

HANDS ON HISTORY

THE NORMANS

THE NORMANS




– Castles: Overview

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Note: For more background information on the Norman invasion and the Battle of Hastings, please see the 'Battle of Hastings' lesson pack.

Symbol key

-  – Teacher guidance: instructions, information and support to help you run your lesson.
-  – Class resources to be handed out to pupils or put on your interactive whiteboard.
-  – Suggested timings for the session. These can be adapted for the age and skills of your class. The 'Hands on' activities can be extended into projects.



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– Castles

Learning outcomes:

- I know where Normans built castles.
- I know why Normans built castles.
- I know what a Norman motte and bailey castle is.
- I know all of the key parts of a motte and bailey castle.
- I know how to research a local castle.
- I have used planning and creative skills to build a castle/design a flyer.
- I have worked collaboratively with my classmates to build a castle/design a flyer.

Curriculum Links

The activities within this set of lesson plans have been designed to offer a cross-curricular approach. They support the following areas of the curriculum across England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales:

England

History (The Norman invasion)
English
Art and Design
Design and Technology
Geography

Activity

All Activities
Hands on Activity 2
Hands on Activity 1 and 2
Hands on Activity 1 and 2
Introductory Activity

Northern Ireland

The World Around Us – History
The World Around Us – Science and Technology
The World Around Us – Geography
Language and Literacy
The Arts

All Activities
Hands on Activity 1
Introductory activity
Hands on Activity 2
Hands on Activity 1 and 2

Scotland

Social Studies (The Medieval Wars of Independence)
Literacy and English
Expressive Arts
Sciences
Social Studies

All Activities
Hands on Activity 2
Hands on Activity 2
Hands on Activity 1
Hands on Activity 2

Wales

History (The Age of Princes)
English and/or Welsh
Art and Design
Design and Technology
Geography

All Activities
Hands on Activity 2
Hands on Activity 1 and 2
Hands on Activity 1
Introductory Activity



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– Castles: Background Information



Teacher Introduction

The Norman motte and bailey castles were quick to construct. William probably brought three ready-made wooden towers with him from Normandy to erect at Pevensey, Hastings and Dover (a bit like a flat-pack kit!).

The original settlements were strong, but were also easy to attack and burn down. Battering rams could be used on the wooden fences around the bailey and planks of wood placed over the ditches so soldiers could just climb inside. Later many parts of the castles and fences were rebuilt out of stone to make them stronger and more difficult to burn down. We can still see many of these stone ruins today.

Motte (mound) – a large mound of earth, had steep sides to make it difficult for attackers to run up and attack the castle. The motte wasn't a natural hill, but was man-made. Mottes ranged from 25 to 80 foot high. To create the motte at Tonbridge Castle 50,000 tonnes of earth were moved.

Bailey (compound) – a simple enclosure filled with residential wooden buildings, animals and food that ranged from one to three acres in size. The bailey enclosure was also surrounded by a wooden palisade (defensive wall) which often had a walkway half-way up so that soldiers could keep watch.

Both the motte and bailey were surrounded by a ditch often filled with water and, in some cases, sections of rivers were diverted into it. On the opposite side of the motte to the bailey thorn bushes and brambles were added to deter attackers.

Keep (lookout tower and central strong point) – On top of the motte a timber tower (later replaced in stone) was built to be the strong point of the castle and the residence of its owner, usually an important Norman nobleman. The tower was surrounded by a wooden palisade (defensive wall). From the top of the tower you could see any potential attackers.

