

Revision Workbook

Medieval England

From the Battle of Hastings, 1066, to the Break with Rome, 1534

This belongs to **Henry**.

Everything you need for the end of year assessment is in here.
It is built to be worked through slowly, one page at a time.

The plan in one line

Understand the idea first. Then learn the facts. Then practise writing your answer.

How to use this workbook

Read this page once. Then you can ignore it.

How each topic works

- Each topic starts with **the big question**. That is what the whole topic is really about.
- Next comes **the idea**. Read it first. Make sure it makes sense before you do anything else.
- Then there are pictures and key words to lock the idea in.
- Then questions, in three steps that get a bit harder each time.

The three kinds of question

Quick check

Short questions. They test what you remember. Answers are at the back so you can mark your own.

Explain why

One question that asks you to give reasons. There is an example answer to read first.

What do you think

A question with no single right answer. You give your opinion and back it up. There is an example to read first.

A few rules that make this easier

- Do one page at a time. You do not have to do it all at once.
- Nothing here is timed. Stop whenever you need to.
- If a page feels like too much, leave it and come back later.
- Reading the example answers is part of the work. It is not cheating.

Eight dates that hold everything together

If you only memorise one thing, memorise these eight dates **in order**. Every topic hangs off this line.

- 1066** ● **Battle of Hastings.**
William of Normandy beats Harold. The Normans take over.
- 1086** ● **Domesday Book.**
William records who owns what, so he can tax it.
- 1170** ● **Murder of Thomas Becket.**
The King and the Church clash. The Church wins the argument.
- 1215** ● **Magna Carta.**
King John is forced to obey the law.
- 1348** ● **The Black Death reaches England.**
About a third of people die. This changes everything.
- 1381** ● **The Peasants' Revolt.**
Ordinary people rise up against the king.
- 1485** ● **Battle of Bosworth.**
The Tudors take the throne.
- 1534** ● **The Break with Rome.**
Henry VIII makes himself head of the Church in England.

How to write a good answer: P E E

The longer questions all want the same shape. Learn it once and use it everywhere.

P

Point

Say your answer. Make your point clearly.

E

Evidence

Give a fact that proves it. A name, a date, a thing that happened.

E

Explain

Say why that fact proves your point. This is the bit that wins marks.

A worked example

Question: *Explain one reason the Normans were able to control England.*

EXAMPLE ANSWER

Point. One reason the Normans controlled England was that they built castles.

Evidence. They built motte and bailey castles quickly all over the country after 1066.

Explain. This let a small number of Norman soldiers control a large area, because the castle was hard to attack and let them watch over the local people and put down any rebellion.

Notice the third part does the real work. It does not just say *what* happened. It says *why it mattered*. Aim for that every time.

Norman England, 1066

The big question: Who should be king in 1066, and how did William end up in control of England?

The idea

In January 1066 the King of England, Edward the Confessor, died.

He had no son.

So three different men said the throne should be theirs.

They could not all be king. So it came down to a fight.

Harold Godwinson

A powerful English earl
Said Edward named him as king on his deathbed. He was crowned at once.

William of Normandy

A duke from France
Said Edward had promised him the throne, and that Harold had sworn an oath to support him.

Harald Hardrada

The King of Norway
Said an old agreement gave the English throne to Norway's kings.

Key words

Claimant

A person who says the throne should be theirs.

Oath

A serious promise, often made in front of God.

Three battles in one year

The idea

1066 had three battles, not one. The order matters.

1. Fulford. Harald Hardrada lands in the north and beats the local English earls.



2. Stamford Bridge. Harold Godwinson marches north fast and beats Hardrada. Hardrada is killed.



3. Hastings. William lands in the south. Harold has to march all the way back down. They fight on 14 October. **William wins. Harold is killed.**

Why did William win at Hastings?

No single reason. Several things added up.

