

Teachers' Kit

Dover Castle: Medieval and Early Modern (1066–1603)

This kit helps teachers plan a visit to Dover Castle, which defended England's shores for 900 years. Use these resources before, during and after your visit to help students get the most out of their learning from the Norman Conquest to the Tudors.

Get in touch with our
Education Bookings Team:

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Share your visit with us on Twitter [@EHEducation](https://twitter.com/EHEducation)



Welcome

This Teachers' Kit for Dover Castle has been designed for teachers and group leaders to support a free self-led medieval-focused visit to the site. It includes a variety of materials suited to teaching a wide range of subjects and key stages, with practical information, activities for use on site and ideas to support follow-up learning.

We know that each class and study group is different, so we have collated our resources into one kit allowing you to decide which materials are best suited to your needs. Please use the contents page, which has been colour-coded to help you easily locate what you need and view individual sections. All our activities have clear guidance on the intended use for study so you can adapt them for your desired learning outcomes.

To further aid your planning, we have created Hazard Information, which you can download from the Dover Castle [School Visits](#) page. Here you can also find information on our expert-led Discovery Visits and an overview of what your class can experience. You can find more practical information about your booked visit to Dover Castle on your Education Visit Permit and in our What You Need to Know document.

We hope you enjoy your visit and find this Teachers' Kit useful. If you have any queries please don't hesitate to get in touch with a member of our team either via bookeducation@english-heritage.org.uk or on 0370 333 0606.

English Heritage Learning Team

Icon Key

The icons below will help you quickly identify the types of activities and information presented.



More to Explore

We've developed resources covering the history of Dover Castle from the Romans to the present day for students of all ages and to suit a range of curriculum-focused themes and topics. You can find links to the following resources and more on the Dover Castle [School Visits](#) page on the English Heritage website.

Dover Castle Through History (KS1–KS5)

An online guide to the castle's top ten stories drawn from 2,000 years of history. It features historical information, key resources and suggested activities for students to use before, during and after their visit to Dover Castle.

Dover Castle: Medieval and Early Modern (1066–1603) Teachers' Kit (KS1–KS4, SEND)

A comprehensive cross-curricular resource focused on the medieval history of Dover from the Norman Conquest to the Tudors. This kit features historical information and pre-visit, on-site and post-visit activity suggestions.

Attack and Defence Handling Collection (KS2, SEND)

A bookable on-site resource providing an opportunity for students to compare attack and defence in the medieval and Georgian periods at Dover Castle. This collection features replica objects and supporting resources to help students develop their observation and evidence-gathering skills.

Dover Castle in the 20th Century Teachers' Kit (KS1–KS4, SEND)

A cross-curricular kit focused on the 20th-century history of Dover Castle, including the First and Second World Wars. This resource features historical information and pre-visit, on-site and post-visit activity suggestions.

First World War Handling Box (KS2)

A bookable on-site resource encouraging students to consider what life was like at Dover Castle during the First World War. This handling box contains replica objects for students to handle and suggested activities to further their learning.

Dover Castle OCR Spec B: History Around Us (GCSE)

Use our site proposal form to support your planning in conjunction with OCR. It contains information and source suggestions for students to explore during their studies.

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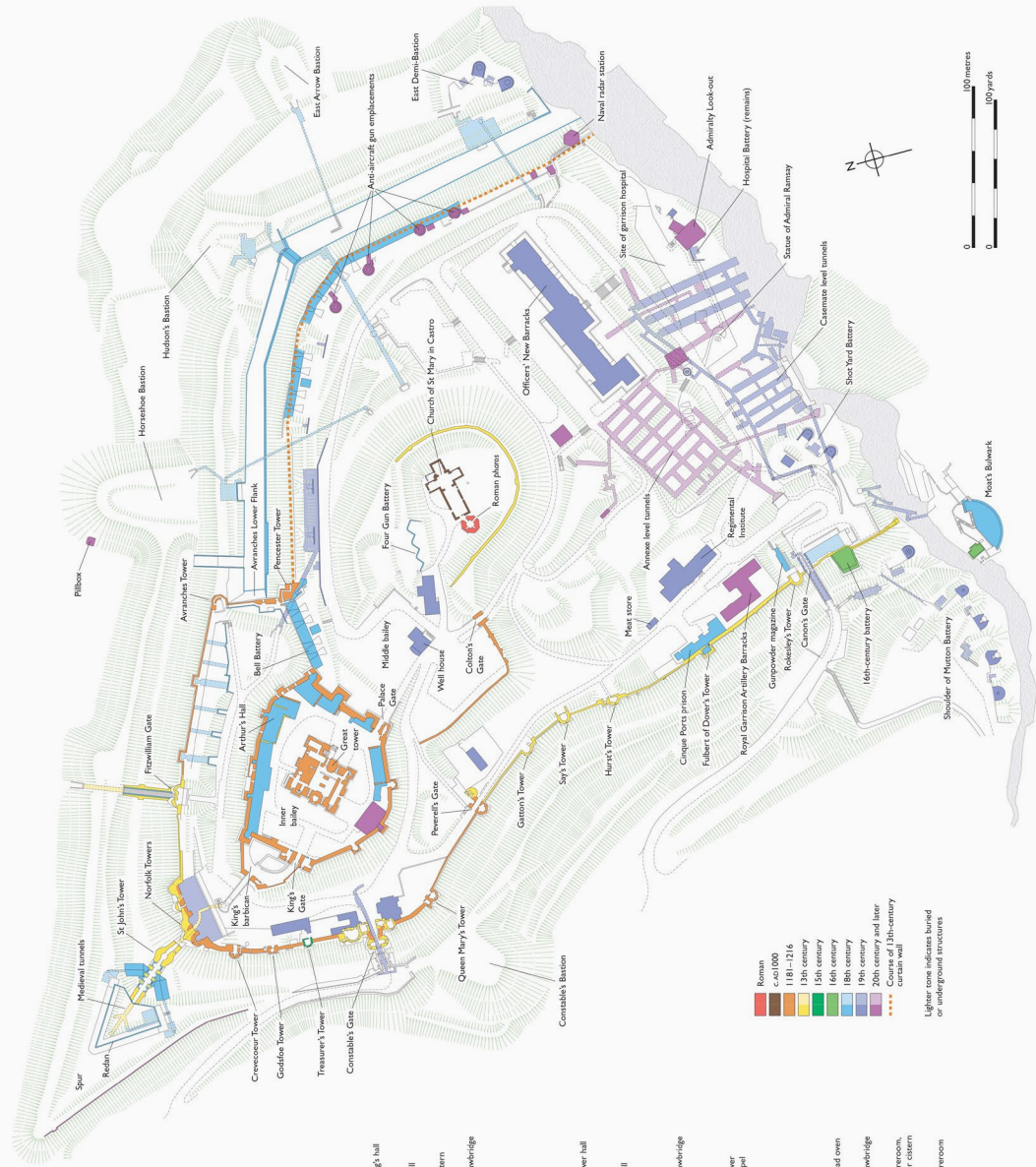
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Pre-visit

Activities and information you can use in the classroom before your visit.

Dover Castle Site Plan

DOVER CASTLE FLOOR PLANS



Dover Castle

Orientation Photos



If you arrive by coach, you will be dropped off outside Constable's Gate and come up this walkway to enter the castle.



Toilets in the medieval part of the castle can be found outside the inner bailey near the Norfolk Towers and inside the inner bailey near Arthur's Hall.



The uniform you will often see around the castle worn by all English Heritage volunteers.



This is the entrance to the Great Tower. The inside of this building can be dark in places and has some uneven floors. Some places within the Great Tower may echo.



The Church of St Mary in Castro is open to English Heritage visitors during the week. Inside is a quiet space where you might find people praying.



There is an exhibition inside the northern defences. This has big screens and audio presentations as well as interactive displays. A one-way system takes you through the tunnels and out to the Spur where you will have a good view towards the Great Tower. The Spur Tunnels are dark with some steep slopes and uneven floors.

Historical Information

Discover the story of Dover Castle

Below is a short medieval and early-modern history of Dover Castle. Use this information to learn how the site has changed over time. You will find the definitions of the key words in the Glossary.

William the Conqueror's castle

Edward the Confessor controlled Dover before his death in 1066. Following his success at the Battle of Hastings in October 1066, William, Duke of Normandy (r.1066–87), took the town of Dover and burnt it. He then built **fortifications**, though it's not clear what these looked like. It was probably a timber castle within the Iron Age **hillfort**, making use of the **earthwork** defences. William's castle may have been built around the existing Church of St Mary in Castro, which dates from around AD 1000.

By the mid 12th century, nine **baronies** had been created in the South East to help protect the important port of Dover. The idea was that one barony supported the castle's **constable** and the other eight supplied knights and men-at-arms to permanently defend the castle. In practice, the baronies may have supplied money and other resources to pay for castle repairs and its **garrison**.



An illustration of William the Conqueror who claimed the English throne after his victory at the Battle of Hastings.

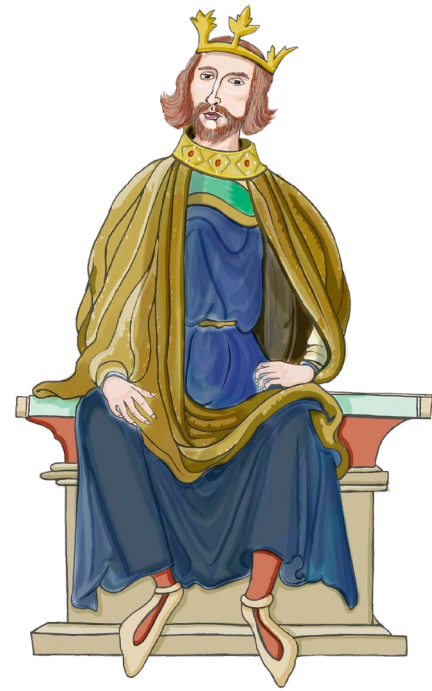
Henry II

Henry II was king of England between 1154 and 1189. He was also Duke of Normandy and Count of Anjou and owned huge estates in south-west France through his marriage to Eleanor of Aquitaine. Henry was extremely wealthy and, as king, became very powerful.

In the 1160s, Henry fell out with his Archbishop of Canterbury, Thomas Becket, over the power of the Church. Henry believed that the clergy should be under Crown control while Becket believed that the pope in Rome had overall power over the **Roman Catholic Church** in England. Becket fled the country in 1165 and when he returned to England in 1170, he was murdered by four of Henry's knights in Canterbury Cathedral. The murder shocked Europe, Becket became a **martyr**, and **pilgrims** began arriving at his tomb. In 1173, he was made a saint.

Dover was a landing point for many pilgrims arriving in England. Eventually, Henry was forced to acknowledge the importance of Becket's martyrdom and arranged to be ceremonially **flogged** at the shrine. This royal recognition led to more high-profile visits – in 1179, King Louis VII of France (r.1137–80) came to Dover on his way to Canterbury.

In 1180, Henry began a massive rebuilding programme. Between 1180 and 1189, he spent £6,000 – over £4 million today – on Dover Castle and it became the most expensive castle in England during his reign. The magnificent castle would leave visitors in no doubt of Henry's wealth and power. Important visitors might be invited to stay there. It is likely that rebuilding the castle at Dover also helped to make sure important people respected Henry's authority after Becket's murder.



An illustration of Henry II who spent huge amounts of money on rebuilding Dover Castle in the 12th century.



Part of a stained-glass window showing the murder of Thomas Becket in Canterbury Cathedral.

1200s: King John's mistake and the Great Siege

When King Henry II died, his son, Richard I (the 'Lionheart') (r.1189–99), continued to spend money on building work at Dover Castle. When Richard was unexpectedly killed, his brother John (r.1199–1216) succeeded him.

Between 1202 and 1204 King Philip II of France (r.1180–1223) gradually took back the land that the **Angevin kings** of England had won in France, including Normandy. The hostile French power was now just across the Channel. John needed to strengthen the defences along the south-east coast. He created a **royal fleet** between 1205 and 1215. Dover Castle was now on the front line in defending England against the French, and John spent more than £1,000 on its defences.