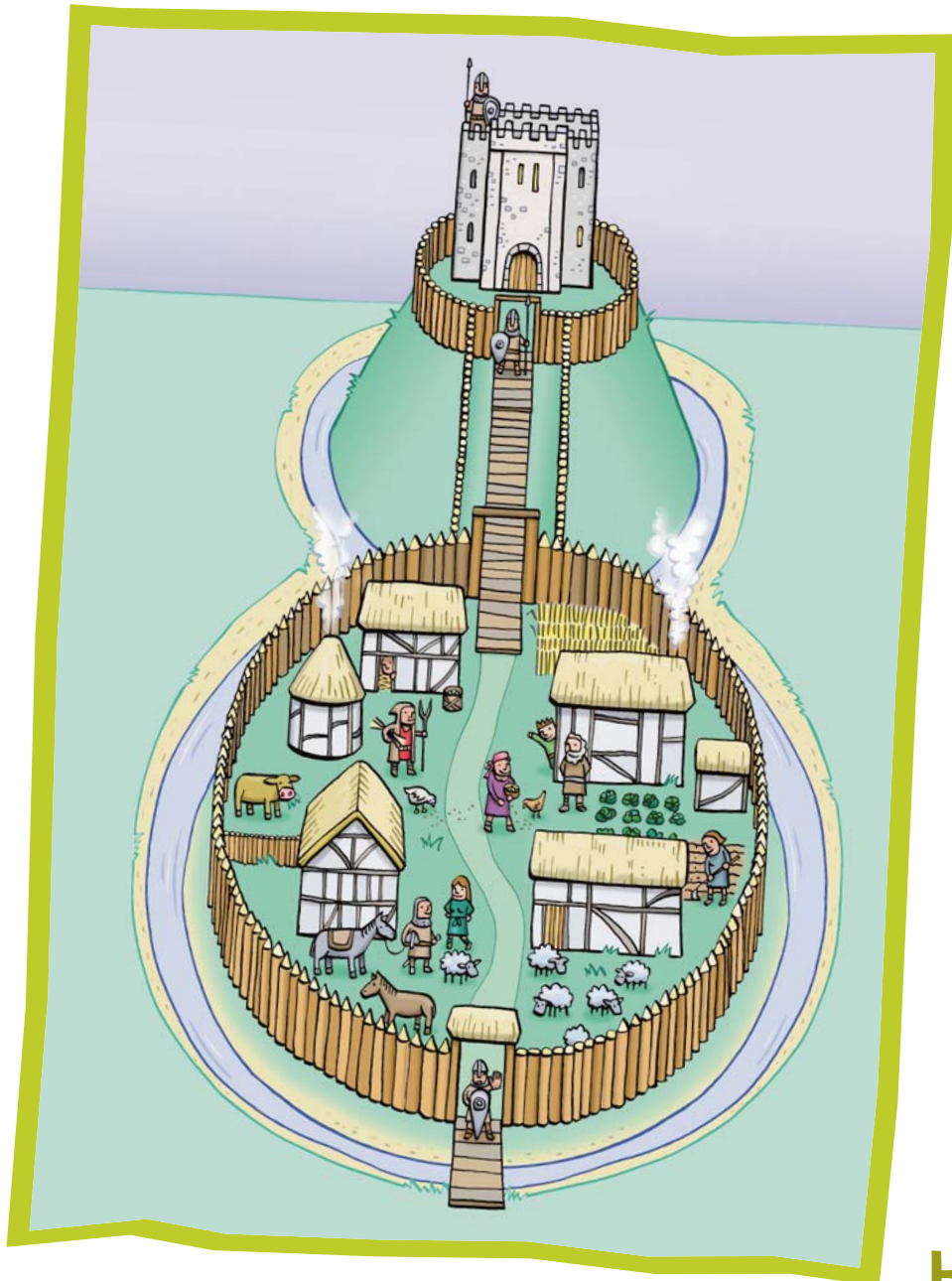
Key characteristics:

- Large and intimidating for local Anglo-Saxon residents
- Usually a square centre with four corner turrets and a stone walkway for soldiers to keep watch including spaces to fire arrows through.
- Very thick walls which made it difficult to use a battering ram to attack.
- The entrance was on the first floor with stairs that could be knocked down if the castle was threatened.
- When people were attacking a stone keep they would use a trebuchet (siege engine) to fire large boulders at the walls. As the walls were square it was also possible to dig a tunnel through the motte up to the corner of the tower, using wood to stop the tunnel collapsing, they would then fill the tunnel with material such as pig fat and set it on fire. The fire would burn the central wooden buildings and make the tower collapse.

