**Objective 3:** Describe the High Middle Ages

* 1. How new technologies sparked an agricultural revolution.
  2. How the revival of trade and guilds were linked to the rise of towns and cities.
  3. How the Magna Carta has influenced American government.
  4. Medieval achievements in architecture.

**Vocabulary:**

1. Flying Buttress: support for a stone cathedral that allowed it to be taller
2. Gargoyle: a carved stone statue that looked like it was spitting water off of a Cathedral roof
3. Gothic: the style of architecture used in the High Middle Ages
4. Guild: association of merchants or artisans
5. Magna Carta: the document that King John’s barons forced him to sign which limited his power
6. Rose window: the large, circular window that was the focal point of a Cathedral
7. Romanesque: the style of architecture used in the Dark Ages

**“Doing Business in the Middle Ages” by Sharon Fabian**

Once in a while, a person in the Middle Ages needed something that he couldn't produce on his own. Maybe he needed salt for his food or iron to make tools. When that happened in the early

Middle Ages, a trade was often made. Maybe one person needed iron to repair his tools for working in the fields, but he had extra grain that he could exchange for the iron. Maybe someone else had an animal to trade for a supply of salt. Trade was the common way of doing business in the early Middle Ages.

Trade did have some drawbacks, however. It wasn't always easy to find someone who had the items you needed. It also wasn't always easy to come up with something that they were willing to trade for. So, eventually, a more businesslike system developed. It developed gradually over several centuries.

The next step beyond everyone trading for himself was traveling peddlers. Peddlers traveled from town to town carrying a supply of goods that they had bought themselves. They hoped to have the right goods that people would want to buy in each town. When the people who lived near the town heard that the peddler had arrived, they went into town to trade for whatever they needed. Some people had coins and could buy instead of trade.

Soon, each town began to expect the peddler to arrive on a certain day. After a number of years, each town had its own market days. Market days became a time for relaxing and entertainment as well as buying and selling. On market days, people flocked into town from all over the countryside. In town, they might hear music or be entertained by a juggler or an acrobat. They probably ran into neighbors that they didn't see at any other time.

Later still, certain towns became well known as market towns, and they became permanent market places. Merchants and craftsmen set up their shops in town. Now people could come to town to shop any day of the week. As more and more merchants and craftsmen set up shops, a wider variety of goods became available for people to buy. All types of craftsmen opened their shop doors in town. Some of these were the armorer, the baker, the ropemaker, and the dyer, and there were many more.

Market towns continued to grow. They became larger and richer. More people began to work in town instead of on the land. Gradually, people began to have more money to spend. With more money, they began to want to buy even more and different goods. Soon, consumers were looking for more than what was available from small town craftsmen.

Merchants who wanted to get ahead began to look further away to find unusual goods to attract consumers to their shops. Some merchants traveled to faraway lands to buy goods that had rarely been seen before in medieval Europe. Some traveled the trading routes to the East. Some built ships and sailed to distant ports. These traveling merchants brought back a variety of products. They brought back sugar, gold, and ivory from Africa. They brought back silk, carpets, and spices from Asia.

By the later years of the Middle Ages, people were using silver money to shop instead of trading. Many different silver coins were in use, so merchants often carried a small scale to weigh the silver coins. Banking and credit also began to be used as merchants bought and sold more and more. Businessmen and accountants replaced the earlier peddlers. The feudal system of the Middle Ages was being replaced by a new system in which the wealthy businessman ruled.

**“King John Signs the Magna Carta” by Sharon Fabian**

When King John didn't treat his people right, Robin Hood took care of the problem in his own way. He stole from the rich and gave to the poor. Of course, Robin Hood was a fictional character. King John, however, was real. And many real people had problems with the way King John was ruling.

King John had been fighting battles in France for many years, trying to regain land that England had once ruled. The battles were going badly; England was losing. English soldiers were dying, and the war was getting expensive. King John's vassals, the barons of England, began to rebel. Under feudal law, it had been their duty to provide fighting men and money in times of war, but they decided that this war had gone on too long. King John had asked for too much.

A group of barons banded together to oppose the king. They refused to pay any more taxes. They formed their own army. They defied the power of the king, and they even occupied the city of London. King John still had some loyal supporters on his side. He brought in fighters from other lands to supplement his own troops. A third group of barons did not join either side. They remained neutral. The church in England had at first supported King John but eventually they took a more middle ground too. By 1215, the conflict had become so severe that there was fear of an all-out civil war in England.

