

## A Pilgrimage during the time of the Black Plague

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Imagine that YOU are traveling to a variety of towns and villages on a pilgrimage or a trading voyage. It is the time of the **Pestis Puerorum** a form of the Black Plague which is particularly virulent among children and young people, during the mid 1300's. It is the second great plague to invade Europe. This Plague was so deadly that it took until the 1800s before the population again rose to the numbers before the Plague, about 500 years!!

### The rules of the journey:

\* You will be a traveler on one of 6 journeys to start, either a Pilgrimage mostly by land or as a trader, mostly by sea. The plague was spread by these trading and pilgrim routes, as travelers went from town to town.

\* When you visit a town or village, you will roll ONE DIE to see **how many nights** you will spend in that particular place. Several of the villages will have just begun to show evidence of the plague. Draw out of the bag (representing the nights lodging & meals) **as many beans as the nights you are staying**. If you get a bean that is **red color**, you have contracted the **Plague** bacterium, which was a bacillus type bacteria. If you get a bean which is not a solid color but is mottled/pinto type, you have contracted **Cholera** from the water. Only a few towns are having outbreaks of Cholera, mostly those which are by rivers, but it is also very deadly.

\* **If you DON'T contract either the plague or cholera**, continue on your journey after you have drawn your beans. You can also choose to stay at this town for one more role if you wish. Replace the beans you have drawn into the container for the next traveler. You have a map. **Mark your journey on the map and list how many days you spent in each location.** \* **If you DO contract the plague or cholera** before you continue to the next town, you need to: 1) get a skull to tape on yourself 2) mark on your map where you got the plague 3) put back all the beans into the bag 4) go to the next two towns. **DON'T** draw out any beans in this town. At the first town roll the die. If you roll a 1,2,3 get ONE plague or cholera bean from the teacher and put it into the bag. If you roll 4,5,6 get TWO plague or cholera beans from the teacher and put them into that town's bag. Go on to the second town. Get a skull to put onto the bag of the second town, if there isn't already one on that bag. This represents that you're likely to die in this second town.

**Note:** to understand what is happening, you can probably see that you will be a carrier of the plague or cholera and will be infecting others who come along after you. Historically, towns that carried the plague were marked for the disease, just like you've marked the bag. After visiting 2 towns after you have first contracted the plague, stop. At this point you have died, unless you can do the following: roll the die twice only; if and only if you roll two ones in a row, you have recovered and can go on your way. (it was very rare, but some people actually recovered from the plague. Some of these were then immune to the next plague, though not always). Otherwise you have died. Roll the dice in front of the teacher to have it count. Put a **red dot** on your own map where you died, and on the class map (green dot for cholera). Also put a red dot on the graph to show how many towns you were able to visit before dying.

## **Writing Postcards About Your Journey:**

Note: Postcard (or letter) writing may have begun around this time, helped by the caring scribes of the monasteries along the pilgrimage routes.

\* After you have been traveling through a each new country for a while, and before you die, think of a "postcard" you can write back to your home, talking about your journey. If you contracted plague or there are plague warnings, note these in the postcard. Use the information sheets for more information on the town you have chosen. After the game is over, send a postcard back to your home town telling about your journey, by turning it in to the teacher (or sharing in a discussion).

\* **If you die early on your journey**, (or finish your journey plague free), you can start over again and make another journey, trying another starting location, or going back home the way you came. You should first write some notes about your first trip in your journal. Keep all your data, since we will be using it to look at where people contracted the plague or cholera.

**Bon Voyage~!**

## **Black Plague: Teacher Set-up**

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### **Pre-Simulation**

Supplies: 24 paper bags; White beans (200 per bag); Red Beans (One Bag---should be as close to the size of the white beans as possible); Pinto Beans (One bag---white bean size); Large Map, or better, 3 European maps, divided into regions (Spain, Port, Algeria--Italy, France, Med--France, England, Netherlands); Graphs; colored sticky dots for graphing.

Run off enough skulls (class set), and place labels for towns on bags. Have students count out 200 white beans and place into bags. One idea is to have them count out 200, then use a scale to estimate 200 beans for one or two other bags in groups. A discussion about the pros and cons of this method would be worthwhile.