On the next page is an image of 'Clifford's Tower' a fantastic Norman motte and bailey castle – remains are still visible today. Also included is an original Hands on History illustration showing how a Norman castle would originally have looked. You can use these images on your interactive white board or as hand-outs to introduce the subject.



Clifford's Tower





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– Castles: Introductory Activity

Where's the Best Place to Build a Castle?

1. Introduce Norman castles, using the Background Information notes and images included in this pack.
2. Discuss as a class whether or not the physical geography of a particular place is important to deciding where to build a castle.
3. Ask the class to imagine they are William, Duke of Normandy's engineers who designed and built his castles to secure the local area after their battle with the Anglo-Saxons. Tell them to imagine that Norman spies have sent descriptions of potential places to build castles along the coast.
4. Put the 'Location Cards' on the interactive white board or print out and share as a worksheet.
5. As you look at each image together ask the class to point out good and bad points of each location for building their castle.
6. Use the Teacher Guidance Notes to ensure each key point is discussed.
7. Once you have discussed each image, draw conclusions together on ideal castle locations.
8. This activity is a great starter before building your own motte and bailey castle (Hands on activity 1) or designing flyers for local castle sites (Hands on activity 2).





Introductory Activity – Where's the best place to build a castle?

Image A

- The site has a good view of the sea and any potential invaders.
- The cliffs would make it difficult for an invader to land unnoticed.
- An invader could not climb up the cliff face easily.
- People living inland could see the castle which would act as a warning to behave.

Image B

- Nearby woodland would provide wood for building and fires.
- Pasture land would be ideal for grazing animals in order to provide food for the castle.

Image C

- A major trading estuary would enable large ships to bring in goods from abroad.
- A clear view of enemy ships sailing up the river would give time to prepare an army before they threaten you.
- There is a safe point to build a bridge across the river.
- The river would provide water for drinking, farming, washing etc.

Image D

- The fertile land would allow you to grow crops for food, especially wheat for bread. Bread is an essential part of the medieval diet for all classes.

Image E

- Marshland would not be good for building a heavy settlement upon.
- The ditches would have to be maintained to avoid the ground flooding.
- It can often be foggy and dangerous walking across the marshes.

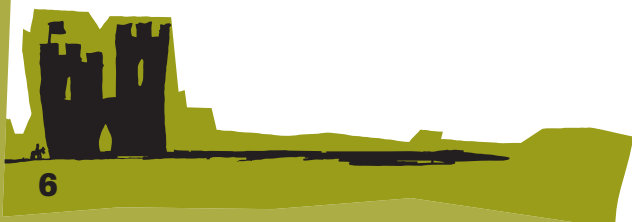
Image F

- A good viewpoint to see any attacker sailing along the channel – other people will continue to want to take England from you for many years to come.

Conclusions that can be drawn from this discussion

A castle needs to be built:

- on high ground with good views to look out for attackers
- near water for drinking, farming and washing
- if near a river, it needs to be navigable and near a bridging point
- near fertile land for growing food and grazing animals to feed the people living in the castle.
- on solid ground (not marshland)





Where's the best place to build a castle?