- **Harold's army was tired.** They had just fought in the north and marched 250 miles south.
- **William's army was mixed.** He had foot soldiers, archers and knights on horseback. Harold mostly had foot soldiers.
- **The trick.** William's men pretended to run away. Some English chased them down the hill, broke their wall, and were cut down.
- **Harold died.** Once the leader was dead, the English lost heart.

Watch out

- People say Harold was killed by an arrow in the eye. We are not sure. The old picture is unclear and the stories do not agree.
- William did not have a claim that everyone accepted. His claim was argued over. He got the throne by winning a battle.

How the Normans kept control

The idea

William won the battle with a few thousand men.

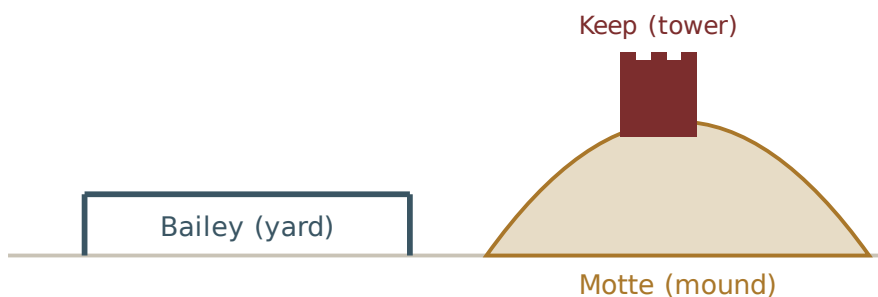
England had about two million people.

So the real problem was not winning. It was holding on.

He did it in two ways: by **force**, and by **structure**.

By force: castles

The Normans built **motte and bailey** castles fast, all over the country. A mound with a tower on top, and a fenced yard below. A few soldiers in a castle could control a whole area.



By structure: the feudal system

William said all the land was his. He lent it out in return for loyalty and soldiers. Everyone owed something to the person above them.



And one more tool: the Domesday Book, 1086

A huge survey of who owned what across England. Once William knew what everyone had, he knew how much tax he could take. Knowledge is control.

Norman England: your turn

QUICK CHECK

1. In what year was the Battle of Hastings?

2. Name the three men who wanted the throne in 1066.

3. Which battle did Harold win just before Hastings?

4. What was the Domesday Book, and why did William want it?

5. Name two ways the Normans kept control of England.

Explain why William won the Battle of Hastings.

EXAMPLE ANSWER

Point. William won partly because his army was stronger in the way it was made up.

Evidence. William had archers and knights on horseback, while Harold's men were mostly on foot and were tired from marching from the north.

Explain. This mattered because the English shield wall could hold off foot soldiers, but it was much harder to defend against arrows from above and horses charging at it, especially when the men were exhausted.

Now write your own paragraph about a *different* reason William won.

WHAT DO YOU THINK

"William only won because he was lucky." How far do you agree?

EXAMPLE ANSWER (SHORT)

Luck did play a part. William was lucky that Harold had to fight a second battle in the north first, which left his men tired. But it was not only luck. William also made good choices, like using the trick of pretending to run away. And Harold made a mistake by letting his men chase down the hill. So I think it was a mix of luck and skill, with William's choices mattering most.

Write your own answer. Say what you think, give a fact, and explain it.

Religion and Belief

The big question: Why did the Church have so much power over people's lives?

The idea

In medieval England, almost everyone believed in God and in life after death.

They believed there were three places a soul could go.

Heaven where good souls go. The goal.

Purgatory a waiting place to be cleaned of sins.

Hell where sinners are punished forever.

Here is the key part.

People believed the **only way** to reach Heaven was through the Church.

So the Church held the one thing everyone wanted most.

That is where its power came from.

Key words

Salvation

Saving your soul. Getting into Heaven.

Sin

Doing wrong in the eyes of God.

Fear, paintings and ordeals

Doom paintings

Most people could not read.

So churches put huge paintings on the wall, called **doom paintings**.

They showed Heaven on one side and Hell on the other.

Every Sunday, people saw exactly what waited for them. It was a warning you could not miss.

Trial by ordeal

If they could not work out who was guilty of a crime, they sometimes asked God to decide.

