

The Abbey Hill CURRICULUM

How powerful
is a castle?

Achieving our dreams together





How powerful is a castle?

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Key Idea:



Step inside a world of towering walls, grand halls, and brave knights—where castles were not just homes, but fortresses of strength and power. Built to protect against invaders, these mighty castles had tall towers, drawbridges, and moats to keep enemies at bay. Inside, royal families feasted in the great hall, while women managed households and sometimes even helped defend their stronghold! From Eleanor of Aquitaine’s rule to the knights who protected the lands after the Battle of Hastings, castles were full of action, mystery, and unforgettable stories.

We will:



Build our very own Castles and hold an exhibition for other children to come and have tours of our designs.

Core Text:



Prince Cinders
Babette Cole



Core Knowledge



- 1.Castles were built to protect people from invaders.
- 2.Castles had strong walls and towers and some had a drawbridge and moat to stop invaders from entering.
- 3.Castles had rooms like the great hall for feasts, kitchens, and bedrooms
- 4.Women in castles played important roles, managing the household, overseeing servants, and sometimes defending the castle.
- 5.E&D: Eleanor of Aquitaine was a powerful queen and landowner, often associated with castles.
- 6.Norman knights wore armour and helped defend castles after the Battle of Hastings in 1066.
- 7.The Bayeux Tapestry shows pictures of the Battle of Hastings, where William the Conqueror won and became king.
- 8.Peveril Castle is named after William Peverel, a Norman nobleman (He was granted the land after the Norman Conquest.)
- 9.Bolsover Castle and Peveril Castle are local castles in our area that were built long ago

Disciplinary Knowledge



Being a Historian:

- Know about new ideas and inventions of the time.
- Know why people did things, why events happened and what happened as a result of this.
- Know several ways of finding out about the past e.g. books, artefacts, people, the internet.
- Know who was important in a simple historical recount and give reasons why.










Being a Geographer:

- Know basic geographical vocabulary to refer to key physical features including beach, cliff, coast, forest, hill, mountain, sea, ocean, river, soil, valley and vegetation.
- Know basic geographical vocabulary to refer to key human features including city, town, village, factory, farm, house, office, port and harbour.
- Know that aerial photographs and plan perspectives to recognise landmarks and basic human and physical features.









Lesson 1: History Detectives – What makes a castle?

Icon	Detail
 Learning Intention	Understand why castles were built with strong walls, towers, drawbridges, and moats to protect from invaders.
 Disciplinary Knowledge	Know why people built castles and their defensive features.
 Key Knowledge	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Castles were built to protect people from invaders. 2. Castles had strong walls and towers and some had a drawbridge and moat to stop invaders from entering.
 What the teacher does	<p>Show photos/images of castles from different periods. Ask pupils to spot features they notice and share any castle names they know. Prompt: "Why do you think castles have strong walls, towers, moats, and drawbridges?" Explain the purpose of each feature. Model labelling a castle diagram and complete sentence frames with pupils (e.g., "The _____ protects the castle because _____").</p>
 What pupils do	<p>Observe images carefully. Discuss and share observations. Complete a labelled castle diagram. Use sentence frames to explain features.</p>
 Key Questions	<p>What features can you see on the castles? Why do you think castles have these features? What does a moat/drawbridge do? How did these features protect people?</p>
 Evidence	Labelled castle diagrams and sentence frame work.
 Adaptation	Scaffolding and scribing support for writing and labelling.
 Resources	Castle images, labelled diagram templates, sentence frames, writing materials.

Lesson 2: Local Castles and Aerial Views

Icon	Detail
 Learning Intention	Explore local castles and how they look from above and over time.
 Disciplinary Knowledge	Know local castles and recognise landmarks using aerial photos and images.
 Key Knowledge	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 8. Peveril Castle is named after William Peverel. 9. Bolsover Castle and Peveril Castle are local castles built long ago.
 What the teacher does	<p>Use Google Maps satellite view. Locate Abbey Hill Primary School, then Peveril Castle and Bolsover Castle.</p>





	<p>Zoom in to see castles from above. Show photos comparing castles today and historic illustrations. Support pupils to compare images and discuss changes. Guide pupils to create photos with speech bubbles explaining differences for a class display.</p>
👤 What pupils do	<p>Locate the school and castles on Google Maps. Discuss what they see from above. Compare historic vs. modern images. Create photos with speech bubbles describing castles then and now.</p>
? Key Questions	<p>Where is our school in relation to the castles? What do you notice about castles from above? How have castles changed over time? Why might castles look different today?</p>
📷 Evidence	<p>Photos with speech bubbles for a classroom display comparing local castles then and now.</p>
🔧 Adaptation	<p>Adult support during discussions for vocabulary and concept development.</p>
📄 Resources	<p>iPads/computers with Google Maps, printed photos, craft materials for speech bubbles.</p>