A: Spectacular view of the sea



B: Pastures and woodland



C: Major trading estuary with fertile fields on its banks



D: Fertile fields for wheat crops



E: Marshland with ditches that flood if not kept clear



F: A view of France from England





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– Castles: Hands on Activity 1

Build a Norman Castle

1. Talk the class through the key elements of a Norman castle using the illustration included in this pack, either projected onto your interactive white board or handed out – you may also want to use the Castle Background Information provided in this pack.
2. Divide the class into teams. Groups of three to five work well.
3. Hand out copies of the three instruction sheets – Motte, Keep and Bailey.
4. Teams can either make a whole castle together or you could break into three larger teams to make one section each. Once they have completed their section, bring them all together to create one castle for the class.
5. Refer each team to the illustration for details and inspiration.
6. Once the basic castle is complete, let the teams use their imagination to add extra details or characters. They could even design a flag for their team or class to go on the top of the keep. Use a small piece of card for the flag and a lolly stick or straw for the flagpole.
7. If your class likes a challenge, set this activity as a competition with each team creating their own castle – this is when a team flag can work well. Ask each team to present their completed castle to the class. Judge the castles on several criteria – including historical accuracy, strength and decoration, ensuring each team is complimented on their own castle at some point. Ask the class to vote for their favourite to find a winner (but remind them they can't vote for their own!)
8. Once you have completed your castle/s you can use it/them as the centrepiece for a class display.



You will need:

A large sheet of cardboard (or a box folded out), a range of cardboard packaging boxes and sheets, toilet rolls, PVA glue and/or sticky tape (masking tape is best to paint over), paints and/or pens to decorate, straw (available from most pet shops) or yellow paper, tissue paper (optional)



Build a Norman Castle Castle Illustration



Visit a real castle

Find castles to visit near you on our interactive map online – bbc.co.uk/history/handsonhistory

Motte:

earth mound with steep sides

Moat:

sometimes a simple ditch, or with defensive spikes or water

Palisade:

