

# Development of weapons and armor history essay

[History](#)



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## **Development of Weapons and Armor**

The development of weapons and armor has been a constant desire of man for centuries as a compensation of their wish to achieve more power, whether through religion, politics or fear; that desire has always been there, both throughout the world and history. As a result of creating stronger weapons, the need for ways to protect yourself had arisen. This created a constant symbiotic relationship between weapons and armor that has exceeded for eons. One particular age of development that has gained my attention was the middle ages. A time of warriors and blacksmiths would be the perfect place for an example of development. During the Middle Ages weaponry and armor were just as common as the rather expensive electronic devices of today. There was just an increasing need for it, do to the fear of robber, war, and in some cases with royalty it was a necessity to become refined, or accepted into their social groups. Regardless of the reasons, the desires for weapons lead to the development of newer more effective forms of weaponry. The development of new weapons called for new forms of protection. It is a constant cycle that by previously proven standards continues. One example in this time period is the transition from short-ranged weapons to the bow and arrow. The bow and arrow is essentially just wood in a crescent shape with its ends attached with rope to propel arrows; wood sharpened at the tip or attached with an arrowhead. When in battle the first to strike may not always win but it does give them the upper hand. They control the battle for the moment. So instead of staying with their need for close combat the soldiers and armies of kingdoms

would use archery to their advantage to gain the first strike before they even reach the battle field. Now as stated before there is a relationship between weapons and armor. So a way to keep arrows (along with other weapons) at bay was to use body armor that arrows wouldn't be able to penetrate. Chain metal under armor and thicker shields to counteract the arrows was the continuation of the cycle going around. Chain metal is basically what it sounds like, think of a shirt made out of tightly woven chains covering your body. For every situation there is a solution and for every action there is an equal and opposite reaction this statement has been proven countless times in the development of weapons. Through the course of history the development of weapons went through changes that allowed the welders of the weapons to use them more efficiently. At one point or another as anyone with a minimum amount of information of history should know the bow and arrow was revered by all. The reason behind the bow and arrows popularity is because of its destructive properties in war and its difficulty in sport. The greatest archers were known and given recognition because of the level of difficulty it takes to master the art of archery. The next step in that weapons line after the bow and arrow would be to create something that would be useful to everyone who wields it, not just those who were exceptionally skilled with it. That next step was the cross bow; a triggered version of the bow and arrow that allowed for easy reloading and could compensate for the lack of talent in archery. The cross bow is also a great example of the development coming from newer innovations through already created inventions, because development is also considered just an improvement on an already great idea. With new inventions being made almost everyday newer and grander weapon inventors began to surface. In many cases the <https://assignbuster.com/development-of-weapons-and-armor-history-essay/>

focus and desire to improve one thing lead to another. The best example comes from china. The mixture of chemicals and powders that made gun powder was never meant for that. The actual purpose was to make a potion for longevity the mixture was composed by the alchemist in china during that time period. They started out by using it for fireworks, and then there was the use of the gunpowder for firearms. Specifically speaking the cannon. Cannons at this time were used to both protect castles and level enemy forces. You can imagine the destructive power of a cannon at that time, but something that should also be known is that it wasn't the only projectile weapon that used gun powder. Another invention during the mid stage of the middle ages was an actual gun. Although it wasn't like the guns we are use to today the image is a bit prehistoric compared to ours, but then again what isn't. The gun from back then was basically a hand cannon. Picture a stick, with a small cannon on the end and a trigger, that's what it was. Leaving that remarkable step in history behind there were enormous varieties of weaponry during that time period. During the middle ages inventors fueled by imagination combined with the threat of war lead to new types of weapons. The best way to list them is to first categorize them into three different kinds of weapons. The categories are based solely on the distance that each weapon can reach the wielders opponent. The best place to start is the weapons made for short ranged conflict. The short ranged weapons consist of things like knives, gauntlets, needles and daggers. One application that is preferred from short ranged weapons is their flexibility in combat. For instance all of the previously listed weapons can be laced with poison for close, and secretive combat, especially needles. Many of them such as knives and needles can be used as projectiles, in china needles were an