By 1215, a large group of English barons had rebelled against John's government, laid sieges to royal castles and captured London, beginning the **First Barons' War** (1215–17). John had little option but to agree to a set of restrictions on his rule, set out in a document called **Magna Carta**. However, John probably had no intention of honouring the agreement and both sides resumed fighting. With John making progress towards winning, the barons had the support of the French king's son, Prince Louis (the 'Lion'). In 1216, he landed in Kent with an **expeditionary force** ready to help the barons win the war, and seize the English throne for himself. It was a nationwide war, with one of the key aims being to capture Dover Castle to gain control of the port and the shortest crossing point of the Channel.

At the time, Dover Castle was protected by King John's **justiciar, Hubert de Burgh**. In July 1216, the French **besieged** the castle, but Hubert led a strong defence with a small garrison. The French tunnelled beneath the north **gatehouse** and one of its towers collapsed, but the defenders fought off the invaders by hand-to-hand fighting. Louis agreed a truce on 14 October.

On 18 October, King John died and his son became Henry III of England at the age of nine. In May 1217, Louis attacked Dover again, but again it defended itself. With further defeats of the French and the barons at great battles in Lincoln and at sea near Sandwich, the war ended in a settlement.



An illustration of King John.

Hubert's extraordinary defences

As Henry III (r.1216-72) was just nine years old when he became king, a **regency** government ruled in his place. Hubert de Burgh played a leading role in this government, spending huge sums of money on remodelling the defences at Dover Castle, following lessons learnt from the 1216 French siege.

Between 1218 and 1221, £4,865 was spent on the rebuilding of the castle and paying for its garrison – more than £8 million today. Hubert oversaw the strengthening of the outer **curtain wall**, blocking up the old north gatehouse that was damaged in the siege, and building the new and much stronger gateway – Constable's Gate – from a huge base built up from the deep **moat**. To stop attackers besieging the northern area of the castle again, Hubert built a series of **outworks** and the huge St John's Tower. A network of tunnels was built deep underground to connect these defences with the rest of the castle.

Dover Castle had become one of the largest and most important castles in England.



A photograph of Constable's Gate, built by Hubert de Burgh in the early 13th century.

1265: Eleanor De Montfort at Dover Castle

During the 1260s, Henry III's government faced a group of rebel barons, led by **Simon de Montfort**, 6th Earl of Leicester known as the **Second Barons' War**. In 1263, Montfort captured Dover Castle. In June 1265, Montfort's wife, Eleanor, was staying at the castle but, by August, her husband had been killed in the **Battle of Evesham**.

Eleanor hired archers to protect her and prepared to hold out at Dover Castle. However, she had imprisoned 14 royalist knights inside the castle, who managed to escape and barricaded themselves in the Great Tower. When Prince Edward brought forces from London to besiege the tower, Eleanor was faced with enemies both inside and outside the castle and had no choice but to surrender to Edward.



A portrait of Eleanor de Montfort, who stayed at Dover Castle in 1265.

1500s: Royal Tudor visitors

By the 16th century, the castle was no longer as prominent as it had been, but it always had a small garrison because of its strategic position on the coast overlooking the **Strait of Dover**. King Henry VIII (r.1509–47) stayed at Dover Castle several times.

In the 1530s, Henry split from the Roman Catholic Church and established the Church of England. After the **English Reformation**, England had no nearby foreign allies because Henry's actions had angered the Catholic powers of Europe, especially the pope. The threat of invasion was very real, and Henry quickly identified weak spots and built a chain of forts to guard England's coast. As part of this work, he improved the defences in Dover harbour and mounted extra cannons at the castle.

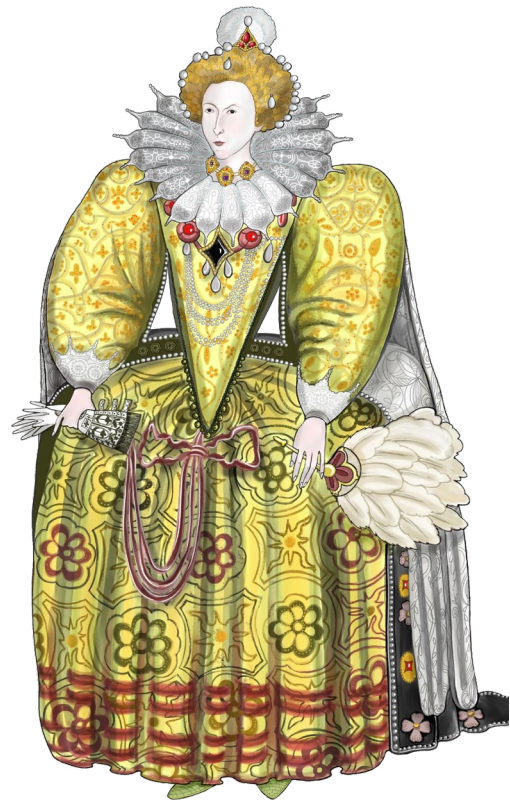
Henry needed **Protestant** allies in Europe, so he decided to marry Anne of Cleves, the daughter of a powerful Germanic duke. In 1539, Anne stayed at Dover Castle on her way from Cleves to Canterbury. The Great Tower was refurbished for her stay.

Though the threat of attack was over by 1541, the newly improved defences at Dover became part of Henry's wider plan to protect the southern coast of England.

In 1573, Elizabeth I (r.1558–1603) stayed at Dover Castle, but on her next visit she preferred to stay in the town. The fact that the castle was beginning to decay probably inspired Elizabeth to pay for a new programme of repairs. In the 1580s, the Roman pharos (lighthouse) was roofed and floored to store gunpowder.



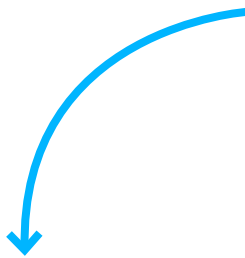
A portrait of Anne of Cleves by Hans Holbein. © Public domain



An illustration showing Elizabeth I in around 1597.

Glossary

Tricky terms and what they mean



Below is a list of words you might come across while exploring the medieval and early-modern history of Dover Castle. Use this Glossary to find out what they mean.

Angevin kings – the first Plantagenet kings of England, who also owned the Duchy of Anjou, in France. The Angevins began in England with King Henry II and ended with King John.



An illustration of King John.

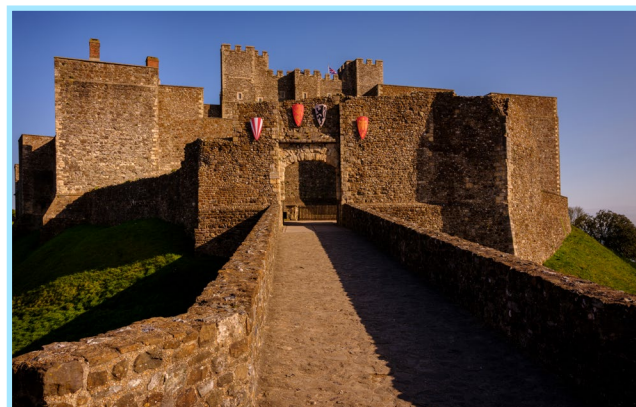
barony – an area of land made up of estates ruled over by a high-ranking noble i.e. a baron. Baronies were created as a way of ruling England and providing resources for its defence.

Battle of Evesham (4 August 1265) – one of the main battles of the Second Barons' War in the 13th century, between King Henry III and a group of rebel barons, led by Simon de Montfort, 6th Earl of Leicester. The battle marked the defeat of Montfort and the rebellious barons by Prince Edward – later King Edward I (r.1272–1307) – who led the forces of his father, Henry III.

besiege – to surround (a place) with armed forces and attack it in order to capture it or force its surrender

constable – the governor of a castle, responsible for its security and defence

curtain wall – a strong wall around a medieval castle or abbey, often with defensive towers



King's barbican is part of the inner curtain wall with fourteen towers protecting the Great Tower.

earthworks – large-scale movement of earth and rocks to make artificial banks and ditches for defensive purposes

English Reformation – a series of events during the 16th century that saw the Church of England break away from the authority of the pope and the Roman Catholic Church, the Suppression of the Monasteries and the beginnings of new and reformed religious practices



An illustration of Henry VIII who broke with the Church in Rome and started the English Reformation.

expeditionary force – a group of soldiers sent to fight in a war overseas

First Barons' War (1215–17) – a civil war between a group of rebellious barons, supported by the French king, Philip II Augustus, and King John. In 1215 at Runnymede, John agreed to the terms of Magna Carta but failed to honour them. Warfare, which had begun before Magna Carta, resumed. The rebel barons, led by

Robert Fitzwalter, offered the crown to Louis, Dauphin of France, in return for his help to defeat John. He landed in Kent in 1216. John's death in October 1216 and the reissue of Magna Carta by his son, Henry III, and the return of many barons to the young king's side gradually led to the end of the war in 1217.

flogged – to have hit someone with a whip or a stick as a punishment

fortifications – defensive structures, e.g. a curtain wall, towers, moats

garrison – a group of troops stationed in a particular place to defend it

gatehouse – room(s) built over a fortified castle entrance, used by guards on duty, for living in, receiving guests and sometimes as prisons

hillfort – a fort built on a hill, often enclosed by a system of defensive banks and ditches, of the Iron Age period

Hubert de Burgh – 1st Earl of Kent.

Hubert was one of the most influential men in England during the reigns of King John and King Henry III. Hubert won many battles for the royalist cause during the First Barons' War. He became a powerful figure in government from 1219 until 1229. Hubert was dismissed from court in 1232 and imprisoned on charges of treason. In 1234, he was pardoned by King Henry III.

justiciar – a deputy in charge of running a Norman or Plantagenet king of England's court

Magna Carta – also known as the ‘Great Charter’, was the document signed by King John in 1215, placing limits on his power

martyr – someone who is killed, and later honoured, because of their religious beliefs

moat – a deep, wide ditch around a castle or palace, sometimes dry, sometimes filled with water

outworks – a section of a fortification beyond a main fortress, often protecting a weak point, but connected to a main one



After the sieges of 1216 and 1217, Hubert de Burgh created new outworks and underground tunnels at Dover Castle.

pilgrim – a person who journeys to a sacred place for religious reasons, often to honour a particular saint or relic

Protestant – someone who disagrees with Roman Catholic religious practice; a member of a Christian religious movement against the established Roman Catholic Church

regency – a government led by a regent (a person appointed to govern a country because the monarch is absent or too young or ill to rule)

Roman Catholic Church – A major branch of Christianity led by the Pope, who runs the Church from Rome. When England became Protestant under Henry VIII, Catholic people were viewed with suspicion and faced persecution for their faith.

royal fleet – in the medieval period, an assortment of the ‘King’s ships’ assembled only when needed and then dispersed

Second Barons’ War (1264–7) – a civil war between Henry III and his barons

Simon de Montfort – 6th Earl of Leicester, a nobleman who led the rebellion against King Henry III during the Second Barons’ War and became ruler of England. During his rule, Montfort stripped the king of unlimited authority. He was killed by forces loyal to the king in the Battle of Evesham.

Strait of Dover – a narrow sea passage between South East England and northern France between the English Channel and the North Sea. It provides the shortest sea crossing between England and the European mainland.

Key Dates

Dover Castle: Medieval and Early Modern

- **1066** William the Conqueror takes the town of Dover and burns it, before building new fortifications.
- **c.1150** Nine baronies are created to support the defence of Dover. The barons supply knights to protect the castle.
- **1179** King Louis VII of France arrives in Dover, on his way to visit Thomas Becket's shrine.
- **1180-89** Henry II oversees a huge rebuilding of the castle at Dover.
- **1216** Prince Louis of France besieges Dover Castle but is fought off by the castle's garrison, led by Hubert de Burgh.
- **1217** Louis attacks the castle again, but is forced to agree a truce and finally withdraws.
- **1217-21** Hubert de Burgh oversees lots of defensive improvements to the castle, including a network of tunnels.
- **1263** Simon de Montfort captures Dover Castle and in 1264 he imprisons Prince Edward (later Edward I) there.
- **1265** Montfort's wife, Eleanor, stays at the castle. She tries to hold out after her husband's death but is forced to surrender when the royalist knights she had imprisoned in the Great Tower escape.
- **1384** Richard II grants his favourite, Simon de Burley, the constablership of Dover Castle and wardenship of the Cinque Ports. Burley receives £300 to cover his expenses but he must live at the castle.
- **c.1460s-80s** Edward IV modernises the Great Tower during his reign so that it can serve as an occasional royal residence.
- **1520** Holy Roman Emperor Charles V arrives at Dover Castle to meet Henry VIII. He probably stays in the Great Tower.
- **1539** Following a period of neglect, parts of the castle are refurbished in anticipation of hosting Anne of Cleves.
- **1573** Elizabeth I stays at Dover Castle. Following her visit, she orders a new round of repairs.