This was called **trial by ordeal**.

- **Ordeal by water.** The person was put in water. If they sank, they were innocent. If they floated, guilty.
- **Ordeal by hot iron.** The person carried a piece of hot iron. The wound was bandaged. If it healed cleanly, God had shown they were innocent.

It sounds strange to us. But it made sense to them, because they truly believed God would step in and show the truth.

Watch out

- Doom paintings were not decoration. They were a warning, on purpose.
- Trial by ordeal was not just cruelty. To medieval people it was a way of letting God judge.

Religion and Belief: your turn

QUICK CHECK

1. What did medieval people believe happened to good souls?

2. What does the word salvation mean?

3. Why did the Church have so much power over people?

4. What were doom paintings, and why were they used?

5. What was trial by ordeal?

Explain why most ordinary people did what the Church told them.

EXAMPLE ANSWER

Point. Most people obeyed the Church because they were afraid of going to Hell.

Evidence. They believed the only way to reach Heaven was through the Church, and doom paintings on church walls showed them the suffering in Hell.

Explain. This gave the Church huge power, because people would do almost anything to save their soul, and only the Church could offer that.

WHAT DO YOU THINK

"The Church controlled people only through fear." How far do you agree?

EXAMPLE ANSWER (SHORT)

Fear was a big part of it. People were scared of Hell, and the Church reminded them of it all the time. But it was not only fear. Many people genuinely believed, and the Church also helped them, by running schools, caring for the sick and the poor, and marking births, weddings and deaths. So fear mattered most, but real belief and real help were part of it too.

Church versus King: Becket

The big question: Who really held more power, the King or the Church?

The idea

King **Henry II** had a close friend called **Thomas Becket**.

Henry made Becket Archbishop of Canterbury, the top churchman in England.

He thought Becket would help him bring the Church under royal control.

He was wrong.

Once Becket had the job, he defended the Church **against** the King.

What they argued about

The main row was about who should judge churchmen who broke the law.

- **Henry** wanted them tried in the King's courts, with proper punishments.
- **Becket** wanted them tried in Church courts, which were much softer.

This was really a fight about power. Was the King in charge, or the Church?

Key words

Archbishop of Canterbury

The most important churchman in England.

Penance

A punishment you accept to show you are sorry for a sin.

The murder, and what it proved

The idea

The argument dragged on for years.

One day, in a rage, Henry shouted something like "will no one rid me of this troublesome priest?"

Four of his knights took him at his word.

They rode to Canterbury and killed Becket inside the cathedral, in **1170**.

What happened next

- People were horrified. A holy man, killed in a holy place.
- Becket was quickly made a **saint**.
- Henry was forced to do public penance. He was whipped by monks to show he was sorry.

So think about what this shows.

The King could lose his temper and have a man killed.

But he could **not** beat the Church. In the end the Church made him say sorry, in public.

That tells you the Church was very powerful indeed.

Watch out

- Henry probably did not order the murder. His angry words were taken too far by the knights.
- We do not know Henry's exact words. The famous line is what people remembered, not a recording.

Becket: your turn

QUICK CHECK

1. Who was Thomas Becket?

2. What did Henry II and Becket argue about?

3. Where and when was Becket murdered?

4. What happened to Becket after his death?

5. What did Henry II have to do to show he was sorry?

EXPLAIN WHY

Explain why Henry II and Thomas Becket fell out.

EXAMPLE ANSWER

Point. They fell out because they disagreed about who should control the Church.

Evidence. Henry wanted churchmen who broke the law to be tried in royal courts, but Becket insisted they be tried in softer Church courts.

Explain. This was really a fight about power, because if the King could not even judge churchmen, it showed the Church was not fully under his control, and Henry could not accept that.

WHAT DO YOU THINK

What does Becket's murder tell us about who had more power, the King or the Church?

EXAMPLE ANSWER (SHORT)

At first it looks like the King had more power, because his knights were able to kill the most important churchman in England. But what happened next shows the opposite. Becket was made a saint, and Henry was forced to do public penance and be whipped to say sorry. So in the end the Church won, because it could make even the King apologise. This tells us the Church was extremely powerful in medieval England.

King John and Magna Carta

The big question: Can a king be forced to obey the law?

The idea

King **John** was very unpopular. Three big reasons:

- He **lost land** in France that England used to own.
- He charged **heavy taxes** to pay for wars he kept losing.
- He had a **quarrel with the Pope**, the head of the whole Church.

The powerful barons had had enough.

In **1215** they forced John to agree to a list of rules.

That list is called **Magna Carta**, which means "the Great Charter".

Why it mattered

Most of the rules protected the barons themselves.

But one idea was bigger than all the rest:

The king is not above the law. He has to obey it too.

That idea did not go away. It is still part of how the country works today.

Watch out

- Magna Carta did not give rights to ordinary people at the time. It mostly helped the rich barons.
- John did not really want to keep it. He got the Pope to cancel it soon after, and war broke out.
- It still matters because of the *idea* it set down, even though John ignored it.

Magna Carta: your turn

QUICK CHECK

1. Who was forced to seal Magna Carta?

2. In what year?

3. Who forced him to do it?

4. What was the most important idea in Magna Carta?

5. Give one reason King John was unpopular.

EXPLAIN WHY

Explain why the barons forced King John to seal Magna Carta.

EXAMPLE ANSWER

Point. The barons acted because they were angry about how John was ruling.

Evidence. He had lost lands in France and charged heavy taxes to pay for wars that went badly.

Explain. This mattered because the barons paid those taxes and lost out, so they wanted to limit the King's power and stop him doing whatever he liked.

WHAT DO YOU THINK

How important was Magna Carta? How far do you agree that it changed things?

EXAMPLE ANSWER (SHORT)

At the time, Magna Carta did not change much. Most of it helped the barons, not ordinary people, and John got it cancelled almost straight away. But the long term importance is huge, because it set down the idea that the king must obey the law. That idea lasted for hundreds of years and still matters today. So it failed in the short term but became very important in the long term.

The Black Death

The big question: What happens to a country when a third of the people die?

The idea

In **1348** a terrible disease reached England.

We now know it spread by **fleas living on rats**, and from person to person.

Medieval people did not know this. They knew nothing about germs.

So they made their own guesses about why it was happening.

What they thought caused it

- A punishment from God for people's sins.
- Bad air, or a smell that carried the illness.
- The planets being in the wrong place.

What they did about it

- Prayed and held religious processions.
- Some whipped themselves to ask God for forgiveness.
- Used herbs and sweet smells against the "bad air".
- Tried to run away from infected towns.

None of it could work, because none of it stopped the fleas.

What the Black Death changed

Short term: death

About a third of England died. In some places, closer to half.

