

Spring 1

Year 2 – Castles

What are the key features of medieval castles and what was life like for people who lived and worked in them?



Key Vocabulary	
medieval	Period of time 11th century until 16th century.
motte	A tall steep sided mound on which the keep was built.
bailey	An area surrounded by a wooden fence, where soldiers and servants lived.
keep	The strongest part of the castle. This was built on top of the motte and was often lived in by the owner of the castle.
portcullis	A strong, heavy spiked barrier that can be lowered to block an entrance.
palisade	A fence of wooden stakes or iron railings fixed in the ground, forming an enclosure or defence.
murder hole	An opening in the ceiling about head height. The occupants, upstairs, could throw down lighted firewood, urine or rocks on intruders.
battlements	Found at the top of a castle's walls with openings to shoot through and raised sections for protection
moat	A deep, wide ditch surrounding a castle, often filled with water.

Powerful knowledge

- A castle is a large, strong building, built in the past by a ruler or important person to protect the people inside from attack. They were both a home and a fortress and displayed the owner's rank and wealth.
- Fire was the best way to attack the early Motte and Bailey castles since they were made entirely of wood. The fire might be started by building a bonfire against the outer wooden fence (palisade) or, more usually, by archers shooting fire-arrows into the castle.
- Attackers found out that the keep on top of the motte was hard to capture as the height of the motte and the ditch surrounding it gave defenders a huge defensive advantage.
- Rich lords or kings lived in castles in medieval times. Many other people would have also lived and worked in the castle. They would cook and clean for the lord or king. There would also be a gardener, stable hands, a blacksmith, a baker and a treasurer who counted all the money. Life in a castle in medieval times was very dark and cold.

What I should already know

- An understanding of the past and the passing of time.
- An understanding of a timeline.
- An understanding of the idea of change.

Learning Journey

- To find out about different types of castles.
- To understand the purpose of a medieval castle.
- To learn about methods of attacking and defending a Motte and Bailey castle.
- To draw castles on a simple map with a key.
- To understand what life was like for people who lived and worked in medieval castles.

NC coverage

- Events beyond living memory that are significant nationally or

Skills: Historical Comprehension

