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Web Site for History Students

The global spread of the English language over the last years is remarkable. This is reflected in several ways, but statistical figures show the growing in its use: over 1.4 billions of people live in countries where English has an official status. Over 70 % of the world's scientists read English. About 85 % of the world's mail is written in English. 90 % of all information in the world's electronic retrieval systems is stored in English. So, English has become a vehicle that is used universally in science, technology and commerce in this communication era.

The widespread use of English as a language of wider communication in the world has also reached Cuban universities, which use it as a medium of instruction to develop linguistic skills in the academic knowledge and future goals of all professionals. Today, successful learning is a challenge in EFL teaching. However, one of the main concerns in the English language teaching is to provide circumstances that maximize student's participation and creative involvement. Computers are one of the most exciting fields into which this energy can be channeled because of its benefits; for example:

- The use of computers motivate students to learn,
- Computers stimulate sight and hearing simultaneously in a way traditional resources do not,
- They can help train students to become more independent and discipline learners,
- The input computers may facilitate the formulation of ideas, develop specific terminology, and produce high – quality "products" / "output" such as letters, essays, descriptions, e-mails, etc.

For these reasons and taking into account the results obtained in pedagogical tests applied in the last three academic years in which students were not efficiently able to summarize in English, (either written or orally), we decided to prepare a Web Site for History students. They should overcome those difficulties by means of the interdisciplinary approach which allows teachers to present them a tool in which the boundaries among subjects (English, Ancient and Middle Age History, Geography, and Spanish Composition among others) get closer in the learner's mind. In this way, students could react for and against, research and solve real problems in a more significant and efficient way. These are abilities they should develop during the first year of their studies.

The Web Site designed is a database of current authentic materials taken from Internet and Encarta. This site, in one hand, gathers the limited and scattered information students and teachers have about those topics and, on the other hand, it is timely and easily accessible for all. But it is necessary to point out that students need to be guided in a practical and feasible way during the process of learning their contents. That is why, they were assigned different tasks going from simple exercises to summarizing in Spanish, which is also a component of the proposal.

At the end of the training, the results were remarkable. The percentage for selecting general and main ideas raised in 42 percent, summaries were much better and grammar problems decreased almost in half of the rank. However, linking of ideas kept its results with an amount of 50 percent of words misused. In general terms, we could state that students were more open – minded, flexible and cooperative when performing their tasks. All this represent a step forward in the way teachers sustain the interest and engagement of students in classes.