🏰 Lesson 3: Castle Life – Rooms and Roles

Icon	Detail
🎯 Learning Intention	Learn about important rooms in castles and the roles of people living there, especially women.
📖 Disciplinary Knowledge	Know about castle rooms and the roles people had in castle life.
🧠 Key Knowledge	<p>3. Castles had rooms like the great hall for feasts, kitchens, and bedrooms.</p> <p>4. Women played important roles managing the household, servants, and sometimes defending the castle.</p>
👤 What the teacher does	<p>Introduce key castle rooms and their functions. Discuss women’s roles using pictures and storytelling. Lead pupils in a role-play sequencing a day in the castle, focusing on different rooms and tasks.</p>
👤 What pupils do	<p>Participate in role play acting out castle life. Sequence pictures or cards showing castle rooms and daily activities. Discuss what women did in the castle.</p>
? Key Questions	<p>What rooms did castles have? What did women do in castles? How did people live and work?</p>
📷 Evidence	Photos of role play and sequencing activities.





Adaptation	Chunking of information and adult modelling during role play.
Resources	Role play props, images of castle rooms, sequencing cards.

Lesson 4: Eleanor of Aquitaine – Queen and Castle Keeper (Role-play)






Icon	Detail
Learning Intention	Understand Eleanor of Aquitaine’s importance as a powerful queen and castle manager.
Disciplinary Knowledge	Know who was important in history and why.
Key Knowledge	5. Eleanor of Aquitaine was a powerful queen and landowner associated with castles.
What the teacher does	Use a detailed role-play script featuring 5 characters. Guide pupils through the story of Eleanor’s life and castle role. Support pupils to participate in role play and respond to questions. Help pupils create simple illustrations or labels about Eleanor and her role.
What pupils do	Take on roles and perform the story. Listen and answer questions. Draw or label illustrations related to Eleanor’s life.
Key Questions	Who was Eleanor of Aquitaine? Why was she powerful? What did she do in castles?
Evidence	Role play participation, pupil drawings and labels.
Adaptation	Chunking the script, adult modelling, and support.
Resources	Role-play script, character props, drawing materials.

Lesson 5: Norman Knights – Armour and Defence

Icon	Detail
Learning Intention	Learn about Norman knights, their armour, and their role in castle defence.
Disciplinary Knowledge	Know about inventions and why events happened in history.
Key Knowledge	6. Norman knights wore armour and helped defend castles after the Battle of Hastings in 1066.
What the teacher does	Introduce Norman knights and their armour. Explain the Battle of Hastings briefly. Model labelling a knight’s armour diagram.
What pupils do	Discuss knights and their role. Label and annotate a knight diagram with support.





 What pupils do	Design and build their own castle models. Prepare and deliver presentations or tours explaining features.
 Key Questions	What features did you include? Why did you choose those features? What did you learn about castles?
 Evidence	Photos of models and pupil-led exhibitions.
 Adaptation	Scaffolded planning and adult support.
 Resources	Model-making supplies (cardboard, glue, scissors, etc.), display space.





Scene 4: The Messenger Brings News

Messenger: *(Enters briskly from one side, looking alert, holding an imaginary scroll)*

Your Majesty, I have urgent news from the battlefield! Our knights and soldiers are fighting bravely to protect our lands. The enemy is strong, but with your leadership and the strength of the castle's walls and soldiers, we hope to keep the castle safe. I travel quickly to bring important news to you so you can decide what must be done next.

(Mime handing over a scroll or bowing to Eleanor; look serious and hurried)

Scene 5: The Soldier Guards the Castle

Soldier: *(Standing tall and firm, holding imaginary shield and sword)*

I am one of the brave soldiers who protect the castle. Every day and night, I stand watch from the towers, looking out for any sign of danger. I wear heavy armour to keep me safe in battle. The walls, towers, and moat are all built to help us defend the castle, but it's the courage of the people inside that truly keeps us strong. We train hard so we are ready to fight if enemies attack.

(Look around vigilantly; mimic looking through binoculars or over a wall; raise imaginary sword in a strong pose)

Scene 6: The Child's Perspective

Child: *(Sitting or standing playfully, smiling, maybe holding a small toy or book)*

Hello! I live here in the castle with my family. My days are full of fun and learning. I play with other children in the great hall, watch the servants working, and sometimes explore the castle's rooms. The castle is like a small town, with everyone having a job to do. I'm proud that my family lives in such a strong and important place.

(Gesture excitedly, maybe mime playing or exploring; look happy and curious)

Scene 7: Eleanor's Final Words

Eleanor: *(Returning to centre stage, looking out warmly)*

Thank you all for sharing your stories. Remember, a castle is more than just stone walls and towers—it is a home, a place of safety, and a symbol of power. My life was full of challenges, but I was proud to lead and protect my people. I hope you now understand how important castles and those who lived in them were in medieval times.

(Open arms wide as if embracing everyone; smile kindly)

