Table of Contents

How to Use This Product .................. 3
Introduction to Primary Sources ....... 5
Using Primary Sources .................. 15

Photographs
  Castle de Chillon ....................... 15–16
    A Home Fit for a King ................. 15
  Westminster Abbey ..................... 17–18
    All Work but Much Pray ............... 17
  Joan of Arc’s Tower .................... 19–20
    Thank the Saint ....................... 19
  Canterbury Cathedral Stained Glass .. 21–22
    Looking through the Stained Glass ... 21
  Tower of London ....................... 23–24
    Looking Above ......................... 23
  Beverley Minster ...................... 25–26
    Inside and Out ......................... 25
  Armor .................................. 27–28
    I Knight Thee! ........................ 27
  Notre Dame ............................ 29–30
    Noting Detail ......................... 29

Primary Sources
  The Canterbury Tales ................... 31–34
    Illuminate Me ........................ 31
    Hot Off the Hands? ..................... 33
    Chaucer Graphic Organizer ............ 34
  Gutenberg Bible ....................... 35–38
    Printing the Bible ..................... 35
    Worth Its Weight ...................... 37
    Gutenberg Bible Organizer .......... 38
  Effigy of Eleanor of Aquitane ........ 39–42
    Carved in History ..................... 39
    Medieval Women ....................... 41
    Enameled Stone Effigy of
      Eleanor of Aquitaine .............. 42
  Magna Carta ........................... 43–46
    It’s the Law .......................... 43
    Magna Carta, You Rule! .............. 45
    Excerpt from the Text of the
      Magna Carta ......................... 46
  Map of Medieval Europe ............... 47–50
    Now Departing ......................... 47
    A Medieval Tour ....................... 49
    Map of Medieval Europe ............... 50
  The First Crusade ..................... 51–54
    Charge! ................................ 51
    Bringing the Crusades into View .... 53
    The First Crusade ..................... 54
  Bayeux Tapestry ....................... 55–58
    Medieval Artistry and Feudalism .... 55
    The Feudal System ..................... 57
    The Bayeux Tapestry ................... 58
  William the Conqueror ............... 59–62
    Conquests and Conquerors .......... 59
    A Crowning Success ................... 61
    William the Conqueror ............... 62

Document Based Assessments .......... 63
  Castle Architecture ................... 63
  Coins from the Middle Ages .......... 64
  Armor and Weapons ..................... 65
  Medieval Towers ....................... 66
  Gothic Cathedrals ..................... 67
  The First Crusade ..................... 68
  Medieval Europe ....................... 69
  Remembering Joan of Arc .............. 70
  Illuminated Manuscripts ............. 71
  Medieval Rulers ....................... 72
  Stained Glass ........................ 73
  The Black Death ....................... 74

Appendix ............................... 75
  About Your CD-ROM ..................... 75
  Suggested Young-Adult Literature and
    Websites ............................ 77
  Document-Based Assessment
    Rubric Example ....................... 78
  Answer Key ........................... 79
Thank the Saint

Standard/Objective

• Develop critical sensitivities such as empathy and skepticism regarding attitudes, values, and behaviors of people in different historical contexts. (NCSS)
• Students will create a holiday festival in honor of the qualities of character exhibited by Joan of Arc.

Materials

copies of both sides of the Joan of Arc’s Tower photo card;
copies of the historical background information (page 20);
reference materials

Discussion Questions

• What is your definition of courage?
• Explain characteristics of heroism.
• Why is Joan of Arc considered a hero or a martyr?
• Can you name other ancient or modern heroes or martyrs?
• Who is one of your heroes? Why?

Using the Primary Source

Provide students with a copy of the photograph. Allow them time to study the photograph of Joan of Arc’s Tower. Have them quickly get with a partner to discuss what they notice about the image. Does it look like a pleasant place to be kept? What can they tell about the area surrounding the tower? There are other images of modern Rouen available on the CD-ROM. You can print those for the students so that they can see how Joan has been remembered in that French city.

