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| Name: |  | Date: |  |

## Purpose

In this lesson, you are introduced to the term Dark Ages, which was the label once used by historians periodizing this time in history. This quick opening activity will get you to think about what the term Dark Ages means, so you can consider what happens when historians label the past in particular ways.

## Process

You are getting ready to study a period of time that most historians used to call the Dark Ages. Historians periodize history into chunks of time based on a number of factors, including artifacts or tools that were used in a certain time, or the rise and fall of empires, or times of artistic or scientific achievement. The Dark Ages once referred to the period of time that began after the fall of the Roman Empire and extended to the start of the Renaissance and the Age of Discovery. In addition, this periodization only concentrates on one region of the world—Europe. In small groups, brainstorm what comes to mind when you hear this term. In particular, consider:

* Why do you think historians might have labeled or periodized this time as being “dark”?
* What might be “dark” about communities in this time period?
* What might be “dark” about networks in this time period?
* What might be “dark” about production and distribution in this time period?

Once you’ve had a chance to consider this, be prepared to share your ideas with the whole class—you’ll revisit them again later in this lesson.