Build a Trebuchet



Recommended for

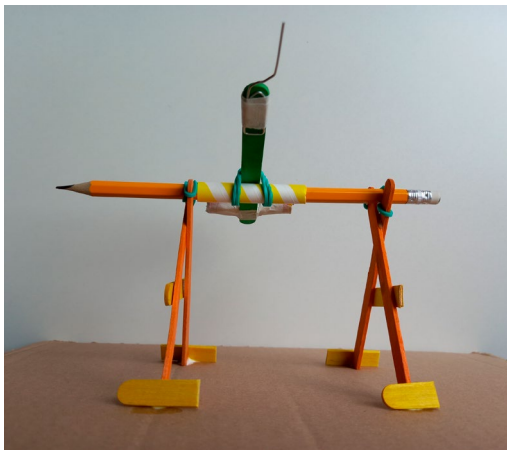
History, Science, Design and Technology

Learning objectives

- Understand the use of medieval machinery in siege warfare.
- Build and test a simple model to explore the principles of medieval trebuchet construction and investigate forces in action.

Time to complete

45 minutes



Make, test and adjust a mini trebuchet to explore medieval warfare and the effects of forces.



Visit the full-size perrier near the Great Tower during your visit to Dover Castle.

Summary

Medieval constructions like trebuchets were key components of siege warfare. In this activity, students will work in small groups to create and test a mini trebuchet model. Students will understand the effect of forces through observation and develop the most effective siege weapon possible through trial and error.

Each group will need

1 piece of thick cardboard, 8 lollipop sticks, 1 pair of scissors, 1 pencil, 1 large straw (thick enough for the pencil to pass through), glue (either PVA or hot glue), sticky tape, rubber bands, string, 1 paper clip, a weight (or an AA battery).

Suggested approach

Introduce the topic with the **short video** 'How to Take a Medieval Castle' (1 min 49 secs) on the English Heritage YouTube channel.

Divide your class into small groups of three or four and distribute the materials they need to build their models. You can distribute the instructions on the next page for students to follow, or you may wish to lead your class through each stage. Some students may require additional adult support during construction.

Once each group has built their model, come together as a class to discuss the forces acting on the trebuchet and how energy is transferred during its use. Encourage students to adjust their models to improve their performance and evaluate their findings.

More learning ideas

Visit the life-size siege engine replica near the Great Tower during your visit to Dover Castle to help place students' learning in context. Challenge your students to find out key facts and figures related to the use of perriers and trebuchets during the sieges of 1216 and 1217.

Build a Trebuchet



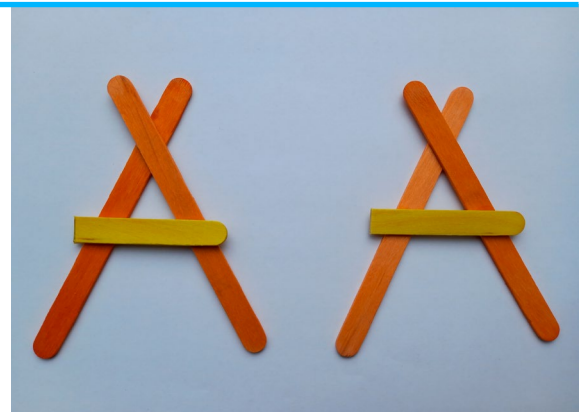
Use these instructions to make your own mini trebuchet and adjust it to make the most effective siege engine you can.

Trebuchets are a type of siege engine used in medieval warfare. They were made from wood and designed with a rotating arm that could fire huge stones at an enemy during a siege.

1

Make two 'A-frames' using four whole lollipop sticks and one stick cut in half. Overlapping your sticks to make a 'v' shape at the top as you can see in this picture is very important.

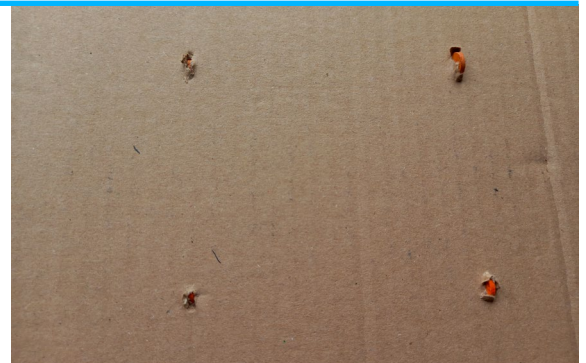
Glue the pieces together and leave them to dry while you complete Step 2. Make sure your frames are dry before moving them.



2

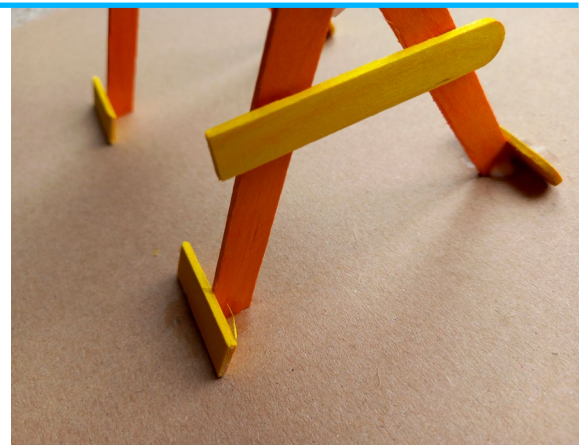
Measure the distance between the legs of your 'A-frames' and mark these out on your cardboard square as shown in this picture.

Cut 1cm vertical slots for your A frame to sit in. You may need some help with this.



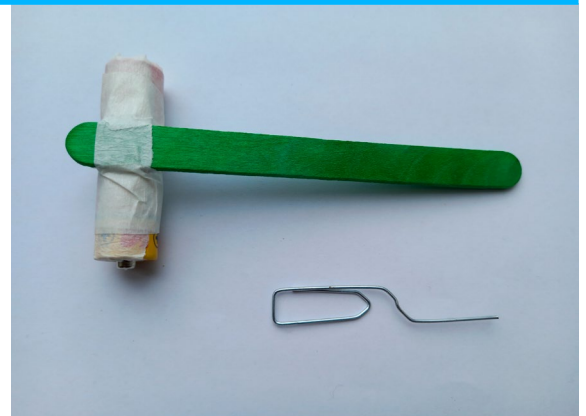
3

Place the ends of your 'A-frames' in the slots so that they are standing up facing each other. You can make your structure stronger by gluing or taping them in place and cutting up another lollipop stick into four small pieces and creating supports at the base of each join.



4

Take another lollipop stick and tape your weight to one end of it to make your trebuchet arm. This is going to be the counterweight. Unbend one end of your paperclip so that it is almost straight and tape the unbent end to the stick (as shown in the picture below). This will be the hook which will hold the sling.

**5**

Cut a 2.5cm length of straw and attach this horizontally across the arm, near to the weight. You can use glue, rubber bands or tape to attach it. The straw should be closer to the weight than the hook.

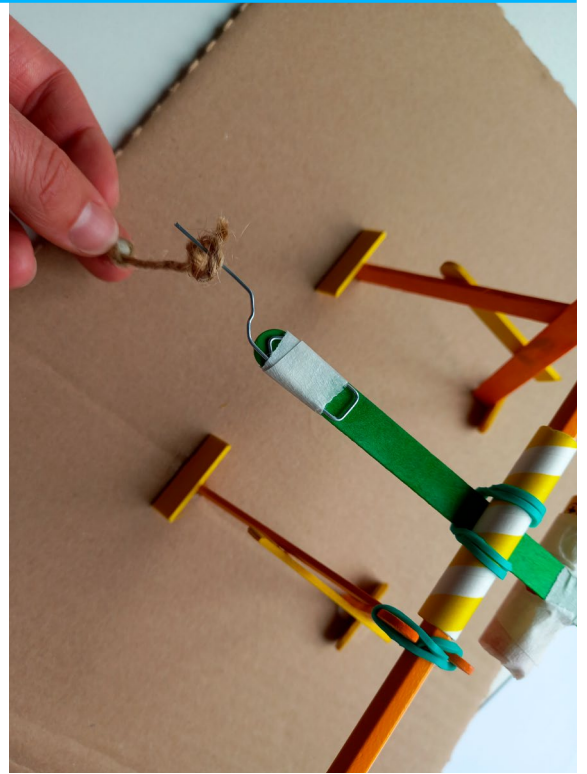
**6**

Put the pencil inside the straw and then slot the pencil into the two notches at the top of your 'A-frames'. The pencil is the crossbar for your trebuchet and forms a pivot. This allows the arm of your trebuchet to rotate. Don't glue the pencil in place as this will stop it moving freely.



7

Attach the foam piece to a small loop of string. Hang the string from the hook on your trebuchet.

**8**

Make sure there is no one in your line of fire and that there is nothing that could be damaged before you test your trebuchet. We recommend using your model in an empty hall or outside to make sure. Use one hand to pull down on the foam piece, raising the counterweight on the opposite end of the trebuchet's arm. Let go and watch your projectile fly.

9

Adjust your trebuchet to get the best results – you could try moving the arm so the weight is closer or further from the pivot, for example. How far can you launch your projectile?

Henry II's Feast



Recommended for

History, English

Learning objectives

- Learn about society in medieval England: dining, food and drink in a medieval castle.
- Develop instructional writing skills by designing your own recipe.

Time to complete

30–40 minutes



Two replica aquamaniles (jugs) based on surviving 13th-century bronze and brass examples. An aquamanile was a vessel for containing water. The water was generally for hand-washing, which usually took place before meals in upper-class households.



The guest hall on the first floor of the Great Tower, set out for a 12th-century banquet.

Summary

The Great Tower at Dover Castle was occasionally used to host important guests and feasts. Medieval royal feasts often involved grand-scale and elaborate ceremony.

Introduce the different roles at a medieval banquet to your students:

- cook – directing the assistants
- cook's assistants – stirring the sauces over the fire, chopping vegetables, mixing, basting the meat, whisking (with twigs!)
- carver – carving the meat at the table
- steward – directing the waiting servants
- spit boy/girl – turning the spit in the kitchen
- scullion (menial) – e.g. cleaning the spit
- sewer – head waiter and official taster of the food
- cup-bearer – brings the king's cup to the table
- pot boy/girl – collecting empty glasses from the table, serving drinks
- washer boy/girl – washing up (scouring with twigs and sand)
- musicians – entertaining the guests and the king
- jesters – entertaining the guests and the king.

Through a whole-class discussion, explore what these roles reveal about medieval feasts. What clues do they give about medieval etiquette, technologies, materials and ingredients?

Ask students to research medieval foods and how they were cooked. Maggie Black's *Food and Cooking in Medieval Britain* and Peter Brears' *Dining in Medieval England* are good source books.

Students should use their research to design recipes and create a banquet for a royal visit to Dover Castle.

More learning ideas

During your visit to the castle, encourage students to explore the hall and kitchens in the Great Tower. They could carry out a role play using the roles they've learned about in class.

Discover Dover Castle's Defences



Recommended for

History, English

Learning objectives

- Identify the defensive features of medieval Dover Castle.
- Explain the way some medieval defences work.
- Identify how Dover Castle has changed over time.

Time to complete

15–20 minutes

Summary

Begin by introducing some key medieval castle defensive features to your class, for example: curtain walls, towers, keeps, moats, earthworks and inner or outer baileys. Definitions for these terms can be found in the glossary.

Show your students the illustration of Dover Castle in the mid 13th century on the next page. Ask them to work in small groups to identify the key castle defences they can see at Dover Castle and to label their copy of the illustration.

Next, each group should consider one or two defensive features in more detail. How would these stop invaders or withstand an attack? They should consider the landscape of the castle, and how each defensive feature might work with others. After discussion, each group should explain how their chosen defensive feature works to the rest of the class. Use the illustration (on the next page) of Dover Castle as it looks today as a comparison to help students explore how medieval Dover Castle has changed over time. Ask students to identify the changes by circling them on their copy of the illustration. Then, in small groups, students should try to formulate why the defences and landscape may have changed.



The Great Tower at Dover Castle.



Use the larger version of this reconstruction on the next page to study Dover Castle's 13th-century defences.

