

# A Distant Mirror Reading Guide

*A Distant Mirror* is the story of western Europe in the 14<sup>th</sup> Century viewed largely from the perspective of a French nobleman, Enguerrand de Coucy VII, who lived from 1340 to 1397. During de Coucy's lifetime Europeans experienced the Hundred Years War, the Black Death, a series of papal wars in Italy, the Great Schism that set up two rival popes, and the early developments of the greatest creative period in European history—the Renaissance. These events kept the continent in continual turmoil and disrupted or challenged the political, economic, military, social, religious, cultural, and intellectual lives of western Europeans. If you do not fully understand some of the narrative, do not get discouraged. Focus on the “strange and great perils and adversities” that struck Europe in the 14<sup>th</sup> Century: plague, war, taxes, brigandage, bad government, insurrection, and schism in the Church (xiv). Note how the events developed and what changes they produced in the lives of people in all socio-economic groups. Look at the photographs to see how they complement or amplify the text. Don't get bogged down deciphering spelling such as “grete and ferse batayle” (261); “cryinge theyre cryes” (261); and “wronge their handes and tare their heeres . . . parell of dethe” (262). These examples illustrate the value of standardized spelling—and demonstrate why I expect students to use correct spelling!

Make notes about the specific topics in each chapter **and collect information cumulatively** about how the events/developments affected the lives and beliefs/attitudes of various groups: peasants, “middle class”, aristocrats, rulers, churchmen/-women, women, children, minorities (Jews, Muslims, “foreigners”), and military personnel, practices, & ideas. *Evaluate how these groups were affected: how they changed, why they changed, which group gained the most, lost the most, etc. What—if anything—did all people have in common? Also consider whether any of the situations or personalities are similar to any contemporary situations or persons.*

Notice the dynastic change in France from the Capetians to the Valois rulers. In 1328, the Capetian monarch Charles IV (brother of Queen Isabella of England—wife of Edward II, mother of Edward III) died without an heir. The throne went to his first cousin Philip of Valois, who became King Philip VI in 1328. Philip VI inaugurated the Valois dynasty which ruled France until 1594. Beginning with Edward III, kings of England claimed the throne of France based on their descent from a French Capetian princess (Isabella, wife of Edward II), even though centuries-old French custom prohibited a woman from holding the throne of France or passing it to her heirs. England's challenge to the Valois claim to the French throne was a major factor in the 100 Years War.

## FOREWARD (xiii-xx)

Problems historians face when studying and writing about the past (Do these problems also apply to other historical eras, such as “Classical Athens”, “Han China”, or “Middle Kingdom Egypt”?)  
Why historians have contradictory opinions about historical events and people  
The roles that Christianity and chivalry played in the lives of Europeans in the 14<sup>th</sup> Century

## CHAPTER 1 (3-23)

How Europeans viewed the material world, the spiritual world, and the Church  
The impact of the Crusades  
The 11-12<sup>th</sup>-century renaissance  
France: Louis IX / king's justice; functions of the 3 estates  
Taxation

## CHAPTER 2 (24-48)

Climate problems: what kind of problems, what effects  
Evils in the Church & protests against evils, William of Ockham, Marsilius of Padua  
Role of Christianity and the Church in people's beliefs and lifestyle, anti-materialist views  
Economic outlook, usury, rich vs. poor  
Anti-Semitism  
Inquisition  
Demise of the Capetian dynasty  
Origins of the 100 Years War

## CHAPTER 3 (49-69)

Marriage arrangements; importance of “love”, money, and dynastic alliances in marriage  
Infant and childhood mortality, attitudes about children  
Personal grooming and hygiene

Time, calendar, clock, science  
Literature and learning  
Chivalry, "courtly love", monogamy, adultery

#### **CHAPTER 4 (70-91)**

100 years War: new weapons (long bow, gun), tactics, expectations of participants, differing attitudes of French and English knights towards commoners in the armies  
Financing the war, money economy  
English economic ties to Flanders, wool trade  
Battle of Crécy (Aug. 26, 1346), Calais

#### **CHAPTER 5 (92-125)**

Short-term and long-term effects of the Black Death, 2 types of infection  
Why Italy was hit hardest, why poor suffered the most, how death of sheep affected England  
Medicine allied with astrology, Arab influence, "causes" (as interpreted then)  
Anti-Semitic response/ideology  
Results (117 ff): matrimony, morals, education, taxes, peasants, inflation, plenary indulgences  
Religion: "Theory of Indulgences", conditions in Rome, anti-clericalism  
Art, depiction of "Death"