The Web Site was made using Dreamweaver. The image design was supported by Photoshop. It could be seen in Internet Explorer 5.0 or above that. It's optimized to 800 x 600 px and the navigator should be provided with Javascript.

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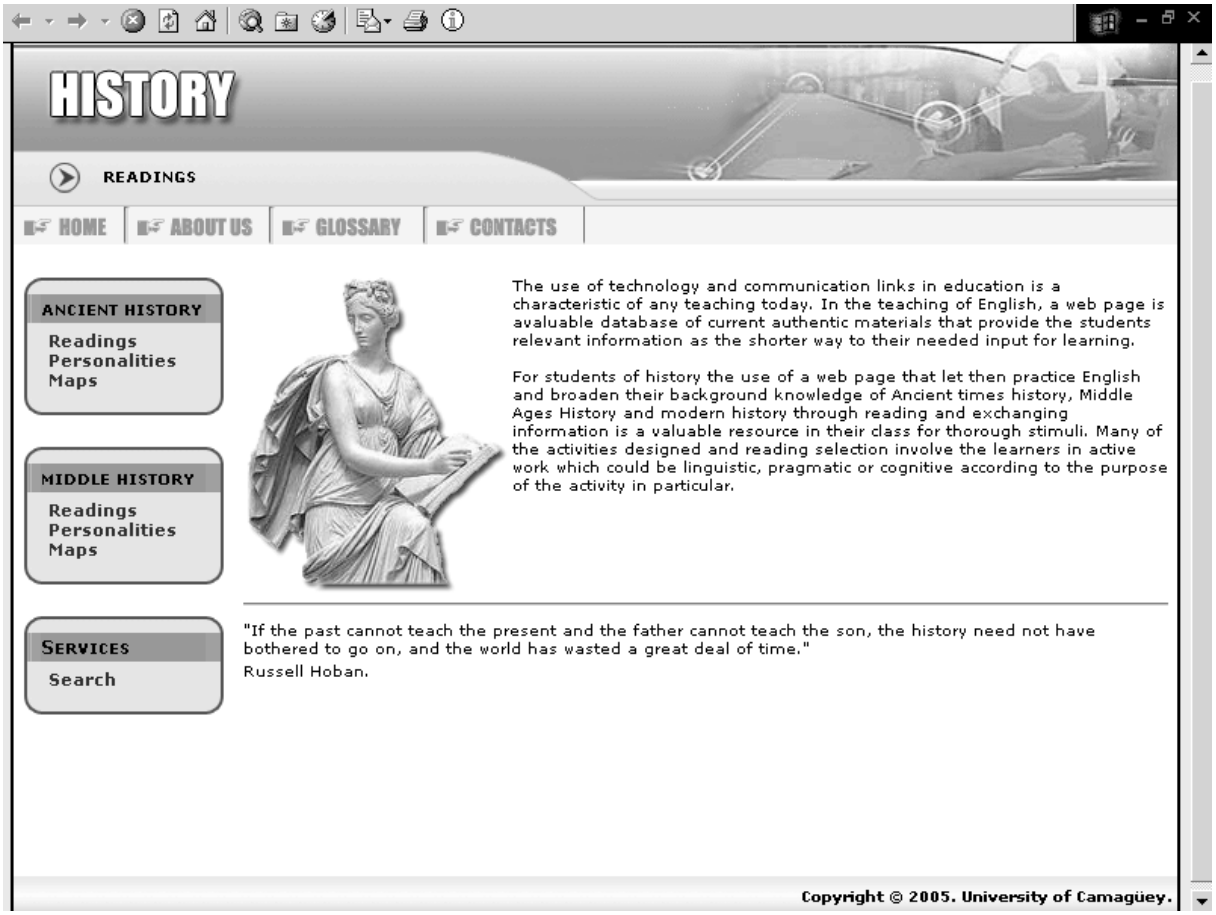
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The use of technology and communication links in education is a characteristic of any teaching today. In the teaching of English, a web page is avaluable database of current authentic materials that provide the students relevant information as the shorter way to their needed input for learning.
For students of history the use of a web page that let then practice English and broaden their background knowledge of Ancient times history, Middle Ages History and modern history through reading and exchanging information is a valuable resource in their class for thorough stimuli. Many of the activities designed and reading selection involve the learners in active work which could be linguistic, pragmatic or cognitive according to the purpose of the activity in particular.
"If the past cannot teach the present and the father cannot teach the son, the history need not have bothered to go on, and the world has wasted a great deal of time."
Russell Hoban.
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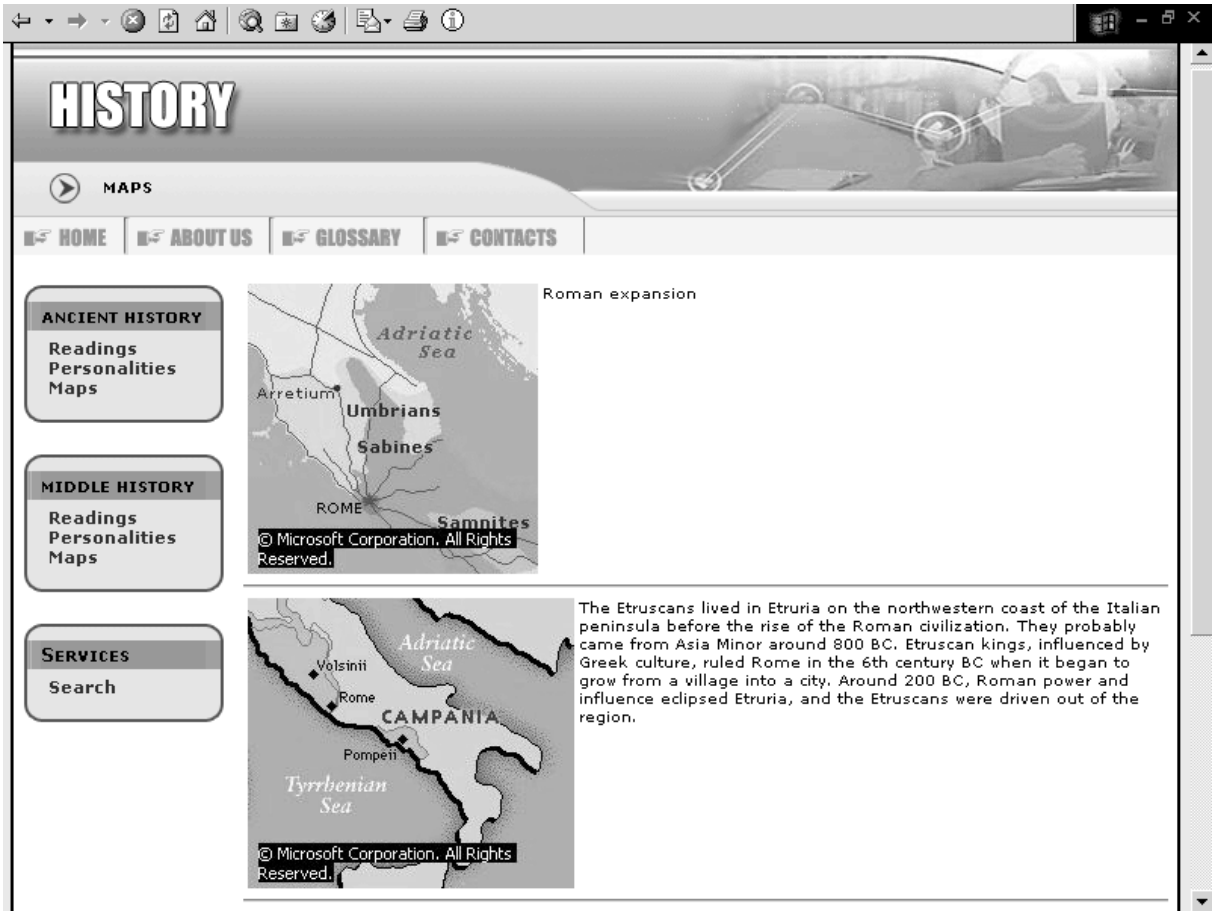
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Roman expansion
Adriatic Sea
Arretium
Umbrians
Sabines
ROME
Samnites
