



ENGLISH HERITAGE  
EDUCATION

KS2 & KS3

## TEACHERS' ACTIVITY IDEAS

### Peveril Castle

This resource pack has been designed to help teachers plan a visit to Peveril Castle, which provides essential insight into the Norman Conquest and life in a medieval castle. Use these activity ideas on-site to help students discover more about Peveril Castle.



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☎ 0370 333 0606

✉ [bookeducation@english-heritage.org.uk](mailto:bookeducation@english-heritage.org.uk)

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Don't forget to download our **Hazard Information Sheets** to help with planning.

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Step into England's story

# TOP 5 ACTIVITIES

## EXPLORING DOMESDAY

IN THE  
CLASSROOM

### ACTIVITY 1

#### Recommended For

KS2 - KS3  
History, English, Geography

#### Learning Objectives

- To understand William Peveril's role as a major Norman landowner in the Peak District, using Domesday Book as primary source material.



Domesday Book (1086) was a record of who owned the land in England and what it was worth.

#### Summary

William Peveril was one of William the Conqueror's loyal supporters. King William rewarded William for his service during the Norman Conquest by granting him large areas of land. In Domesday Book, William 'Peverel' is listed as owning or overseeing 162 manors, many in Derbyshire and Nottinghamshire.

William Peveril built castles to demonstrate his authority as the ruling Norman feudal lord. He built Peveril Castle as a symbol of his power in the Peak District. Students can explore the extent of land that William Peveril owned in the Peak District, by investigating the lands listed in Domesday Book in his name.

#### STUDENT ACTIVITIES:

a) Give students a list of William Peveril's land holdings as they are listed in Domesday Book (see table on following page). They should try to find out which modern places the 11th-century place names refer to. Many are similar, but some will require careful thinking about how the pronunciation may have changed.

b) Older students can use online access to Domesday Book through The National Archives to investigate how modern place names were spelt in the 11th-century. They can enter the modern name into the search option, select the record and look for 'Domesday Place Name'. They could then plot a map to create a plan of William Peveril's land holdings in 1086.

[www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/domesday](http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/domesday)

## ACTIVITY I Continued

Modern place name	Domesday place name
Abney	Habenai
Aston	Estune
Bradwell	Bradewelle
Chatsworth	Chetesuorde
Edale	Aidele
Hazelbadge	Hochelai
Hope	Heselebec
[Great and Little] Hucklow	Hope
Litton	Litun
Nether Water Farm	Watrefeld
Peak Cavern	Peschers
Shatton	Scetune
Tideswell	Tideswelle

## MORE LEARNING IDEAS

This activity could lead into studies about how place names give clues about where people from different countries settled in England. Students can investigate how most place names in England in the 11th century were in English, but with large numbers of Danish names in the East Midlands and North-East, and of Celtic-based names in the South-West and towards Wales. Most place names in Derbyshire are English in origin – the suffixes ‘-ton’, ‘-ham’, ‘-ley’, and ‘-worth’ are all indicators of an English name. The significant exception is ‘Derby’ itself, as ‘-by’ is the commonest suffix in place names of Danish origin, found all over Yorkshire and Lincolnshire, where most Danish people settled in the 9th century (Whitby, Grimsby, Selby, Thornaby).

## ACTIVITY 2

### Recommended For

KS2 - KS3  
History, Drama

### Learning Objectives

- To understand how people lived in a castle during medieval times.
- To compare the lives of people of different status.



The new hall as it may have looked in the late 13th century.



The remains of the new hall and kitchens beyond, today.

### Summary

This activity takes place in the new hall.

Role play: in a whole-class group, re-enact a great state dinner – a grand meal for King Henry III, who is visiting in 1235. Choose a king, his advisers, the lord of Peveril and the royal constable, who owned the castle at the time. Some of the class will have to be lower-status servants, perhaps a washerwoman, or a lowly stable boy waiting for scraps. They sat at the end of the hall furthest from the fire.

Some students will need to be the servants preparing the food and wine in the kitchen and serving it in the hall. The service buildings (including a kitchen and food stores) were at the opposite end of the hall to the fireplace. Students can use the carved stone rubbish chute in the wall on the right – this is probably where food waste was disposed of.

