

SELF-LED ACTIVITY

LIVING TIMELINE



Recommended for

KS2–3 (History, Drama)

Learning objectives

- Use character cards to explore the stories of people who lived and worked at Clifford's Tower.
- Investigate the periods that these characters lived in to discover how Clifford's Tower was used during their lifetimes.
- Take on the roles of the characters to compare and contrast their experiences of life in York over time.

Time to complete

Approx. 45-50 minutes



A medieval mason working on the construction of Clifford's Tower.

SUMMARY

Clifford's Tower has witnessed important events in local and national history for the last thousand years. In this activity, students will consider how these events have influenced Clifford's Tower and the history of York.

Organise students into small groups (4 to 6 students) and give each group a character card. Ask students to prepare a short narrated performance using the card they've been given as inspiration. KS2 students may need additional support with pronunciation and definitions of key vocabulary, which can be found in the Glossary on page 22. We've suggested character parts on each card (highlighted in bold) but you may wish to assign parts within groups.

- The Norman Soldier and Stuart Cavalier cards have a minimum of six parts
- The Medieval Mason and Victorian Prison Guard cards have a minimum of five parts
- The Tudor Constable and 20th-Century Engineer cards have a minimum of four parts

Groups should perform their segments in chronological order to create a living timeline.

SUCCESS CRITERIA FOR PERFORMANCES

We suggest the following success criteria for students' living timeline performances:

- Everyone in the group has taken an active role in preparing and delivering the group's performance.
- Students show clear character through tone, expression, movement and gestures.
- Students have considered the use of props, or imagined props, to support their performance.

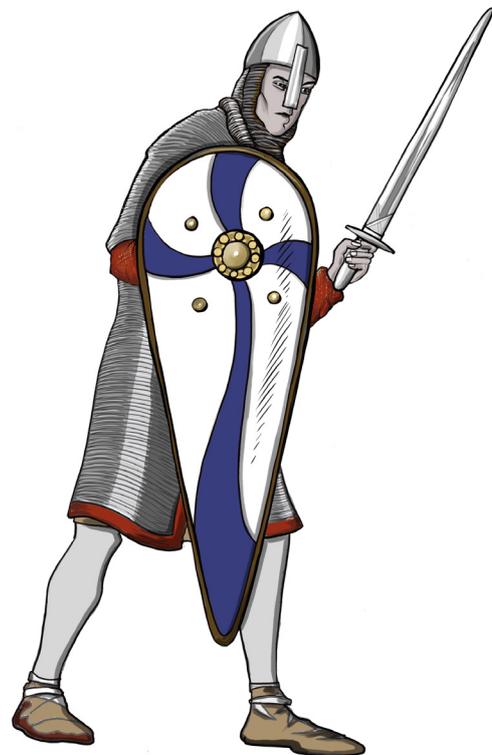
MORE LEARNING IDEAS

Discuss which period students consider to be the most significant in the tower's history. They could debate or write persuasively to explain their decision.



NORMAN SOLDIER

‘Norman rule wasn’t very popular in the north of England after the Battle of Hastings in 1066. In the summer of 1068, **Gospatrick, Earl of Northumbria**, led a rebellion in York against our Norman king, **William the Conqueror**. William heard about it and ordered that we travel north to put down the revolt. He founded a castle at York to establish his authority. We thought that would be the end of it, but in 1069, Gospatrick joined forces with **Edgar Ætheling** to attack York. We had to return to York once again to re-take the city. William founded another castle on the opposite bank of the river Ouse on Baile Hill to strengthen his control. That summer, there was another big rebellion across the north and west of England. A rising in York attracted the attention of **King Sven of Denmark** and **Malcolm of Scotland** of all people! In September, the rebels captured York and destroyed both of King William’s castles. He was not best pleased and we returned a third time in autumn 1069 to stamp out the rebellions once and for all. William wasted no time in rebuilding both of his castles. He put **William Percy** in charge and punished the whole region by destroying and plundering. This is being called the “harrying of the north”’



MEDIEVAL MASON

‘**Henry III** ordered us to start building works at York Castle during the 1240s. He feared that a war against the Scots was on the horizon and wanted to make sure his northern defences were up to scratch. King Henry sent **Henry the mason** and **Simon the carpenter** to York to take a look at the castle and work out how best to reinforce it. At the same time, he ordered the **sheriff of York** to bring together **other masters** skilled in the same trades, that’s where I came in.