Add the proper number of red (Plague) beans to those bags which will have them (see key); likewise for pinto beans, add \*one\* pinto (Cholera) to \*every bag\* then put 4 more in the bag for Brussels, 2 more in Rotterdam. Students probably shouldn't know how many Plague beans are in the bags.

### **Plague Beans Key:**

The following \*start\* with 5 red beans:

Bastia, Rome, Marsala

The Following \*start\* with 8 red beans:

Cagliari, Tunis

The Following \*start\* with 2 red beans:

Algiers, Marseille, Venice, Genoa

The Following have 1 red bean:

Barcelona, Lisbon

### **Ideas For Enrichment**

Graphing various relationships can be an integral part of the simulation, but can also be used as an enrichment.

Questions can be raised before the lesson:

- 1. Which type of trip might be more dangerous & why?
- 2. What is the average number of days or towns a person will be traveling before becoming infected.
- 3. Is it better to spend more time in a less number of towns or be able to travel to many towns over a short time?
- 4. How could these ideas, questions be graphed? What are some other possibilities?

In this way students could set up graphs ahead of time. Different colored dots could represent whether they died of the plague, cholera, or survived the entire trip. Different colors could also represent voyages versus pilgrimages.

### **Other**

In debriefing this activity, a discussion concerning how students might change the rules is appropriate. Is this a "fair" game. If not how would they change the rules to make it more real or fairer? Other enrichment can be to research the towns that are being visited, and look for special artistic highlights for postcard writing/pictures.

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**Name:**

**Pilgrimage #1:**

**Liverpool, England to Rome, Italy**

**(via the Channel, Netherlands and overland)**

**Date: June, 1349 Anno Domini**

**LOG BOOK OF YOUR JOURNEY**

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**Town/\*\*\*\*\*/Number of Nights Sojourn/Comments**

**First Town To Visit: Bristol, England**

- **London**
- **Rotterdam, (Neth)**
- **Brussels**
- **Dijon**
- **Lyon**
- **Marseille**
- **Bastia (Corsica, Fr)**
- **Genoa (It)**
- **Milan (you try to go here but it has been closed to all travelers; historically, Milan was one of the few cities not plague inflected)**
- **Siena**
- **Florence**
- **Rome**

**Number of days on your pilgrimage:**

**Comments:**

**Visit a town or village**

1. Roll ONE DIE to see how many nights you will spend in that particular place
2. Draw out of the bag as many beans as the nights you are staying.
  - A. White bean = no illness
  - B. Red bean = Plague
  - C. Pinto bean = Cholera
3. **If you DON'T contract either the plague or cholera**, continue on your journey OR stay at this town for one more role if you wish.
  - A. Put all beans back in the bag
  - B. Replace the beans you have drawn into the container for the next traveler.
  - C. **Mark your journey on the map and list how many days you spent in each location in your Log Book.**
3. **If you DO contract the plague or cholera**
  - A. get a skull to tape on yourself
  - B. mark on your map where you got the plague
  - C. put back all the beans into the bag
  - D. go to the next two towns. DON'T draw out any beans in this town.
  - E. At the first town roll the die.
    - 1,2,3 = **ONE plague or cholera bean from the teacher and put it into the bag.**
    - 4,5,6 = **TWO plague or cholera beans from the teacher and put them into the bag.**
  - F. Go on to the second town. Get a skull to put onto the bag of the second town

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**Trade Voyage #1:**

**Name:**

**Florence, Italy to Liverpool, England  
(via boat, through the Straits of Gibraltar)**

**Date: June, 1349 Anno Domini**

**LOG BOOK OF YOUR JOURNEY**

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**Town\*\*\*\*\*Number of Nights Sojourn\*\*\*\*\*Comments**

**First Town To Visit: Venice**

- Marsala (Sicily, Italy)
- Tunis (Tunisia)
- Cagliari (Sardinia, It.)
- Rome
- Genoa
- Algiers (Algeria)
- Barcelona (Sp.)
- Lisbon (Port)
- Cherbourg (Fr.)
- Rotterdam (Neth.)
- London (Eng.)
- Maidstone
- Bristol
- Liverpool

