



The Black Death Changed Britain Forever

KS2 HISTORY

KS3 HISTORY

Ages 10-14 ⌚ 3 min read

What Was the Black Death?

The **Black Death** was one of the worst disasters in human history. It was a terrible disease that spread across **Europe** and **Britain** during the **1340s and 1350s**. The disease killed around **75 million people worldwide**, and in Britain alone, it killed roughly **half the population**. People called it the "Black Death" because the disease caused blackish marks to appear on the skin of those who caught it.

Think of it like a computer virus that spreads so fast it crashes nearly every computer in the world before anyone can stop it.

How Did It Spread?

The **Black Death** was caused by bacteria carried by fleas living on rats. When rats came aboard trading ships from **Asia**, the infected fleas came too. People didn't understand how diseases spread back then, so the plague moved quickly from person to person through crowded towns and villages. Nobody had medicine to stop it, and doctors didn't know how to treat it.

Think of it like when one person in your classroom gets a cold and soon everyone catches it, but much, much worse.

How Did It Change Britain?

The **Black Death** completely changed **British society**. With so many people dead, there weren't enough workers to farm the land or build things. This meant workers became much more valuable and could demand higher wages. Many people also moved from the countryside to towns looking for better jobs.

The **feudal system**—where peasants worked for lords—began to break down. Peasants had more power because employers desperately needed them. This gave ordinary people more freedom than they'd ever had before. Some rebelled against unfair treatment, leading to the **Peasants' Revolt in 1381**.

Think of it like when your friends stop wanting to do what you say because they have better things to do—you lose your power over them.

Learning from History

The **Black Death** teaches us how a single disease can shake an entire society. It shows why understanding how diseases spread is so important. Modern science and medicine mean we're much better prepared for pandemics today, but the **Black Death** remains a powerful reminder of nature's power and why we need to take health seriously.