#### **CHAPTER 6 (134-35)**

Violence in the 14<sup>th</sup> century

#### **CHAPTER 7**

**158-161** Paris in 1356  
**172-176** Peasants in France

#### **CHAPTER 9**

**208-219** Women, sex, marriage, Church's view of women

#### **CHAPTER 11 (232-245)**

Free peasants, advantages, buying labor  
Lifestyle of nobles in France and Italy --Galeazzo and Bernabò Visconti – their lifestyle, character, daughter's marriage to Lionel, son of Edward III

#### **CHAPTER 12**

**249-252** Urban V's attempt to return papacy to Rome  
**259-262** Jews, Black Death, dancing mania, witchcraft  
**263-264** Massacre at Limoges, French hatred of the English  
**266-269** John of Gaunt's march to Aquitaine, Charles V's tactics, French plunder people they had "liberated" (**are these like any current military / political situation?**)

*Events in the second phase of the 100 Years War: In 1371, England lost all the French lands it had gained in 1347-49. The "Black Prince", the oldest son of King Edward III of England, left France and returned to England, aged 38 and invalided by dysentery and gout. He died in England six years later. His brother, John of Gaunt, led English forces on a disastrous march from Calais to Aquitaine in the summer of 1373. The next year France and England signed a one-year truce.*

## 14<sup>TH</sup> – 15<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY KINGS OF ENGLAND

Monarch	dates of reign	wife	comments
Henry III	1216-1272	Eleanor of Provence	son of King John (a much-hated monarch)
Edward I	1272-1307	Eleanor princess of Castile	defeated Wm Wallace/Braveheart
Edward II	1307-1327	Isabella of France (dtr. of Philip IV)	<i>Queen &amp; her lover deposed &amp; murdered Ed II; made 14-year-old Ed III king.</i>
Edward III	1327-1377	Philippa of Hainault	In 1330 he avenged his father's murder -- executed his mother's lover & put his mother in perpetual house arrest.

### **Children of Edward III & Philippa (3 others died before 1368)**

Edward	Lionel	John of Gaunt	Edmund	Thomas
(Black Prince) d. 1376	Duke of Clarence d. 1368	Duke of Lancaster d. 1399	Earl of Cambridge Duke of York d. 1402	Earl of Buckingham Duke of Gloucester d. 1397
Richard II 1377-1399		Henry IV 1399-1413 Henry V 1413-1422 Henry VI 1422-1461		

### **CHAPTER 14 (284-305)**

Turmoil and lawlessness (any comparison to current situations in the U.S.?)

Free peasants, legend of Robin Hood

Black death returns, **John Wyclif**, Lollardy, anti-clericalism—Why does John of Gaunt support Wyclif?

Role of John of Gaunt, Sir Peter de la Mare, Parliament, election of Commons, impeachment devised

Death of the Black Prince, Chaucer, death of Edward III, ascension of Richard II (ten years old)

#### **Developing sense of “nation” in France**

Renewal of 100 Years War, French depredations in Southern England, “destruction and terror”, attitude of English nobles about the fate of the towns/people attacked

### **CHAPTER 15**

**306-311** Holy roman Emperor visit France—not his education, lavish lifestyle and entertainments

**311-314** Drama, sex, violence

**315-319** Religious dissent and sorcery become “evil”, women and sorcery, torture to secure convictions, new images and ideas about the “Devil”

### **CHAPTER 16 (320-339)**

Anti-papal and anti-clerical sentiments

Robert of Geneva—note his role early and later in the chapter

Massacre at Cesena, Feb.3--5, 1377—who did it, why, what results

#### **Catherine of Siena, Pope Gregory XI**

Election of Pope Urban VI, his reforms, conflict that follows

Election of Pope Clement VII (Robert of Geneva)

**Schism** -- why it happened, its effects on people's thoughts and lives. Whom does Tuchman blame?

On 336 Charles V is described as overestimating “his capacity to control events”. Does he remind you of any ruler or leader in today's world?

Role of propaganda in the Great Schism (is propaganda still used to lead or mislead?)

**Wyclif** comes to turning point—his short-term and long-term impact and fate

**WHAT IDEAS, ACTIONS, ATTITUDES, ETC. ARE EVIDENT THAT WOULD FINALLY PROVOKE SOME EUROPEANS TO THROW OFF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH AND THE PAPACY IN THE PROTESTANT REFORMATION?**

# *A Distant Mirror* ▪ Reading Assignment Instructions

CONSULT THE READING GUIDE FOR THE SPECIFIC CHAPTERS & PAGES TO READ.