**Number of days on your Trading Voyage:**

**Comments:**

**Visit a town or village**

4. Roll ONE DIE to see how many nights you will spend in that particular place
5. Draw out of the bag as many beans as the nights you are staying.
  - A. White bean = no illness
  - B. Red bean = Plague
  - C. Pinto bean = Cholera
6. **If you DON'T contract either the plague or cholera**, continue on your journey OR stay at this town for one more role if you wish.
  - A. Put all beans back in the bag
  - B. Replace the beans you have drawn into the container for the next traveler.
  - C. **Mark your journey on the map and list how many days you spent in each location in your Log Book.**
3. **If you DO contract the plague or cholera**
  - A. get a skull to tape on yourself
  - B. mark on your map where you got the plague
  - C. put back all the beans into the bag
  - D. go to the next two towns. DON'T draw out any beans in this town.
  - E. At the first town roll the die.
    - 1,2,3 = **ONE plague or cholera bean from the teacher and put it into the bag.**
    - 4,5,6 = **TWO plague or cholera beans from the teacher and put them into the bag.**
  - F. Go on to the second town. Get a skull to put onto the bag of the second town

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**Pilgrimage #2:**

**Name:**

**Dijon, France to Venice, Italy**  
**(via boat through the Straits of Gibraltar)**

**Date: June, 1349 Anno Domini**

**LOG BOOK OF YOUR JOURNEY**

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**Town\*\*\*\*\*Number of Nights Sojourn\*\*\*\*\*Comments**

**First Town To Visit: Paris, France**

- Calais
- Cherbourg
- Lisbon (Port.)
- Algiers (Algeria)
- Tunis (Tunisia)
- Cagliari (Sardinia, It.)
- Marsala (Sicily, It.)
- Rome
- Genoa
- Siena
- Milan (you try to go here but the city is closed to travelers; historically Milan was one of the few Italian cities not infected by the plague)
- Florence
- Venice

**Number of days on your pilgrimage:**

**Comments:**

**Visit a town or village**

7. Roll ONE DIE to see how many nights you will spend in that particular place
8. Draw out of the bag as many beans as the nights you are staying.
  - A. White bean = no illness
  - B. Red bean = Plague
  - C. Pinto bean = Cholera
9. **If you DON'T contract either the plague or cholera**, continue on your journey OR stay at this town for one more role if you wish.
  - A. Put all beans back in the bag
  - B. Replace the beans you have drawn into the container for the next traveler.
  - C. **Mark your journey on the map and list how many days you spent in each location in your Log Book.**
3. **If you DO contract the plague or cholera**
  - A. get a skull to tape on yourself
  - B. mark on your map where you got the plague
  - C. put back all the beans into the bag
  - D. go to the next two towns. DON'T draw out any beans in this town.
  - E. At the first town roll the die.
    - 1,2,3 = ONE plague or cholera bean from the teacher and put it into the bag.
    - 4,5,6 = TWO plague or cholera beans from the teacher and put them into the bag.
  - F. Go on to the second town. Get a skull to put onto the bag of the second town

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**Trade Voyage #2:**

**Name:**

**Milan, Italy to Rotterdam, Neth.**  
(via boat through the Straits of Gibraltar)

**Date: June, 1349 Anno Domini**

**LOG BOOK OF YOUR JOURNEY**

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**Town\*\*\*\*\*Number of Nights Sojourn\*\*\*\*\*Comments**

**First Town To Visit: Genoa (It.)**

- **Rome (It.)**
- **Marsala (Sicily, It)**
- **Tunis (Tunisia)**
- **Cagliari (Sardinia, It.)**
- **Algiers (Algeria)**
- **Barcelona (Sp)**
- **Lisbon (Port)**
- **Cherbourg (Fr.)**
- **Calais (Fr)**
- **Maidstone (Eng.)**
- **London (Eng.)**
- **Rotterdam (Neth.)**

**Number of days on your Trading Voyage:**

**Comments:**

**Visit a town or village**

10. Roll ONE DIE to see how many nights you will spend in that particular place

11. Draw out of the bag as many beans as the nights you are staying.

- A. White bean = no illness
- B. Red bean = Plague
- C. Pinto bean = Cholera

12. **If you DON'T contract either the plague or cholera**, continue on your journey OR stay at this town for one more role if you wish.

