

Name _____



Plague In Context

Directions: Read the passage. Then answer the vocabulary questions using evidence from the text. Write in complete sentences when asked.

In the mid-1400s, European cities were crowded, noisy, and surrounded by busy trade routes. In that setting, **outbreaks** of disease spread quickly because people and goods moved from place to place every day. When a deadly illness appeared, many citizens searched for explanations in superstition or rumor. However, some officials began to rely on **observation** rather than guesses. They noticed patterns: certain neighborhoods were hit harder, and symptoms often appeared a few days after contact with an infected person. These observations pushed communities to try new public health responses.

One important response was **quarantine**. City leaders created rules that required ships, travelers, or goods to wait outside the city for a set period of time before entering. The goal was to reduce **exposure** by separating those who might carry illness from those who were still healthy. Quarantine was not perfect; it could be enforced unevenly, and some merchants tried to avoid delays. Still, it represented an early attempt to control disease using organized policy instead of panic. Over time, these practices became more **systematic**, especially when records were kept and officials compared results across different outbreaks.

Even without modern microscopes, some thinkers suggested that disease might be **transmitted** by something too small to see. Their ideas were incomplete, but they encouraged a shift toward scientific reasoning. Later, as scientists developed better tools and methods, they confirmed that many diseases are caused by microbes. That discovery transformed medicine and changed how cities prepared for emergencies. Today, public health still depends on careful data, clear communication, and coordinated action, especially when fast spreading illnesses threaten large populations.

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Vocabulary in Context

Use context clues from the passage to define each **bold** word.

1. **outbreaks** means: _____

Text clue(s): _____

2. **observation** means: _____

Text clue(s): _____

3. **quarantine** means: _____

Text clue(s): _____

4. **exposure** means: _____

Text clue(s): _____

5. **systematic** means: _____

Text clue(s): _____

6. **transmitted** means: _____

Text clue(s): _____

Precise Language Check: Each sentence below is based on the passage, but one vocabulary word is used incorrectly. Correct the sentence by replacing the incorrect word with a better word from the passage.

1. City leaders used quarantine to increase exposure to illness.

2. Officials relied on superstition and rumor, but others used careful panic to guide decisions.
