

Knowledge Organiser - Topic One: Medieval Medicine 1250-1500

Medieval Britain

1	Medieval Britain is the period between 1250-1500 also known as the 13 th -16 th century. It is also known as the Middle Ages.
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Key Events

2	1123 – Britain's first hospital, St. Bartholomews was set up in London
3	1348-49 – The Black Death affects England, kills 40% of population.
4	1350 – Average life expectancy is 35 years of age
5	1388 – Parliament passes the first law requiring streets and rivers to be kept clean by the people.
6	1400 – There were 500 hospitals in Britain

Key Concepts

6. The Medieval Church	The official religion of Britain was Roman Catholic and the church was led by the Archbishop of Canterbury, who was answerable to the Pope in Rome. Ideas and power was dominated by the Church, they controlled education and the church played a central part in daily life.
7. The Four Humours	First suggested by Greek doctor Hippocrates . He believed the body was made up of Four Humours, Black Bile, Yellow Bile, Blood and Phlegm . These humours linked to the four elements and seasons. Hippocrates believed if these humours became unbalanced you would get ill, so you would need to rebalance the four. Galen , a Greek doctor working in Rome, continued the Four Humours Theory and added his own ideas. His ' Theory of Opposites ' to heal illness suggested using opposites to cure the humours, e.g. using hot to cure cold.
8. Medieval Power	The emphasis in Medieval Britain was on authority , the King had absolute power but the Church has considerable control. People followed authority and would not question the views of King/Church at risk to their own lives.

Key Words

9.	Superstition	A belief, not based on knowledge, but in the supernatural like God, witchcraft or astrology.
10.	Monastery	A building where monks live, eat and pray
11.	Miasma	'Bad air' which was blamed for spreading disease
12.	Astrology	Study of the planets and its affect on humans
13.	Urine Chart	Used human urine to help diagnose an illness
14.	Amulet	A charm that brought 'protection' from disease
15.	Purging	To rid the body of a 'excess' like blood or vomit
16.	Leeching	The use of leeches for drawing blood from patients
17.	Cupping	Using glass cups to draw blood to the surface
18.	Pilgrimage	A journey to a religious shrine and relics to show your love of God and to cure an illness
19	Apothecary	A medieval pharmacists or chemist
20.	Physician	A male medically trained doctor
21.	Barber Surgeon	Untrained surgeon, who practiced basic surgery
22.	Wisewoman	A female healer, who used magic or herbal remedies to cure illnesses.
23.	Vademecum	A medieval 'medical' book carried by doctors
24.	Herbal Remedy	Medicine made from plants with natural cures
25.	Trepanning	Cutting hole in the skull
26.	Rakers	Men hired to clean the streets of muck
27.	Epidemic	A widespread outbreak of a disease
28.	Black Death	A term to describe the bubonic plague
29.	Flagellant	People who whipped themselves to show god they repented their sins and wanted mercy.
30.	Pestilence	A fatal epidemic disease, e.g. the Black Death