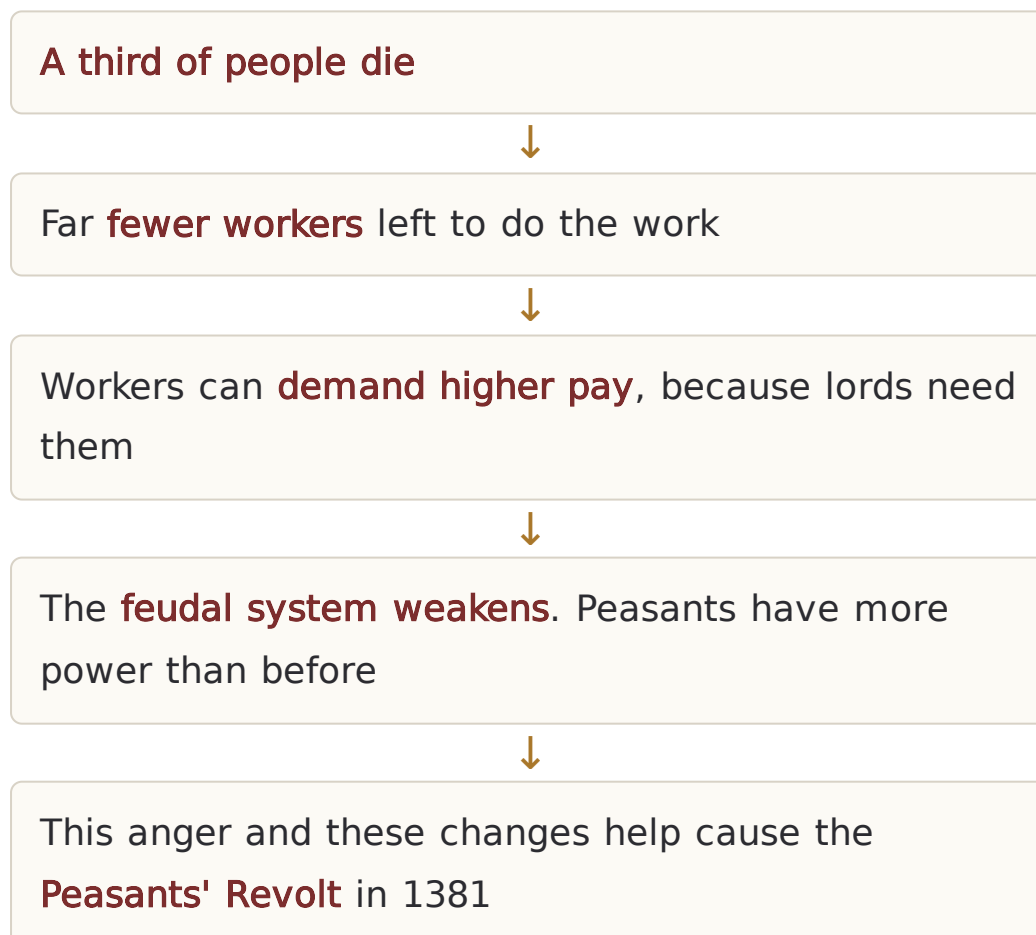
Whole villages were emptied.

Long term: this is the important part

Fewer people alive meant fewer workers.

Suddenly, the workers who were left were valuable.

Follow the chain:



Some people also started to question the Church.

Priests had died too. All the prayers had not saved anyone. People began to wonder.

Watch out

- Do not just write that lots of people died. The exam wants the *changes* it caused afterwards.
- The Black Death is the link to the next topic. Hold on to that chain above.

The Black Death: your turn

QUICK CHECK

1. When did the Black Death reach England?

2. What really spread the disease?

3. Give one thing medieval people thought caused it.

4. Roughly how many people died?

5. Give one long term change that came after it.

EXPLAIN WHY

Explain why medieval people could not stop the Black Death.

EXAMPLE ANSWER

Point. They could not stop it because they did not understand what was really causing it.

Evidence. They blamed God, bad air or the planets, and tried prayer and sweet smells, when it was actually spread by fleas on rats.

Explain. This mattered because their cures were aimed at the wrong cause, so nothing they did could stop the fleas, and the disease kept spreading.

WHAT DO YOU THINK

How far did the Black Death change England?

EXAMPLE ANSWER (SHORT)

The Black Death changed England a great deal. In the short term it killed about a third of people, which was terrible but did not change how the country was run. The bigger change was long term. With fewer workers left, peasants could demand higher wages, the feudal system grew weaker, and some people began to question the Church. These changes lasted for years and even helped cause the Peasants' Revolt. So the long term changes were the most important.

The Peasants' Revolt, 1381

The big question: Why did ordinary people rise up against the king?

The idea

By **1381** the peasants had had enough. The king was **Richard II**, who was only a teenager.

Causes. The Black Death left fewer workers, so peasants wanted better pay, but the lords tried to stop them. Then the king brought in a **Poll Tax**, a tax everyone had to pay no matter how poor they were.



Events. Peasants marched on London, led by **Wat Tyler**. They met the young king. At Smithfield, an argument broke out and **Wat Tyler was killed**.



