

The Causes of the Crusades

Name:

Period:

What were the Crusades?

The Crusades were holy wars fought between Christians in Europe and Muslims in the Middle East between 1095 and 1291. Although the main goal of the Crusades was to take control of Jerusalem away from the Muslims, there were many reasons why European knights and others were willing to travel and fight a war in a foreign land.

Why were Europeans willing to fight the Crusades?

For centuries, Christian pilgrims traveled from Europe to Jerusalem. In the 11th century, however, the Seljuk Turks, who were Muslim, began to interfere with these pilgrimages. In 1071, the Seljuk Turks fought against the Byzantine Empire at the Battle of Manzikert. The Byzantines, who were Christian, lost. The Byzantine emperor asked the Christians in Europe to help protect his empire from the Turks. In 1095, Pope Urban II called for a crusade against the Muslims to regain control of Jerusalem. To all crusaders, he gave this promise:

All who die by the way, whether by land or by sea, or in battle against the [Muslims], shall have immediate [forgiveness] of sins.

-Pope Urban II, 1095

Besides the promise of forgiveness of sins, there were other reasons Europeans were willing to fight. Read the following list of reasons and decide whether the reason is religious, political, or economic.

Reason	Religious, Political or Economic?
The desire to take control of Jerusalem away from Muslims.	
The belief that fighting in a crusade would give you forgiveness of sins.	
The chance to travel and make money.	
The desire to defend the Byzantine empire from the Turks.	
The opportunity for younger sons of European nobles to get new land in the Middle East.	
The possibility of opening up new trade routes between Europe and the Middle East.	

Take another look at the reasons why Europeans were willing to fight. Which one would have convinced you most to go on a crusade? Why?

Course of the First Four Crusades

There were nine Crusades fought by European Christians against Muslims in the Middle East. The following chart summarizes the first four.

Crusade	Years	Summary
First	1095-1099	At the urging of Pope Urban II in 1095, the First Crusade succeeded in taking Jerusalem and was the most successful from the European point of view. When Jerusalem fell in 1099, crusaders massacred Jews, Christians and Muslims alike. Then the leaders divided up land into territories, each governed by a European feudal lord.
Second	1147-1149	The Second Crusade started when Europeans lost control of Edessa, to the Muslims, territory that they had previously controlled. Led by King Louis VII of France and King Conrad III of Germany, the Europeans failed to regain any land and the crusade was a failure from a European point of view.
Third	1189-1192	The Third Crusade was a response to Jerusalem's fall in 1187 to Salah al-Din (Saladin). Three great armies from Europe were led by Richard the Lion-hearted of England, Philip II of France, and the Holy Roman emperor Frederick Barbarossa, Europe's greatest warrior. However, Frederick accidentally drowned, the other two kings quarreled, and the whole crusade failed from a European point of view.
Fourth	1201-1204	Instead of going to Jerusalem, the Fourth Crusade went to the Byzantine Empire's capital, Constantinople, for various reasons. The European armies looted (robbed) the city and overthrew the Byzantine emperor. The main outcomes of the Fourth Crusade were to deepen the division between Greek and Latin Christianity and to hasten the Byzantine Empire's decline.

Discuss with your group:

Based on what you have read, overall were the first four Crusades a success or failure for the Europeans? Why?

Based on what you have read, were any of the Crusades a success? Why?

The Effects of the Crusades

Directions: Read each effect. Which category does the effect represent? (G,R,A,P,E,S) Why it was significant?

	Effect	G,R,A,P,E,S	Why is this significant?
General Effects	European contact with the cultures of the Eastern Mediterranean grew.		
	Trade of Asian goods increased, including spices, furs, cloth, cane sugar, rice, and different fruits such as melons and apricots.		
	European towns grew and made the role of urban merchants more important.		
Effects on Jews in Europe	The violence unleashed by the Crusades caused great suffering for Jews due to Anti-Semitism, or prejudice against Jews.		
	By the end of the Crusades, Jews could no longer hold public office and Christians took over businesses that had been run by Jews.		
	Isolation of Jews spread throughout Europe during the 14 th and 15 th centuries. Jews were forced to live in crowded neighborhoods called ghettos. Typically, walls and gates separated ghettos from the rest of the town or city.		

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	Effect	G,R,A,P,E,S	Why is this significant?
Effects on Christians in Europe	Approximately two million Christians were wounded or killed in the battle.		
	Crusaders needed a way to pay for supplies, which increased the use of money in Europe. Knights began performing banking functions, such as making loans; knights also started tax systems to raise funds.		
	Royals grew more powerful as nobles and knights left to fight. This helped end feudalism.		
	After Crusaders returned home, European merchants earned enormous profits by trading for new goods.		
Effects on Muslims	An unknown number of Muslims lost their lives and property in battles.		
	Muslims gained exposure to new weapons and military ideas during the Crusades, including adopting a permanent army.		
	Muslim merchants earned riches from trade with Europe which helped fund projects such as the building of mosques and religious schools.		
	Muslims grew more unified as they banded together to fight their common enemy.		