

Unit 12: Organizing texts (4) Creating texts
Task: 2
Author: Erik van Evkelen, E12A
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The Feudal System

This system, which existed hundreds of years ago in Britain, was based on a four level hierarchy. These four levels were represented by The King, Tenants-in-Chief, Mesne Tenants and Knights.

The King who, theoretically, owned the whole country, was^{not} able to run it all by himself. In order to get all the tax and money from crop sales, he assembled a group of Tenants-in-Chief to whom he gave of large part of the country. These Tenants-in-Chief also weren't able to control their 'little kingdoms', so they hired servants, called Mesne Tenants. In their turn, these Mesne Tenants used the well known Knights to collect money and taxes from the farms (with force if necessary). The Knights were called 'Lords of the Manor' because they actually controlled one or more villages.

England was divided in many so-called Fiefs. The King gave away most of these Fiefs or Holdings, retaining only some as his 'demesne', usually around his castle. The given-away Fiefs were exchanged for promise of service. If an oversea aggressor or usually an inland rebellious Tenant-in-Chief~~s~~ didn't^{not} stick to the King's Rules, other Tenants-in-Chief were ordered by the King to order their Mesne Tenant's Knights to bring this rebel to obediency.

The Feudal System was a very clever one because everyone in the system was controlled by other people elsewhere in the system. The king only needed a majority of obedient Tenants-in-Chief and this was accomplished by giving them a fair piece of the country and a large share of the countries resources. But the system was also ruthless and undecent, the farmers were regarded as the property of the manor and the Knights used them as soldiers in the King's Wars if necessary. If they refused, they weren't~~not~~ allowed to run a farm and thus destined to starve. In this way everyone, starting at the bottom of the society, was obedient to someone higher up the hierarchy, all the way up to the all-mighty King.

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thanks for taking
part in this course.
I think you did
very well!