More learning ideas

At the castle, encourage students to explore the outdoor displays at the northern end of the castle to help put Dover Castle's defences into context. Once they've discovered how medieval siege weapons worked, they should annotate their illustrations with examples that could be used to launch an attack on particular castle features. You could also venture out from the Spur Tunnels and look back towards the castle to identify the layers of defensive features you can see.

Discover Dover Castle's Defences



An illustration of the castle in the mid 13th century. It shows the castle at the height of its development in the medieval period.



Reconstruction illustration by Terry Ball, 2008. This illustration shows the castle as it looks today. Its last major role as a defensive fortress was against German forces during the Second World War (1939–45).

At the Castle

Activities for students to do at Dover Castle to help them get the most out of their learning.

Sensory Trail: Exploring Medieval Dover Castle



Recommended for

History

Learning objectives

- Explore key areas of the castle and identify what they were used for.
- Develop sensory observation skills.

Time to complete

15–20 minutes

Summary

Please print the Teachers' Notes and map (on pages 26–28) to help students explore six key parts of the castle through sensory activities. As you explore the castle, use the questions and suggestions in the Teachers' Notes (pages 26–27) to help connect the different parts of the castle to what they were used for.

Using this trail

Although this is a sensory trail, please remind the group not to touch anything unless invited to.

The trail can be followed at the pace of the group and the stops can be visited in the order that best suits your group's needs. If any member of your group feels overwhelmed or overstimulated by the sensory input at any time, Dover Castle has plenty of calm spaces that you can use. Please see the Access Map on the Dover Castle webpage for information about sensory considerations around the site.

More learning ideas

You might like to create a sensory bingo sheet for your students to use as they explore the castle. After your visit, you could compare and contrast the sights, smells and sounds students experienced at the castle and those they encounter regularly at school.



Explore the sights, sounds and smells of Dover Castle on a medieval-inspired sensory trail.

Sensory Trail: Exploring Medieval Dover Castle

Stop 1: Church of St Mary in Castro

Standing by the wall behind the church, look out towards the town of Dover and the sea beyond the harbour. Imagine that you have been transported back to a time before the large town and large ships you can see today. Close your eyes and listen – what sounds can you hear? What can you feel against your face? Discuss whether you think these are similar to what people may have felt standing here in the past.



Stop 2: Palace Gate

March towards Palace Gate which guards the Great Tower beyond. Imagine there are soldiers looking down on you from the top of the gate, aiming their arrows. How will you attack? Gather together, form orderly lines and practise marching together. You can hear the whoosh and ping of arrows firing down on you. Take cover and decide if you will carry on into the castle or retreat.



Stop 3: Inner bailey

You've made it to the inner bailey, the strongest part of the castle! The Great Tower looms above you casting you in shadow. What might an attacker feel, looking up at such an imposing building?



Teachers' Notes

Sensory Trail: Exploring Medieval Dover Castle *continued*

Stop 4: Great Tower (king's rooms)

Explore the upstairs rooms of the Great Tower and take the opportunity to stop in different spots and look around at the bright colours and luxurious furniture used by the king and his courtiers. What colours and images can you see? Find a fireplace and imagine a roaring fire flickering and crackling, heating up the room.



Stop 5: Great Tower (kitchens)

The kitchens are a very important place in the Great Tower. Check the supplies in here and imagine the kinds of meals you could cook for all your soldiers in a big cauldron over a large fire. What would they smell like? Imagine that this is a very busy and hot place with lots of people rushing around preparing lots of food.



Stop 6: Constable's Gate

Now it's your turn to defend the castle from an attack! Remember your experience earlier and get into a defensive position. March together in time, draw your arrows and swords and advance towards the gate. Well done! Your enemy has run away and you've successfully held Dover Castle against attack.



Dover Castle

Exploring Medieval Dover Castle Sensory Trail Map



Key

1 Church of St Mary in Castro

2 Palace Gate

3 Inner bailey

4 Great Tower (king's rooms)

5 Great Tower (kitchens)

6 Constable's Gate

Explore Medieval Dover Castle

Top Things to See


Find these places and **complete** each challenge. Teachers can guide their groups, reading the information before students complete the challenges. Or, students may like to lead their own learning in small groups with support.

Can't find your way?
Use the map to help.



1 Palace Gate

Today, this is the entrance to the inner bailey, the most important part of the medieval castle. It protected the Great Tower where King Henry II had chambers.

 **Where is it?**
Middle bailey

Did you find it?



Palace Gate.

Did you know?



In the past, there was a barbican (a walled enclosure defending the gate) in front of Palace Gate, giving the Great Tower extra protection.

Challenge time!



Work together to form an attacking force and march in time through the gate with swords and arrows drawn.

2 Well chamber

This chamber is designed around the deep well. It is more than 90 metres deep and reaches down to the water table at the base of the chalk cliffs.



The well chamber.



Where is it?

Second floor, Great Tower



Did you find it?

Did you know?



The well chamber is built into the thickness of the wall. In some places, the walls are 6.5m thick!

Challenge time!



Discuss with your group: if you were asked to dig this well down through the building, how would you do it without modern machinery?

3 Wall hangings

The painted wall hangings in the king's hall show the events between William the Conqueror's victory at the Battle of Hastings in 1066, and the capture and rebuilding of Dover Castle in the same year.



Wall hangings in the king's hall.



Where are they?

Second floor,
Great Tower



Did you find them?

Did you know?



Henry II became king in 1154, thanks to a claim to the throne passed down to him from his great-grandfather, William the Conqueror.

Challenge time!



Think about what message these wall hangings sent to the important visitors who met with the king in this room.

Hint: Brightly coloured hangings like these were very expensive in medieval times.

4 Mappa Mundi

The replica world map near the door shows how wealthy people viewed the world in the 12th century. A map like this was the ultimate symbol of power and status; a person was very important if they had one.

Where is it?



Second floor,
Great Tower



Did you
find it?



A replica of the Mappa Mundi.

Did you know?



Medieval maps were used by wealthy people to teach subjects like natural history, to share legends and reinforce religious ideas.

Challenge time!



Look closely at the map – do you recognise any countries? Is there anything odd about the shape and location of them compared with maps you may be used to?

5 King's bed

The covers on the king's bed are made of silk and backed with real Eurasian (from Europe and Asia) squirrel fur. These squirrels have blue-grey backs and white bellies.

Where is it?



Second floor,
Great Tower



Did you
find it?



The king's bed in the king's chamber.

Did you know?



In the 1100s, there was a job called 'The Bearer of the King's Bed'. These servants had to carry the bed wherever the king went.

Challenge time!



This bed is a replica because no 12th-century beds survive. **Discuss** with your group: what kinds of evidence could a historian use to work out what a 12th-century bed looked like?

6 Becket's Chapel

The Archbishop of Canterbury, Thomas Becket, was killed by four of the king's knights in 1170.

Where is it?



Second floor,
Great Tower



Did you
find it?



A stained-glass window in Becket's Chapel.

Did you know?



The chapel is thought to have been built by the same masons, or designed by the same person, who made the eastern end of Canterbury Cathedral, where Becket was murdered.

Challenge time!



Look inside the chapel. Why do you think the decorations, flooring and windows are more detailed here than in all the other rooms?

7 Garderobe

The room with dining tables arranged in a large U-shape is the guest hall. Linked to this is a small room with one toilet (garderobe), for guests to use. A medieval toilet had a wooden seat over a shaft in the thickness of the wall.

Where is it?



First floor,
Great Tower



Did you
find it?



The garderobe next to the guest hall.

Did you know?



In medieval times, it was very extravagant to have a garderobe just off the dining hall.


Challenge time!



Spot the main similarities and differences between the king's hall on the second floor and the guest hall on the first floor.

8 Bread oven

This is an original 12th-century feature and can be found in the bakehouse. It is built into the thickness of the walls. This bread oven is an important clue to the way the ground floor was originally used.

 **Where is it?**
Ground floor,
Great Tower

Did you find it?



The bread oven in the reconstructed kitchens.

Did you know?



The dough trough is used for mixing large amounts of flour and water. It is big enough for the baker to climb in and knead the dough with his feet!

Challenge time!



Practise a kneading motion with your hands (or your feet!). How might it feel to stretch and press enough dough for everyone at the castle?

9 Constable's Gate

This gate was the main entrance into the castle from its completion around 1221. The gate and the lodging above were built by Hubert de Burgh in 1217–21 when he was constable of Dover Castle.

 **Where is it?**
Left from king's barbican

Did you find it?



Constable's Gate.

Did you know?



Hubert was also Lord Warden of the Cinque Ports which meant he had overall control of the important medieval ports of Sandwich, Dover, Hythe, New Romney and Hastings. From his time until the early 18th century, the official residence of the Lords Warden was inside Constable's Gate.

Challenge time!



Consider the features you would include if you were building a home above a defensive gateway like this one. **Discuss** your ideas with a partner.

Explore Medieval Dover Castle

Top Things to See

See if you can find all these things.
Tick each one off as you find it.



1. Palace Gate



Arrow loops



2. Well chamber



Winding gear



3. Wall hangings



William the Conqueror



4. Mappa Mundi



Mythical creatures



5. King's bed



Board games



6. Becket's Chapel



Altar



7. Garderobe



Guest Hall



8. Bread oven



Thickness of walls



9. Constable's Gate



Drawbridge



Dover Castle

Medieval Top Things to See Map



Key

- | | | | | | |
|----------|---------------|----------|-----------------|----------|------------------|
| 1 | Palace Gate | 4 | Mappa Mundi | 7 | Garderobe |
| 2 | Well chamber | 5 | King's bed | 8 | Bread oven |
| 3 | Wall hangings | 6 | Becket's Chapel | 9 | Constable's Gate |

Attack and Defence Handling Collection



Recommended for

History

Learning objectives

- Use objects to learn more about attacking and defending Dover Castle over time.
- Consider physical evidence to determine the construction, use and function of objects through close observation.
- Compare and contrast objects from medieval and Georgian Dover to understand how attacking and defending techniques changed over time.

Time to complete

Approx. 30 minutes



The handling collection has been designed to encourage students to compare and contrast objects from the medieval and Georgian periods.

Summary

This activity encourages students to develop their observation skills by investigating objects to discover more about attacking and defending Dover Castle. We've made suggestions for how to use the handling collection and supporting information with your group in the Teachers' Notes on page 37.

Booking and using the resource

To ensure that the handling collection is available on the day of your visit, please book the resource as part of your visit booking.

When you arrive at Dover Castle, the group leader should check in with staff at Constable's Gate. They will welcome you to the castle and direct you to the handling collection. Please use the collection within the casemate learning space and replace all the objects and supporting information when you have finished so it's ready for the next group. There is enough room in the learning space for 30 students to explore the handling collection comfortably. For larger groups, we suggest 30 students start with the handling collection while the rest discover other areas of the castle. They can use the other on-site activities in this kit to support their exploration before swapping over.

More learning ideas

Back in the classroom, discuss the properties of the objects students examined at Dover Castle. What did they notice about the materials used to create weapons and equipment during the medieval and Georgian periods, and why do they think this is?

Attack and Defence Handling Collection

What's included in the handling collection?

There are eight objects (four comparison pairs) in this handling collection:

- Mail, broadcloth, arrowheads, musket balls, bevor, stock, leather costrel, three-pint wooden bottle.

Each object has a prompt card with information about the objects on one side (date, use, materials) and questions to help students explore the object on the other.

Suggested approach for exploring the objects

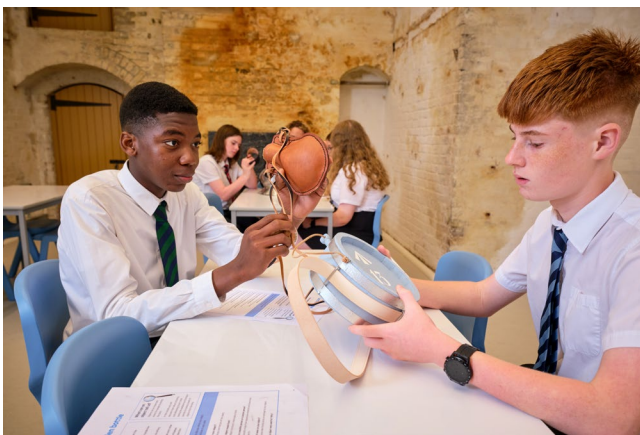
Depending on how much students have already learned about this topic, you may wish to refer to the Historical Information in this kit (pages 8–12) to provide extra context for the objects in this handling collection.