- A. Put all beans back in the bag
- B. Replace the beans you have drawn into the container for the next traveler.
- C. **Mark your journey on the map and list how many days you spent in each location in your Log Book.**

3. **If you DO contract the plague or cholera**

- A. get a skull to tape on yourself
- B. mark on your map where you got the plague
- C. put back all the beans into the bag
- D. go to the next two towns. DON'T draw out any beans in this town.
- E. At the first town roll the die.
  - 1,2,3 = **ONE plague or cholera bean from the teacher and put it into the bag.**
  - 4,5,6 = **TWO plague or cholera beans from the teacher and put them into the bag.**
- F. Go on to the second town. Get a skull to put onto the bag of the second town

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### Trading Voyage #3:

Name:

**Marseille, France to Rotterdam, Bistol & Return**

(via boat through the Straits of Gibraltar)

Date: June, 1349 Anno Domini

### LOG BOOK OF YOUR JOURNEY

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Town\*\*\*\*\*Number of Nights Sojourn\*\*\*\*\*Comments

**First Town To Visit: Barcelona (Spain)**

- **Algiers (Algeria)**
- **Lisbon (Portugal)**
- **Cherbourg (Fr)**
- **Calais**
- **Rotterdam (Neth)**
- **London (Eng)**
- **Maidstone**
- **Bristol**
- **Cherbourg (Fr)**
- **Algiers (Algeria)**
- **Cagliari (Sardinia, It)**
- **Bastia (Fr)**
- **Barcelona (Sp)**
- **Marseille (Fr)**

Number of days on your Trading Voyage:

Comments:

#### Visit a town or village

13. Roll ONE DIE to see how many nights you will spend in that particular place

14. Draw out of the bag as many beans as the nights you are staying.

- A. White bean = no illness
- B. Red bean = Plague
- C. Pinto bean = Cholera

15. **If you DON'T contract either the plague or cholera**, continue on your journey OR stay at this town for one more role if you wish.

- A. Put all beans back in the bag
- B. Replace the beans you have drawn into the container for the next traveler.
- C. **Mark your journey on the map and list how many days you spent in each location in your Log Book.**

3. **If you DO contract the plague or cholera**

- A. get a skull to tape on yourself
- B. mark on your map where you got the plague
- C. put back all the beans into the bag
- D. go to the next two towns. DON'T draw out any beans in this town.
- E. At the first town roll the die.

**1,2,3 = ONE plague or cholera bean from the teacher and put it into the bag.**

**4,5,6 = TWO plague or cholera beans from the teacher and put them into the bag.**

- F. Go on to the second town. Get a skull to put onto the bag of the second town



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**Pilgrimage #3:**

**Name:**

**Brussels, Neth. to Rome , Italy**

**(via Channel, through France & Italy)**

**Date: June, 1349 Anno Domini**

**LOG BOOK OF YOUR JOURNEY**

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**Town\*\*\*\*\*Number of Nights Sojourn\*\*\*\*\*Comments**

**First Town To Visit: Rotterdam (Neth.)**

- **London (Eng)**
- **Maidstone (Eng.)**
- **Bristol (Eng.)**
- **Cherbourg (Fr.)**
- **Calais (Fr)**
- **Paris**
- **Dijon**
- **Lyon**
- **Marseille**
- **Genoa (It.)**
- **Florence**
- **You try to go to Milan, but it is closed to all foreign travelers; historically, Milan was one of the few major Italian cities not infected with the plague**
- **Rome (It)**

**Number of days on your Pilgrimage:**

**Comments:**

**Visit a town or village**

16. Roll ONE DIE to see how many nights you will spend in that particular place

17. Draw out of the bag as many beans as the nights you are staying.

- A. White bean = no illness
- B. Red bean = Plague
- C. Pinto bean = Cholera

18. **If you DON'T contract either the plague or cholera**, continue on your journey OR stay at this town for one more role if you wish.

- A. Put all beans back in the bag
- B. Replace the beans you have drawn into the container for the next traveler.
- C. **Mark your journey on the map and list how many days you spent in each location in your Log Book.**

3. **If you DO contract the plague or cholera**

- A. get a skull to tape on yourself
- B. mark on your map where you got the plague
- C. put back all the beans into the bag
- D. go to the next two towns. DON'T draw out any beans in this town.
- E. At the first town roll the die.