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extremely dangerous and difficult weapon when used because of their size speed and stealth. A final application is their ability to be combined with other weapons. A gauntlet usually used by knights with armor and soldiers on the battle field to guard and deflect attacks as well as attack close opponents. Daggers were used very heavily when dueling and in battle to help deflect sword attacks. Both of these short range weapons gave the user the ability to heighten his fighting skill and chance to win battle. It's a very simple concept to understand, why fight with one blade when you can have two and why fight open when you can be defended? Following the short ranged weapons is the mid ranged weapons. The list for the mid ranged weapons is exceptionally long, but the tools that show the most variety and have incredible power stand out. One that everyone is familiar with is the sword. At one point they were large and bulky, heavy and hard to swing but had great power. They later changed to a thinner swifter form of blade known as the rapier. Many knights and people of royalty practiced countless hours honing their skills in swordsmanship for war and social acceptance. Another mid range weapon is the axe. Now the axe comes in multiple forms; long, short handle, large, short plate, double edged. The list can go on and on. The basics of the axe are it is a heavy weapon with an inverted triangle like blade. Another weapon that can come in multiple forms is the mace. The mace in a nutshell is like a slim tipped sledge hammer, or a stick with a hard metal tip that when swung contains an immense amount of blunt force. Speaking of swinging, a popular weapon was the flail. It is practically a mace but with a ball attached by a chain on the tip instead of just metal. The flail is used by swinging the handle to cause the centrifugal force of the ball at the end of the weapon to build up. When equipped (and it usually is )with spikes <https://assignbuster.com/development-of-weapons-and-armor-history-essay/>

at the of the ball it is known as the morning star. One strike from this weapon unprotected to the head would cause mass trauma and in many cases death. One weapon that was used both then and now is the bludgeon. The bludgeon is a weapon that resembles today's night stick, a weapon used by today's police force. That just proves the old saying, " If something isn't broken don't fix it." The bludgeon is a weapon that has transcended time, but it isn't the only weapon form. The next group of weapons is the long ranged weapons. Long ranged weapons were very important during times of war because it was essential to get the first strike. Long range weapons can vary by two factors that I personally recognized. One is their reach. In other words how, far they go from your current location to the point of the desired attack. The other has to do with projectiles. So whether or not you can shoot or throw what ever you are holding and still have the ability to continue fighting. The first long ranged weapon is the lance. A long range tool similar to a spear, the lance is used while ridding horse back. With this weapon you will defiantly reach your opponent before he reaches you. The next weapon also shares similarities to a spear. However a horse is not required to attack with this one. The next weapon is the Lochaber Axe. Fashioned similar to a spear the lochaber axe differs in many ways. One being while it still keeps the essence of a spear there is clearly an axe on opposite sides of the tip along with the point of the spear. This allowed the users of this weapon to not only thrust towards their opponent but to slash against them. The lochaber is a truly effective weapon when it comes to the battle field. The third is one of the most famous weapons in history, told in both legends and is used today in the Olympics, the bow and arrow. The bow itself has multiple forms, like the size for instance, another important feature being the design