We suggest that you assign each pair of objects to a small group of four or five students. They can then work together to investigate their objects. For larger groups, you can give a single object to each small group.

You may choose to ask students to work through the question side of the card first, so they can make their own assessments about what the objects are and how they were used. You could then reveal the object information on the other side of the card to allow for comparison between students' assessments and the object's historical information. Remind students that the focus of this activity is to ask good questions and make assessments based on what they can see – just like archaeologists and historians.

They shouldn't worry about getting the right answer straight away.

Allow time for students to share their object and observations with the wider group. This will ensure that all students have the chance to find out about all the objects. There are further prompts on the object information side of the cards. These encourage students to compare and contrast objects in the collection and consider where in the castle they were used.



Students using the handling collection in the casemate learning space.

Meet the Medievals: Interactive Timeline



Recommended for

History, Drama

Learning objectives

- Use character cards to explore the stories of people who lived at, visited and worked at Dover Castle.
- Investigate the periods that these characters lived in to discover how Dover Castle was used during their lifetimes.
- Take on the roles of the characters to compare and contrast their experiences of life at Dover Castle during the medieval period.

Time to complete

Approx. 45–50 minutes



Use this interactive timeline to understand the roles of different people in Dover Castle's medieval history, including William the Conqueror.

Summary

In this activity, students will consider the impact of local, national and international events on the medieval history of Dover Castle.

Find an open outdoor space around the castle or book ahead to use one of our education spaces. Organise students into small groups (four to six 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 pages 13–15. We've suggested character parts on each card (highlighted in bold) and you may wish to assign parts within groups:

- The William the Conqueror card has a minimum of four parts.
- The Matilda of England and Prince Louis cards have a minimum of nine parts.
- The Hubert de Burgh and Eleanor de Montfort cards have a minimum of six parts.
- The Elizabeth I card has a minimum of eight parts.

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

More learning ideas

Challenge students to find out more about the characters they encountered during this activity as they explore the castle. You could organise a debate to explore which character students think was most important to the history of Dover Castle based on their findings.

William the Conqueror

My victory at the Battle of Hastings in 1066 was only the beginning! It took years to stamp my authority on England. There were many rebellions and many **rebels** to deal with!

Straight after the battle, I took **my army** eastwards to Dover. We took the town for ourselves and burnt it to enforce my authority. We stayed for eight days and built fortifications to secure the port below the cliffs.

I then travelled to Canterbury and on to Westminster Abbey for my coronation on Christmas Day.

Twenty years later, I made a survey of all the lands in England in my Domesday Book. This shows how I distributed land to loyal **Norman nobles** to help me keep control of my hard-won kingdom. Dover is a Cinque Port which meant it had to provide ships to protect the coast when I asked.



Matilda of England, Duchess of Saxony

I grew up at the royal court. My father, **King Henry II**, ruled a large empire from England down to the Pyrenees mountains between France and Spain. He built much of the grand palace and fortress you see at Dover today.

The king faced many problems during his reign. He wanted firm control of his empire and expected his Archbishop of Canterbury, **Thomas Becket**, to support him in bringing churchmen under crown authority. When Becket refused and fled to France the king was furious. On his return, four of my **father's knights** murdered Becket in his cathedral at Canterbury to show their loyalty.

In the 1170s, my mother, **Eleanor of Aquitaine**, and my brothers **Henry** and **Richard** rebelled against my father. The King thought this was a punishment from God for the Archbishop's murder and he tried to make amends where people could watch him. I never thought I'd see a king walk barefoot through the streets of Canterbury!

The king ordered his master builder, **Maurice**, to build a fortress and palace. Here, he could entertain important pilgrims travelling to Canterbury. He was so embarrassed when he had nowhere to receive **Louis VII of France** when he came in 1179.



Prince Louis of France

In 1215, **King John** faced rebellions by his **barons**. The two sides came together to agree on Magna Carta – the Great Charter. Neither side kept to the agreement and a civil war broke out.

The barons wrote to my father, **Philip II Augustus of France**. They wanted me to become King of England! I headed straight for Dover with an army. If I captured the castle, I would control the shortest crossing between England and France. There was a stand-off between **my men** and the **garrison** inside the castle. Eventually, I took my army up the hill and besieged the castle.

John died in 1216 and his young son **Henry III** became king. I returned to the south coast of England with part of my army and faced some resistance from the new king's supporters. My fleet of ships gathered and sailed to Sandwich and we marched to Dover to begin a second siege.

Eustace the monk tried to bring more French men to Dover to support us but **Hubert de Burgh** defeated them off Sandwich. The English barons didn't support me any more so I signed a treaty with Henry III and returned to France.



Hubert de Burgh

I was one of **King John's** most faithful supporters. He put me in charge of Dover Castle during the First Barons' War. When his son, **Henry**, became king at just nine years old I was part of the regency government. We ruled England before the king was old enough to rule himself.

After the sieges, I got to work rebuilding the castle between 1217 and 1221. We had learned our lesson from the French attacks on the castle.

I worked with **masons** and **labourers** to strengthen the curtain wall.

We built a stronger gateway at Constable's Gate and blocked up the old north gatehouse which had been damaged. We also built outworks and St John's Tower to stop attackers besieging the north of the castle.

A network of tunnels deep underground linked these defences with the rest of the castle. I made sure there was a strong **garrison** stationed at the castle. All of this wasn't cheap – £4,865 if you can believe it!

Under my leadership, Dover became one of the largest and most important castles in England.

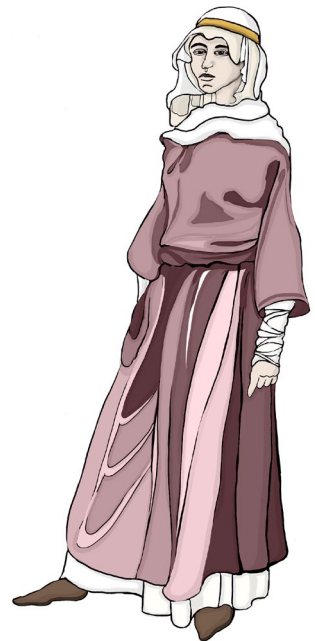


Eleanor de Montfort

I arrived at Dover in 1265 during the Second Barons' War. England's **barons** were frustrated because my brother, Henry III, was favouring our foreign relatives. My husband, **Simon de Montfort, 6th Earl of Leicester**, became the barons' leader. At one point in 1264 he was ruling England after capturing the **king** and his eldest son, **Prince Edward**, at the Battle of Lewes.

Edward escaped in 1265 and restarted the war. My husband and **son** died fighting him at the Battle of Evesham and suddenly I became a target.

I moved my household to Dover Castle where I thought I would be safe. I hoped I could influence the powerful Cinque Ports from here too. A siege broke out here in October 1265. Some royalist **prisoners** I was holding in the Great Tower convinced their gaolers to set them free. I was trapped. I had no choice but to negotiate. I left England for France and never returned.



Elizabeth I

My father, **Henry VIII**, met the **Holy Roman Emperor Charles V** at Dover Castle in 1522. Ten years later, King Henry broke with the Catholic Church in Rome and created the Church of England. This put him at odds with Charles and many other Catholic countries in Europe, including the powerful France and Spain. Henry needed Protestant allies so he married **Anne of Cleves** in 1540 when I was still a girl. She stayed at Dover on her way to marry the king.

As Queen of England, I also had many enemies in Europe so I visited the castle in 1573 to check that it was in good repair. During the 1580s, I supported sailors like **Sir Francis Drake** who stole from Spanish ships and this made **Philip II of Spain** angry. Things got especially tense when I supported **Dutch rebels** in the Spanish Netherlands in 1585.

Philip gathered an armada of ships to attack England in 1587. My spymaster **Francis Walsingham** found out about his plans and Drake led an attack on the armada at Cadiz before they even left port. Their cunning delayed the armada by a year and allowed us time to prepare.



Medieval Activity Trail



Recommended for

History, Geography

Learning objectives

- Recognise Dover Castle's strategic position and how the castle adapted over time in defending England during the medieval period.
- Understand the functions of Dover Castle's key defences and be able to explain the significance of the castle's position on the south-east coast.

Time to complete

15–20 minutes pre-visit activity; 5–10 minutes per on-site activity (x6)



Use our activity trail to explore the medieval areas of Dover Castle.

Prior learning

Before your visit, you could discuss the strategic importance of Dover Castle on the coast of the English Channel. Show your students an aerial view of Dover Castle on Google Maps, pointing out typical defensive features of a castle, such as the curtain wall, keep, moat, drawbridge and gatehouse, and discuss how they may have helped to prevent attack. You could also show students our **short animation** 'A Mini Guide to Medieval Castles' (1 min 55 secs) on the English Heritage YouTube channel as a brief introduction to castle design over time.

Pre-visit activity

In the pre-visit activity 'Dover's key position', students will use a map and aerial photography to identify why the geographical location of Dover led to a requirement for military protection.

Preparation and resources

You will find the Activity Trail on the following pages. Please read our printing tips below and photocopy enough for your class to bring to Dover Castle.

The booklet pages have their own sequence which differs from the rest of the Teachers' Kit and they will appear to be in a random order; this is purposeful to help you create an A5 booklet that can be easily followed by your students.

To do this you'll need to adjust your Print settings:

1. Select size A4.
2. Select a custom page range of 45–52 (to avoid printing unnecessary pages).
3. Select 'Print on both sides of the paper' and 'Flip on short edge'.
4. This will print four double-sided pages of PDF that can be folded in half and arranged in page number order.

More learning ideas

You could download our Meet the Medievals activity (pages 40–43) to further students' understanding of key characters from Dover's medieval history.

Medieval Activity Trail

Dover's key position

Pre-visit

A) How many castles can you find along the coastline?

3 – you can see Deal, Walmer and Dover on your map. Dover is a short distance across the English Channel to the north-west coast of France. Historically, France and England have been frequent adversaries and England was periodically faced with French invasion since the Norman Conquest. Spain, the Netherlands, Germany and others were also enemies that threatened the south-east coast over time. Henry VIII created gun forts at Deal, Walmer and Sandown (now demolished) between 1539 and 1540 to guard against French and Spanish invasion following his break with the Church in Rome.

B) Why were castles built along the south-east coast of England?

Dover is the shortest distance from the French coast, so invaders attempting to get to England safely with large numbers of soldiers and supplies would choose this point to cross the Channel as quickly as possible.

C) Why is Dover Castle's position on the cliffs good for defence?

Dover port was a place of entry to England in miles of inaccessible white cliffs. The castle protected the port from falling into enemy hands. The top of the cliffs provides a good view out over the Channel. There is an advantage for aiming fire at enemy ships below. Strong fortifications would be clearly visible to invaders and would warn against attempting to attack England.

Activity 1

Middle bailey

A) Why are the walls so high?

The high, strong stone curtain wall stopped invaders trying to break into the castle. They would need sophisticated siege weapons to try to break down the walls to get to the inner bailey.

C) How did Colton's Gate stop invaders?

Long arrowloops allowed archers to aim at approaching enemies.

Activity 2

Church of St Mary in Castro (Saxon church)

Most of the building is made from flint.

A) What other type of building materials can you see? Red bricks/tiles

Where else can you see these building materials around here?

In the Roman pharos next to the church. The Saxons reused Roman bricks for building the church. They might have come from the lighthouse or from other Roman buildings nearby.

Medieval Activity Trail *continued*

Activity 3

Great Tower (outside)

A) How did the thick walls protect the Great Tower from attack?

Thick stone walls were very strong and were designed to withstand attack methods such as siege engines and battering rams.

Activity 4

Great Tower (inside)

B) There are very few examples of medieval furniture that survive today. Why do you think this is?

A lot of medieval furniture was made of wood which can weaken and decay over time. People in the past tended to recycle materials when an object became too damaged or old to be used for its original purpose. Though some special items were passed on through the royal family, most monarchs commissioned new decorations and furniture to suit their own tastes rather than using existing things from one of their predecessors.

C) Discuss with a partner what English Heritage could use as evidence to help redecorate historic spaces like these.

The interiors at Dover Castle were recreated using a mixture of evidence types pieced together by historians. Chairs, benches and cupboards were recreated based on existing 12th-century examples but the thrones and beds are based on images from 12th-century illustrated manuscripts. The wardrobe off the king's chamber contains clothing and armour based on 12th-century images. In some cases, surviving wall paintings from contemporary buildings like churches were also used to help guide colour and style choices in the Great Tower.

