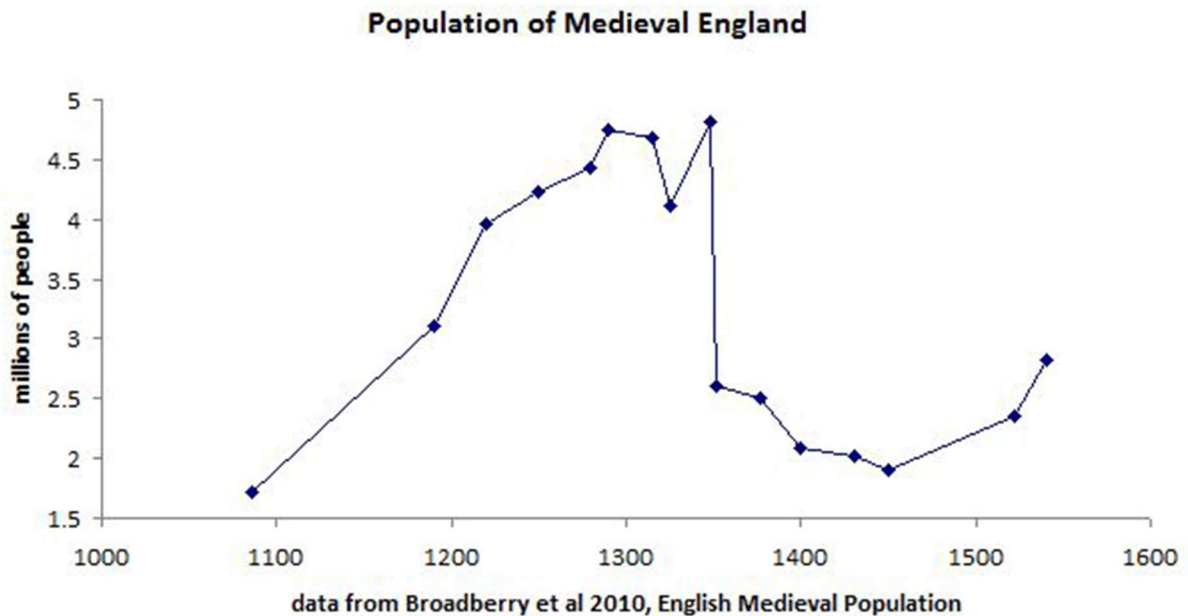


# Black Death Station #5

## The Impact

#1.



Some villages were deserted.

The Lord of the Manor could not get enough people to live and work on his land.

Food shortages (not enough workers!), some crops in fields were left to rot.

Price of food went up, in some parts of England they went up by 4 times!

Half the Clergy were wiped out.

Trade fell as prices of goods dropped.

A shortage of labour meant that workers wanted higher wages.

Many angry peasants ran away.

Some Lords refused to pay wages, making peasants work for nothing.

## #2. Primary Source: Jean de Venette on the Progress of the Black Death (France)

The plague lasted in France for the greater part of the years 1348 and 1349 and then [stopped]. Many country villages and many houses in good towns remained empty and deserted. Many houses, including some splendid dwellings, very soon fell into ruins. Even in Paris several houses were thus ruined, though fewer here than elsewhere.

After this [end] of the epidemic, pestilence, or plague, the men and women who survived married each other. There was no sterility among the women, but on the contrary fertility beyond the ordinary. Pregnant women were seen on every side. . . . But woe is me! the world was not changed for the better but for the worse by this renewal of population. For men were more [greedy] and [selfish] than before, even though they had far greater possessions. They were more [jealous] and disturbed each other [more often] with [fights], disputes, and pleas. [Not] by the [death] resulting from this terrible plague [caused] by God was peace between kings and lords established. On the contrary, the enemies of the king of France and of the Church are stronger and wickeder than before and stirred up wars on sea and on land. Greater evils than before [swarmed] everywhere in the world. And this fact was very [surprising]. Although there were lots of goods, everything was twice as dear [more valued], whether it were utensils, [food], or merchandise, hired helpers or peasants and serfs.

## #3. YouTube: “Impact of the Black Death”

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OFMvDPRvL3M>

## #4. Effect on the Feudal System

Feudal law stated that peasants could only leave their village if they had their lord’s permission. Now many lords were short of desperately needed labour for the land that they owned. After the Black Death, lords actively encouraged peasants to leave the village where they lived to come to work for them. When peasants did this, the lord refused to return them to their original village.

Peasants could demand higher wages as they knew that a lord was desperate to get in his harvest.

So the government faced the prospect of peasants leaving their villages to find a better ‘deal’ from a lord thus upsetting the whole idea of the **Feudal System** which had been introduced to tie peasants to the land. Ironically, this movement by the peasants was encouraged by the lords who were meant to benefit from the Feudal System.