Then, tell the story of Joan of Arc using the background information on page 20 as well as your own information. After sharing some basic information about Joan of Arc, have students work in pairs to create time lines showing the major events in Joan of Arc’s life. They should be sure to show the time that she spent in this tower. Encourage students to also include the years 1456 and 1920 at the far end of her time line to show how she has been remembered after her death.

May 30th is the anniversary of Joan of Arc’s death and is celebrated each year in memory of her. Discuss causes for popular holidays and how they are celebrated. Then, divide students into groups to plan a Joan of Arc celebration for your classroom. Group assignments could include: food, banners, colors and symbols, music, parade, program, costumes, plays, and a monument. Finally, hold your Joan of Arc day celebration in your classroom (even if it doesn’t fall on May 30th).

Extension Ideas

• Have the students design publicity posters describing the positive attributes of their heroes.
• Have each student prepare a closing speech as a lawyer defending Joan of Arc at her trial.
Thank the Saint (cont.)

Historical Background Information

In about 1412, there was a young, illiterate girl from Domremy, France, and a young aristocratic man of noble birth. Their lives would cross and forever change history. Through her heroic efforts, he would be king of France. Through his disloyalty, she would die a criminal’s death. However, his honor would be stained in the hearts of his countrymen, and her memory would live on as a hero of France.

The young peasant girl, known as Joan of Arc, was born in the midst of the Hundred Years’ War between France and England. This war was fought between 1337 and 1453. She was a young girl with a mysterious sixth sense and strong drive of purpose. She would inspire the French to victory, set her beloved Charles on the throne, and secure her place as a hero forever.

Joan began having visions at around the age of 13 as she completed her daily chores. She felt she was chosen by the saints to save the throne for the French king, Charles VII. She left her home at age 17 in 1429 to answer the call of her visions. She went to the castle at Chinon. Legend states that Charles hid among the court guests, but Joan was somehow able to pick him from the crowd as her king. Impressed, Charles gave her shining, unadorned armor, a commissioned banner, and troops for her battle campaign. Charles, king of a divided France, could not be officially crowned until Reims was held by French troops, and he could have his coronation in the cathedral there. Realizing the inspiration that Joan could bring, he felt that this might soon be possible.

Joan began her conquest by marching her army for the city of Orleans in April 1429. She reformed her rough and rowdy soldiers into an army dedicated to her religious vision. She gained victory in Orleans, giving her the nickname of the “Maid of Orleans,” and then she set out to lead Charles safely to Reims for his coronation on July 17, 1429. Next, she set her sights on Paris. She lead with bravery, strength, and also tenderness to her wounded enemies.

After having less and less support from an ill-advised Charles, she was wounded and captured by the Burgundians at Compiegne. Thinking that Charles would do anything to save Joan, they set a high ransom, but Charles refused to rescue her. So, it was the English who ransomed her. They were hoping to break the spirit of the French army. They put her in prison and tried her for heresy and witchcraft. She remained true to her beliefs despite isolation, fear, and harsh treatment. They sentenced her to die by burning at the stake. She was killed on May 30, 1431, in Rouen with her ashes later placed into the Seine River.

From that time on, many believed her to be an innocent martyr. The Catholic church declared her innocent in 1456. She was later canonized as a saint in 1920. There is a special holiday to commemorate her life on the anniversary of her death each May 30th. Her name and her spirit live on in monuments, literature, movies, and art. Noting her determination and strength of character in the face of opposition and even death, she can serve as a role model around the world.
# Joan of Arc’s Tower

## Historical Background Information

Joan of Arc sat in chains in this tower awaiting her trial for witchcraft. She was a lonely, tormented teenager who had led her troops to victory and placed a new king on the throne of France. However, neither that king nor his shining knights would come to rescue her. For days she faced interrogation by the church and state officials. Her jailers treated her roughly and denied her time for her religious devotions. She stood by her conviction that she was guided by God to help the French and refused to sign any documents that might save her life. Finally, after withstanding long hours at a trial and abuse at the hands of her guards, she was sentenced to death May 30, 1431. As Joan burned at the stake, legend has it that she asked for a cross to hold. Another legend states that a hardened soldier who witnessed the scene cried out at her death, “We have burnt a saint!”