Activity 5

Under Siege exhibition and Spur Tunnels

B) Why are the cannons aiming at the ditch?

If invaders managed to get past the outworks into the ditch, soldiers could still aim fire at them to stop them getting further into the castle. These guns are called carronades, a cast iron cannon first used by the Royal Navy and also used by land forces from the 1780s.

Activity 6

Avranches Tower

A) Why do the arrowloops point in different directions?

It allowed a great range of positions from which archers could aim their fire. This was called an 'arc of fire' – each individual loop covered areas of ground that overlapped with the next loop, so that no area was left free from fire.

B) How are the arrowloops designed for crossbows, rather than longbows? Label the photograph below to explain your answer.

Longbows were very tall. The arrowloops in Avranches Tower are short, so they are designed for crossbows rather than longbows.

Activity Trail



Discover Medieval Dover Castle

Well done!

Congratulations on completing the trail!

We hope you enjoy your visit.

You can stick this Activity Trail into your book as a record of your learning.



Name:

.....

Class:

.....

School:

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Pre-visit

Dover's key position
Look at the map below.

Notes

A How many castles can you find along the coastline?



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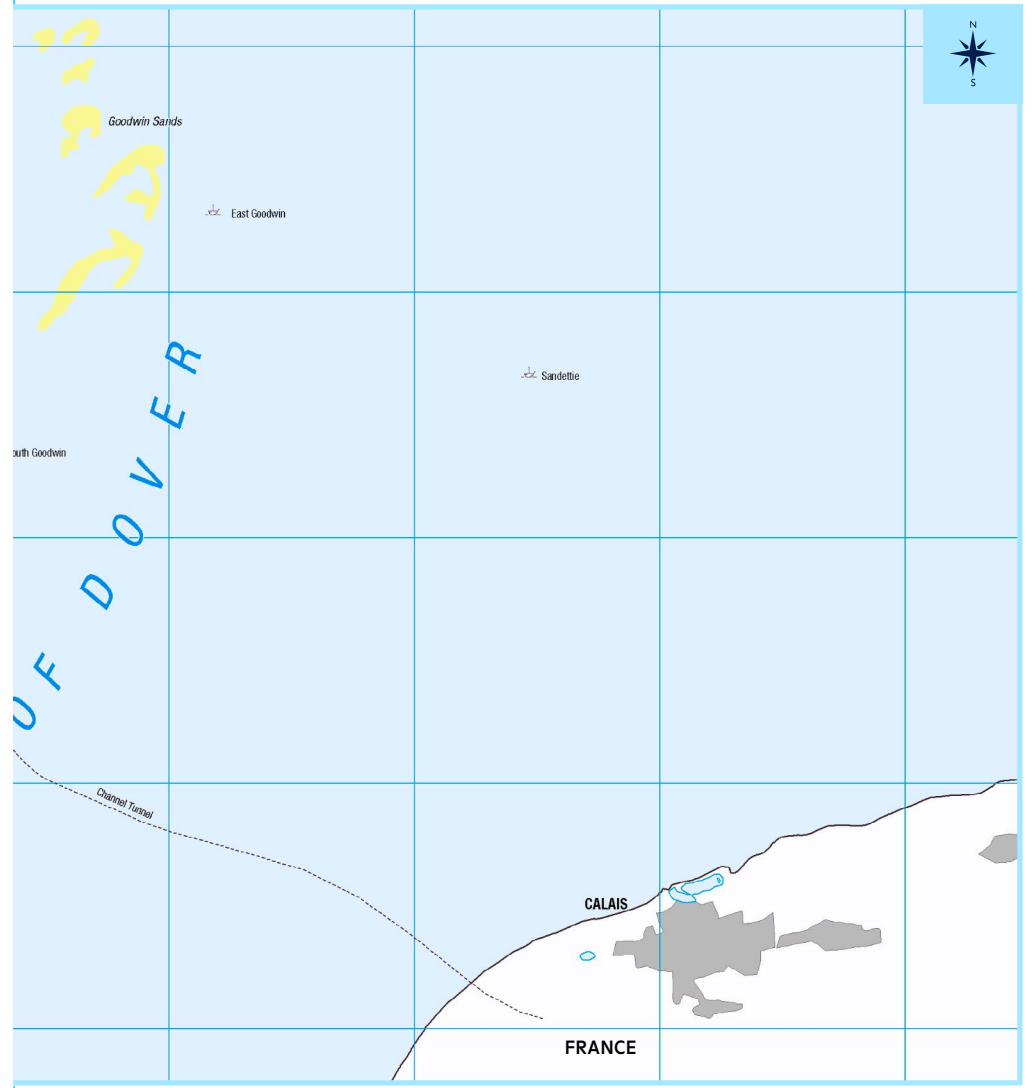
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Notes

B Why were castles built along the south-east coast of England?

.....

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Pre-visit

Dover's key position

Dover Castle was continually updated for use in military action from the Norman Conquest (1066) until the Second World War (1939–45).



At the Castle

Activity 6

Avranches Tower

From the entrance of the Spur Tunnels, **walk** straight ahead and look for Avranches Tower on your left.

Avranches Tower was built in the late 12th or early 13th century. It protects the angle of the curtain wall as it turns south.



Archers aimed their arrows through thin arrowloops.

A Why do the arrowloops point in different directions?

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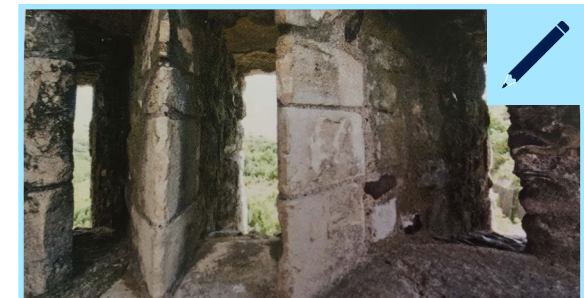
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B How are the arrowloops designed for crossbows rather than longbows?

Label the photograph below to explain your answer.



Inside Avranches Tower.

At the Castle

Activity 5

Under Siege exhibition
and Spur Tunnels

Go to the King's Gate behind the Great Tower. **Find** the stone bridge, go down the wooden steps and into the Under Siege exhibition.

A **Identify** a character's story in the exhibition that you find interesting.

What was their role?

When were they here?

What happened to them?

Discuss why you chose this character with a partner.

Fast-forward

In the late 18th and 19th centuries, parts of the Spur Tunnels were rebuilt. **Enter** the Spur Tunnels and **find** the area with the cannon inside.

B **Why** are the cannons aiming at the ditch?

.....
.....
.....

The north gate of the castle (now Norfolk Towers) survived a great siege in 1216, but only just. In 1217–21, the defences at the northern end of the castle were rebuilt.

Did you know?



In medieval times, there was a drawbridge inside the tunnels, connecting one tunnel to another. It could be pulled up if invaders got inside.

C

Why is Dover Castle's position on the cliffs good for defence? **Label** the image below to explain your answer.

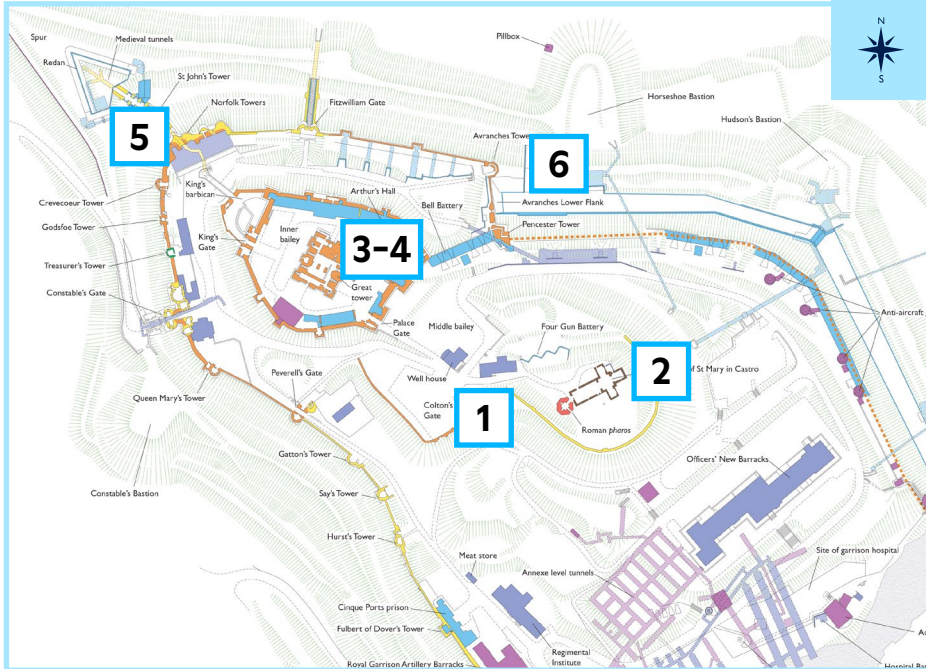
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At the Castle

Castle Plan

The trail begins at Colton's Gate



Key

- 1** Middle bailey
- 2** Church of St Mary in Castro
- 3** Great Tower (outside)
- 4** Great Tower (inside)
- 5** Spur Tunnels
- 6** Avranches Tower

At the Castle

Activity 4

Great Tower (inside)

The inside of the Great Tower has been refurbished to show what the rooms may have looked like during Henry II's reign.

A Circle three words below that you would use to describe the medieval decorations inside the Great Tower.

- Bright
- Colourful
- Intricate
- Bold
- Sturdy
- Dull
- Golden
- Dark
- Striking
- Boring

Or come up with your own words:

.....

.....

B There are very few examples of medieval furniture that survive today. **Why** do you think this is?

.....

.....

.....

C Discuss with a partner what English Heritage could use as evidence to help redecorate historic spaces like these.

At the Castle

Activity 3

Great Tower (outside)

The Great Tower was built by King Henry II (r. 1154–89) to show off his power and importance. It can be seen from far out to sea.

A The walls of the Great Tower are very thick – up to 6.4 metres.

How did the thick walls protect the Great Tower from attack?

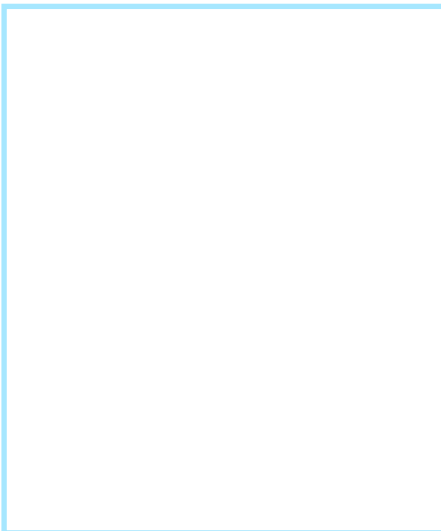
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The Great Tower.

B **Look** for evidence that the windows have changed shape over time. **Draw** an example in this box.



Did you know?



The Great Tower is 25.5 metres high – that's as tall as eight school coaches stacked on top of each other!

At the Castle

Welcome

Your task is to collect evidence to discover how Dover Castle defended England during the medieval period.

You'll learn about:

- why the castle was important for defending England
- key defensive and architectural features
- how (and why) the castle's defences changed over time.

It should take you about an hour to complete this trail.



An aerial view of Dover Castle.

At the Castle

Activity 1 Middle bailey

- A** **Explore** the stone curtain wall.
Why was the wall so high?



This reconstruction shows how the castle may have looked in the 13th century. The stone curtain wall linked the earth bank with the middle bailey, all of which protected the inner bailey, where the Great Tower is.

- B** **Find** Colton's Gate – the gatehouse protecting the middle bailey.



- C** **How** did Colton's Gate stop invaders?



At the Castle

Activity 2 Church of St Mary in Castro (Saxon church)

- A** **Study** the outside of the church.
Most of the building is made from flint. **What** other type of building materials can you see? **Where** else can you see these building materials around here?

The Church of St Mary in Castro was probably built in the 10th or early 11th century. It is large which suggests that a large Saxon community was living nearby.



- B** After the Norman Conquest, the church was still used. Look for evidence of Norman building work outside the church.

- A Saxon doorway blocked up by the Normans
- Round-headed windows
- Vaulted ceiling at the crossing (inside)

Fast-forward

In the 17th century, the church was left to ruin. During the French Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars in the 18th and 19th centuries, it was used as a court for ball games and then for storing coal.



