**Middle Ages, Medieval Times, Dark Ages: What's the Difference?**

When people use the terms Medieval Times, Middle Ages, and Dark Ages they are generally referring to the same period of time. The term “Dark Ages” usually refers to the first half of the Middle Ages from 500 to 1000 AD. The term “Middle Ages” usually refers to the period of time after the “Dark Ages” *c.* 1000 until the fall of Constantinople in 1453.

After the fall of the Roman Empire *c.* 500 CE, a lot of the Roman culture and knowledge was lost. This included art, technology, engineering, and history. Historians know a lot about Europe during the Roman Empire because the Romans kept excellent records of all that happened. However, the time after the Romans is "dark" to historians because there was no central government recording events. This is why historians call this time the Dark Ages.

**Timeline**

* **476** - The fall of the Roman Empire. Rome had ruled much of Europe. Now much of the land would fall into confusion as local kings and rulers tried to grab power. This is the start of the Dark Ages or the Middle Ages.
* **481** - Clovis becomes King of the Franks. Clovis united most of the Frankish tribes that were part of Roman Province of Gaul.
* **570** - Muhammad, prophet of Islam is born.
* **732** - Battle of Tours. The Franks defeat the Muslims turning back Islam from Europe.
* **800** - Charlemagne, King of the Franks, is crowned Holy Roman Emperor. Charlemagne united much of Western Europe and is considered the father of both the French and the German Monarchies.
* **835** - Vikings from the Scandinavian lands (Denmark, Norway, and Sweden) begin to invade northern Europe. They would continue until 1042.
* **896** - Alfred the Great, King of England, turns back the Viking invaders.
* **1066** - William of Normandy, a French Duke, conquers England in the Battle of Hastings. He became King of England and changed the country forever.
* **1096**- Start of the First Crusade. The Crusades were wars between the Holy Roman Empire and the Muslims over the Holy Land. There would be several Crusades over the next 200 years.
* **1189** - Richard I, Richard the Lionheart, becomes King of England.
* **1206** - The Mongol Empire is founded by [Genghis Khan](http://www.ducksters.com/biography/world_leaders/genghis_khan.php).
* **1215** - King John of England signs the [Magna Carta](http://www.ducksters.com/history/middle_ages/king_john_magna_carta.php). This document gave the people some rights and said the king was not above the law.
* **1271** - Marco Polo leaves on his famous journey to explore Asia.
* **1337**- The Hundred Years War begins between England and France for control of the French throne.
* **1347** - The Black Death begins in Europe. This horrible disease would kill around half of the people in Europe.
* **1431**- [French heroine Joan of Arc](http://www.ducksters.com/biography/women_leaders/joan_of_arc.php) is executed by England at the age of 19.
* **1444** - German inventor Johannes Gutenberg invents the printing press. This will signal the start of the [Renaissance](http://www.ducksters.com/history/renaissance.php).
* **1453** - The Ottoman Empire captures the city of Constantinople. This signals the end of the Eastern Roman Empire also known as Byzantium.
* **1482** - [Leonardo Da Vinci](http://www.ducksters.com/biography/leonardo_da_vinci.php) paints "The Last Supper."

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| **Overview**[Timeline](http://www.ducksters.com/history/middle_ages_timeline.php)[Feudal System](http://www.ducksters.com/history/middle_ages_feudal_system.php)[Guilds](http://www.ducksters.com/history/middle_ages_guilds.php)[Medieval Monasteries](http://www.ducksters.com/history/middle_ages_monastery.php)[Glossary and Terms](http://www.ducksters.com/history/middle_ages/glossary_and_terms.php)**Knights and Castles**[Becoming a Knight](http://www.ducksters.com/history/middle_ages/becoming_a_medieval_knight.php)[Castles](http://www.ducksters.com/history/middle_ages_castles.php)[History of Knights](http://www.ducksters.com/history/middle_ages/history_of_knights.php)[Knight's Armor and Weapons](http://www.ducksters.com/history/middle_ages/knight_armor_and_weapons.php)[Knight's coat of arms](http://www.ducksters.com/history/middle_ages/knight_coat_of_arms.php)[Tournaments, Jousts, and Chivalry](http://www.ducksters.com/history/middle_ages/tournaments_jousts_chivalry.php) | **Culture**[Daily Life in the Middle Ages](http://www.ducksters.com/history/middle_ages/daily_life_in_the_middle_ages.php)[Middle Ages Art and Literature](http://www.ducksters.com/history/middle_ages_art_literature.php)[The Catholic Church and Cathedrals](http://www.ducksters.com/history/middle_ages/catholic_church_cathedrals.php)[Entertainment and Music](http://www.ducksters.com/history/middle_ages/entertainment.php)[The King's Court](http://www.ducksters.com/history/middle_ages/kings_and_court.php)**Major Events**[The Black Death](http://www.ducksters.com/history/middle_ages_black_death.php)[The Crusades](http://www.ducksters.com/history/middle_ages_crusades.php)[Hundred Years War](http://www.ducksters.com/history/middle_ages/hundred_years_war.php)[Magna Carta](http://www.ducksters.com/history/middle_ages/king_john_magna_carta.php)[Norman Conquest of 1066](http://www.ducksters.com/history/middle_ages/norman_conquest.php)[Reconquista of Spain](http://www.ducksters.com/history/middle_ages/reconquista.php)[Wars of the Roses](http://www.ducksters.com/history/middle_ages/wars_of_the_roses.php) | **Nations**[Anglo-Saxons](http://www.ducksters.com/history/middle_ages/anglo_saxons.php)[Byzantine Empire](http://www.ducksters.com/history/middle_ages_byzantine_empire.php)[The Franks](http://www.ducksters.com/history/middle_ages/the_franks.php)[Kievan Rus](http://www.ducksters.com/history/middle_ages/kievan_rus.php)[Vikings for kids](http://www.ducksters.com/history/middle_ages_vikings.php)**People**[Alfred the Great](http://www.ducksters.com/history/middle_ages/alfred_the_great.php)[Charlemagne](http://www.ducksters.com/biography/charlemagne.php)[Genghis Khan](http://www.ducksters.com/biography/world_leaders/genghis_khan.php)[Joan of Arc](http://www.ducksters.com/biography/women_leaders/joan_of_arc.php)[Justinian I](http://www.ducksters.com/history/middle_ages/justinian_i.php)[Marco Polo](http://www.ducksters.com/biography/marco_polo.php)[Saint Francis of Assisi](http://www.ducksters.com/history/middle_ages/saint_francis_of_assisi.php)[William the Conqueror](http://www.ducksters.com/history/middle_ages/william_the_conqueror.php)[Famous Queens](http://www.ducksters.com/history/middle_ages/famous_queens.php) |

<http://www.ducksters.com/history/middle_ages_timeline.php>

videos--

<http://www.history.com/topics/middle-ages> Coroner’s Report: Plague

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6EAMqKUimr8> The Middle Ages in 3 ½ minutes

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Y0E62fiv6mk> 25 reasons you’ll be glad you didn’t live in the Middle Ages