You might like to take photos of students posing in tableaux, rather than conducting a role play. Share your photos with us @EHEducation.

### MORE LEARNING IDEAS

The activity looks at the different experiences of high and low-status people in a Norman/medieval castle household. It would help to look at castle and medieval hierarchies before your visit. You could help students to understand how the type of clothes that people wore represented their place in the hierarchy, and how this might be similar to how we wear clothing today.

## ACTIVITY 3

## Recommended For

KS2 - KS3  
History, Design & Technology

## Learning Objectives

- To identify Peveril Castle's defensive features.
- To understand how castle structures and defensive features were designed to combat medieval siege weaponry.



The castle model outside the visitor centre. It shows how the castle probably looked during the 1300s.



Students exploring the defensive features at Peveril Castle.

## Summary

Castles were built as defensive fortresses against attack. The only military action known to have happened at Peveril was in 1216, when the king's constable refused to surrender the castle to its new owner, William Ferrer, Earl of Derby.

Before you get to the main site, it will be helpful for this activity to stop and look at the castle model outside the visitor centre. The students can try to identify the landscape features that contribute to Peveril Castle's defensive position.

Split the class into two groups and decide who will be attackers and defenders. The students should explore the site, looking for and examining remains of key defensive features.

Features you might like to focus on:

- curtain wall
- east gate
- west gate (bridge over the gorge)
- keep (including windows, high doorway which would have had a wooden staircase and the lookout platform on the roof)
- turret
- thick walls.

The students could label each defensive feature on the Site Plan, illustrating or making notes about how they would either reinforce or try to overcome the defence. If they are the attacking group, they will need to think about how they would break through the defences. If they are the defending group, how would they maintain their hold?

Use the Attackers vs. Defenders table overleaf to help students plan their strategies.

## MORE LEARNING IDEAS

Before the visit, students should gain a good understanding of medieval siege weapons, such as siege towers, battering rams, mangonels and trebuchets. Would all of these methods work at Peveril Castle? Alternatively, the class could focus on simpler tactics, such as cavalry, foot soldiers and archers.

It would also be helpful to look at generic medieval castle features, so the students have an idea of what to identify when they explore the castle.

### ACTIVITY 3 Continued

Attackers	Defenders
<p>Peveril Castle was high up away from food supplies and a water source. The keep did not have a well. If the attackers managed to force the castle garrison to retreat to the keep, they would have no water supply. This would have helped force them to surrender if they were put under siege.</p>	<p>Peveril Castle is in a position that is very difficult to access. The ways into the castle were up the hill to the east gate, where attackers would easily be seen by the watchmen in the turret, or by crossing the bridge over the gorge. If the defenders burnt the bridge in time, they would have been safe.</p>
<p>Trebuchet – could throw projectiles high, with a range of 40m.</p> <p>Mangonel – could hurl 25kg projectiles for 200m but needed to be on level ground.</p> <p>Siege tower – a platform was lowered onto the castle wall from the top of the tower to allow soldiers to access the wall-walk.</p> <p>Mining equipment – miners dug beneath the castle walls and propped up the channels with wooden supports – then set fire to the supports so that the tunnel and earth foundation beneath the castle wall would collapse.</p> <p>Battering ram – a large wooden log, hauled by chains to break down castle doors.</p> <p>Bows and arrows; axes; swords; spears.</p>	<p>Curtain wall – the stone walls around the grounds that enclosed the castle were thick and very strong. Most had a wall-walk on top for soldiers to patrol and aim missiles from. The soldiers were protected by crenellations.</p> <p>Position – the site of Peveril Castle is relatively inaccessible, as it is surrounded on three sides by steep gorge faces. It had very good views of approaching armies.</p> <p>Gates – the only entrances into the castle were gates with heavy wooden doors that were under armed guard.</p> <p>Keep – the tall tower had the best views of approaching enemies and a platform on its roof for soldiers to aim projectiles at attackers approaching the west gate over the gorge.</p> <p>Turret – the turret in the north curtain wall provided a protected platform for armed guards to defend the east gate.</p>

### ACTIVITY 4

#### Recommended For

KS2 - KS3  
History, English,  
Geography, Art

#### Learning Objectives

- To understand how the town of Castleton developed as a medieval settlement that served the castle.
- To compare the structure and economy of medieval Castleton to the town today.