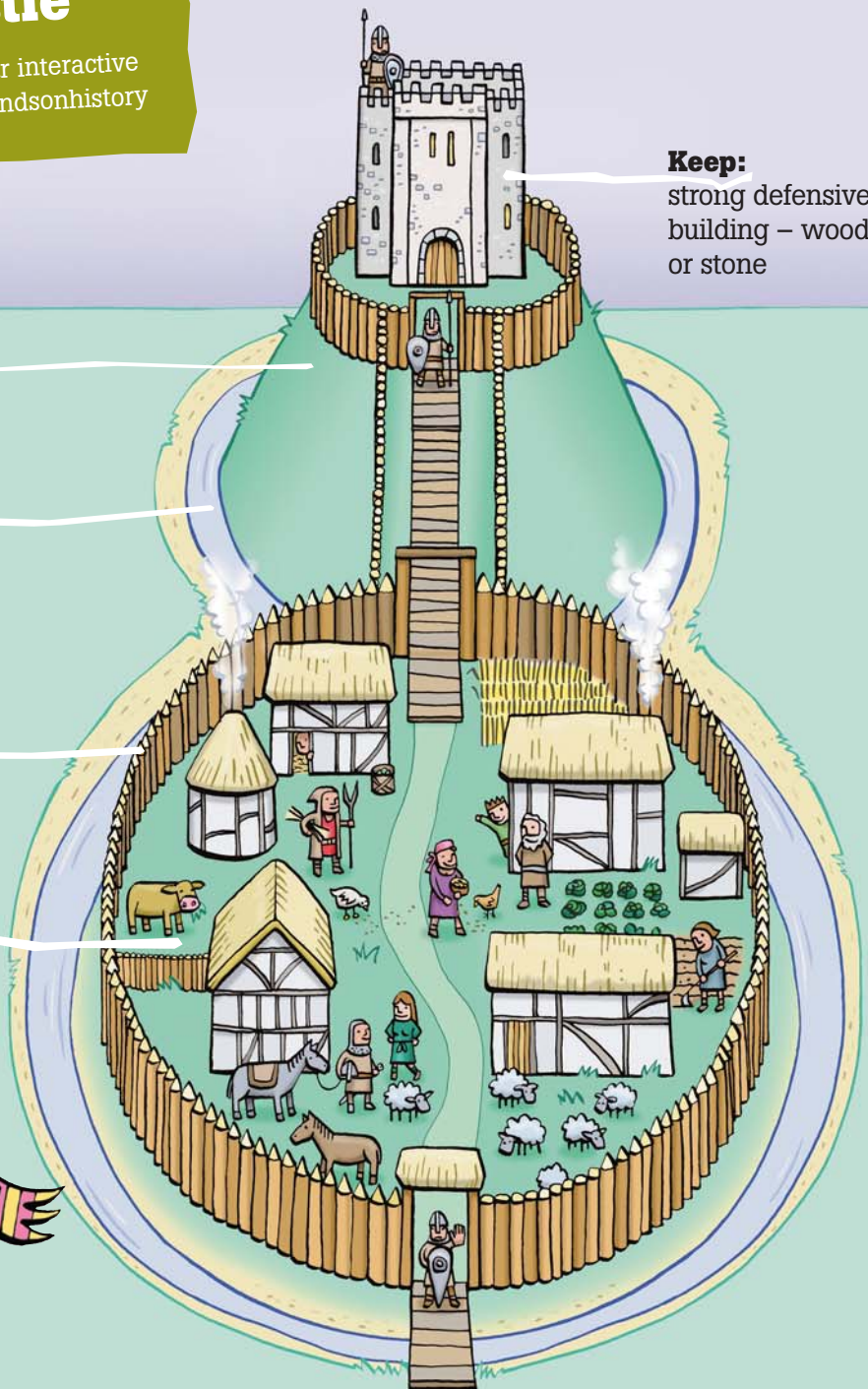
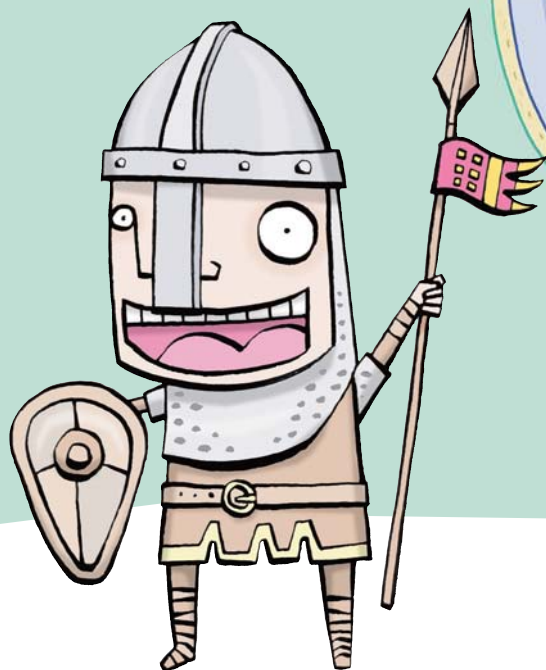
the outer defensive wall made of wood

Bailey:

the castle compound – like a small village

Keep:

strong defensive building – wood or stone



BBC

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Build a Norman Castle

Castle Card 1

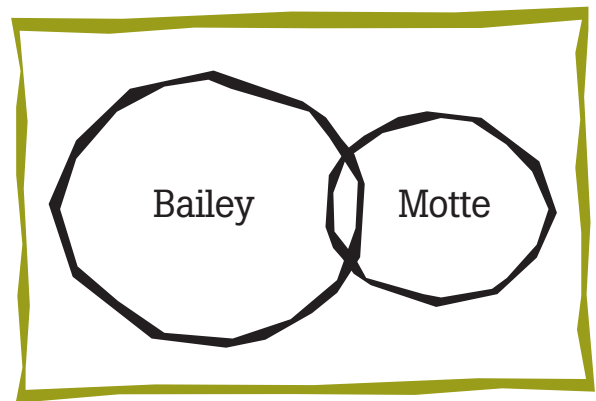


1. The Motte (Mound)

- Choose a large piece of cardboard to use as a platform to build on.
- Sketch a figure of eight onto it to create the shape for your motte and your bailey (don't worry about it being a bit messy, you'll paint over this later).
- Find a small square box to start off your mound.
- Stick the box on the motte end of your platform using sticky tape or glue.
- Screw up old newspaper into balls. Use them to build up the sides of your mound around the box using glue or sticky tape. Make sure it's wider at the bottom and narrower towards the top.
- Once you're happy with the shape of your mound, stick a layer of ripped-up newspaper or tissue paper on it to create a smooth surface – don't worry if there are some lumps and bumps underneath, it's made from 'earth' after all!
- Paint the mound green to make it look as if it is covered in grass. Paint the circular bailey end of the platform at this point too. You can add a layer of tissue paper first to create texture.
- Leave to dry.