Consequences. The revolt was crushed. The leaders were executed. The king's promises were broken. **But** the hated Poll Tax was dropped, and over time the peasants did slowly gain more freedom.

Key words

Poll Tax

A tax charged on every single person, the same for rich and poor.

Revolt

When people rise up against those in charge.

Watch out

- It was not only about the Poll Tax. The Black Death set the whole thing up first. The tax was the final straw.
- The revolt did not win straight away, but it was not a total failure either. Things did change, slowly.

The Peasants' Revolt: your turn

QUICK CHECK

1. Who was king during the Peasants' Revolt?

2. In what year did it happen?

3. Name one cause of the revolt.

4. Who led the peasants?

5. What happened to Wat Tyler?

EXPLAIN WHY

Explain why the peasants revolted in 1381.

EXAMPLE ANSWER

Point. The peasants revolted because of years of unfair treatment, made worse by a new tax.

Evidence. After the Black Death there were fewer workers, so peasants wanted better pay, but the lords tried to hold them back. Then the king brought in the Poll Tax, which charged everyone the same, rich or poor.

Explain. This mattered because the poorest people felt the tax most, and it came on top of long anger about pay and freedom, so the Poll Tax was the final straw that pushed them to rise up.

WHAT DO YOU THINK

"The Peasants' Revolt was a complete failure." How far do you agree?

EXAMPLE ANSWER (SHORT)

In some ways it did fail. The revolt was crushed, the leaders were executed, and the king broke the promises he had made. But it was not a complete failure. The hated Poll Tax was dropped and not used in the same way again, and over the following years the peasants slowly gained more freedom anyway. It also showed that ordinary people could challenge the king, which was new. So it failed at the time but had some lasting effects.

The Tudors

The big question: How did the Tudors take the throne, and why did Henry VIII break with the Church?

The idea: how the Tudors began

For years, two families fought over the throne of England.

This long fight is called the **Wars of the Roses**.

It ended at the **Battle of Bosworth** in **1485**.

Henry Tudor beat King Richard III, who was killed in the battle.

Henry Tudor became King **Henry VII**, the first Tudor king.

The Princes in the Tower

Just before this, two young princes, the sons of an earlier king, were put in the Tower of London. Then they vanished. Nobody knows for sure what happened to them. Their uncle, Richard III, is the main suspect, but it was never proven.

Henry VIII and the Break with Rome

The idea

Henry VIII wanted a son to be king after him.

His wife, Catherine of Aragon, had a daughter but no surviving son.

Henry wanted to end the marriage and marry someone else.

But to do that, he needed the **Pope** to agree. And the Pope said no.

What Henry did

So Henry made a huge decision.

In **1534** he made himself **head of the Church in England**.

England left the Catholic Church run from Rome.

This is called the **Break with Rome**.

His reasons, all at once

- He wanted his marriage ended so he could try for a son.
- He wanted full power, not to be told no by the Pope.
- He gained money and land from the Church afterwards.

Watch out

- Henry did not break away because he had new religious beliefs. It was mostly about a son, power and money.
- This is the same Church power question from the Becket topic, but flipped. This time the King wins, and takes control of the Church.

The Tudors: your turn

QUICK CHECK

1. Which battle ended the Wars of the Roses, and when?

2. Who became the first Tudor king?

3. Who were the Princes in the Tower?

4. Why did Henry VIII want to leave the Catholic Church?

5. What was the Break with Rome?

Explain why Henry VIII broke with Rome.

EXAMPLE ANSWER

Point. Henry broke with Rome mainly because he wanted to end his marriage and the Pope would not let him.

Evidence. His wife Catherine of Aragon had not given him a son, so he wanted to marry again, but the Pope refused to allow it.

Explain. This mattered because the only way Henry could get what he wanted was to take charge of the Church himself, so in 1534 he made himself head of the Church in England.

WHAT DO YOU THINK

"Henry VIII broke with Rome only because he wanted to end his marriage." How far do you agree?

