

Your student has been instructed to list the causes of feudalism, which led to feudalism and its significant relationships, which in turn led to the effects of feudalism. Your dialectic student need not provide all of the information we include.



CAUSES OF FEUDALISM

External: - Viking attacks and need for safety

Internal: - Grew out of Roman and German customs
 - Chaotic political conditions and petty wars among lords



FEUDALISM

Definition of Feudalism: A system of political and social relationships based on service, loyalty, and military service

Participants: Only noblemen, who became lords or vassals

Relationships among lords, vassals, and fiefs:

Lord to vassal:

- Had authority over a vassal
- Promised to treat vassal with honor

Vassal to lord:

- Took oath of fealty in a ceremony called homage, in submission to a lord
- Maintained knights to use in the service of his lord

Lord to fief and vassal to fief:

A lord owned a fief and gave it to a vassal in an investiture ceremony; the vassal supervised the fief and had political, economic and judicial power



EFFECTS OF FEUDALISM

- Strengths:
- Clearly defined the social classes
 - Provided some peace, security, and protection from Vikings
 - Nobility maintained control over land and serfs
 - Improved amount of food people could grow
- Weaknesses:
- Rigid social structure, with little personal freedom and no hope of improving one's social position
 - Power struggles between the church and lords
 - If lords and vassals did not fulfill their obligations, wars erupted.
 - Serfs at the mercy of their lords, who were sometimes unjust