

Causes of the Black Death

Henry Knighton:

"In this year, 1348, two ships docked in Dorset. A french **sailor** brought with him from France the seeds of the terrible plague, and through him the men of Melcombe were the first in England to be **infected**. Then the dreadful plague made its way along the coast by Southampton and reached Bristol, where almost the whole town perished"

Henry Knighton

"The Scots, hearing of the plague in England, said it was a **punishment from God** upon them. And so they planned to invade the country. But when they got to the border, they too caught the disease. Within a few days, 5000 of them had died, and the rest retreated back to their own country, taking the disease with them".

Brother Clyn, a Friar of Kilkenny:

"Plague stripped villages, cities, castles and towns of their inhabitants so thoroughly that there was scarcely anyone left alive in them. The pestilence was so **contagious** that those who **touched** the dead or the sick were immediately affected themselves and died"

The Neuberg Chronicle

"In many German cities **foreign Jews** were believed to have caused the deaths by **poisoning the wells**. Many of these jews, including women and children, were **burnt alive**. Many jews were **moneylenders**, so they were unpopular anyway"

Jean de Venette

"The disease was spread because of **contagion**. If a healthy man **visited** the plague victim, he usually died himself"

Chronicle of Este

"**Fire from the heavens** fell down like rain. It destroyed all the land and killed the people. Then there were huge amounts of **smoke** – anyone **looking** at this died in less than twelve hours. Also, anyone who **looked** at someone who had seen this smoke quickly died"

Guy de Chauliac

"The main cause of the Plague was **the position of the planets**: Saturn, Jupiter and Mars were very close together at that time. This is always a sign of terrible or wonderful things to come"

1. What does each source say was the cause of the plague?

1. Complete column 2 by copying bits of each source into the appropriate **orange** (left-hand) cell of this table.
 2. Complete column 3 by typing an appropriate cure into the appropriate **green** (right-hand) cell of this table.
- [TIP: Your teacher may wish to explain each of the terms in the first column before you start!]

	Column 2: Causes	Column 3: Your suggested cures
<u>Scientific reasons</u>		
<u>Magical / Superstitious reasons</u>		
<u>Religious reasons</u>		

2. Imagine you are the Lord of the Manor. You want to explain the cause of the Black Death to your villagers which includes religious, superstitious AND scientific reasons. What would you say?

Your answer: