The Crusades

**Description** – Learn all about the drama that spawned the Crusades! Who fought whom and why!

**Optional Activities**
- Design a Scroll explaining the Crusades’ history using popular song lyrics
- Journal entries from the perspective of a Crusader from England or France
- [The Crusades](#) - History Channel's Crusades video clip
- Use [MJ's Beat It](#) music video to connect the conflict between Christians and Muslims fighting over the Holy Land just as rival gangs fight over turf as their “holy land.” The Muslims want the Christians to “beat it” and leave! video clip
- Guiding Questions based on the articles. They begin easy, then become increasingly difficult. They are at the very end of the Lesson.
- [Horrible Histories](#) – The Crusader Report video clip

***All activity sheets and rubrics are attached at the end of this lesson.***

**Lesson** – Read articles, then answer guiding questions or take quiz. To reinforce ideas from the articles, show the video clip explaining the Crusades. Give map to students highlighting the Christian and Muslim lands and various routes the Crusaders traveled. After discussing Crusades, show the MJ video for Beat It and have class complete the corresponding sheet.

**Additional Video Clips**
- Deeper into why people fought in the Crusades
- The first Crusaders capture Jerusalem
The Crusades

The Crusades – Article 1

The city of Jerusalem was the center of faith for three major world religions. For the Jews, it was their homeland. It had been promised to them by Jehovah, whom they believed had covenanted with Abraham to give him the land of Israel. To the Muslims, Jerusalem was the location where the Prophet Muhammad had ascended into heaven. After Makkah and Medinah, Jerusalem was Islam’s third most holy city. To the Christians, Jerusalem was both the location of Christ’s birth and the location of his death. It is also the location of much of the New Testament.

This Holy Land was conquered by Islam in the 600s A.D., and would remain in their control for many centuries to come. In 1095 A.D., Pope Urban II called for volunteers to travel to Jerusalem and fight to take it back from the Muslims. He called their mission a crusade. The word “crusade” comes from the word Crux, which means “cross” in Latin. Those who volunteered for the crusade would be called crusaders, meaning that they took the cross of Jesus upon them.

This crusade would be the first of nine total crusades that Christians would carry out as they attempted to control Israel territory.

These crusaders were promised that they would receive eternal life if they died while fighting non-Christians. As a result of the rhetoric, these Christians killed thousands of non-Christians, including Jews and Muslims, as they traveled to Jerusalem. In some cases, they slaughtered entire Jewish communities.

After two years of traveling in the desert, the crusaders finally reached Jerusalem. They laid siege upon the city, surrounding it for two months. Finally the city fell and the crusaders entered, killing almost all of the non-Christians who inhabited the city; men, women and children.

Europeans would control many parts of Israel and the surrounding regions for a little over 200 years. During this time, Muslims made slow but steady efforts to regain control over Jerusalem. Eight more crusades would follow in an effort to keep control over the city in the hands of the Europeans. In 1291 A.D., the Muslims captured the last European stronghold in the area. European leaders lost interest in the area, and the crusades came to an end.
The Crusades – Article 2

What were the Crusades?

The Crusades were a series of wars during the Middle Ages where the Christians of Europe tried to retake control of Jerusalem and the Holy Land from the Muslims.

Why did they want to control Jerusalem?

Jerusalem was important to a number of religions during the Middle Ages. It was important to Jewish people as it was the site of the original temple to God built by King Solomon. It was important to the Muslims because it was where they believe Muhammad ascended to heaven. It was important to Christians as it is where Christ was crucified and rose again.

Who fought in the Crusades?

The Crusades were between the armies of the Europe, mostly the Holy Roman Empire, and the Arabs that had control of Jerusalem. In the first Crusade this was the Seljuk Turks.

There were around 30,000 soldiers from Europe in the first Crusade, they were made up of Knights, peasants, and other commoners. Some saw the army as a way to get rich and try out their fighting skills, while others saw it as a way into heaven.

How they got started

The initial Crusade began when the Seljuk Turks took control of the Holy Land. Prior to this, the Arabs had been in control of the land. However, the Arabs had allowed Christians to pilgrimage and visit the city of Jerusalem. In 1070, when the Turks took control, they began to refuse Christian pilgrims into the area.

Byzantine Emperor Alexius I called for help from the Pope with defending his empire from the Turks and to help push them out of the Holy Land. The Pope helped to gather an army, primarily with the help of the Franks and the Holy Roman Empire.