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itself. Usually made from the person who plans to use it the bow is usually a reflection and an embodiment of the archer. The arrows can be customized as well. Traditional arrows are wooden, however during this period they were changed to cause more damage. One way was the position of the arrow head's tail. When I say tail I mean the trail left behind the arrow head. Some are made to slice the skin and once caught to stay without any hope of a clean removal. So once shot with this kind of arrow the skin would be cut by the tip. The tail would dart outwards almost locking on the flesh that hasn't already been damaged by the entry wound of the arrow. The more upgraded version on the bow and arrow is the crossbow. It is essentially the bow and arrow in a handheld trigger form. The cross bow allowed those who could not develop archery skill to come close with the help of this invention. Moving on from the lower form of projectiles, gunpowder allowed for a greater development of weaponry. So, a step from wooden tools to a more mechanical advantage. One famous weapon that utilized gunpowder was the cannon. It gave castles new defenses and allowed for great casualties on the enemies forces. Another was a step into the future. A hand held cannon, a primitive gun also used gunpowder to propel projectiles through the air. Finally a great long range invention was the non gunpowder using cannon, the catapult. The catapults purpose for the most part, to sends large boulders flying at the enemy, sometimes on fire. Amor developed over time to situate the battle field. From bulky and thick knights uniforms or suit, to the thinner movable chain under armor with plating. This new form of armor allowed for adequate protection, without restricting the wearer so much. They were usually made with helmets that were the same, although in some cases it included a leather exterior with chain metal underneath. Just like <https://assignbuster.com/development-of-weapons-and-armor-history-essay/>

China's development of gunpowder, they had a hand in developing multiple weapons that suit their style of warfare. For years they trained their bodies in the ways of martial arts to make it a weapon for defense. However with harder obstacles in their way they realized they needed more. They equipped an assortment of weapons with their styles of fighting to improve and advance. One important weapon in the Chinese arsenal is the sword. Swords of all shapes and forms can be considered first rate weapons. They molded them together with their styles to create equality between both empty handed styles of fighting and fighting that included weapons. While some countries merely use the weapons the Chinese believe the weapons to be apart of their bodies and attack with them as an extension of themselves. To fit each style there were multiple designs for the swords used by each style. One kind of sword is the butterfly sword. The butterfly sword is similar to the American bowie knife. In battle the butterfly sword is duel wield. Another is the dao, a sword made thin enough to practically cut the air, and bend gracefully in the wind. It is a single edged sword that usually fashions colorful trails of thread. The next sword is a personal favorite of mine. The next blade is used by Shaolin monks, it is known as the hook blade. The hook blades looks are in the name. It is used duel wield and at the tip is curved. Although that isn't the only special feature of this sword. Altogether there are four points where u can attach someone with this sword. The first is the hook, the next is the blade, following is the handle which covers the hands and has two polar tips, and finally a spear head tip at the base of the hilt. The Chinese armor of that time was a bit lacking during this era. It went through a development of cloth to metal and leather that left a lot to be desired. While tough for the most part the armor itself was not impenetrable.

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They did however at one point wear chain metal like the armor from England. The Chinese will always be known for their weapons, but in my opinion one of their cultures best weapons is their martial art. I believe that it will continue to develop into something even more dangerous than what it already is. The next part is the most important part of development, the people who make the weapons. The inventors and blacksmiths who bring all of the weapons warriors of the past were able to use are the really incredible people of this time. They were able to design and fashion weapons from basic materials. Truly it is an impressive and difficult skill that if not done would have probably lead to the fall of the development of weapons and armor. All great warriors know that the material and maker of the weapon is just as important as learning to use the weapon. Another important factor is that a weapon to a blacksmith, to a creator is like a child. If the blacksmith is not willing to put out the time and care into creating the weapon then it will become utterly useless. The process for making weapons through metal is a long and difficult one. To start of the is the choice in material. Next that material is melted down , then paced into a cast of the desired weapon. Finally it is refined and toned by the blacksmiths hands and tools. Wooden weapons are usually carved from good sturdy pieces o wood. Then made by those who can assemble what ever weapon is desired. Armor is made the same way as weapons by the blacksmith. One less important but still import part of the weapons and armor is the decoration. Cloths and additions made for decoration that showed royalty or position, and power. It is something that personalizes the weapon and armor. Many people may not realize or understand that no weapon can ever be the same. Each is different and has a soul that will only be understood by the wielder. Throughout history man

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has sought out power by any means. When he made weapons he desired more powerful ones, and the cycle began and continued for eons. The developments of weapons in the past have changed the course of war and lead us to the outcome that we have today. Without our past we would not have a future. With that said perhaps the next development in weaponry and armor will be an improvement from the past that has been forgotten.

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