William the Conqueror burnt the town of Dover in 1066 while establishing his authority in England.

Post-visit

Information and activities to help you extend your students' learning back in the classroom.

Sources

Peer into the past

A historical source is something that tells us about life in the past, such as a document, a picture or an object.

It may be a primary source, from the time, or a secondary source, created later. Our experts have chosen these sources to help you learn about Dover Castle's medieval history.

Source 1

‘... Louis, with a powerful force of knights and soldiers laid siege to Dover Castle, having first sent to his father for a petraria which was called in French ‘Malvoisine’ [a mangonel], and the French having disposed this and other engines before the castle, they began to batter the walls incessantly; but Hubert de Burgh, a brave knight, with a hundred and forty knights and large number of soldiers who were defending the castle, destroyed many of the enemy, until the French feeling their loss removed their tents and engines farther from the castle; on this Louis was greatly enraged and swore he would not leave the place till the castle was taken and all the garrison were hung. They therefore, to strike terror into them, built a number of shops and other buildings in front of the entrance to the castle, so that the place appeared like a market; for they hoped that they would, by hunger and a protracted siege, force them to surrender, as they could not subdue them by force of arms ... Louis then summoned Hubert de Burgh, constable of Dover Castle, to a conference, and said to him, ‘Your Lord King John is dead, and you cannot hold this castle against me for long, as you have no protector; therefore give up the castle, and become faithful to me, and I will enrich you with honours, and you shall hold a high post among my advisers... [Hubert] then returned to the castle and told his friends what Louis had said, but they were all unanimous in refusing to surrender it to him, lest they might be branded with treachery for a cowardly submission. When this was announced to Louis and the barons they determined to reduce the smaller castles throughout the country, that, after the lesser fortresses were in their power, they might attack the larger ones; they then raised the siege and returned to the city of London.’

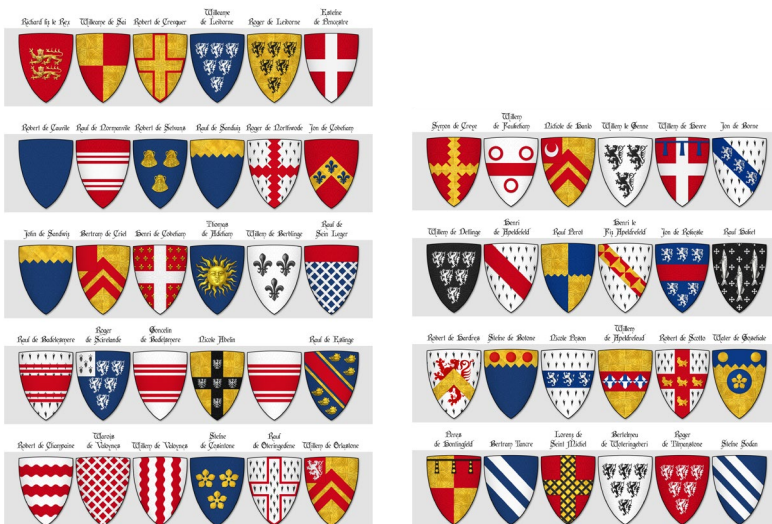
This is an extract from *Flores Historiarum*, translated from the Latin as *Flowers of History*, by Roger of Wendover (active 1204–36) and translated by JA Giles, 1849. Roger of Wendover was an English chronicler, writing in the 13th century. When writing *Flowers of History*, he was a monk at St Albans Abbey. The chronicle is based on written material that already existed at the abbey.

Source 2

‘Next day, he [King John] went away, leaving Hubert de Burgh, who was Justiciar of England, at Dover to guard the castle and many other knights. A very strong garrison remained at the castle; there were at least 140 knights and a great number of men at arms, and there was plenty of food. Now hear about Louis, who came to Dover ... The men of the castle came forth from the gates many times; they had a barbican outside the gate. It was enclosed with very good palisades of oak trunks and had a big ditch around it ... Soon afterwards, Louis went up the hill with all the army, and besieged the castle. He made one part of his forces remain in the town, so as to surround those within from all sides. Then Louis had his perriers [stone-throwing machine] and mangonels set up to bombard the gate and the wall, and he had a very high siege tower made of hurdles, and a covered gallery to lead up to the wall. He made his miners enter the ditch, and they mined the stone and the earth under the palisades. Then he made the knights from the army attack, and the barbican was soon taken. Then Louis set his miners to work on the gate, and they mined so that one of the towers fell, of which there were two. Then a large part of Louis’s forces got into the castle, but the people inside drove them out with great vigour, and then closed up the palace where their walls had fallen, with great timbers, and crossbeams and palisades of oak trunks. Louis besieged Dover Castle until a truce was arranged between him and those inside about which the King of England was very angry. Soon afterwards he heard the news he was taken ill ... and died ...’

This is an extract from *Historie des ducs de Normandie et la roi de Angleterre*, translated as *History of the dukes of Normandy and the kings of England*, a 13th-century manuscript. It was written by a Flemish monk who was present at the siege and translated by Eric Poole in 1990.

Source 3



The Dering Roll was probably commissioned by Stephen of Penchester, constable of Dover Castle from 1268 to 1299. This image is a modern copy of one of the manuscript pages.

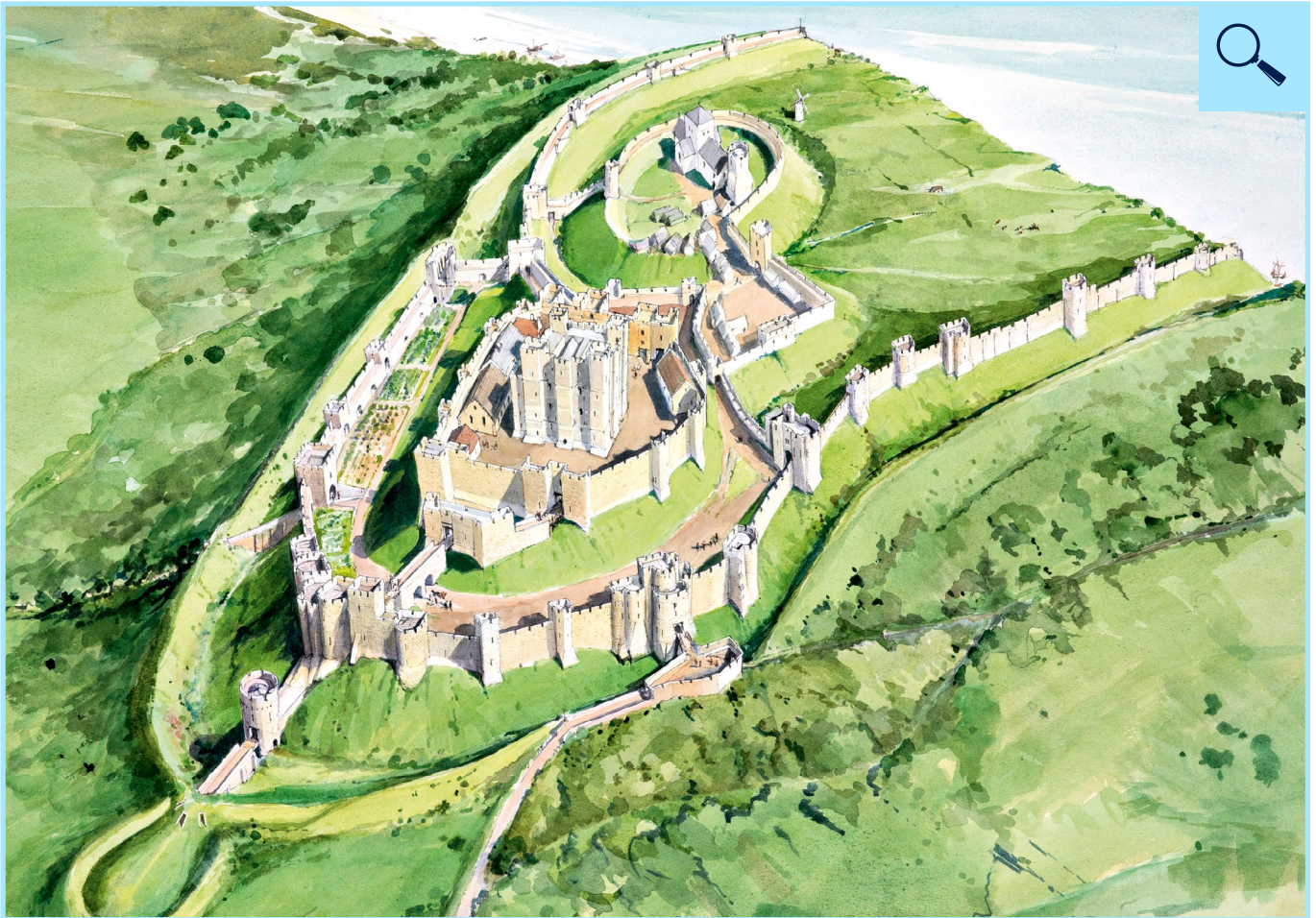


The Treaty of Dover

This source is a page from *The Treaty of Dover*, a 14th-century book that gives details of the eight baronies created to provide a garrison for the castle. Each barony paid knights to be on guard at Dover Castle in case of attack. The garrison was led by the castle's constable.

The book also contains the castle's statutes – guidelines for how the watch should be kept, how the gates should be guarded and how the soldiers should be disciplined.

Source 5



This source is a reconstruction illustration of the castle in the mid 13th century, created by artist Terry Ball. It shows the castle at the height of its development in the medieval period.

Source 6



Edward IV symbol

This source is a photograph of a carved Yorkist rose on a fireplace in the Great Tower. It dates from Edward IV's reign (1461–70, 1471–83) when the Great Tower was remodelled as an occasional residence for the king and important visitors. Dover was on the main route to Flanders (modern-day Belgium) and its ruler, the Duke of Burgundy, was one of Edward IV's close allies.

Source 7



This modern reconstruction by Bob Marshall shows Dover Castle before the siege in 1216. The digital model includes the original entrance to the castle, lost towers and defensive walls that can no longer be seen at the castle. It took more than 800 hours for English Heritage experts to develop this model based on historical and archaeological research.

Source 8



This image shows the process of applying gold leaf to a piece of furniture on display in the Great Tower. English Heritage used contemporary sources like household accounts and illuminated manuscripts to inform what Henry II's interiors may have looked like in the 12th century.

Design a Coat of Arms



Recommended for

History, Art and Design

Learning objectives

- Understand the meaning and purpose of heraldry in medieval society.
- Explain how Dover Castle was protected by a garrison of local knights, paid by the local barons.

Time to complete

Approx. 30 minutes

Summary

This activity helps students explore the meaning and purpose of heraldry through two important artefacts – the Dering Roll (Source 3, page 55) and the Treaty of Dover (Source 4, page 56). Although heraldry was in its infancy during Henry II's time, it began to develop more fully in the 13th century.

About these sources

The Dering Roll and the Treaty of Dover are illuminated medieval manuscripts relating to the constablership of Dover Castle and the Lord Wardenship of the Cinque Ports. They are the work of a number of constables and lieutenants of Dover Castle.

The Dering Roll (Source 3) is an armorial roll, showing 324 shields that represent the knights who owed feudal service to garrison the castle in the later 13th century.

The Treaty of Dover (Source 4) is a later 14th-century book that outlines the eight baronies (probably created by Henry II) responsible for paying the knight's fees to ensure that Dover Castle had a permanent garrison.

Each baron or knight had their own coats of arms by which they were identified. Students can use the activity sheets on the following pages to follow the medieval rules and symbolism of heraldry to create their own coat of arms.



The Treaty of Dover was discovered in a library at Knole, Kent.

More learning ideas

Students could make an armorial roll for their class – make copies of each of their coats of arms and collect them together in a book or in a poster for the classroom wall. What services would they pledge to their school?

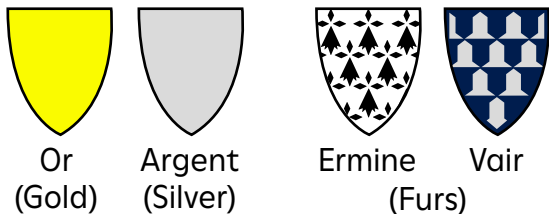
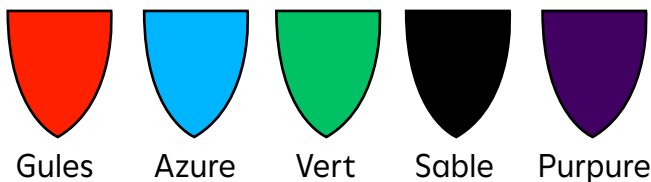
Design a Coat of Arms



Create a coat of arms that represents you. Follow the heraldic rules below.