Did you know?

The Motte was made with steep sides so it was tricky for the enemy to run up and attack!



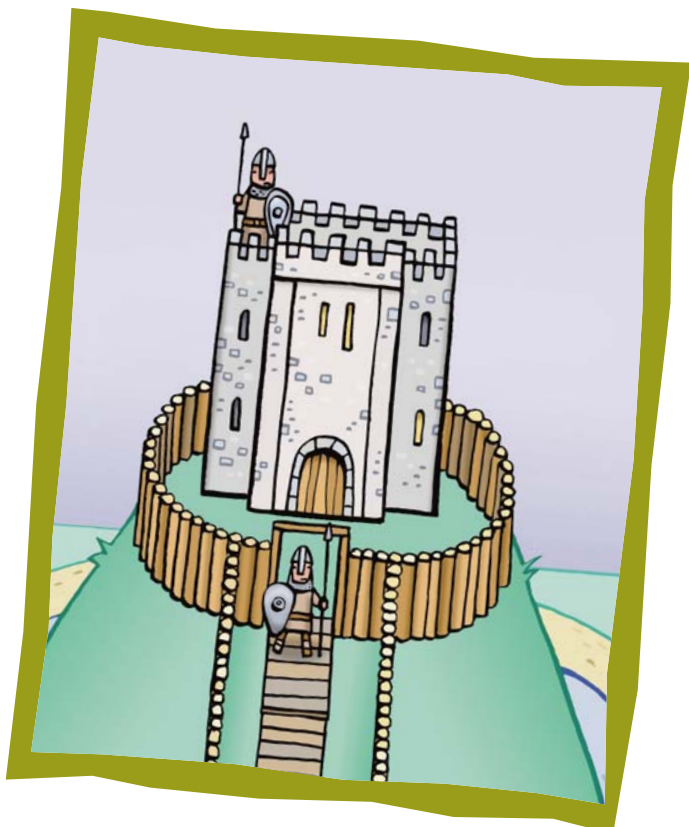
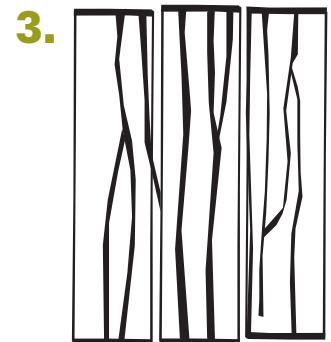
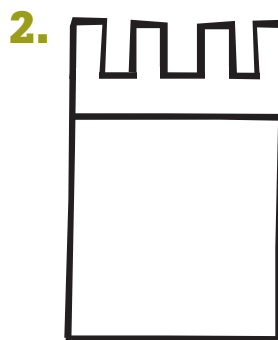
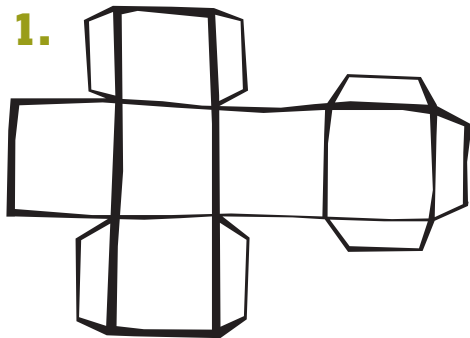
Build a Norman Castle

