MIDDLE AGES: DAILY LIFE

COUNTRY LIFE
Most people in the Middle Ages lived and worked in the country as farmers. Local lords lived in a large house called a manor or castle. Peasants worked the land of the lord and were called the lord's “villeins,” like servants. They worked hard all year long. Their main crops were barley, wheat, and oats. They also had gardens where they grew vegetables and fruits. Peasants usually had a few animals like chickens for eggs and cows for milk.

CITY LIFE
City life was a lot different from country life, but not much easier. Cities were crowded and dirty. A lot of people worked as craftsmen and were members of guilds. Boys were apprentices for seven years to learn a craft. Some of the other city jobs were servants, merchants, bakers, doctors, and lawyers.

HOUSING
Typically people think of large castles with the Middle Ages, but most people lived in small one or two room homes. They were very crowded and everyone slept in the same room. In the country, the family animals, like cows, may also live inside homes. Homes were usually dark, smoky from the fire, and uncomfortable.

CLOTHING
Most peasants wore plain clothing made from heavy wool to keep them warm during the winter. The wealthy wore much nicer clothes made from fine wool, velvet, and silk. Men typically wore a tunic, woolen stockings, breeches, and a cloak. Women wore long skirts called kirtles, an apron, woolen stockings, and a cloak. To separate nobles from peasants, “sumptuary” laws were passed stating who could wear what types of clothes and the materials they could use.
FOOD
Peasants did not have a lot variety in their food during the Middle Ages. They mostly ate bread and stew. The bread was usually gritty from the millstones used to grind the grain, causing many people's teeth to wear down. Stew was made from beans, dried peas, cabbage, and other vegetables. Sometimes stew was flavored with bits of meat or bones. Meat, cheese, and eggs were saved for special occasions. Peasants were not allowed to hunt on the lord's land. Punishment for killing a deer was sometimes death. They had no way to keep meat cold, so they were forced to eat it fresh. Any leftover meat was smoked or salted to preserve it. The nobles ate a wider variety of food including meats and sweet puddings. People mostly drank ale or wine because the water would make them sick. Kings and nobles held large banquets to show off their wealth and power. There were several courses of food that took hours to prepare. Musicians played music and people danced. Banquets lasted for hours, especially when celebrating special occasions such as Christmas, a military victory, or a royal wedding.

SCHOOL
Few people attended school during the Middle Ages. Peasants learned their jobs and how to survive from their parents. Some children learned a craft during an apprenticeship. Wealthy children learned through tutors. They lived in castles of other lords and worked for them to learn how a large manor was run. Some schools were run by the church. Students learned to read and write Latin. The first universities started during the Middle Ages. Students studied a wide range of subjects like reading, writing, logic, math, music, astronomy, and public speaking.

MARRIAGE
Marriages were often arranged, meaning women had to marry men chosen by their fathers. Noble girls often married at 12 years old and boys at 14. Married noblewomen and peasants were considered the property of their husbands. Women did domestic work, such as caring for babies, making clothes, and cooking foods. They also worked with their husbands on the land or in trade too.
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Multiple Choice: Choose the best answer.

1. Which does NOT describe life in the country during the Middle Ages?
   A. Most people were farmers.  
   B. Peasants were called villeins.  
   C. People ate a lot of meat.  
   D. They had few animals.

2. Which best describes city life?
   A. Similar to country life  
   B. Harder than country life  
   C. Boys apprenticed for 5 years  
   D. People worked as craftsmen

3. Which of the following does NOT describe houses during the Middle Ages?
   A. Most people lived in castles.  
   B. Most houses were small.  
   C. Family animals stayed inside.  
   D. Homes were dark and smoky.

4. What was the purpose of sumptuary laws?
   A. Determine where people could work  
   B. To tell people who they could marry.  
   C. To tell people what they could wear.  
   D. Determine where people could work.

5. Which of the following is true about food during the Middle Ages?
   A. There was a large amount of variety.  
   B. They ate mostly bread and stew.  
   C. Meat was eaten daily.  
   D. People only drank water.

6. Which of the following is true about schools during the Middle Ages?
   A. Most were run by the church.  
   B. Most were run by the government.  
   C. Most everyone attended school.  
   D. Only peasants attended school.

7. Which of the following is NOT true about marriages during the Middle Ages?
   A. Noble girls were usually married at 12.  
   B. Boys were usually married by 14.  
   C. All marriages were arranged.  
   D. Most noble marriages were arranged.

8. Which of the following was NOT a main crop during the Middle Ages?
   A. Corn  
   B. Wheat  
   C. Barley  
   D. Oats

9. “A lot of people worked as craftsmen and were members of guilds.”
   What is the best meaning of guild, as used above?
   A. Houses built in the Middle Ages  
   B. Businesses that sold items  
   C. Group of craftsmen or merchants  
   D. Markets in town squares

10. Which of the following is NOT a food saved for special occasions during the Middle Ages?
    A. Meat  
    B. Cheese  
    C. Eggs  
    D. Stew