The Archbishop of Canterbury, Stephen Langton, set up a meeting to discuss a peaceful settlement. He arranged a meeting with all three groups in a meadow known as Runnymede, along the Thames River just outside of London. At the meeting, the rebel barons presented a document, the "Articles of the Barons," for the king to sign. The king had few options left, and so, he placed his royal seal upon the document.

The document, which later became known as the Magna Carta, had 63 articles. Even though many of the articles are no longer relevant today, and even though the Magna Carta applied to only the 25% of English people who were considered free men, it established principles that have become foundations of modern democratic governments. Most importantly, it stated that even the king must obey the law. This was a brand new idea in 1215. The Magna Carta limited the amount of taxes that a king could collect without the consent of his vassals. In the American

Revolution, this principle resurfaced in the protest, "No taxation without representation." The Magna Carta also said that the king could not imprison free men without it being judged lawful by their peers. In the same way, he could not just take away their possessions or their rights. At that time, England did not have a jury system like we have today, but the Magna Carta established the principle that would later be interpreted to mean that a person is entitled to a fair trial.

Although the Magna Carta was originally just a document to settle a dispute between King John and his barons, it has lived on to become something much greater. The Magna Carta was the original writing that paved the way for some of the greatest legal documents in history. In the United States, its influence can be seen in the Constitution and the Bill of Rights.

The Magna Carta said that people must be treated fairly by their leaders. If Robin Hood had been at Runnymede, he would have agreed.

**“Stone Carvers and Stained Glass Window Makers” by Sharon Fabian**

The Cathedral in a medieval town wasn’t just a useful building. It was beautiful and inspiring. It made people look to the heavens and dream of something beyond the drudgery of their daily lives. These beautiful buildings were created by stone masons and many other cathedral builders, but two groups of workers in particular were assigned the task of putting on the artistic finishing touches. These were the stone carvers and the stained glass window makers.

Stone carvers were the artisans who went beyond just cutting precise stone blocks for building. They made stone statues and relief carvings for medieval cathedrals. They made the grand carved panels known as tympanums that decorated the large space above the cathedral doors. They also made the small stone statues, known as gargoyles and grotesques, which decorated the outside walls of cathedrals and served as water spouts. Gargoyles were small carved creatures that looked like they were spitting water. Grotesques were also small carved creatures that carried water away from the cathedral's walls, but the water ran off their back, or off the tip of their nose, instead of through their mouth.

Some of the gargoyles and grotesques were scary looking; some were funny. Some looked suspiciously like a real person. They were one of the features that made medieval architecture unique, even though they were not something new in gothic times but were retained from earlier pagan cultures.

Another feature that people loved about medieval cathedrals was their stained glass windows. The architects who designed these cathedrals wanted them to be light inside, not dark and gloomy like large buildings of earlier days. They also wanted brilliant, jewel-like colors for the people inside the cathedral to enjoy. Stained glass windows provided this colorful light and more. Their pictures also told Bible stories to people who visited the cathedral.

A massive rose window was a focal point in many gothic cathedrals. A rose window was a large, round window, made of stone tracery and filled in with hundreds of pieces of stained glass. When the sunlight hit the rose window, it glowed and sent rays of brilliant light to all corners of the cathedral.

Stained glass makers used chemistry to create colored glass. They mixed metal oxides with sand and the other ingredients used for clear glass to create glass that was blue, green, or red. To begin a window, the glazier, or stained glass window maker, drew out the pattern on a tabletop or a piece of paper. Then he cut pieces of colored glass to fit each section of the pattern. He used lead to seam the pieces together. Next, a glass painter would paint figures or designs over the colored glass. Thinned paint was used to shade in parts of their design and to give the finished window a wide range of shades. The finished stained glass window was mounted in a wooden frame, and it was ready to be put in place in the cathedral wall.

Like many medieval craftsmen, stone carvers and stained glass window makers began their careers as apprentices. After years of training, they went on to become journeymen, and maybe one day, master stone carvers or stained glass window makers. Like all of the other cathedral builders, stone carvers and stained glass window makers were part of a project that would take generations to complete. Many of them would never live to see the finished product, but they knew that they were contributing to something that not only their own community, but people for ages to come, would appreciate. They were building a cathedral.

**Objective 3 Homework Assignment**

Directions: Read the articles. Then answer the questions below in complete sentences on a separate piece of paper:

1. How did medieval towns develop?
2. What was the most important idea in the Magna Carta?
3. How has the Magna Carta influenced life in the US today?
4. Why did medieval people want to have stained glass windows in their Cathedrals?
5. What were the steps in a career for stone carvers or glassmakers?