Castle Card 2



2. The Keep

- Find a square or rectangular box, small enough to sit on the top of your motte, or make a box with card using a dab of glue on each tab. **See diagram 1.**
- Add some 'crenellation' detail to the top of your box – this means the square-shaped decorations you can see at the top of castles even today. Cut crenellations into strips of card, long enough to go around the top of the four sides of your box and attach with glue. **See diagram 2.**
- Paint the whole keep grey, adding some stone details in black.
- Add narrow windows on each wall and an arched front doorway in black.
- Place your keep on top of the motte and stick in place.
- Add a defensive wall around your keep using a strip of card painted to look as if it is made from strong wooden planks. **See diagram 3.** Bend the wall around the Keep and attach to the mound with sticky tape.



Build a Norman Castle

Castle Card 3



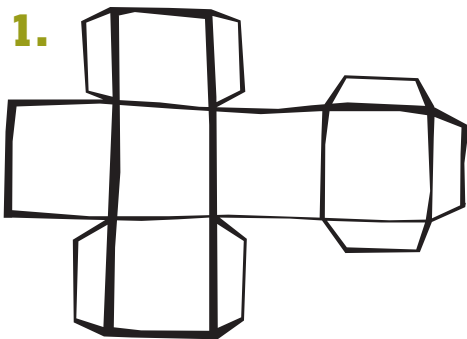
3. The Bailey (Castle compound)

- Create houses out of old packaging boxes or cardboard using our box template. **See diagram 1.**
- Paint the houses brown to look like wood, or copy the 'wattle and daub' design on the castle illustration. Add windows and a door to each one.
- Create thatched roofs by building up a pointed roof using straw, or create a straw look by cutting fringing carefully into yellow paper.
- Build grain stores by cutting toilet rolls in half and adding 'straw' roofs.
- You may want to add farm animals too, using modelling clay, card or toys.

- Link your keep and bailey by a walkway, either by painting a path onto the motte in brown, or by adding a ramp made out of a strip of card.
- Add a palisade defensive wall around the bailey - to match the wall around your keep - by cutting a long strip of card (or several stuck together) and painting to look like a wooden fence.
- Use sticky tape to attach the wall to the platform, remembering to leave entrances where required.

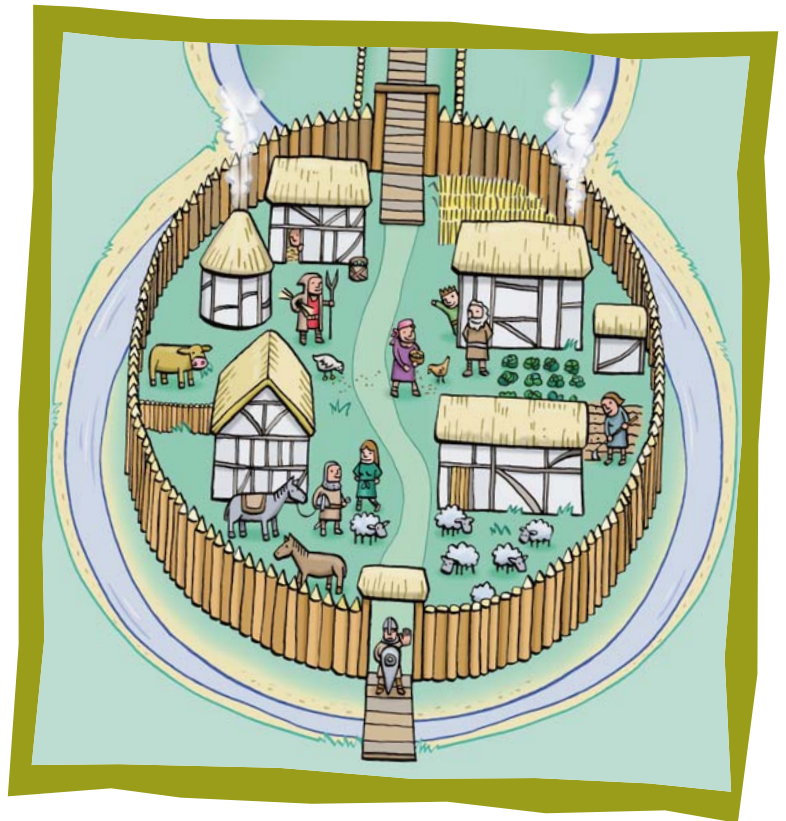
For added defence, you can also paint a moat in blue around your entire castle and add a drawbridge painted brown.

