *A Chronicle of Gods and Sovereigns: Jinno Shotoki of Kitabatake Chikafusa* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1980).

## Document 9

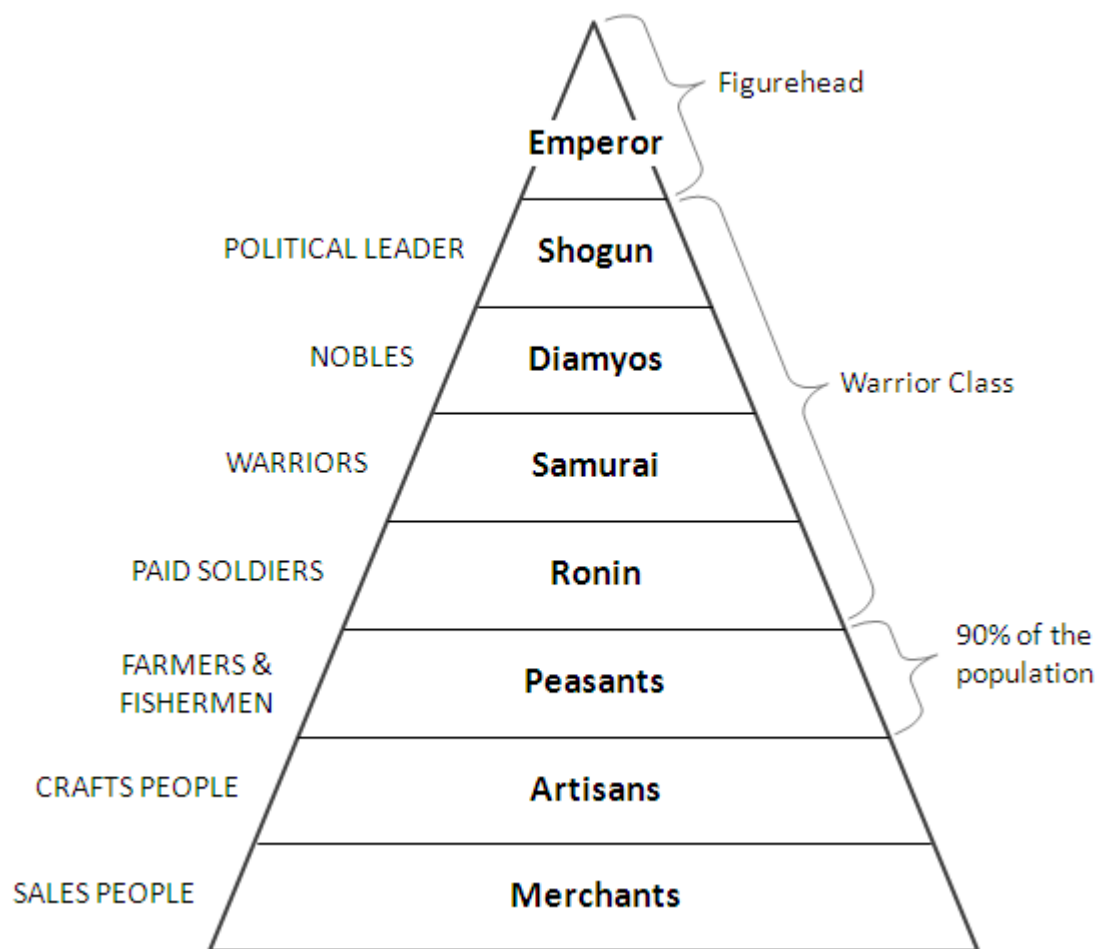
Source: Illustration of feudal structures in Europe.



Credit: Adapted from <http://www.library.ubc.ca/edlib/lessonplans/sec/ssed314/Grade%208/Gr.%208-Medieval%20Europe%20Feudalism-B.%20Reeve.pdf>

## Document 10

Source: Diagram of the feudal structure of Japan.



Credit: Adapted from <http://www.library.ubc.ca/edlib/lessonplans/sec/ssed314/Grade%208/Gr.%208-Medieval%20Europe%20Feudalism-B.%20Reeve.pdf>

**STOP – END OF EXAM**