We copied the French fashion for curved lobes, like at the French royal castle Étampes, south-west of Paris. It’s very different to anything seen in England before and is drawing lots of attention. Work to rebuild York Castle has gone on for almost 20 years and at great expense. We hear that King Henry has spent more than £3,700 on improving his castle!’



TUDOR CONSTABLE

'Nowadays, York Castle is mostly used for public events like executions, not as a fortress. **Henry VIII's** break with the Church in Rome in the 1530s has not been popular with everyone in England. People are angry about the Dissolution of the Monasteries and want the king to stop his religious reforms. A rebellion sprang up in the north in 1536 led by a lawyer, **Robert Aske**. He led the rebels in a protest against the king's reforms, now known as 'the Pilgrimage of Grace'. Word spread and soon other risings began all over the north, from Yorkshire to Lincolnshire, Cumberland, Northumberland and Lancashire. The **rebels** carried large banners so that people could see that they were pilgrims in the service of God and the Church.

Although the **royal government** told the rebels that they would listen to their concerns if they disbanded, the rebel leaders were arrested and punished. Robert Aske was hung at Clifford's Tower as a warning to others. Although the "dungeon", as we call it, is not what it once was and is falling into disrepair, the tower remains a famous landmark in the city.'



STUART CAVALIER

'We brought Clifford's Tower back into military use in 1642 to support **King Charles I's** fight against the **Parliamentarians** during the English Civil War. His wife, **Queen Henrietta Maria**, supported our cause by travelling to Holland to gather arms and money to fund the king's Royalist army. She brought much-needed cannon and materials to York to improve the fortifications. **Henry Clifford, Earl of Cumberland and governor of York**, directed lots of repairs to the tower – it could never have withstood an attack before. The top of the tower was boarded over to create a platform for cannon and in June 1644 we saw direct action.

Parliamentarians besieged the city and we Royalists were successful at stopping their advance at first. Unfortunately for us, the Parliamentarians' victory at Marston Moor on 2 July 1644 secured their victory in the area. Not even **Prince Rupert**, the king's nephew, could stop them. We were forced to surrender the city of York on 16 July but were allowed to march out honourably to continue fighting in other places.'



VICTORIAN PRISON GUARD

‘For a hundred years, Clifford’s Tower has been sealed away inside a working prison. The only way in is by getting permission from a magistrate. Good luck trying to get that! Even if you did get to see inside the tower, all you’d find are walls covered with ivy. There’s nothing much up there except crumbling walls and overgrown plants.

It’s all about the prison these days. The Female Prison was designed by **Thomas Wilkinson** and **John Prince** to match the Assize Courts. **John Carr**, an architect, supervised the building work between 1780 and 1783. Their original prison was much smaller than you can see today. By the 1800s, extensions and outbuildings were needed to accommodate the growing number of prisoners.

Then came stricter regulations about living conditions for prisoners. This was in the 1820s and meant even more building at York prison! There was a competition to design the improvements. Two architects, **P F Robinson** and **G T Andrews**, won with a Tudor-inspired Gothic design in 1826. By the time the building work was completed in 1835, the 10-metre high wall around the prison with its dark gritstone, battlements and gatehouse made the place look very forbidding. You can hardly see Clifford’s Tower behind those high walls.’



20TH-CENTURY ENGINEER

‘Clifford’s Tower was in a very sorry state when **Sir Basil Mott** came to York to draw up plans to stabilise it in 1902. Even with Sir Basil’s repairs, by 1914, it was clear that there was much more work to do. **Frank Baines** at the Office of Works inspected the tower and recorded that the walls had been badly damaged by movement in the mound below. The structure was still really unstable but gaining access to it was difficult because of the prison walls surrounding it. In 1914, there were **German prisoners of war** held at York prison.

We **engineers** got to work with extensive repairs to the tower in 1919 once the war was over. We reinforced the walls with metal rods and filled in the cracks and tears in the stonework. The prison closed in 1929 and after that many of the prison buildings constructed after 1824 were demolished. Clifford’s Tower opened properly to the public once the works were complete in 1936. Now everyone can enjoy Clifford’s Tower and the views across York from its walls.’