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The Etruscans lived in Etruria on the northwestern coast of the Italian peninsula before the rise of the Roman civilization. They probably came from Asia Minor around 800 BC. Etruscan kings, influenced by Greek culture, ruled Rome in the 6th century BC when it began to grow from a village into a city. Around 200 BC, Roman power and influence eclipsed Etruria, and the Etruscans were driven out of the region.
Adriatic Sea
Volsinii
Rome
CAMPANIA
Pompeii
Tyrrhenian Sea
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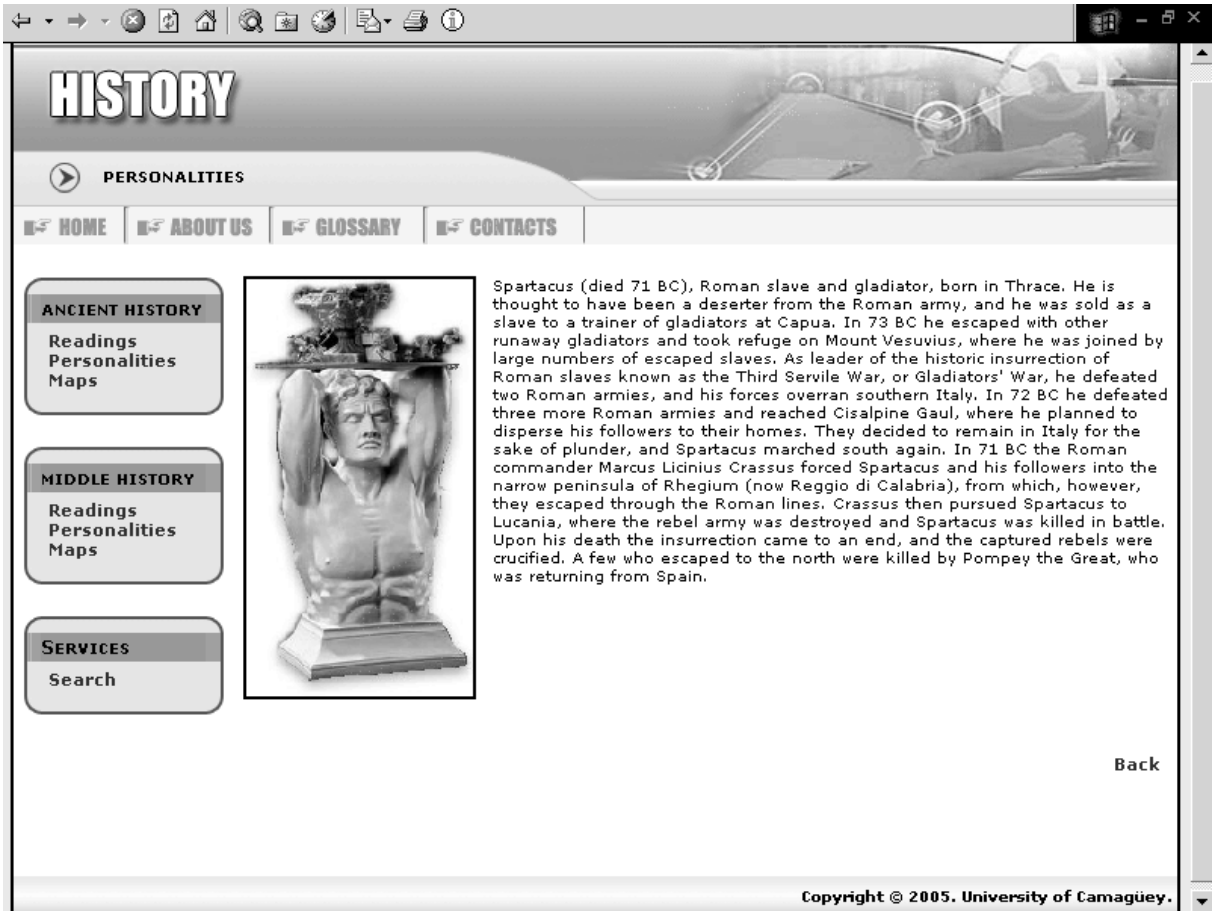
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Spartacus (died 71 BC), Roman slave and gladiator, born in Thrace. He is thought to have been a deserter from the Roman army, and he was sold as a slave to a trainer of gladiators at Capua. In 73 BC he escaped with other runaway gladiators and took refuge on Mount Vesuvius, where he was joined by large numbers of escaped slaves. As leader of the historic insurrection of Roman slaves known as the Third Servile War, or Gladiators' War, he defeated two Roman armies, and his forces overran southern Italy. In 72 BC he defeated three more Roman armies and reached Cisalpine Gaul, where he planned to disperse his followers to their homes. They decided to remain in Italy for the sake of plunder, and Spartacus marched south again. In 71 BC the Roman commander Marcus Licinius Crassus forced Spartacus and his followers into the narrow peninsula of Rhegium (now Reggio di Calabria), from which, however, they escaped through the Roman lines. Crassus then pursued Spartacus to Lucania, where the rebel army was destroyed and Spartacus was killed in battle. Upon his death the insurrection came to an end, and the captured rebels were crucified. A few who escaped to the north were killed by Pompey the Great, who was returning from Spain.
