I am a knight in medieval society. I am from a Norman family who came to conquer Ireland. I went through three stages before I became a knight. I became a page when I was seven years old. I went to live in another lord’s castle and helped the lady of the castle. I became a squire when I was fourteen years old. I helped the lord dress for jousts (combats with other knights). I practised with lances, swords, and shields.

I became a knight when I was twenty-one years old. I prayed all night before the ceremony. In the ceremony, I was dubbed a knight as I knelt before my lord and he placed a sword on my shoulder. I took vows of chivalry to be loyal, help the poor and to protect women and children.

I practise in tournaments and jousts. I wear a suit of armour and chain mail. I wear the crest of my family on my shield. This tells everybody who I am. I also have a helmet with a visor to protect my eyes. My weapons are a lance, a sword and a battle-axe. I got land (fief) from a baron - I’m his vassal. I am loyal to my lord and I will be ready to go into battle if he needs me. This is called feudalism.

I live in a village in a manor house with a wall and a mot. I will build a tower house soon because this is stronger – more like a castle. I will control the land around, which I rent to peasants (serfs). They work three open fields but they have to harvest crops for me as part of the rent.
I am a monk in a medieval monastery. I joined the Benedictines as a novice. I learned the rule of St. Benedict and I help with work in the monastery. The monastery is surrounded by a wall. We have a church which faces east-west, a cloister (a covered walkway where we pray), a refectory, a chapter room and an abbot’s house. We have large fields around the monastery.

The abbot was happy with my progress, so I became a monk. I had part of my head shaved in a tonsure and I took three vows: poverty – I had to give up all my possessions; chastity – I had to promise that I would not marry or have children; and obedience – I had to promise to obey the abbot.

My day is organised around prayer and work. All the monks come together to pray seven times a day. We all wear habits and leather sandals. We meet every morning in the chapter room. The abbot gives us our jobs for the day there. I copy manuscripts in the scriptorium most days. I use a quill (a pointed feather) and ink. The books we copy are stories from the bible. Other monks are working in the fields or taking care of the sick or giving food to the poor.

We eat all our meals in the refectory in silence. A passage from the bible is read while we eat. We all sleep in the dormitory. New orders have been founded, such as Franciscans and the Dominicans, because some people think that our monasteries have become too rich.