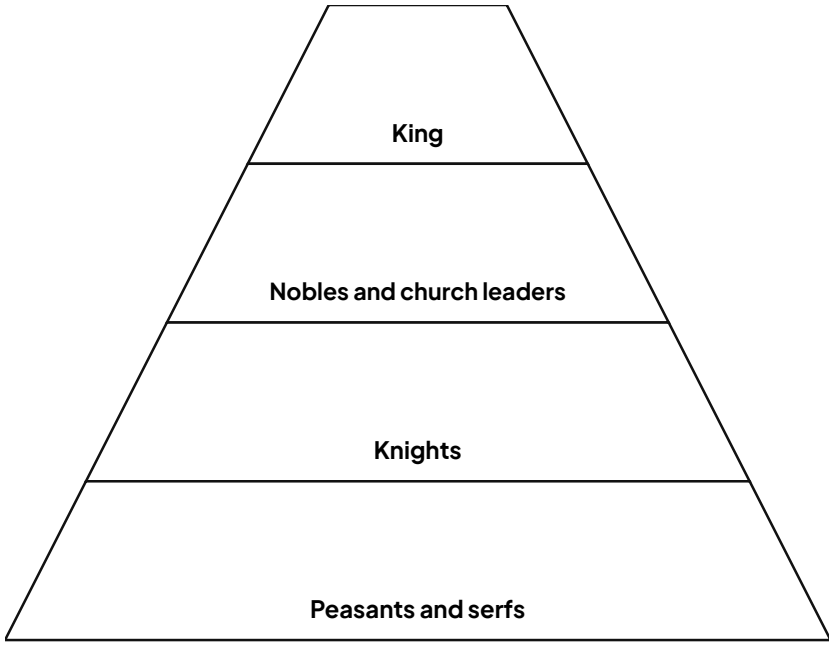
THE FEUDAL PYRAMID

The top had the most power and land. Medieval people did not draw this pyramid: historians use it as a simple model, and real ties were messier.



King: Ruled the whole kingdom and in theory owned all its land. Gave large fiefs to great lords in return for their loyalty and soldiers, and led the army in war.

Nobles and church leaders: Lords, barons, bishops and abbots who held large fiefs from the ruler and swore an oath of fealty. They sent soldiers to fight and gave smaller fiefs to their own vassals.

Knights: Trained for years as page and squire, then fought on horseback in mail armor. Held small fiefs as vassals of greater lords and were expected to follow chivalry.

Peasants and serfs: The largest group. They farmed the land; many were bound to the manor and owed the lord work on his demesne, part of their crops and fees for his mill.