

# Teacher Fellowship programme: The People of 1381



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## The People of 1381 project



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## The People of 1381 narratives

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## The People of 1381 narratives: a guide for teachers

### What are The People of 1381 profiles?

At the heart of The People of 1381 research project is a focus on 'history from below', using medieval records such as judicial and manorial documents, government records and poll tax records in order to rebuild the experiences and involvement of a range of people, such as women and soldiers. These narratives, written by leading historians, are available at: [1381: People and Places Profiles](#).

### What are the teacher resources linked to these profiles?

The People of 1381 profiles have been adapted to be more accessible for use in schools by turning them into narratives told from the perspective of the person. This includes less assumed prior knowledge, such as through providing greater background on roles such as being a nun or man-at-arms or holding a government position. They seek to encapsulate the elements of historical uncertainty surrounding the lives of these people, while creating an interesting and relatable story for students to use.

### How can these people narratives be used in school?

There are many ways in which you could use these within school, and they are suited to further adaptation based on your setting. Here are some suggestions:

- Get students to think about the local picture of the Revolt by choosing a local story and reading it together and drawing out what it reveals about the Revolt and/or fourteenth-century life. This could be contrasted to the national narrative, to demonstrate the complexity of events and challenge generalisations, without overwhelming students.
- Challenge misconceptions of the medieval world by looking at a story that shows female power or the complexity of fourteenth-century bureaucracy.
- Consider the diversity of experience by using a range of stories (using either the longer stories or the summarised character cards) and discussing similarities and differences between them.

### What key takeaways might I focus on with my students?

- The Revolt was not just based in London, but was an event of national importance and local significance.
- These were not just 'peasants' but a wide cross-section of society, such as local gentry and soldiers.
- The context of the Hundred Years' War is important to focus on (not just the Black Death).
- Women played a role in the Revolt and also received pardons.
- Fourteenth-century England had a complex bureaucracy and legal system. Suing your neighbours was commonplace and the justice system mattered – hence why so many sought pardons.
- Common motifs emerged during the Revolt, such as ringing the bells out of sequence, destroying documents, settling local disputes and raising the flag of St George to show support for England and true King's justice.

**Why so few women?**

Ideally, half of the narratives would have a woman as the focus. However, fewer details survive about women in the historical record. This reality should be made clear to students. The fact that women were often not recorded makes it impossible (or certainly very hard) to reconstruct their lives. There are limitations to what we can know, shaped by the values and beliefs of 1381. The history that we can write is shaped by the past. We need to be aware that this makes our view of the past partial.