

Back to the Middle Ages

Previous compulsory steps / Prior students' knowledge	None
Learning objectives	Historical events, citizenship
Subjects	History, philosophy, social sciences, Geography
Recommended Age	All
Material needed	PC or iOs/Android device
Sequence duration	5 hours
Individual or group activity	Individual homework (play time) and group activity (course and debrief time)
Skills developed	Critical thinking, cultural skills, empathy
Comparison of game time and study time	1 hour history course, 3 hours of play, 1 hour debrief and discussion
Price range of the game	Free
Tips to make the sequence more inclusive	There might be students with no access to a PC or iOs/Android device at home so you might want to prioritise them playing in class.
Tips for a shorter duration of the sequence	If there are any students familiar with the mechanics of the game, ask them to briefly explain them to the rest of the class.

Step by step: how to implement the sequence

Crusader Kings II is a strategy game set in the Middle Ages. The player controls a medieval dynasty from 1066 to 1452. It is a good game for history classes because it mentions numerous historical figures, like William the Conqueror, Charlemagne, Genghis Khan, etc. The player can choose their character from these figures, and from minor dukes and counts categories. The game's objective is to obtain prestige and points to surpass various European dynasties such as the Capetian, Rurikid, and the Habsburg dynasties, among others.

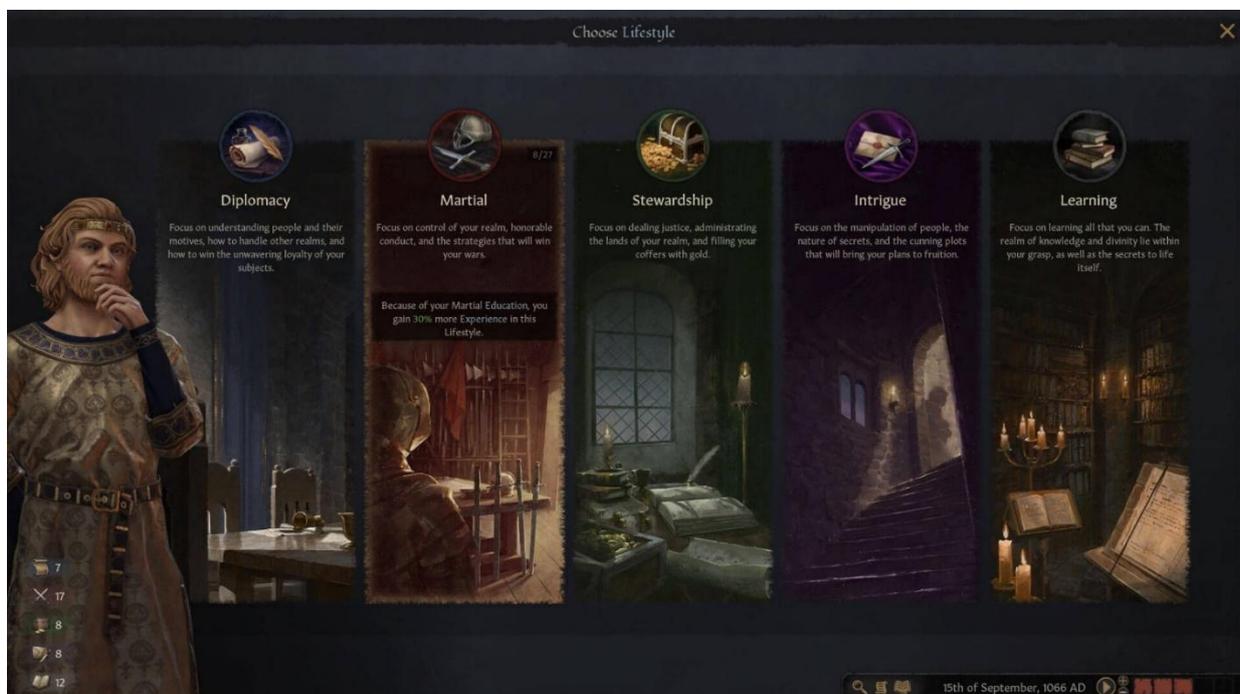


Image 1: Crusader Kings 2. (Source: <https://www.crusaderkings.com/en/pc#about>)

- **Step 1: Giving historical background (1 hour, optional)**

Explain to your students that after this course they will play a game set within the Middle Ages, and they can choose to be anyone they want from that period. What they have to do is to gain respect, prestige and piety points. The main purpose will be to choose a historical character from that period of time like Constantine X Doukas, Robert the Bruce or Genghis Khan.

Before starting to play the game, we recommend discussing with your students about the terms that appears in the game.

For example, tell them that a marshal is an officer of the highest rank in some military forces, or that a chancellor is the head of the government in a state.

- **Step 2: Students play the game at home (2 to 3 hours)**

After the historical explanation, instruct the students to play the game at home for 2-3 hours for homework, to put into practice some of the historical facts and context they learned in class.

- It is good for your students to know these tricks before playing:
 - You have to be sure your spouse loves you. You need them on your side.
 - It's not bad to be focused on family for a long time, meanwhile you are waiting for heirs.
 - You should be brave and annul any marriage if it is not good enough. If you are divorcing your spouse, this will provoke their family to come against you.

The only exception is if you want to make a claim on your spouse's land.



- **Step 3: Debrief and discussion (30 minutes - 1 hour)**

After finishing the game ask your students a few questions, in order to see what they understood from the game:

- Which character did you choose?
- Do you think you were a good noble?
- Do you think you deserved all the prestige from the game?
- Were people on your side because you deserved it, or because you promised them presents in exchange for their support?
- Do you see any similarities between the life in the Middle Ages and your life today?
- What did you learn about the Middle Ages playing this game?
- Do you see yourself living on the Middle Ages?



Image 2: Crusader Kings 2. (Source: <https://www.crusaderkings.com/en/pc#about>)



Getting the game:

https://store.steampowered.com/app/203770/Crusader_Kings_II/

References:

Bailey D. (October 19th, 2019). Crusader Kings 2 is now free-to-play. PCGamesN.

<https://www.pcgamesn.com/crusader-kings-2/free-to-play>

Crusader Kings II. In *Wikipedia* https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Crusader_Kings_II

Mass, E. (May 14, 2020). "Crusader Kings 3 - Release Date, Gameplay Features, Trailer and More!". Strategy Gamer. <https://www.pcgamesn.com/crusader-kings-3/release-date>

Image sources: Crusader Kings II <https://www.crusaderkings.com/en/pc#about>