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## Analyzing History

### Knowledge

Why was Joan taken captive?

### Comprehension

Describe what may have been on Joan’s mind during her captivity.

### Application

Why did the officials want her to sign a document about her beliefs?

### Analysis

Compare Joan’s trial to a famous modern trial.

### Synthesis

Design an escape plan from the tower.

### Evaluation

What do you really think motivated Joan’s actions?

## Historical Writing

### Fiction

Write a letter to Joan encouraging her during her imprisonment. You can write your letter from whatever point of view you would like (French peasant, knight, clergyman, etc.). Be sure to let her know how you feel about her capture and imprisonment.

### Nonfiction

Read about the life of Charles VII. Write an article about his reign after Joan’s death. The article should be an unbiased news article describing how he did as king. Include at least five events that occurred during his reign in your description.

## History Challenge

Write a nomination letter recommending someone for a “Joan of Arc Award.” Your letter should have a brief description of what the award is. (You get to decide this!) Then, the letter should describe the characteristics of the person you chose to receive the award.
Using Primary Sources  

Effigy of Eleanor of Aquitaine

Carved in History

Standard/Objective

• Describe ways that historical events have been influenced by, and have influenced, physical and human geographic factors in local, regional, national, and global settings.  
• Students will become familiar with women’s roles in Medieval Europe and share what they specifically learn about Eleanor of Aquitaine.

Materials

copies of the facsimile *Effigy of Eleanor of Aquitaine*; copies of the historical background information (page 40); copies of the student activity sheet (page 41); art supplies; reference materials such as magazines and books

Discussion Questions

• Describe the roles of women in Medieval Europe.
• Give examples of some great women from this time period.
• How did the law view the women’s roles in the medieval period?
• What is it that made Eleanor of Aquitaine a notable woman of this time period?
• Discuss Eleanor of Aquitaine’s life and her effect on history.

Using the Primary Source

Each student will examine the picture of the enameled stone effigy of Eleanor of Aquitaine. This effigy is from her tomb in the Abbey of Fontevrand, France. Have each student record a list of all the details from the image. In other words, they should list specific things that they notice when looking at this image. Then, they should answer the following questions in writing. How is she dressed? Is there anything unique or different about how she is shown? What is an “effigy”? Why do they think she was important enough to be immortalized in this way? Why do they think that Eleanor came to be known as an important woman of this era? Have them compare and contrast their answers in a small group setting.

Tell students that they are going to make a scrapbook of the life of Eleanor of Aquitaine and the events surrounding her. They must use original artwork, pictures from digital references, or scanned images from print resources. Each image that they choose should have a paragraph or more describing why it was included. In this way, students will produce an illustrated history of her life. Remind students to note important events surrounding her life as well as events in which she was personally involved (e.g., the Second Crusade or important events about her children). Students should be sure to document her time in jail. You may also want to suggest that students include a time line of her life along the bottom of the pages. Have students share their booklets and then display them in your school or public library.

Extension Idea

• Have students make a scrapbook of the life of another notable medieval man or woman and the events surrounding his or her life.
Carved in History (cont.)

Historical Background Information

During the Middle Ages, most women spent their time doing household chores such as cooking, baking bread, sewing, weaving, and spinning. Women also hunted and worked in the gardens beside men. Women were not recognized as being equal to men, although many of the jobs men held were certainly done by women of the time as well. Some women had important and useful occupations such as merchants, artists, or blacksmiths. Others served as midwives or devoted their lives to God and became nuns.

