14- **Crash Course World History Video Notes:**

**The Dark Ages...How Dark Were They, Really?**

1. The period between 600 and 1450 CE is often called the Middle Ages in Europe because itcame between the \_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_—assuming you forget the Byzantines—and the beginning of the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_.
2. And it’s sometimes called the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_, because it was purportedly unenlightened.
3. Medieval Europe had less \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, fewer \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, and less cultural \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ than the original Roman Empire.
4. But with fewer powerful \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, wars were at least smaller, which is one reason why Europeans living in Medieval Times lived slightly longer.
5. Instead of centralized governments, Europe in the middle ages had \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, a political system based on reciprocal relationships between lords, who owned lots of land, and vassals, who protected the land and got to dress up as \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ in exchange for pledging loyalty to the lords.
6. The lords were also \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ to more important lords, with the most important of all being the king. Below the knights were \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ who did the actual work on the land in exchange for protection from bandits and other threats.
7. Feudalism was also an \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ system, with the peasants working the land and keeping some of their production to feed themselves while giving the rest to the landowner whose land they worked.
8. This system reinforces the status quo – there’s little \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and absolutely no social \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_: Peasants could never work their way up to lords, and they almost never left their villages.

*One more point that’s very interesting from a world history perspective:this devolution from empire to localism has happened in lots of places at lots of different times. And in times of extreme political stress, like after the fall of the Han dynasty in China, power tends to flow into the hands of local lords who can protect the peasants better than the state can.*

1. We hear about this a lot in Chinese history and also in contemporary Afghanistan, but instead of being called feudal lords, these landlords are called \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.
2. The other reason the Dark Ages are called Dark is because Europe was dominated by \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and by religious debates about like how many angels can fit on the head of a pin.
3. All that noted, things were certainly brighter in the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ world, or Dar al Islam.
4. So when we last left the Muslims, they had expanded out of their homeland in \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and conquered the rich Egyptian provinces of the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and the entire Sassanian empire, all in the space of about 100 years.
5. The Umayyad Dynasty then expanded the empire west to \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and moved the capital to Damascus, because it was closer to the action, empire-wise but still in Arabia.
6. Their replacements were the Abbasids which hailed from the Eastern and therefore more \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ provinces of the Islamic Empire.
7. The Abbasids took over in 750 and no one could fully defeat them—until 1258, when they were conquered by—wait for it—\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.
8. The Abbasids kept the idea of a hereditary monarchy, but they moved the capital of the empire to \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, and they were much more welcoming of other non-Arab Muslims into positions of power.
9. By about 1000CE , the Islamic Caliphate which looks so incredibly impressive on a map had really descended into a series of smaller \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, each paying lip-service to the caliph in Baghdad.
10. This was partly because the Islamic Empire relied more and more on soldiers from the frontier, in this case \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, and also slaves pressed into military service, in order to be the backbone of their army.
11. More important than the Persian-style monarchy that the Abbasids tried to set up was their \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ to foreigners and their ideas. That tolerance and curiosity ushered in a \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ of Islamic learning centered in Baghdad; and Baghdad was the world’s center of scholarship with its \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and immense library.
12. Muslim scholars translated the works of the Greek \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ as well as scientific works. They translated and preserved \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and Hindu manuscripts that might have otherwise been lost.
13. Muslims made huge strides in \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ as well. One Muslim scholar ibn Sina, wrote the Canon of Medicine, which became the standard medical textbook or centuries in both \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and the Middle East.
14. The Islamic empire adopted mathematical concepts from \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_such as the zero, and the symbols we use to denote it “Arabic numerals.”
15. Muslim mathematicians and astronomers developed \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ partly so they could simplify Islamic inheritance law. Plus they made important strides in \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ so that people understand where to turn then trying to turn toward Mecca.
16. Baghdad wasn’t the only center of learning in the Islamic world. In \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, Islamic Cordoba became a center for the arts, especially \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and engineering.
17. Muslim scholars took the lead in \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ science, improving yields on all kinds of new crops, allowing Spanish lives to be longer and less hungry.
18. Meanwhile, \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ was having a Golden Age of its own. The \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Dynasty made China’s government more of a meritocracy, and ruled over 80 million people across four million square miles.
19. The Tang also produced incredible art that was traded all throughout Asia. Many of the more famous sculptures from the Tang Dynasty feature figures who are distinctly not-Chinese, which again demonstrates the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ of the empire.
20. The Song Dynasty, which lasted from 960 to 1258, Chinese metalworkers were producing as much \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ as Europe would be able to produce in the 18th century. Some of this iron was put to use in new \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, which enabled agriculture to boom, thereby supporting population growth.
21. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ was of such high quality that it was shipped throughout the world, which is why we call it “china.”
22. And there was so much trade going on that the Chinese ran out of metal for coins, leading to another innovation–\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.
23. By the 11th century, the Chinese were writing down recipes for a mixture of saltpeter, sulfur and charcoal, that we now know as \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.