**Task #1:    Write a TEAL paragraph:   Choose two impacts from the Bubonic Plague; explain how the Turning Point affected Europe.  Make sure to use one of the Part III documents in your answer.**

**Write your answer here:**

**Task #2:    Identify and Describe three Enduring Issues from the circumstances, impact and/or part III Homework Documents**

**Write your answer here:**

**Historical Circumstances**

The Middle Ages in Europe reached a high point during the 1200s. In the 1300s,

however, disaster struck. A terrible plague, known as the Black Death, swept across Europe and Asia. A plague is a disease that spreads quickly and kills many people. Most scientists think the Black Death was bubonic plague – a disease caused by a type of bacteria carried by infected fleas living off of rats.  It led to swellings or buboes that appeared on a victim's neck, armpits or groin. These tumors could range in size from that of an egg to that of an apple. Another respiratory version spread from breathing the infected air of the victim. Finally, a third septicemic version attacked the blood stream. Regardless of the version, most people died a painful death within a week.

The Black Death probably began somewhere in the Gobi, a desert in central Asia.  It had been around for centuries, but in the 1300s, it began to spread farther and more quickly than ever before.  Historians believe the Mongol Empire was partly responsible for the plague spreading so fast. The empire covered all the land from Eastern Europe through central Asia to China. The Mongols opened up trade between China, India, the Middle East, and Europe. They encouraged the use of the Silk Road and other trade routes.

By the early 1300s, more goods were being shipped across central Asia than ever before. This made it possible for the Black Death to spread rapidly, as caravans infested with rats carried it from city to city.  The first outbreak took place in China in 1331, however quickly made its way across China into Europe. The Black Death appeared in Europe in 1346 at the city of city of Caffa on the Black Sea. The city had been under attack by Mongols when the plague erupted. The Mongols, with their troops dying, called off the attack. In anger they also threw bodies of infected soldiers into the city.  Caffa was a trade colony controlled by Italian merchants from the city of Genoa. Their ships carried the plague to Sicily in October 1347. From there it spread into Europe. The rats (and the disease carrying fleas) quickly spread in the overcrowded but filthy cities that were developing as a result of the Commercial Revolution.The fast growth of cities led to many problems**.** There was over-crowding, and poor housing planning and many streets were narrow, dark and filled with animals and their waste.  There was no sanitation system and people dumped their garbage and their waste in the street as well. But streets were narrow, filled with animals and their waste.  Many homes lacked fresh air, light and access to clean water. All of this made for a situation ripe for the spread of rats, fleas and disease.

**Historical Impact**

Between 1348 and 1400, at least 19-38 million people died.  England alone lost nearly one-third of its population to the dreaded disease.  By the time the epidemic played out three years later, anywhere between 25% and 50% of Europe's population had fallen victim to the pestilence or disease.  Along with the terrible suffering and loss of life, the Black Death sent the economies of Europe into a depression; a loss of money by every aspect of the economy (people, businesses and governments.  Fewer people were left to work, pay taxes, and even pay their debts. In fact, not only had the debtor died, his whole family had died with him as well as many of his kinsmen. There was simply no one to collect from.  The labor shortage was also very severe. Construction projects stopped for a time or were abandoned altogether, Guilds or craft unions lost their craftsmen and could not replace them. Mills and other special machinery might break and the one man in town who had the skill to repair it had died in the plague.  Farms and entire villages died out or were abandoned as the few survivors decided not to stay on.

The Roman Catholic Church was also affected by the Black Death. Many priests died and no one could hear confession. Bishops died, and so did their successors and even their successors.  The loss of life in such great numbers and to such a gruesome a disease, brought despair everywhere. People wondered how God do this. And why could not His servants in the Church avert or mitigate His wrath?  Many people believed that the Black Death was the result of God punishing them for their sins. There were some extremely religious people who believed that they could drive the devil away and wash away their sins. These people were called Flagellants. They would strip naked, and then beat themselves or each other. This, they believed, would relieve them of their sins, and thus prevent them from getting the plague. Overall, Flagellants did little harm, in that they hurt their own bodies by choice. Others were not so lucky. The Jewish people were falsely blamed by many for the Black Death.  People believed they poisoned towns’ water supply or were witches and there were massacres in many cities.

However, as the plague decreased in the late 14th and early 15th centuries, people moved back into the cities, populations grew and this created a new demand for goods and services.  A new middle class began to emerge as merchants once again had a market for their goods and services. The labor shortage led to higher wages.  As prices fell the combination led to a higher standard of living. The feudal system was also almost fully washed away as the so much death caused the break-down of the strict social order and created new opportunities to earn money for people who normally couldn’t before.

**Black Death Documents**

**Document #1:  Maps of the Spread of the Bubonic Plague**

**1)       How does this document show the impact of the Plague?**

**Document #2:  Lithograph (Picture) of the Black Death in Paris, 1372**

**1)       How does this document show the impact of the Plague?**

**Document #3:  *Giovanni Boccaccio’s account of the Plague in the city of Florence, from his book The Decameron, 1348***

*“*One citizen avoided another, hardly any neighbour troubled about others, relatives never or hardly ever visited each other. Moreover, such terror was struck into the hearts of men and women by this calamity, that brother abandoned brother, and the uncle his nephew, and the sister her brother, and very often the wife her husband. What is even worse and nearly incredible is that fathers and mothers refused to see and tend their children, as if they had not been theirs. *Lawyers refused to come and make out wills (final testaments) for the dying. Friars and nuns were left to care for the sick, and monasteries and convents(home of the nuns) were soon deserted, as they were stricken, too. Bodies were left in empty houses, and there was no one to give them a Christian burial.  The people turned on each other out of fear. People boarded themselves in their houses and isolated themselves from the world on islands, but death found them too. One extreme group wandered the countryside whipping themselves as a form of self abuse . Others took the attitude of “eat, drink, and be merry,” in what could have been their last moments alive. Others questioned the very existence of “God.” In five short years an estimated 25 million people were dead as a result of the plague.”*

1)  **What is the purpose of this document?**

2)   **According to Giovanni Boccaccio how did the Plague impact society?**

3)   **To what extent is this a reliable source for the Black Death’s impact on society?**