

# Evidence Questions

Women's Lives in Medieval Times

November 2008

**SOURCE A:** a picture from the Luttrell Psalter, a medieval book, showing a peasant woman carrying a spindle for spinning wool



## Question A1

**GTI x 1**

A1. Look at Source A.

Explain how it shows that peasant women had to work hard. (2)

# Sample answer to A1

The picture shows the woman working hard spinning wool and feeding the chickens/birds at the same time.

**SOURCE B:** from the medieval poem  
'Piers the Ploughman'

My wife was a weaver and made woollen cloth.  
She then used a spindle to spin it out...  
I bought her barley malt and she made beer to sell.  
Rose was her name and  
She stayed with selling food and drink all her life.

## Question A2

**GTI x2**

A2. Look at Source B.  
Give two ways in which  
the wife earned money  
for the family. (3)

## Sample Answer A2

Two ways in which the wife earned money are firstly by the sale of beer “she made beer to sell” and secondly by the sale of food “selling food”

**SOURCE C:** from the modern history book, Medieval Minds by Michael Riley, Jamie Byrom, and Christine Counsell

**Medieval people saw silk-making, spinning and brewing [making beer] as women's work. But women also worked as ironmongers, shoe-makers and goldsmiths. Some guilds (business organisations) allowed women to practise a craft, but would not let women become full members. Some barbers' and dyers' guilds accepted women, but most guilds kept them out altogether.**

## Question A3

**Be CANY**

A3. Look at Source C. How does this source help us to understand the information given in Sources A and B? (7)

# Sample Answer A3

Source C shows that there were a variety of traditional jobs carried out by women, although some guilds banned women. Source B like Source C mentions spinning and brewing as women's jobs. Source A also shows spinning but also the feeding of birds not mentioned in either of the other two sources. Therefore Source B supports Source C most although Source A also plays its part.

## Question A4

I, I, FAB

Look at and refer to all the sources. How useful would they be to an historian studying women's involvement in the world of work in medieval times? (8)

# Sample answer for A4

A useful source provides the historian with **valuable insight and information**.

**Source A** is a unique contemporary picture given us an indication into how some people viewed women's work. The artist is trying to portray the busy life of a woman. Its limitation is the fact that it is a picture.

**Source B** is a unique contemporary extract from a well known poem, giving the views of one particular man as he travelled around England.

**Source C** is from a modern history book. The authors will have researched thoroughly accessing a variety of different sources to provide a fair, accurate and balanced view.

**All three sources help our understanding** about women's work in medieval times.

Source A is the **least useful** because of its limitations as a picture and the fact that it's an artist's impression and in reality the woman is unlikely to have been doing both jobs at the same time. Source B is **more useful** but limited as it's the view of one man of what his wife did. This may not be typical. Source C is the **most useful** as it has been researched well probably using Source A and B in the process.