

Getting Your Daily Bread: Breads in Medieval Society

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 [Teacher's Content Base Outline](#)

Applying State Standards

Although no state standards specifically address teaching about bread or bread-making in medieval or colonial life, every set of state standards addresses issues of how people lived in other times and places. Typically, such standards are located among history or social studies standards. General standards that attend to such issues as culture, life in other places, the science and application of agriculture, foods and home economics, and literature are found throughout state standards in various places.



Learning about breads in historical settings and how it is important to understand bread and bread-making in society also contains elements of a broad literacy, that is, helping students grasp the meaning and place of things in their lives. The lessons “starters” that follow are targeted toward middle school students, where they could apply the lesson as part of some integrated unit on foods, or technologies, or medieval life, etc. However, this material could also be easily moved into the lower grades with greater emphasis on the examples of the various grains and breads, particularly if children could bake the breads themselves! The unit could also be used in senior high school classes concentrating on research activities and/or reading and writing. As determined by teachers, the standards applied here would vary from very specific history standards to more generic standards designed to explore diversity of life in various cultures.

Activities	
Elementary	Middle School/Senior High
(Lesson Plan) Teachers will introduce content within the experience of the child, first, by identifying and explaining bread as a familiar object in the child's life. Then, the teacher will encourage the child to move beyond simple understanding of the bread as something that comes from the grocery store to a manufactured commodity central to our way of life in America. Finally, the teacher introduces the	Using the the subject matter of the in-depth articles on bread as a base, the teacher will focus on the place of bread in society, with particular emphasis on medieval and colonial times. As the essential source of carbohydrates in both medieval and colonial times , bread was central to daily life and therefore to the economy. Students will be encouraged to draw parallels and distinguish differences between the medieval/colonial periods and the contemporary situation in regard to bread. The following objectives cover the in-depth

concept of bread making as an historical subject, outlining how bread was a central part of life dating back to colonial times and before, in medieval times.

As objectives, as a result of the lessons, students will be able to answer the following questions and participate in the suggested activities.

Explaining:

- What is bread?
- Where does it come from?
- How are the plants grown?
- How is bread made?
- What are the different types of breads?
- Who eats breads?

Doing:

- Look at the variety of breads: sizes, shapes, and function
- Examine various grains (seeds) to grow plants for bread making
- Watch demonstration on bread making
- Participate in bread making (and eating)
- Read/hear about how breads were made in the past
- Discuss the role of bread making today and in the past

essay on bread: Given the various presentations on medieval times, the students will...

1. **recognize** the significance bread had in medieval society.
2. **identify** the two main types of breads.
3. **describe** the two types of breads and give examples of each.
4. **recognize** the place wheat breads held in medieval society.
5. **define** the varieties of "wheat breads".
6. **analyze** the significance of different shades of "white breads".
7. **describe** the special health properties attached to white breads.
8. **identify** the "geography" (common domain) for wheat and rye breads.
9. **compare/contrast** the consumption of bread over time.
10. **describe** the role bread guilds played in medieval society.
11. **identify** the two foods taxed by authorities.
12. **describe** how laws determined tax on breads.
13. **explain** why recipes for bread do not exist from medieval times.
14. **explain** why recipes for porridge have not survived.
15. **describe** a typical medieval menu for a day.
16. **explain** why breads were so versatile for serving and eating.

Activities:

Given the suggested materials, teachers will be able to construct presentations that introduce and provide information about the various aspects of breads and bread making. From these presentations, teachers will be able to design specific activities that include brief "lectures,"

	research projects (for individuals or small groups), action projects that include experimenting with various bread making and baking techniques, and demonstrations (either student or teacher generated)
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