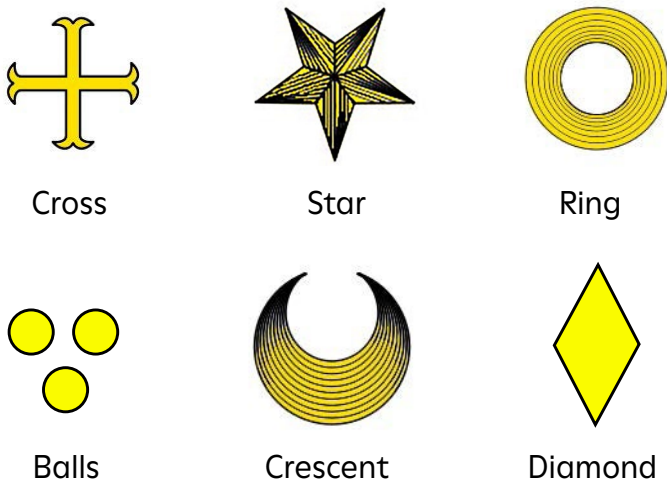
1 Background

The first step in making your coat of arms.



3 Charge

Emblems that can go anywhere on your coat of arms.

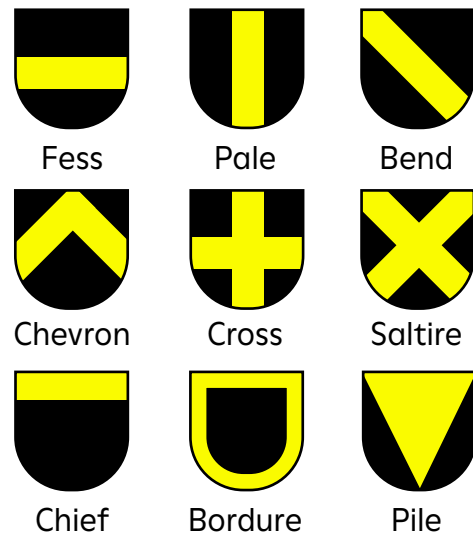


Hint

Search the [English Heritage website](#) for our 'Guide to Heraldry' to help you with your design.

2 Ordinary

A simple shape that goes over the top of your background.



Tip

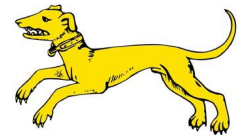
Charges had symbolic meaning in medieval England. A cross could represent devotion to religion or that someone had taken part in a crusade.

Design a Coat of Arms



4 Animal

You could use an animal as your charge. Choose one of these, or pick your own.



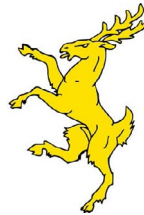
Lion = bravery

Dog = reliability

Did you know?



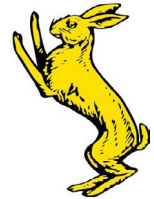
A 14th-century book called *The Treaty of Dover* shows coats of arms for knights involved with the constablership of Dover Castle and the Lord Wardenship of the Cinque Ports.



Stag = wisdom



Eagle = power



Hare = speed

5 Object

You can also choose any object that represents you. Here are some ideas:

- a musical instrument
- sports equipment
- your favourite book
- someone in your family



The coat of arms of the United Kingdom. This includes a golden harp with silver strings symbolising Ireland and the Royal Banner of Scotland (the red lion rampant with a blue tongue) and the three yellow lions of England.



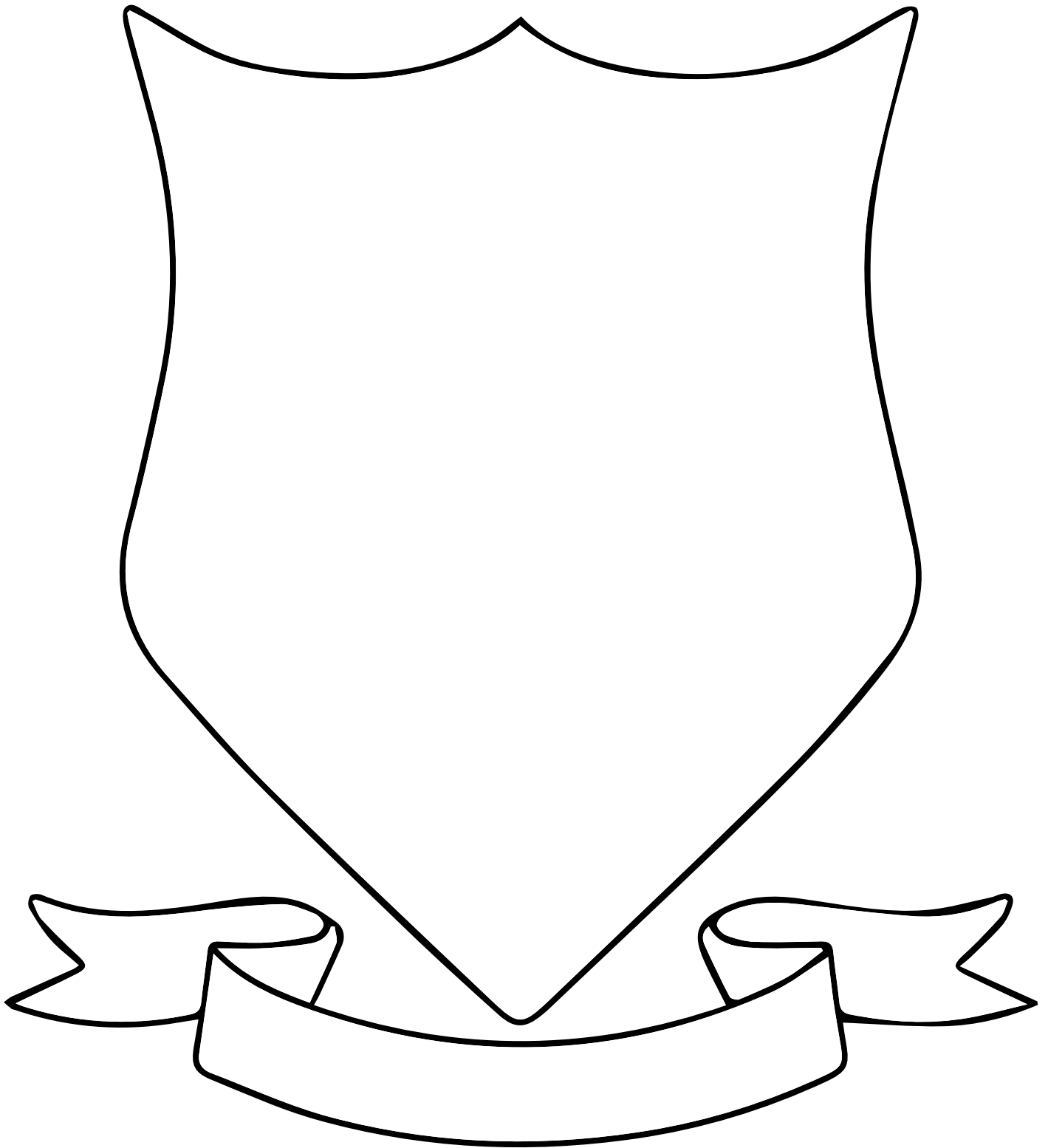
The royal coat of arms of the United Kingdom.

6 Motto

A motto is a short sentence that summarises what motivates you or what you think is important. For example, the Scout motto is 'Be prepared'. *Dieu et mon droit* means 'God and my right'.

Don't worry, your motto doesn't have to be in Latin!

Design a Coat of Arms



Plan Your Attack



Recommended for

History, Design and Technology

Learning objectives

- Understand how medieval siege weapons worked, and how castle defences were built to defend against them.
- Consider how structures are designed to cope with forces applied to them.

Time to complete

20–30 minutes



A reconstruction image of a siege tower being used by the French during the siege of Dover Castle in 1216.



A battering ram being used to re-enact a siege.

Summary

Use this activity to explore the strategic use of medieval siege weapons and consider how castles were built to defend against attack.

Begin by dividing your students into small groups and introducing them to some key medieval siege weapons – use the table on page 64 to help. Students can then look at Sources 1 and 2 (on pages 54 and 55) to learn more about how siege weapons were used. They will then be ready to plan their own siege at Dover Castle.

- Give each group a copy of Source 6 (on page 55).
- Ask students to plan a strategic attack, thinking carefully about the castle's defences and how they are designed to combat an attack.
- Come together as a class to share students' plans of attack and consider their effectiveness.

More learning ideas

Your class could try out their ideas by making model siege weapons using craft materials, such as card and paper or papier mâché, or a mini trebuchet using our activity on pages 18–20. Students can use their models to understand how structures can be designed to withstand forces applied to them, and where their weaknesses are. For example, how a tower can be strengthened to withstand a battering ram or how miners can undermine a tower by digging underneath.

Medieval Siege Weapons

Name	How it worked	Pros and cons
siege tower	The tower was built high enough so that when it approached a castle wall, or tower, it could drop a platform down that let soldiers cross over it.	The tower protected the attackers inside as they approached the enemy castle, but it had to be on level ground and didn't work if there was a moat.
battering ram	This was usually a huge felled tree that was pushed on wheels into a castle door or wall to break it down.	The ram could break down a strong gatehouse door but if there was a drawbridge attackers needed to get across before it was pulled up.
trebuchet	Like a catapult, the trebuchet could fling a stone weighing up to 25kg. The stone sat in a cup held down by a rope – when the rope was released, the cup threw the stone into the air.	The trebuchet could launch projectiles over a moat but had to be aimed carefully so the projectile hit its target.
pavises	This was a sloping board like a large shield that covered attacking archers on the ground as they aimed arrows at a castle.	This provided good cover for the archers but it needed holes to let the archers see where to aim.
mining	Miners, or 'sappers', dug under castle walls, gates and towers to break into the castle, or cause them to collapse and mined into the foundations.	This was a skilled operation that needed trained miners.



A siege tower.



A catapult.



A battering ram.

A Siege of Two Sides



Recommended for

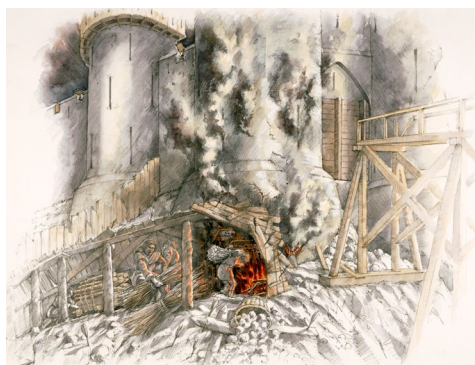
History, English

Learning objectives

- Identify how, by comparing different sources about the same event, historians can make judgements about utility and reliability.
- Analyse techniques of language used to persuade.

Time to complete

Approx. 30 minutes



During the siege of Dover Castle in 1216, French miners tunnelled beneath the north gatehouse and its eastern tower collapsed, but the English forces fought off the invaders.



During the siege of Dover Castle in 1216, French miners tunnelled beneath the north gatehouse and its eastern tower collapsed, but the English forces fought off the invaders.

Summary

Students can compare Sources 1 and 2 (on pages 54 and 55), which both describe the siege of Dover Castle in 1216, but from French and English perspectives.

Students should first work in pairs or small groups and look for similarities and differences in the content of the sources. They should then consider:

- whether the sources describe events differently
- why the authors of the sources might want to portray the event and those involved in a particular way
- who the authors of the sources were and why they were writing – how might this affect the source's reliability?

Next, students can look at specific language techniques used by both authors. How do they use language to portray the event and the people involved from their point of view – for example, use of imagery, interesting adjectives and active verbs? Students can circle these words or phrases in their copies of the sources and discuss their effect with a partner, before sharing with the whole class.

More learning ideas

Students could imagine that they are involved in the siege of 1265, when Eleanor de Montfort tried to hold the castle against Prince Edward. They should choose a side – either supporting Eleanor and the rebel barons, King Henry – and write an account of the siege that uses language techniques to portray their leader in a favourable light. They should try not to stray too far from the facts!