EXAMPLE ANSWER (SHORT)

Wanting to end his marriage was the biggest reason, because he needed a son and the Pope would not allow it. But it was not the only reason. Henry also wanted full power and did not like being told no by the Pope. He also gained a lot of money and land from the Church afterwards. So the marriage was the main cause, but power and money mattered too.

How the topics join up

The best answers link topics together. Here are the four threads that run through the whole course.

Thread 1: who controls the Church?

The Church on top. It controls the way to Heaven, so people obey it.



Becket, 1170. The King fights the Church and loses. The Church is too strong.



Break with Rome, 1534. Henry VIII finally takes control of the Church. The story turns around.

Thread 2: limits on the king

Becket (1170) showed the King could not control the Church. Magna Carta (1215) showed the King had to obey the law. Bit by bit, the King's power was being fenced in.

Thread 3: control from the top, push back from below

The Normans controlled people by force and structure. Then the barons pushed back with Magna Carta. Then the peasants pushed back in 1381. Each time, people lower down demanded more.

Thread 4: the Black Death as a turning point

The Black Death is the hinge of the whole course. Fewer workers led to higher wages, a weaker feudal system, doubts about the Church, and

the Peasants' Revolt. One event, many results.

The five most useful topics to revise

If you cannot do everything, do these five well. They carry the most marks and connect to the most other topics.

1 Why William won the Battle of Hastings

The foundation of everything, and a classic explain question.

2 The Black Death: causes, results, and the link to 1381

One topic that unlocks two. The turning point of the course.

3 Henry VIII's Break with Rome

A big judgement question, and it closes the Church power thread.

4 Becket and Church power

A strong judgement question about who held power.

5 Why Magna Carta mattered

Short term failure, long term importance. A neat judgement answer.

One last tip

For every one of these, do not just learn the facts. Practise the example answers, then write your own. The marks are in the explaining, not the listing.

Answers to the quick check questions

These are for the short "quick check" questions only. The explain and judgement answers have examples next to them already.

Topic 1: Norman England

1. 1066.
2. Harold Godwinson, William of Normandy, Harald Hardrada.
3. Stamford Bridge.
4. A survey of who owned what in England, so William knew how much tax to take.
5. Any two of: castles, the feudal system, the Domesday Book.

Topic 2: Religion and Belief

1. They believed good souls went to Heaven.
2. Saving your soul, or getting into Heaven.
3. Because it controlled the only way to reach Heaven.
4. Paintings on church walls showing Heaven and Hell, used as a warning for people who could not read.
5. A test where God was believed to decide if someone was guilty, such as ordeal by water or hot iron.

Topic 3: Becket

1. The Archbishop of Canterbury, and once the King's close friend.
2. Whether churchmen who broke the law should be tried in royal courts or softer Church courts. Really a fight about power.
3. Canterbury Cathedral, in 1170.
4. He was made a saint.
5. Public penance. He was whipped by monks to show he was sorry.

Topic 4: Magna Carta

1. King John.
2. 1215.
3. The barons.
4. That the king is not above the law and must obey it too.
5. Any one of: he lost land in France, he charged heavy taxes, he quarrelled with the Pope.

Topic 5: The Black Death

1. 1348.
2. Fleas living on rats, and spread from person to person.
3. Any one of: a punishment from God, bad air, the planets.
4. About a third of people, and closer to half in some places.
5. Any one of: fewer workers, higher wages, a weaker feudal system, people questioning the Church.

Topic 6: The Peasants' Revolt

1. Richard II.
2. 1381.
3. Any one of: the Poll Tax, fewer workers after the Black Death wanting better pay, anger about serfdom.
4. Wat Tyler.
5. He was killed at Smithfield.

Topic 7: The Tudors

1. The Battle of Bosworth, in 1485.
2. Henry VII.
3. Two young princes, sons of an earlier king, who were put in the Tower of London and then disappeared.
4. He wanted to end his marriage to try for a son, and the Pope refused.
5. When Henry VIII made himself head of the Church in England, in 1534, and England left the Catholic Church run from Rome.