THE BLACK DEATH
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• A terrible plague, known as the Black Death, swept through Europe in the 1300’s killing millions.
• Have you ever been given a shot to prevent the flu or to protect you from another disease? Let's look at what happened in Europe before modern medicine could control contagious diseases.
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• The Middle Ages in Europe reached a high point during the 1200’s.

• In the 1300’s however, disaster struck...A terrible plague, known as the Black Death or Bubonic Plague, swept across Europe and Asia.
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- A plague is a disease that spreads extremely quickly and kills many people violently.

- Most scientists think that the Black Death was a disease caused by a type of bacteria carried by fleas.
• The Black Death probably began somewhere in the Gobi Desert, a desert located in central Asia.

• It had been around for centuries in Asia, but in the 1300’s, the plague began to spread farther and more quickly than ever before.
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• These fleas infested black rats
• Black rats were everywhere because of unsanitary lifestyles of humans during the Middle Ages.
• The way that the Black Death spread so rapidly all of a sudden is completely baffling to Historians and Scientist at first.
• How do you think it spread?
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• Upon further research, historians believe that the Mongol Empire was truly responsible for the plague spreading so fast.

• The Mongols had created a vast empire that covered all of the land from Eastern Europe through Central Asia, ending in what is now China.
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- The Mongols had continued using an existing, widespread trade network set up between China, India, the Middle East and Europe.

- This trade network was so prosperous that they encouraged its use constantly, in order to bring wealth into their vast Empire.
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• Does anyone know the name of this massive trade network????
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The Silk Road!
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• By the early 1300’s, more goods were being shipped across central Asia than ever before.

• This made it possible for the Black Death to spread so rapidly, as caravans infested with rats carried the plague from city to city.
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- The first documented outbreak took place in China in 1331 and again in 1353.
How does the Black Death Kill?

Once contracted by a human the disease became airborne.

It would take about 3-7 days for it to kill you.

Symptoms were a fever, painful swelling of the lymph glands, red spots on skin that turned black and armpits would fill with blood.
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- The disease appeared in India as well in the 1340’s and reached Makkah, deep inside the Muslim lands, in 1329.

- While the Black Death spread throughout Asia it was also traveling all over Europe.
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Makkah - The most populated province of Saudi Arabia, Its capital is the sacred city of Mecca, which is extremely important within the Islamic faith.
The Black Death appeared in Europe in 1346 at the city of Caffa (Today known as Feodosiya), located along the Black Sea.
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• The city of Caffa had been under attack by Golden Horde branch of Mongols when the plague erupted.

• The Mongols, with many of their troops dying, called off the attack and created one of the first forms of Biological Warfare ever to happen on the planet.
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• The Mongol soldiers were withering from being infected with the plague.

• In frustration they catapulted the infected corpses over the city walls, infecting the inhabitants of Caffa.

• Fleeing inhabitants may have carried the disease back to Italy, causing its spread faster across Europe.
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• Caffa was a trade colony controlled by Italian merchants from the city Genoa.

• Their ships carried the plague to Sicily in October of 1347.
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• From there is spread into Italy and by the end of 1349, it had spread through France, Germany and finally England.

• By 1351, it had reached Scandinavia, Eastern Europe and Russia.
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• As many as 19-38 million Europeans died from the Black Death between 1347 and 1351. (A cross was used to show that bodies were inside a house for pick up)

• That is nearly one out of every two people. (The image above is not real and was used in a renaissance festival to show what the plague looked like)
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- The death of so many people in the 1300’s turned Europe’s economy upside down.

- Trade declined and wages rose sharply because workers were few and in demand.
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• At the same time, fewer people meant less demand for food and food prices fell.

• Earning a living as a farmer was almost impossible.
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• Landlords found they had to pay workers more and charge lower rents.

• Some peasants actually bargained with their lords to pay rent instead of owing services.
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• This meant that they were no longer serfs.

• In this way the plague, like the Crusades, helped to weaken the Feudal System and change European society forever.
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• History Connection:

• Many folklorists believe that the popular nursery rhyme “Ring Around the Rosie” is about the Black Death.
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• The first line refers to the round pink rash that is an early sign of the disease.

• Posies, or bouquets of flowers, were worn to disguise the terrible smell of the infection.
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• The third line refers to the burning of infected corpses.

• The final line is about almost everyone infected with the Black Death eventually died, or fell down.