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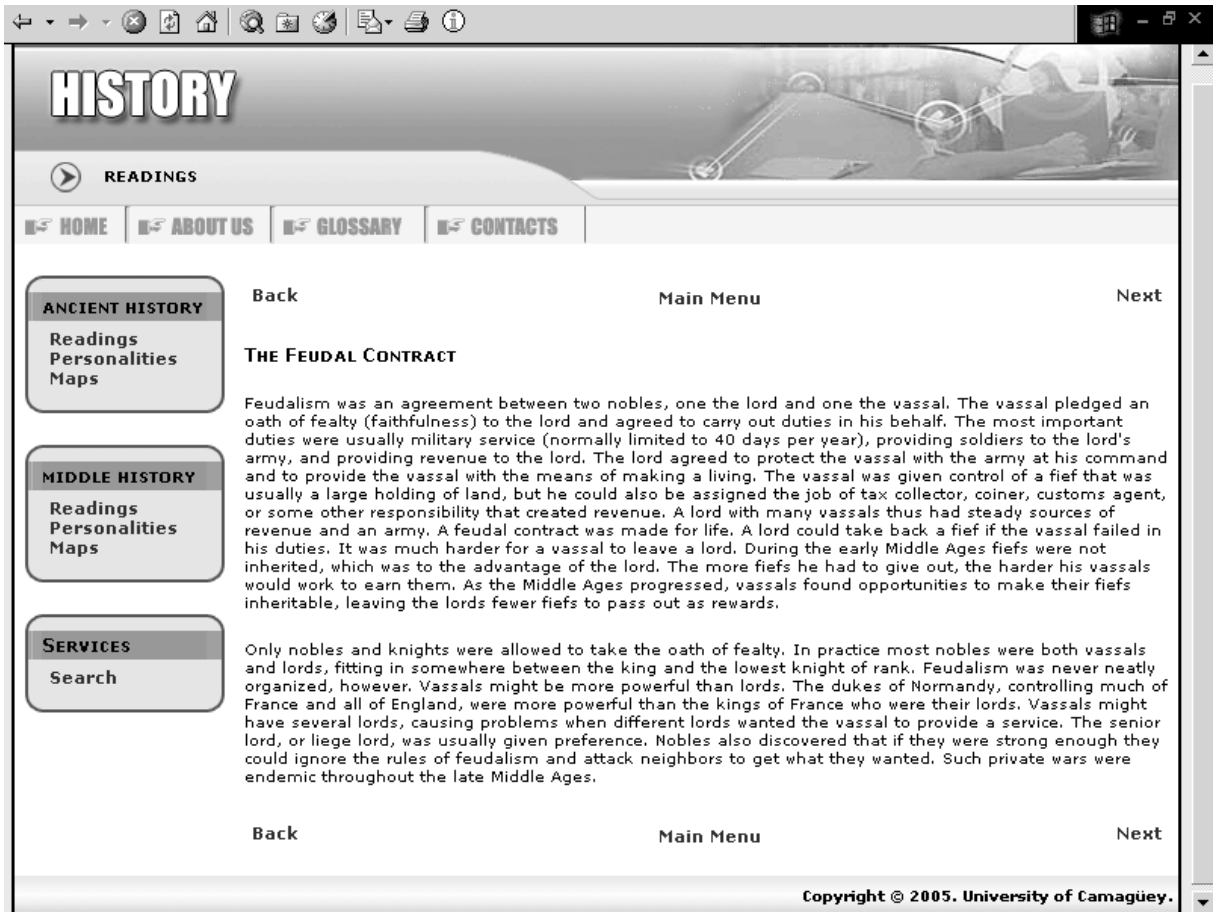
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THE FEUDAL CONTRACT
Feudalism was an agreement between two nobles, one the lord and one the vassal. The vassal pledged an oath of fealty (faithfulness) to the lord and agreed to carry out duties in his behalf. The most important duties were usually military service (normally limited to 40 days per year), providing soldiers to the lord's army, and providing revenue to the lord. The lord agreed to protect the vassal with the army at his command and to provide the vassal with the means of making a living. The vassal was given control of a fief that was usually a large holding of land, but he could also be assigned the job of tax collector, coiner, customs agent, or some other responsibility that created revenue. A lord with many vassals thus had steady sources of revenue and an army. A feudal contract was made for life. A lord could take back a fief if the vassal failed in his duties. It was much harder for a vassal to leave a lord. During the early Middle Ages fiefs were not inherited, which was to the advantage of the lord. The more fiefs he had to give out, the harder his vassals would work to earn them. As the Middle Ages progressed, vassals found opportunities to make their fiefs inheritable, leaving the lords fewer fiefs to pass out as rewards.
Only nobles and knights were allowed to take the oath of fealty. In practice most nobles were both vassals and lords, fitting in somewhere between the king and the lowest knight of rank. Feudalism was never neatly organized, however. Vassals might be more powerful than lords. The dukes of Normandy, controlling much of France and all of England, were more powerful than the kings of France who were their lords. Vassals might have several lords, causing problems when different lords wanted the vassal to provide a service. The senior lord, or liege lord, was usually given preference. Nobles also discovered that if they were strong enough they could ignore the rules of feudalism and attack neighbors to get what they wanted. Such private wars were endemic throughout the late Middle Ages.