As with any historical era, the Middle Ages had some amazing women. Anne Boleyn, Elizabeth I, Isabella of Castille, and Joan of Arc are all among those outstanding women. One of the most powerful and interesting female personalities of feudal Europe was Eleanor of Aquitaine. This woman demonstrated wisdom, compassion, and nobility. History recognizes Eleanor of Aquitaine as among the greatest of female rulers ever.

Eleanor of Aquitaine was 15 when she married Louis VII, King of France. At age 19, she offered Abbé Bernard of Clairvaux thousands of her vassals for the Second Crusade. She then surprised everyone by dressing for battle with the expectation that she and 300 of her ladies would be allowed to make the trip. After some convincing, she and the others were finally allowed to go. She thought the church should be pleased that they were offering to go as nurses to help the injured. The vassals were probably much appreciated; Eleanor of Aquitaine and her ladies were probably not appreciated.

During this Crusade, Eleanor of Aquitaine renewed an old friendship with her uncle, Raymond of Tripoli. Her husband, Louis, was jealous of this friendship. Raymond and Louis had different views on the appropriate strategy during their journey. Raymond wanted to capture Edessa, and Louis wanted to focus on Jerusalem. Eleanor tried to side with her uncle; however, Louis forced Eleanor to go with him to Jerusalem. The expedition was a failure, and Eleanor and Louis returned to France on different ships.

The marriage was also a failure. Although they stayed married for a while longer, the marriage was eventually annulled. Shortly after the marriage was dissolved, Eleanor married Henry II of England. Eleanor continued to rule Aquitaine, while the couple had eight children. One of those children was Richard Coeur de Lion, known as Richard the Lionhearted.

Eventually, this marriage soured as well and she incited her sons to rebel against their father. The revolt failed and Eleanor was thrown into prison. She remained there for 16 years. After her husband’s death, she was released from prison by order of her son, Richard, the new king.

She suffered greatly during her imprisonment; however, it made her a compassionate person. Instead of seeking revenge when she was returned to power, she devoted herself to deeds of mercy and piety, going from city to city, and setting free all persons confined without good reason.
Medieval Women

Background Information
During the Middle Ages, most women spent time doing household chores such as cooking, baking bread, sewing, weaving, and spinning. Women also hunted and worked in the gardens beside men. Women were not recognized as being equal to men, although many of the jobs men held were certainly done as well by women of the time. Some women had important and useful occupations such as merchants, artists, or blacksmiths. Others served as midwives practicing or devoted their lives to God and became nuns. There were even women who involved themselves in politics. History recognizes Eleanor of Aquitaine as among the greatest of female rulers ever.

Activity
1. Your job is to research a notable woman from the time period and share her contributions with the rest of the class. Choose from Eleanor of Aquitaine, Anne Boleyn, Elizabeth I, Isabella of Castille, and Joan of Arc. (You may also check with your teacher for approval on another woman from this time period.) Who are you going to study?

_______________________________________________________________________________

2. Write at least three paragraphs describing the life of the woman that you have chosen. Include significant events in her life, contributions, and the effects on Europe or on history. Use this space to record what three major issues you are going to cover in your paragraphs.

• __________________________________________________________________________

• __________________________________________________________________________

• __________________________________________________________________________

3. At the conclusion of your paper, compare the woman’s life and role in medieval Europe with that of a serf, knight, or tradesman.

Challenge
Pretend you are a medieval man, woman, or child. Describe your daily life. Describe how you are dressed, how you wear your hair, and your home. What do you do for entertainment? Are you a commoner or a person of nobility? If you have an occupation, describe it. There are many differences in married women and single women in this historical age. If you have chosen to be a woman, which are you? How is life different for you than for other women?
Enameled Stone Effigy of Eleanor of Aquitaine

(Library of Congress)
Gothic Cathedrals

1. List some characteristics of gothic architecture that you see in the images above.

_______________________________________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________________________________

2. Describe some similarities and differences of these two buildings.

_______________________________________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________________________________

3. If you were a visitor to Europe with only time to visit one of these two landmarks, which one would you visit and why?

_______________________________________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________________________________