Timeline of the Crusades

There were a number of Crusades that took place over the course of 200 years starting in 1095:

- **The First Crusade** (1095-1099): The First Crusade was the most successful. Armies from Europe drove out the Turks and took control of Jerusalem.
• **The Second Crusade** (1147-1149): In 1146 the city of Edessa was conquered by the Turks. The entire population was killed or sold into slavery. Then a second Crusade was launched, but was unsuccessful.

• **The Third Crusade** (1187-1192): In 1187 Saladin, the sultan of Egypt, recaptured the city of Jerusalem from the Christians. A third Crusade was launched led by Emperor Barbarossa of Germany, King Philip Augustus of France, and King Richard the Lionheart of England. Richard the Lionheart fought Saladin for several years. In the end he could not conquer Jerusalem, but he did win the right for pilgrims to visit the holy city once again.

• **The Fourth Crusade** (1202-1204): The Fourth Crusade was formed by Pope Innocent III with the hope of taking back the Holy Land. However, the Crusaders got sidetracked and greedy and ended up conquering and plundering Constantinople instead.

• **Children’s Crusade** (1212): Started by a French child named Stephen of Cloyes and a German kid named Nicholas, tens of thousands of children gathered to march to the Holy Land. This ended in total disaster. None of the children made it to the Holy Land and many were never seen again. They were likely sold into slavery.

• **Crusades Five through Nine** (1217 - 1272): Over the next several years there would be 5 more Crusades. None of them would be very successful in terms of gaining control of the Holy Land.

**Interesting Facts about the Crusades**

• “Deus vult!”, meaning "God wills it" was the battle cry of the Crusaders. It came from a speech the Pope gave while gathering support for the First Crusade.
• The symbol of the Crusaders was a red cross. Soldiers wore it on their clothing and armor. It was also used on flags and banners.
• Between the second and the third Crusades, the Teutonic Knights and the Templars were formed to help defend Christendom. These were famous groups of Holy Knights.
The Crusades – Article 3

Three major religious groups all claimed Jerusalem in the land of Palestine as their holy city.

To Christians, it was the place where Jesus was crucified and ascended to heaven
To Muslims, it was the place where Muhammad ascended to heaven
To Jews, it was the site of the ancient temple built by Solomon

In 600 CE, Arabs entered the city and took control.
The Arabs allowed Christian and Jewish pilgrims to visit Jerusalem. In fact, Jews and Christians could live in Palestine as long as they paid their taxes like everyone else.

The First Crusade:
The Problem: Around 1095, a new group of Arabs took control of Jerusalem. They closed the city to Jewish and Christian pilgrims.

The Solution: The Pope acted. He called for a crusade - a volunteer army whose goal was to retake Jerusalem. Many people volunteered. About 30,000 men left Western Europe to fight in Jerusalem.
For knights, this was a chance to use their fighting skills, something they enjoyed and did well. They were delighted to have such a worthy battle to fight.
For peasants, this was a chance to escape from their dreary life in the feudal system. The pope promised that if they died while fighting a holy crusade, they would automatically be welcomed into heaven.
For others, it was a chance to have an adventure, and perhaps even to get rich.

Sign of the Crusade - The Red Cross: Each crusader had a huge red cross, made out of fabric, stitched onto their shirts or armor. It made all crusaders, irrespective of rank or background, appear to be a unified army. It reminded the crusaders that they were fighting a holy cause. The red cross was added to flags and banners

The Results: After about two years of harsh traveling, hunger, disease, freezing weather, and quarrels amongst themselves, the crusaders finally arrived in Jerusalem. After a two-month siege of the city, the city fell. The crusaders had won back Jerusalem. Some men stayed. Some headed home. Those who returned brought back new foods and new forms of culture.

More Crusades: It was a short victory. Less than 50 years later, Muslims once again conquered Jerusalem. Again the pope called for a crusade to take back the city.
The Second Crusade lasted from 1147-1149. It was not successful.
The Third Crusade lasted from 1189-1192. It was not successful.

The Fourth Crusade lasted from 1202-1204. Instead of attacking Jerusalem, the crusaders attacked Constantinople. They stole statues, money, paintings and jewelry. They burned libraries. They destroyed churches. Their ridiculous excuse was that they needed money to defend Constantinople from the same fate as Jerusalem, as well as to fund the rescue of Jerusalem. The people of Constantinople did not find this excuse acceptable, and they were filled with hatred for the west.

The Children’s Crusade in 1212 was a terrible tragedy. Many thousands of French and German children died trying to reach Jerusalem. They believed God would help them because they were children. Many died of hunger. Other froze to death. When the survivors reached the Mediterranean Sea, they expected the waters to part and let them pass. When this did not happen, those who were left returned dismally home.