**1,2,3 = ONE plague or cholera bean from the teacher and put it into the bag.**

**4,5,6 = TWO plague or cholera beans from the teacher and put them into the bag.**

- F. Go on to the second town. Get a skull to put onto the bag of the second town

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## **Town Key: Plague Simulation**

### **England**

- 1. Liverpool**
- 2. Bristol**
- 3. London**
- 4. Maidstone**

### **Netherlands**

- 5. Rotterdam**
- 6. Brussels**

### **France**

- 7. Calais**
- 8. Cherbourg**
- 9. Paris**
- 10. Dijon**
- 11. Lyon**
- 12. Marseilles**
- 13. Bastia (Corsica)**

### **Italy**

- 14. Genoa**
- 15. Venice**
- 16. Siena**
- 17. Florence**
- 18. Rome**
- 19. Cagliari (Sardinia)**
- 20. Marsala (Sicily)**

### **Tunisia, Algeria, Spain & Portugal**

- 21. Tunis (Tun)**
- 22. Algiers (Algeria)**
- 23. Barcelona (Sp)**
- 24. Lisbon (Port)**

The Black Death: Bubonic Plague (Source: <http://www.themiddleages.net/plague.html>)

Note – the exact same text is available on many websites and I have not identified the original source.

In the early 1330s an outbreak of deadly bubonic plague occurred in China. Plague mainly affects rodents, but fleas can transmit the disease to people. Once people are infected, they infect others very rapidly. Plague causes fever and a painful swelling of the lymph glands called buboes, which is how it gets its name. The disease also causes spots on the skin that are red at first and then turn black.

Since China was one of the busiest of the world's trading nations, it was only a matter of time before the outbreak of plague in China spread to western Asia and Europe. In October of 1347, several Italian merchant ships returned from a trip to the Black Sea, one of the key links in trade with China. When the ships docked in Sicily, many of those on board were already dying of plague. Within days the disease spread to the city and the surrounding countryside. An eyewitness tells what happened:

"Realizing what a deadly disaster had come to them, the people quickly drove the Italians from their city. But the disease remained, and soon death was everywhere. Fathers abandoned their sick sons. Lawyers refused to come and make out wills for the dying. Friars and nuns were left to care for the sick, and monasteries and convents were soon deserted, as they were stricken, too. Bodies were left in empty houses, and there was no one to give them a Christian burial." The disease struck and killed people with terrible speed. The Italian writer Boccaccio said its victims often "ate lunch with their friends and dinner with their ancestors in paradise." By the following August, the plague had spread as far north as England, where people called it "The Black Death" because of the black spots it produced on the skin. A terrible killer was loose across Europe, and Medieval medicine had nothing to combat it.

In winter the disease seemed to disappear, but only because fleas--which were now helping to carry it from person to person--are dormant then. Each spring, the plague attacked again, killing new victims. After five years 25 million people were dead--**one-third of Europe's people**. Even when the worst was over, smaller outbreaks continued, not just for years, but for centuries. The survivors lived in constant fear of the plague's return, and the disease did not disappear until the 1600s.

Medieval society never recovered from the results of the plague. So many people had died that there were serious labor shortages all over Europe. This led workers to demand higher wages, but landlords refused those demands. By the end of the 1300s peasant revolts broke out in England, France, Belgium and Italy.

The disease took its toll on the church as well. People throughout Christendom had prayed devoutly for deliverance from the plague. Why hadn't those prayers been answered? A new period of political turmoil and philosophical questioning lay ahead.

## **DISASTER STRIKES**

Estimated population of Europe from 1000 to 1352.

- 1000 38 million
- 1100 48 million
- 1200 59 million
- 1300 70 million
- 1347 75 million
- 1352 50 million

25 million people died in just under five years between 1347 and 1352.

Here are some of the early symptoms of the disease: Swollen lymph glands under the arms and the throat. A red swelling with a ring on the neck (once thought to be the source of the children's song "Ring around the rosey!") internal bleeding, pneumonia and liquid in the lungs, soreness throughout the body, fever, followed by death.