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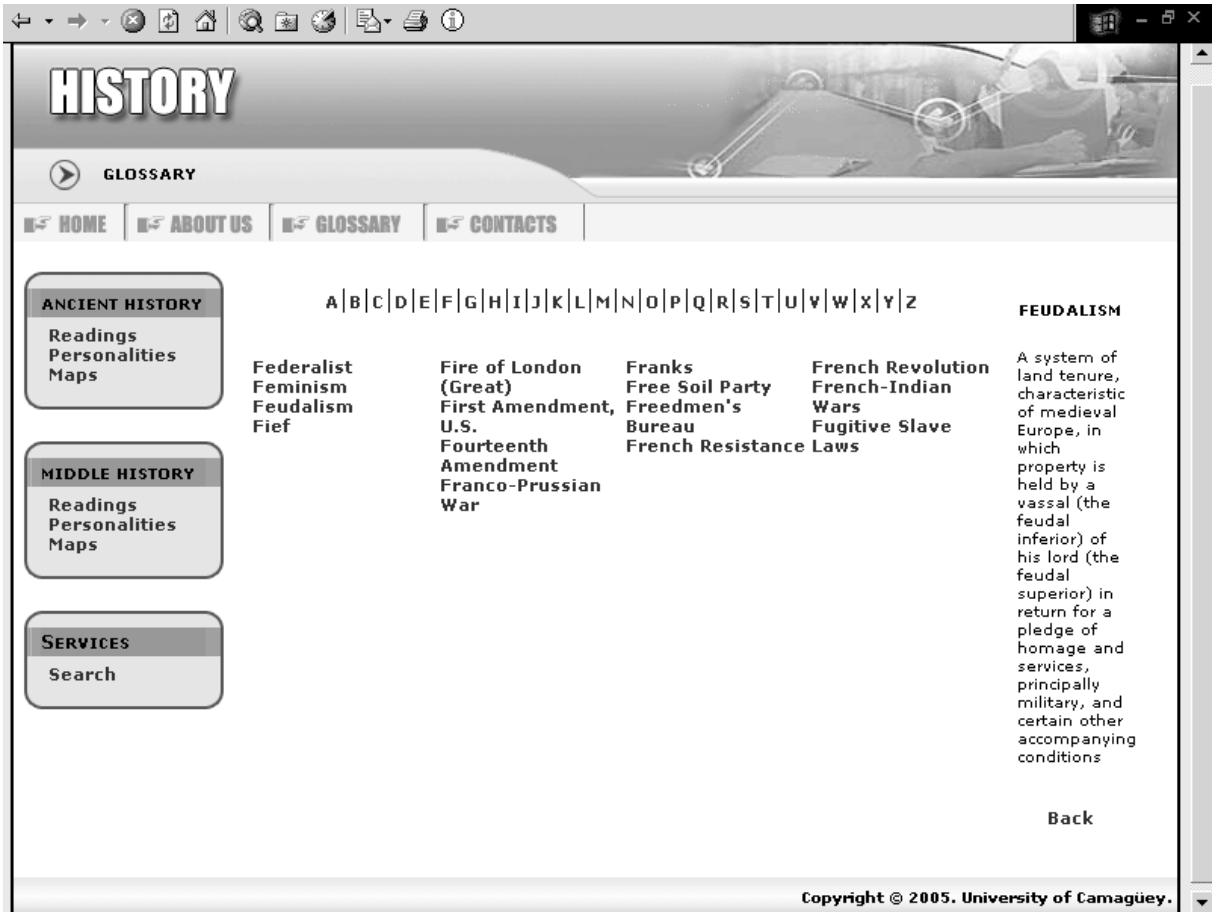
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Feudalism
Fief
Fire of London (Great)
First Amendment, U.S.
Fourteenth Amendment
Franco-Prussian War
Franks
Free Soil Party
Freedmen's Bureau
French Resistance
French Revolution
French-Indian Wars
Fugitive Slave Laws
FEUDALISM
A system of land tenure, characteristic of medieval Europe, in which property is held by a vassal (the feudal inferior) of his lord (the feudal superior) in return for a pledge of homage and services, principally military, and certain other accompanying conditions
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