Over the next 70 years, there were several other crusade attempts, but they were motivated more by personal gain than by religious purpose. None succeeded. By 1291, 200 years after the first crusade, European leaders lost interest. Western Europe never admitted defeat. They simply stopped asking for new crusaders.
The Crusades - Quiz

1) Who fought each other in the Crusades?
- The Eastern and Western Roman Empires
- The Romans and the Greeks
- The Europeans and the Arabs
- The Europeans and the Egyptians
- The Vikings and the English

2) The city of Jerusalem is important to what three major religions?
- Buddhism, Hinduism, and Islam
- Judaism, Islam, and Buddhism
- Islam, Christianity, and Hinduism
- Christianity, Islam, and Judaism
- Islam, Buddhism, and Christianity

3) The First Crusade got started when the Seljuk Turks did what?
- Capture the city of Constantinople
- Burnt down the city of Jerusalem
- Attacked the Catholic city of Rome
- Took military control of the Mediterranean Sea
- Prevented Christians from entering Jerusalem

4) Why did people join in fighting in the Crusades?
- They thought it would help them to practice their fighting skills
- They thought it would help them to get rich
- They thought it would help them to get into heaven
- All of the above
- None of the above

5) What was the result of the First Crusade?
- The Crusaders were defeated and returned home
- The Crusaders captured and gained control of Jerusalem
- The Crusaders got greedy and attacked Constantinople
- The Crusaders never made it to the Holy Land
- None of the above
6) Not counting the Crusade of Children, how many Crusades were there?
- 2
- 4
- 7
- 9
- 15

7) Which Crusade, led by the kings of Germany, France, and England did not retake Jerusalem, but did gain the right for Christian pilgrims to visit the city?
- The Second
- The Third
- The Fourth
- The Fifth
- The Sixth

8) What was the symbol of the Crusaders?
- A blue sword
- A yellow lion
- A red cross
- A black snake
- A green helmet

9) True or false: The majority of the Crusades were very successful in capturing the Holy Land.
- TRUE
- FALSE

10) What religious leader from the Catholic Church helped to organize the First Crusade?
- The Bishop of Constantinople
- Stephen Harding
- The Pope
- Saint Benedict
- The Cardinal of Italy
Crusades, 1096–1204

Christian lands 1096–1204
Muslim lands 1147–1204
First Crusade, 1096–1099
Second Crusade, 1147–1149
Third Crusade, 1189–1192
Fourth Crusade, 1202–1204
Crusades Guiding Questions

1 – Who fought each other during the Crusades?

2 – Why were Christians and Muslims fighting over the city of Jerusalem?

3 – What caused the Crusades to begin in the first place?

4 – Why would non-soldiers, such as farmers and artisans join Knights and fight in the Crusades?

5 – Analyze whether or not the Crusades were successful for Christians or the Muslims.
The Crusades
Scroll Song or Journal Entry

Lyric Directions
For this assignment, you will be writing song lyrics that explain what the Crusades were all about. Your lyrics must be written to the melody of a popular song. It can be simple, such as *Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star* or something more challenging, such as Ke$h’a’s *Tik Tok*. You decide!

**Requirements**
- Song must have 4 verses
- Each verse must have 4 lines
- You must provide the name of the song you used

Journal Entry Directions
If song lyrics aren’t your thing, then you may choose to write about the Crusades. You will write in the perspective a Christian Crusader or a Muslim fighter. You could write about a battle, traveling, being homesick, being captured, anything!

**Requirements**
- Your writing must be 2 solid paragraphs
- Each paragraph should have 5 sentences
Crusades Journal Entry

2 solid paragraphs  _____/3
8-10 sentences total _____/3
Describes the Crusades _____/3
Presentation _____/1

Total _____/10

Crusades Journal Entry

2 solid paragraphs  _____/3
8-10 sentences total _____/3
Describes the Crusades _____/3
Presentation _____/1

Total _____/10

Crusades Journal Entry

2 solid paragraphs  _____/3
8-10 sentences total _____/3
Describes the Crusades _____/3
Presentation _____/1

Total _____/10
Crusades Music Lyrics Scroll

2 verses       _____/3
4 lines each (8 total)    _____/3
Described the Crusades      _____/3
Presentation                 _____/1

Total                    _____/10
The Crusades and Michael Jackson! *Beat It*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What Did You Notice while watching the video?</th>
<th>Michael Jackson’s <em>Beat It</em></th>
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1 - How does *Beat It* connect to our study on the Crusades?

***Hint*** Think about the title of the song and what you saw towards the end of the video.