**Effects of the Crusades**

***Directions: Please highlight in 1 color the positive effects of the crusades, and highlight in another color the negative effects of the crusades.***

The Crusades kept all Europe in a tumult for two centuries, and directly and indirectly cost Christendom several millions of lives (from 2,000,000 to 6,000,000 according to different estimates), besides incalculable expenditures in treasure and suffering. They were, moreover, attended by all the disorder, license, and crime with which war is always accompanied. On the other hand, the Holy Wars were productive indirectly of so much and lasting good that they form a most important factor in the history of the progress of civilization. The effects of the crusades influenced:

* The role, wealth and power of the Catholic Church
* Political effects
* Effects of the Crusades on Commerce
* Effects of the Crusades on Feudalism
* Social development
* Intellectual development
* Social Effects of the Crusades
* Effects of the Crusades - Intellectual Development
* Effects of the Crusades - Material Development
* Effects of the Crusades - Voyages of Discovery

**Effects of the Crusades on the Catholic Church**   
The Crusades contributed to increase the wealth of the Church and the power of the Papacy. Thus the prominent part which the Popes took in the enterprises naturally fostered their authority and influence, by placing in their hands, the armies and resources of Christendom, and accustoming the people to look to them as guides and leaders.

As to the wealth of the churches and monasteries, this was augmented enormously by the sale to them, often for a mere fraction of their actual value, of the estates of those preparing for the expeditions, or by the out and out gift of the lands of such in return for prayers and pious benedictions.

Thousands of the crusaders, returning broken in spirits and in health, sought an asylum in cloistral retreats, and endowed the establishments that they entered with all their worldly goods

Besides all this, the stream of the ordinary gifts of piety was swollen by the extraordinary fervor of religious enthusiasm which characterized the period into enormous proportions. In all these ways, the power of the Papacy and the wealth of the Church were vastly augmented.

**Effects of the Crusades on Commerce**   
One of the most important effects of the crusades was on commerce. They created a constant demand for the transportation of men and supplies, encouraged ship-building, and extended the market for eastern wares in Europe. The products of Damascus, Mosul, Alexandria, Cairo, and other great cities were carried across the Mediterranean to the Italian seaports, whence they found their way into all European lands. The elegance of the Orient, with its silks, tapestries, precious stones, perfumes, spices, pearls, and ivory, was so enchanting that an enthusiastic crusader called it "the vestibule of Paradise."

**Effects of the Crusades on Feudalism**  
The crusades could not fail to affect in many ways the life of western Europe. For instance, they helped to undermine feudalism. Thousands of barons and knights mortgaged or sold their lands in order to raise money for a crusading expedition. Thousands more perished in Syria and their estates, through failure of heirs, reverted to the crown. Moreover, private warfare, which was rife during the Middle Ages, also tended to die out with the departure for the Holy Land of so many turbulent feudal lords. Their decline in both numbers and influence, and the corresponding growth of the royal authority, may best be traced in the changes that came about in France, the original home of the crusading movement.

**Political Effects of the Crusades**  
As to the political effects of the Crusades, they helped to break down the power of the feudal aristocracy, and to give prominence to the kings and the people.

Many of the nobles who set out on the expeditions never returned, and their estates, through failure of heirs, escheated to the Crown; while many more wasted their fortunes in meeting the expenses of their undertaking.

At the same time, the cities also gained many political advantages at the expense of the crusading barons and princes. Ready money in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries was largely in the hands of the burgher class, and in return for the contributions and loans they made to their overlords, or suzerains, they received charters conferring special and valuable privileges.

And the other political effects of the Crusades was that in checking the advance of the Turks the fall of Constantinople was postponed for three centuries or more. This gave the early Christian civilization of Germany time to acquire sufficient strength to roll back the returning tide of Mohammedan invasion when it broke upon Europe in the fifteenth century.

**Social Effects of the Crusades**  
The Social effects of the Crusades upon the social life of the Western nations were marked and important. The Crusades afforded an opportunity for romantic adventure. The Crusades were therefore one of the principal fostering influences of Chivalry. Contact with the culture of the East provided a general refining influence.

**Effects of the Crusades - Intellectual Development**The influence of the Crusades upon the intellectual development of Europe can hardly be overestimated. Above all, they liberalized the minds of the crusaders. The East at the time of the Middle Ages surpassed the West in civilization. The crusaders enjoyed the advantages which come from travel in strange lands and among unfamiliar peoples. They went out from their castles or villages to see great cities, marble palaces, superb dresses, and elegant manners; they returned with finer tastes, broader ideas, and wider sympathies. The crusades opened up a new world. Furthermore, the knowledge of the science and learning of the East gained by the crusaders through their expeditions, greatly stimulated the Latin intellect, and helped to awaken in Western Europe that mental activity which resulted finally in the great intellectual outburst known as the Revival of Learning and the period of the Renaissance.

**Effects of the Crusades - Material Development**  
Among the effects of the Holy Wars upon the material development of Europe must be mentioned the spur they gave to commercial enterprise, especially to the trade and commerce of the Italian cities.

During this period, Venice, Pisa, and Genoa acquired great wealth and reputation through the fostering of their trade by the needs of the crusaders, and the opening up of the East. The Mediterranean was whitened with the sails of their transport ships, which were constantly plying between the various ports of Europe and the towns of the Syrian coast.

In addition to the effects of the crusades on material development various arts, manufactures, and inventions before unknown in Europe, were introduced from Asia. This enrichment of the civilization of the West with the "spoils of the East" can be seen in the artefacts displayed in modern European museums.

**Effects of the Crusades - Voyages of Discovery**  
Finally, the incentive given to geographical discovery led various travellers, such as the celebrated Italian, [Marco Polo](http://www.lordsandladies.org/marco-polo.htm), and the scarcely less noted Englishman, Sir John Mandeville, to explore the most remote countries of Asia. Even that spirit of maritime enterprise and adventure which rendered illustrious the fifteenth century, inspiring the voyages of Columbus, Vasco de Gama, and Magellan, may be traced back to that lively interest in geographical matters awakened by the expeditions of the crusaders