Students sketching the view of landscape from Peveril Castle.



The medieval bank and ditch that once surrounded the town for protection.

#### Summary

The first record of Castleton – ‘Castle Town’ – is in 1196, but it probably began to grow earlier. The settlement developed because the castle needed supplies of food, craftsmen and servants. The lord encouraged people to settle near the castle, so that they would become his tenants. In return for serving the castle, the town could expect protection from its garrison.

Inside the castle, students have an excellent view of the town of Castleton and the surrounding landscape. Students can start by sketching features such as Mam Tor, Back Tor and Lose Hill (they can use the information board to help them). They should also include the rivers and flat farmland. They should label these natural features on their drawing.

#### STUDENT ACTIVITIES:

Find the main town car park – to the right students will see a green space with a mound. This is part of the medieval bank and ditch that once surrounded the town for protection. It also probably controlled people coming and going and it is likely that visitors were charged a toll to enter.

Next, students can draw the view of Castleton and mark on their drawing the settlement features of the medieval town that we can still see today. They should draw and label:

- the medieval bank and ditch
- long, narrow farming fields
- St Edmund’s Church spire.

Then, in a different colour, they should label the modern settlement features:

- car parks
- the Tourist Information Centre
- telegraph poles.

Students should discuss in pairs or small groups why, in medieval times, they think this landscape was a good place for William Peveril to build a castle, then share their ideas with the class.

### ACTIVITY 4 Continued

#### MORE LEARNING IDEAS

This activity can lead into more work back in the classroom about how the settlement of Castleton has changed over time. From their drawings, students can identify what type of settlement Castleton is – dispersed, linear or nucleated – and how this is a clue to how the settlement has grown and why. They could consider why medieval features of the town still exist today, and what the modern settlement features tell us about how and why the settlement function has changed.

The function of Castleton has changed from supplying the castle to a popular place for tourists to visit. The castle is one of its key tourist attractions. Students could write and perform a local TV history documentary that presents the evidence they have collected to explain how the castle is still linked to the town's economy and development.



The town of Castleton as seen from the inner bailey of Peveril Castle.



## ACTIVITY 5

## Recommended For

KS2 - KS3  
History, English, Art

## Learning Objectives

- To recognise Peveril Castle as a heritage tourist attraction.
- To compare the visual purpose of the castle as an intimidating, defensive structure in the Norman era to its appeal as a picturesque, scenic sight today.



The rugged and dramatic landscape around Peveril Castle is popular with tourists.

## Summary

Once its role as a defensive castle or administrative base for the lordship of the Peak was no longer important, Peveril Castle fell into ruin. By the 17th century, the castle began to take on a new role as a tourist destination. Its dramatic position high up in the rugged Peak landscape gave it an attractive appeal to writers and artists, who depicted the area in their work. Soon people began to travel to view the castle and these numbers increased with the building of the railway in the 19th century. Today, Peveril Castle has an important role in Castleton's economy, by attracting tourists to the town.

During their visit, students should carry out research on what would attract visitors. As they walk around the site, students should make notes and sketches to record:

- what are the most interesting things to see at Peveril Castle?
- which parts of the castle's history are the most interesting for people?
- what adjectives would they use to describe what a visitor will see when they come to Peveril Castle?
- what other things are there to do for visitors in Castleton?

## MORE LEARNING IDEAS

Before your visit, it might be helpful for students to carry out some research on the heritage tourism industry. They could look at advertising material for other heritage attractions in their area, to try to identify what features of the site and the visit that advertisers emphasise.

Using their observational sketches and notes from their visit, the students could design their own tourist poster or leaflet encouraging people to visit Peveril Castle. They could also come up with a plan to promote the castle in the local area. Who else will they need to communicate with about travel, refreshments and other things to do?