

Can disease change the world?

YEAR 4 - SUMMER 1 - THE BLACK DEATH

What was the Black Death?

Also known as the Great Plague, the Black Death was one of the deadliest diseases in the 14th Century. Between 1346 and 1353, a bubonic plague pandemic spread across the world.

It is believed by scientists that the plague was spread by fleas that had been found on infected rats. These fleas drank the infected blood and then fed on humans. Unfortunately, the bacteria from the rat blood would then enter the bite, infecting the victim with the plague.



Others believed that the Black Death was a punishment from God. Many ill people were ordered to pray in order to cure their illness.

According to sources, the first cases of the plague were recorded in Asia but soon spread through Turkey, France and other European cities as goods were escorted around the world on ships.



ARTICLE 24: You have the right to good food and water and to see a doctor if you're ill.

How did it affect people in the 14th Century?

Incredibly, it is believed that between twenty-five to two hundred million people were killed by this horrendous illness worldwide.

Symptoms of the plague varied amongst victims, though one of the most famous symptoms were the large buboes (or boils) that formed on the body in the neck, groin and armpits. Other symptoms included headaches, nose bleeds and vomiting.

One of the only effective treatments for stopping the spread of the disease was to quarantine people. This was particularly effective in Eyam, a small village in Derbyshire.

Many people died within a week of contracting the plague.



Key Vocabulary	
plague	A disease that affects humans and other mammals.
contagious	The spread of a disease passed on from one person to another.
pandemic	An outbreak of a disease across more than one

