



ENGLISH HERITAGE
EDUCATION

KS2 & KS3

STUDENT ACTIVITY SHEETS

Scarborough Castle

This resource has been designed to help students step into the story of Scarborough Castle and gain essential insights into life in a medieval castle.

Give these activity sheets to students on site to help them explore important features at Scarborough Castle.

Get in touch with our Education Booking Team:

☎ 0370 333 0606

✉ bookeducation@english-heritage.org.uk

➔ <https://bookings.english-heritage.org.uk/education>

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

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Step into England's story

EXPLORE THE CASTLE

DISCOVER OUR TOP 10
THINGS TO SEE

Scarborough Castle was an important medieval fortress, used to defend the north of England. People inside the castle could spot attackers trying to invade from land or sea. By the 1100s, Scarborough was one of the most powerful castles in the area.

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



1 ARROW LOOPS

To get into the castle through the barbican (outer defences), attackers would have to smash through the gates and overcome two drawbridges. On this narrow path, it would be almost impossible to avoid arrow fire from archers inside the castle.

 WHERE ARE THEY?
Curtain wall

DID YOU
FIND THEM?



CHALLENGE TIME!



Look up towards the keep and spot three arrow loops in the outer curtain wall, used by archers to fire at the enemy.

DID YOU KNOW?



The enemy often used 'siege' tactics where they would surround the castle and bombard it from the outside or wait for the defenders to starve and surrender.



2 DOUBLE DRAWBRIDGE

Halfway up the barbican you'll find the remains of a double drawbridge, which was raised to stop the enemy getting in. In medieval times, there were dangerous drawbridge pits either side of the gate tower, but they've now been built over.

 WHERE IS IT?
Barbican

DID YOU FIND IT?

CHALLENGE TIME!



As you go up the cobbled path, **imagine** you are an enemy soldier wearing heavy armour. You'd need to avoid arrows and stone missiles hurtling towards you!

DID YOU KNOW?



The cliffs protected Scarborough Castle from seaward attack, while the barbican and steep slopes protected it from landward attack.

3 THE KEEP

The keep was built by Henry II (r.1154–89) between 1159 and 1169. The base of the tower is bigger than the floors above – this made it very sturdy and the stone slopes could be used to bounce stones off at attackers.

 WHERE IS IT?
Inner bailey

DID YOU FIND IT?



CHALLENGE TIME!



Look up at the tower and come up with three words to describe it. **Think** about the size, colour and texture of the building, and how it makes you feel.

DID YOU KNOW?



During a Civil War siege in 1645, the keep was bombarded with cannonballs, causing half of the building to collapse.



4 KEEP WINDOWS

The keep windows provide a clue to how the rooms were used. The narrow slits in the basement kept the storage rooms cool and dark, while the bigger, arched windows on the upper floors provided light for entertaining guests.

 WHERE ARE THEY?
Keep walls

DID YOU FIND THEM?

CHALLENGE TIME!



Fancy windows were a sign of wealth and power in medieval times. As you circle around the keep, **decide** which window looks the most impressive.

DID YOU KNOW?



The approach to the keep was deliberately complicated, forcing attackers to go the long way round (in a clockwise spiral) to get to the entrance.

5 SPIRAL STAIRCASE

You can still see the remains of the spiral stairs that connected all four floors of the keep. The surviving lower steps would have been used to get down to the basement where food, drink and weapons were stored.

 WHERE IS IT?
Inside the keep

DID YOU FIND IT?



CHALLENGE TIME!



Stand on the wooden platform inside the keep and look down. **Imagine** people scurrying around the basement, gathering food and drink for a royal feast.

DID YOU KNOW?



These spiral stairs are narrow, which forced attackers to climb up them one at a time, in a line, making them more vulnerable.



6 FIREPLACE

There was no central heating in medieval times, so a fireplace in the centre of the wall was used to heat the rooms. The chimney went all the way up to the top of the keep, allowing smoke to escape.

 WHERE IS IT?
Inside the keep

DID YOU FIND IT?

CHALLENGE TIME!



Look closely at the tiles in the fireplace. Can you see the clever heat protection on some of them (a shiny green glaze)?

DID YOU KNOW?



The tiles were placed in a v-shaped pattern, which allowed the heat to spread more evenly, so the chimney didn't crack from the heat of the fire.

7 WELL

The well was built in the 1100s and is 46 metres deep. The keep is 26 metres tall so it's nearly double that! In medieval times most people got water for cooking and drinking from the well.

 WHERE IS IT?
Inner bailey

DID YOU FIND IT?



CHALLENGE TIME!



Sit on the side and look down the well. You can drop a penny in if you have one, to see how deep the well is.

DID YOU KNOW?



In the 1940s, a boy called Ted was lowered into the well to see if any treasure was at the bottom (there wasn't!).



8 VIEWING PLATFORM

From up here you can look along the outer ditch and curtain wall, created by King John (r.1199–1216). The town has been added to over the years but the old medieval street plan hasn't changed much.

 WHERE IS IT?
Curtain wall

DID YOU FIND IT?

CHALLENGE TIME!



Spot St Mary's Church directly below the castle. What other landmarks can you see?

DID YOU KNOW?



The curved metal runner on the floor of the viewing platform was used in the Second World War to rotate a heavy anti-aircraft gun.

9 DOUBLE GARDEROBE

Find the D-shaped tower between the viewing platform and King John's chamber block. On the ground floor, there are two chutes in the wall that used to be medieval garderobes (toilets).

 WHERE IS IT?
Curtain wall

DID YOU FIND IT?



CHALLENGE TIME!



Discuss how hygiene has changed since medieval times – how do these toilets compare to your bathroom at home?

DID YOU KNOW?



These two garderobes are very close to each other so it wouldn't have been very private!

10 KING JOHN'S CHAMBER BLOCK

King John built this two-storey block of royal rooms between 1210 and 1211. All that remains today is the basement. It can get very windy and rainy up on the cliff tops so some of the stones are wasting away—this is called erosion.

 **WHERE IS IT?**
Outer bailey

DID YOU FIND IT?



CHALLENGE TIME!



Look at the walls in the chamber block and spot the bits of shell in the cement between the stones. Where do you think they got the sand from to build this wall?

DID YOU KNOW?



Near King John's chamber block, you'll find the foundations of a separate dining hall and kitchen, where food was prepared and eaten.

WHAT WE'VE LEARNT

We think the best thing to see at Scarborough Castle is:

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The most interesting thing we have 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 Scarborough Castle: