

## What caused the Black Death? Lesson 2

### Focus

- What was the Black Death and how did it arrive in England?

### Task 1

Read carefully the following information.

**The Black Death, was a pandemic that ravaged Europe between 1347 and 1351, taking a proportionately greater toll of life than any other known epidemic or war up to that time.**

1. What is a pandemic?
2. What is meant by toll of life?
3. What is an epidemic?

You may need to research these terms.

### Task 2

Read carefully the following information.

**The Black Death first struck Asia in 1346. It swept westwards following sea and land routes used by traders and travellers. It killed millions of animals, birds and people. It arrived in England in the summer of 1348.**

Copy out the following statements and then correct them.

1. The Black Death first struck England.
2. It first happened in 1349
3. It swept eastwards into England.
4. It didn't have a great impact.

Medieval doctors knew what the symptoms were, and they knew that usually ended in death. **They didn't know what caused it though.** They knew there was a connection between **dirt and disease**, but they didn't know what the connection was.

### Task 3

- Read the sources below. Draw a table to show what people at the time thought caused the Black Death.

Source	Cause of the Black Death
A	
B	
C	
D	

#### Source A

Saturn, Jupiter and Mars are close to each other. It is always a sign of terrible things to come.

*Written by a 14<sup>th</sup> century French doctor*

#### Source B

God has sent the plague to our town because the people spend so much time gambling, fighting and attending tournaments.

*The views of a 14<sup>th</sup> century citizen of Leicester*

#### Source C

The joining together of Saturn and Mars caused death and disaster. The joining together of Mars and Jupiter spread plague in the air.

*A report written by the University of Paris, after the plague had killed 1/3 of England's population*

#### Source D

God often allows plagues, miserable famines, wars and other kinds of suffering to happen. He uses them to punish men and to stop their sins. The plague has attacked England because so many people have been proud and rotten in their lives.

*From a letter written by the monk in charge of Christchurch Abbey to the Bishop of London. It was written in September 1348.*

### **Other causes of the Black Death.**

Task 4 -Do any of these ideas below make sense? Choose any that do. Write them out and explain why they made sense.

1. "The problem is bad air. That privy stinks, the pond is stagnant and dead animals are rotting in the fields. No wonder we're dying"
2. "I think we have got to look at strangers in our midst. Everything was all right until they came. They could have poisoned our wells"
3. "It's the look that does it. You've got to avoid infected people. Just one stare from someone who is sick and you're done for"

Task 5 -Research any other information about:-

What was the Black Death?

How did it arrive in England?