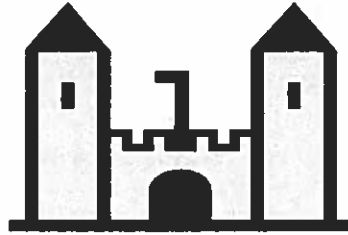


FEUDALISM SOCIAL STRUCTURE



Negotiating a Feudal Contract

Although an actual written contract was never written between a lord and his vassals, this activity will help you to understand the mutual obligations between each. In the Middle Ages, the rights and obligations were already steeped in tradition and common law.

Procedure: A few rules of procedure for negotiation are listed below.

1. First you will receive the handout FEUDAL OBLIGATIONS: LORDS or FEUDAL OBLIGATIONS: VASSALS. On each handout will be listed twelve feudal obligations – things the lords want from the vassals and things the vassals want from the lords in return. Out of the twelve will be four starred obligations. The object of this activity is to try to get the four starred obligations in the final contract, but also not let the other party get their four. Don't be too pushy or obvious about the starred obligations, be devious and tricky.
2. Before negotiating, the vassals of each manor will sit in their groups and strategize. The lord can go somewhere else or meet with other lords to strategize. This will last 5-10 minutes, depending on what is needed.
3. The last step is for the lords and vassals to meet together and negotiate. A final contract must then be written and signed. You may not be able to get your four starred obligations in the contract due to compromise. Try to get as many as you can.
4. REMEMBER: This is LORDS v. VASSALS!!

FEUDAL OBLIGATIONS: LORDS

(KEEP THIS A SECRET!!)

WHAT YOU WANT FROM THE VASSALS:

- ★ Supply a quota of knights, permanently trained for the your protection
- Give contributions when my son is knighted
- Work the fief given and turn a handsome profit
- Give contributions to me if I am captured in war and need to be ransomed
- Attend my court when summoned to be a witness in a case against another vassal (trial of peers).
- ★ Give a certain percent of the food grown on your own manor land
- Entertain me and my court
- Maintain properly and efficiently a house given by me
- Do not pollute or foul my rivers, lakes, or streams
- ★ Allow me to choose a new husband/wife for your widow (upon your death)
- ★ Allow me to kill disobedient serfs on your fief
- Give contributions to me when your daughter marries

FEUDAL OBLIGATIONS: VASSALS

(KEEP THIS A SECRET!!)

WHAT YOU WANT FROM THE LORD:

- A share of his land called a fief
- ★ Pay for one of our children's training as a knight
- Protect and feed the poor orphans and widows
- Allow us to choose each other's spouses for widow/widower
- Provide a castle for each of us
- Be a guardian of a minor who will inherit a fief of a vassal
- ★ Lead us into battle against the enemy
- Help maintain our village – to be efficient
- ★ Grant us use of your ovens, presses, mills, waters, woods, and fields
- Maintain roads, bridges, and defenses
- ★ Let us handle the punishment of disobedient serfs on the fief
- Allow us to work only four days a week

feudal contract

Between Lord _____ and his vassals:

of the manor _____.

I, Lord _____, give the following to my vassals:

-
-
-
-

We vassals of Lord _____ swear to give the following to him in exchange for his part of the contract:

-
-
-
-

Signed/Attested:

Lord _____

Vassals: _____