- Do not copy terms or passages from the text, even if you use quotation marks. If you cannot explain or express information or ideas in your own words, then you don't understand the material.
- Write answers on the printed sheet using dark blue or black ink. You do not have to write complete sentences, but you must express complete thoughts--give adequate information to demonstrate that you know what a term (event, etc.) means! **Include pertinent information such as location and time. When describing a large group, such as "peasants", specify whether your response applies to all, some, most, etc.**
- When an item says "give an example", cite a specific event, situation, etc.—not a generalization.
- For items pertaining to particular groups, give responses that apply **only** to that group.
- If a person's name includes a **number**, you must include the number. It may help if you keep a brief index of people/numbers (Charles V) for referral.
- Read the text carefully. Be sure you understand the location, time, people, and other aspects of the story.
- Give the chapter & page number for each response in this format: 1: 12. I will deduct one-half point for each incorrect page citation. Write the page citations following your text, not in the left-hand margin.
- Leave a 1-inch margin on both sides for grader's comments.
- Write legibly and neatly. Do not turn in work that looks like it was done by a 1<sup>st</sup>-grader. You may need to write the response on another sheet of paper before filling it in on the assignment sheet.
- Correct spelling is required. Use the text or a dictionary to verify the correct spelling or meaning of words. Incorrect spelling will be penalized up to 15% of the score.
- STAPLE LOOSE PAGES AND WRITE YOUR NAME ON BOTH PAGES.

SCORE \_\_\_\_\_

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

*A Distant Mirror* ▪ Reading Assignment ▪ PART I

Read Foreward -- Chapter 4. Part I is worth 50 points plus bonus points—each item is 3 points.  
Select responses from the entire reading for Part I.

I. Identify 2 “hazards” or difficulties that historians encounter when researching or writing history.

1.

2.

II. Laymen’s dissatisfaction with (or outright opposition to) the Church and its officials—pope, priests, etc. —is called “anti-clericalism”. Cite 3 reasons for anti-clericalism. *Be sure you know who “laymen” are.*

1.

2.

3.

4. BONUS

III. Cite 2 attributes (characteristics, habits, attitudes, etc.) of the nobility.

1.

2.

3. BONUS

IV. Identify the city & country where Philip IV established the papacy.

V. Identify the pope who died shortly after being arrested by agents of Philip IV.

**VI.** Identify the king of England who initiated the 100–Years War.

**VII.** Describe 2 aspects of childhood / child-rearing in the 14<sup>th</sup> Century. Specify any particular social/economic group to whom this applies.

1.

2.

**3. BONUS**

**VIII.** Identify an invention / technology that was introduced in the 14<sup>th</sup> Century, telling how it was used and why it was important.

2<sup>nd</sup> invention: BONUS

**IX.** What was man's primary goal in the 14<sup>th</sup> Century? *See p. 59*

**X.** Identify a superstition held by people in the 14<sup>th</sup> Century (specify the "people" –peasants, noble, priests, all people, etc.).

**XI.** Identify a book read by people in the 14<sup>th</sup> Century.

SCORE \_\_\_\_\_ NAME \_\_\_\_\_

*A Distant Mirror* ▪ Reading Assignment ▪ **PART II**

**Read Chapter 5 & remainder of designated text (see Reading Guide for specific selections). Part II is worth 50 points plus bonus points—each item is 3 points. Select responses from the entire reading for Part II.**

I. Describe a symptom of the “Black Death”.

II. Describe 3 results/consequences of the “Black Death”. (political, economic, social, etc.)

1.

2.

3.

4. BONUS

III. Cite an example of population decline resulting from the “Black Death”.

1.

2. BONUS

IV. Identify a medical treatments/skill used in the 14<sup>th</sup> Century and tell how it was used.

1.

2. BONUS

V. Identify the person who required Jews to wear a badge of identification--tell when.

VI. What was the “Truce of God”?

**VII.** Identify 2 ways Christians expressed anti-Semitism in the 14<sup>th</sup> Century.

1.

2.

**VIII.** Cite 2 attributes (characteristics, habits, attitudes, conditions) of peasants.

1.

2.

3. BONUS

**IX.** Explain a 14<sup>th</sup>-Century attitude about sex or violence.

**X.** Cite an example of how the French or the English caused long-lived hatred of the other.

**XI.** Identify the woman who tried to resolve the “Great Schism”?

**XII.** Who was John Wyclif and why was he important? 6 points