

# WINE MERCHANTS & THE PLANTAGENET TRADE NETWORK

## Is AI a medieval historian?

Objective : Can AI produce a reliable historical account?

Before studying the historical sources, you will investigate how different AI tools explain the medieval wine trade.

### Step 1 – Ask the AI (5 min)

Work in groups of 4. Each group will use a different AI tool:

- Group 1: ChatGPT
- Group 2: Claude
- Group 3: Gemini
- Group 4: Mistral

Use the following prompt:

**“You are a medieval historian. Describe the wine trade between Bordeaux and England between 1200 and 1400 in 20 lines.”**

Copy the AI's answer into a shared document.

### Step 2 – Analyse the AI's answer (20 min)

Read the text carefully and discuss the following questions:

1. What are the main ideas presented by the AI?
2. Does the AI mention:
  - merchants?
  - trade routes?
  - political power?
  - risks at sea?
  - economic importance?
3. Does the AI provide precise facts, dates or examples?
4. Does the AI mention any historical sources?

### Step 3 – Become an expert (30 min)

Each member of the team joins a new expert group and studies one set of 3 documents:

- Expert A → Legal & economic sources
- Expert B → Maritime Trade: rules, risks and protection
- Expert C → Geographic & material evidence
- Expert D → Political context

Answer the questions provided for your document set and prepare a short oral report for your original team.

### Step 4 – Fact-check the AI (30 min)

Return to your original team. Each expert presents their findings.

Discuss:

- Which information was accurate?

- Which information was incomplete?
- Which information was missing?
- Did the AI make any mistakes?

### **Step 5 – Critical report (10 min)**

Prepare a 2-minute presentation to the class answering:

- What did the AI get wrong?
- What did the AI oversimplify?
- What crucial historical dimension is absent?

Cross-referencing : What patterns emerge ? What does the AI systematically miss ?

### **Step 6 – Improve the AI's answer : the counter-prompt challenge (15 min)**

Think carefully about what your team discovered during the fact-checking phase (activity 2), then decide what the AI needs in order to produce a better historical explanation.

Run the new prompt and compare the two answers.