

ENGLISH HERITAGE
EDUCATION

KS2

STUDENT ACTIVITY SHEETS

Carisbrooke Castle

This resource pack has been designed to help teachers plan a visit to Carisbrooke Castle, which provides essential insight into defences and life in a medieval castle. Give these sheets to students on-site to help them explore Carisbrooke Castle.



Get in touch with our Education Booking Team

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Don't forget to download our **Hazard Information Sheets** and **Discovery Visit Risk Assessments** to help with planning:

- **A Carisbrooke Carry On: How to Survive and Stay Alive**
- **Who Lives in a House Like This: Castle Life From the Anglo Saxons to the Victorians**

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Step into England's story

EXPLORE THE CASTLE

DISCOVER OUR TOP 10
THINGS TO SEE

Carisbrooke Castle has been an important fortress for over 1,000 years. It is on top of a hill, so attackers can be seen from a long way away – even ships on the sea can be seen from the keep. Because the castle is on the Isle of Wight it could help to protect the south of England from invasion.

Explore the castle in small groups. See if you can find all of these places and complete each challenge!



1 SAXON WALL

The first building work on the hill happened in about AD 1000. The Saxons built up a bank of chalk and later strengthened the bank with a wall of stone.

 WHERE IS IT?
Right of the gatehouse

DID YOU FIND IT?



DID YOU KNOW?



The wall is around 3 metres thick – that's the length of an African elephant.

CHALLENGE TIME!



Discuss why you think the Normans built their castle on top of the Saxon bank and wall?



2 GATEHOUSE

This has been the entry to the castle for the past 900 years. It would have had a drawbridge that could be raised in an attack. The platform between the towers has holes in so that soldiers could drop things on the enemy.



WHERE IS IT?

After the ticket office



DID YOU FIND IT?

DID YOU KNOW?



In 1380, gun ports (like upside-down keyholes) were added to the top of the towers to hold early handguns.

CHALLENGE TIME!



Why are the drum towers circular? **Decide** how this could help during an attack.

3 CAREY'S MANSION

Sir George Carey built the mansion house between 1584 – 1586. As a cousin of Elizabeth I, the mansion showed off his wealth and power. The house had 13 rooms. Look out for fireplaces and slots for floor beam joists.



WHERE IS IT?

Inner bailey,
on the left



DID YOU FIND IT?

DID YOU KNOW?



The house has a Long Gallery (like a long, wide corridor) where people walked up and down for daily exercise.

CHALLENGE TIME!



Discuss what you would find in the house of an important, rich person living today.





4 ISABELLA'S WINDOW

Before this area was Sir Carey's Elizabethan mansion, it was the medieval great chamber of Countess Isabella. At this time, wealthy people wanted private rooms. The steps up to the window allowed Isabella to see far off into the distance over her lands.

 **WHERE IS IT?**
Inner bailey, on the left

DID YOU FIND IT?

DID YOU KNOW?



Glass was very expensive in medieval times. To have a window in her room showed that Isabella was very rich.


CHALLENGE TIME!



Look closely at the windows. Why are they much smaller than the frame around the edge? Why are there sloping walls on either side?

5 KEEP

The keep stands on a motte. The motte is built from layers of chalk and stone. The motte could not hold a tall, heavy tower, so a shell keep was built – a wall around the top of the motte with lean-to buildings inside.

 **WHERE IS IT?**
Along the wall walk, past the mansion

DID YOU FIND IT?



DID YOU KNOW?



The well in the keep is 48 metres deep. Look out for sockets in the wall that were used to winch up the water.

CHALLENGE TIME!



Find the garderobes (toilets). Why are they built in a tower that leans over the edge of the keep wall?



6 WELL HOUSE

This well house and treadwheel were built in 1587 to get water to the castle. At first the wheel would probably have been turned by prisoners. By the 1600s it was turned by donkeys. This well is 49m deep and holds water up to 12m.

 **WHERE IS IT?**
At the bottom of the keep stairs, walk left

DID YOU FIND IT?

DID YOU KNOW?



It takes 7 months of training for a donkey to be ready to move the treadwheel. They work for just two hours a day.


CHALLENGE TIME!



Look closely at the treadwheel. How does the turning of the treadwheel bring the bucket out of the well?

7 SOUTH-WEST TOWER

The artillery bastion (platform) was built around the south-west tower in the 1500s. It was built to hold new, big, heavy guns that could aim at the enemy coming towards the castle.

 **WHERE IS IT?**
Along the wall-walk, near the garden

DID YOU FIND IT?



DID YOU KNOW?



Another name for a bastion is a 'knight'.

CHALLENGE TIME!



Discuss why the bastions aren't tall towers, like the keep. Why are they low to the ground?



8 DE HEYNOE'S LOOP

In 1377 Carisbrooke Castle was under siege by the French. The commander of the French army was shot and killed by an arrow. We think the arrow was shot by the archer Peter de Heynoe from this arrow loop in the wall walk.

 **WHERE IS IT?**
Along the wall walk,
near the gatehouse

DID YOU FIND IT?

DID YOU KNOW?



The French had to pay 1000 marks after they surrendered - a lot of money in medieval times!

CHALLENGE TIME!



Think about the shape of a bow and arrow.
Talk to a partner about why the arrow loop is in a cross shape.

9 A KING AS PRISONER

Charles I was kept prisoner at the castle from 1647-8. One of his bedrooms was in the chamber block of the great hall. On the 20th March 1648 he tried to escape from here but got stuck in the window. The window was replaced in 1901 by the one you see now.

 **WHERE IS IT?**
Inner bailey, on the
outside of the great hall

DID YOU FIND IT?



DID YOU KNOW?



Charles's page, Henry Firebrace, wrote that Charles practised putting his head through the window, so he thought the rest of his body would fit through.

CHALLENGE TIME!




Imagine you were the constable of the castle when Charles I was here. How would you feel about keeping the king as a prisoner?

10 ST NICHOLAS'S CHAPEL

There has been a chapel or church on roughly this site ever since the Norman Conquest. You can see the foundations of the medieval chapel at the base the walls. The chapel you see today was built in 1904 to commemorate the execution of Charles I (in 1649).



 **WHERE IS IT?**
Inner bailey,
opposite the mansion

DID YOU FIND IT?

DID YOU KNOW?



The woodwork in the chapel is from a ship, the **HMS Nettle**. It was one of the last wooden warships to be built, and first set sail in 1831.

CHALLENGE TIME!



Today the chapel is a memorial to the men from the Isle of Wight who gave their lives in the world wars. **Discuss** why we have war memorials.

WHAT WE LEARNT

We think the one best thing to see at Carisbrooke Castle is:

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.....

The most interesting thing we learnt today is:

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

We want to know more about:

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.....

Draw a picture inspired by your visit to Carisbrooke Castle.