1.



Did you know?

Wattle and daub is made by weaving together a lattice of sticks (wattle) and covering it in a sticky mixture of soil, clay, straw and sometimes even animal dung (daub).



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– Castles: Hands on Activity 2



Design a Norman Castle Flyer

1. Collect together examples of guidebooks and flyers from visitor attractions in your area (they don't have to be Norman, but it may help younger classes if they are). Most sites also have a website where you can download information and flyers, or tourist information offices should be able to help.
2. Create a display of the guides on a wall, or hand them out to the class to look at.
3. Discuss the materials, asking each pupil to think about:
 - Which one is their favourite?
 - Why does it appeal to them?
 - How does it 'sell' the site to them?
4. Encourage the class to discuss the colours, images and persuasive wording on the flyers and make a list of all of the points the class comes up with on your white board or IWB.
5. Split the class into groups of 2–3 pupils
6. Give each group an image and the name of a Norman castle. This should ideally be one that is local to your school.
7. If you don't have local sites, there are several images included in this pack to get you started, plus a list of fantastic Norman castles you may want to consider.
8. Ask each group to design a flyer to persuade people to visit their castle. They will need to use their researching, designing and writing skills to create an effective flyer.
9. Give them time to use the school library and the internet to find information about the castle for their flyer. They may want to share out the roles – researcher, designer, writer or share all three responsibilities together.
10. A flyer can be two sides of A4, but you could work on a one-sided poster with a younger class, or a booklet with a more advanced group. It can include a range of information, including the following:
 - The name of the site in large letters (they may want to design a logo)
 - Bright, colourful photos or drawings of the castle
 - The date the castle was built
 - A couple of brief paragraphs with information about the history of the castle
 - Opening and closing times
11. Print up the flyers and create a display. If you have also built a castle (see Hands on Activity 1), this can be an ideal backdrop to the models.

Fantastic Norman sites:

Pevensey, Hastings,
Tonbridge, Rochester,
Dover, Warwick, Chepstow,
Pembroke, Canterbury,
York, Corfe, Caerphilly,
Tretower, Kidwelly,
Laugharne, Trim Castle,
Dublin Castle, Pickering Castle,
Clare Castle, Clitheroe Castle

Top Tip:

Find Norman Castles near you by searching on the following websites –

England: www.english-heritage.org.uk/daysout/properties.
Many of the English Heritage sites also offer free entrance to school groups if booked in advance. You can find out more on their website.

Wales: www.cadw.wales.gov.uk

Scotland: www.historic-scotland.gov.uk/index/places

NI: www.ni-environment.gov.uk/built-home



Design a Norman Castle Flyer

Pevensey Castle



Orford Castle



Clifford's Tower



Carrick Fergus Castle



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– Castles: Evaluation

Split the class into five groups and give each group one of the questions below to discuss. Then ask each group to feed back their views to the rest of the class.

1. Why did the Normans build castles?
2. What was important to consider when choosing a place to build a castle?
3. What were the main sections of a motte and bailey castle?
4. Why did the Normans have to adapt the building materials they used to build castles?
5. Why do people visit Norman castles in modern times?

Once each group has fed back their ideas, ask the class to imagine they are an architect designing a castle for a Norman noble and they have to compile a list of all the design elements he will need in his castle. Ask individual pupils to contribute ideas to a class list recorded on the board and then ask follow-up questions to ensure that pupils can justify their choices.

