

Life in a Castle

Aims

- To introduce evidence that aspects of life in the past were different, by looking at an old building through storytelling
- To introduce some of the people who lived in a castle in the medieval period
- To explore issues of fact and fantasy

Preparation

Some work on castles could be useful, but is not essential.

Programme

This programme takes as its starting-point a story which will be familiar to key stage 1 children - Sleeping Beauty. The story uses a castle as its setting, but has clear fantasy elements. Through the story, the children learn that a castle was home to a big community, including royalty, lords and ladies, servants and soldiers, and that life included work and leisure. They will hear about the walls and the gatehouse for security, the great hall for feasting, the kitchen with its huge fireplace for cooking, spiral stairs, rooms and towers. They will also be able to see and handle relevant objects such as helmets, sword and shield.

After their Education Room introduction, your class could look round the castle in small supervised groups. Suggested features to look for, with discussion points, are available for the adult helpers. If you have access to a camera, you could appoint someone to take photographs of your pupils in various locations within the castle.

Follow-up

Talk about what the children saw, including their favourite parts of the castle. Think about who might have used different parts of the castle and how they were used (e.g. soldiers on the wall, guards at the gate). Use photographs as reminders if you were able to take any.



Heritage Education Service



**Life in a castle:
features to look for**

Up steps to Keep

Keep
Look for bread oven, toilet (garderobe) and well

Exhibition :

life in a castle in war and peace, includes display of food

Museum Building

Downstairs: Great Hall which would have had long tables set out for eating. Notice the huge fireplace

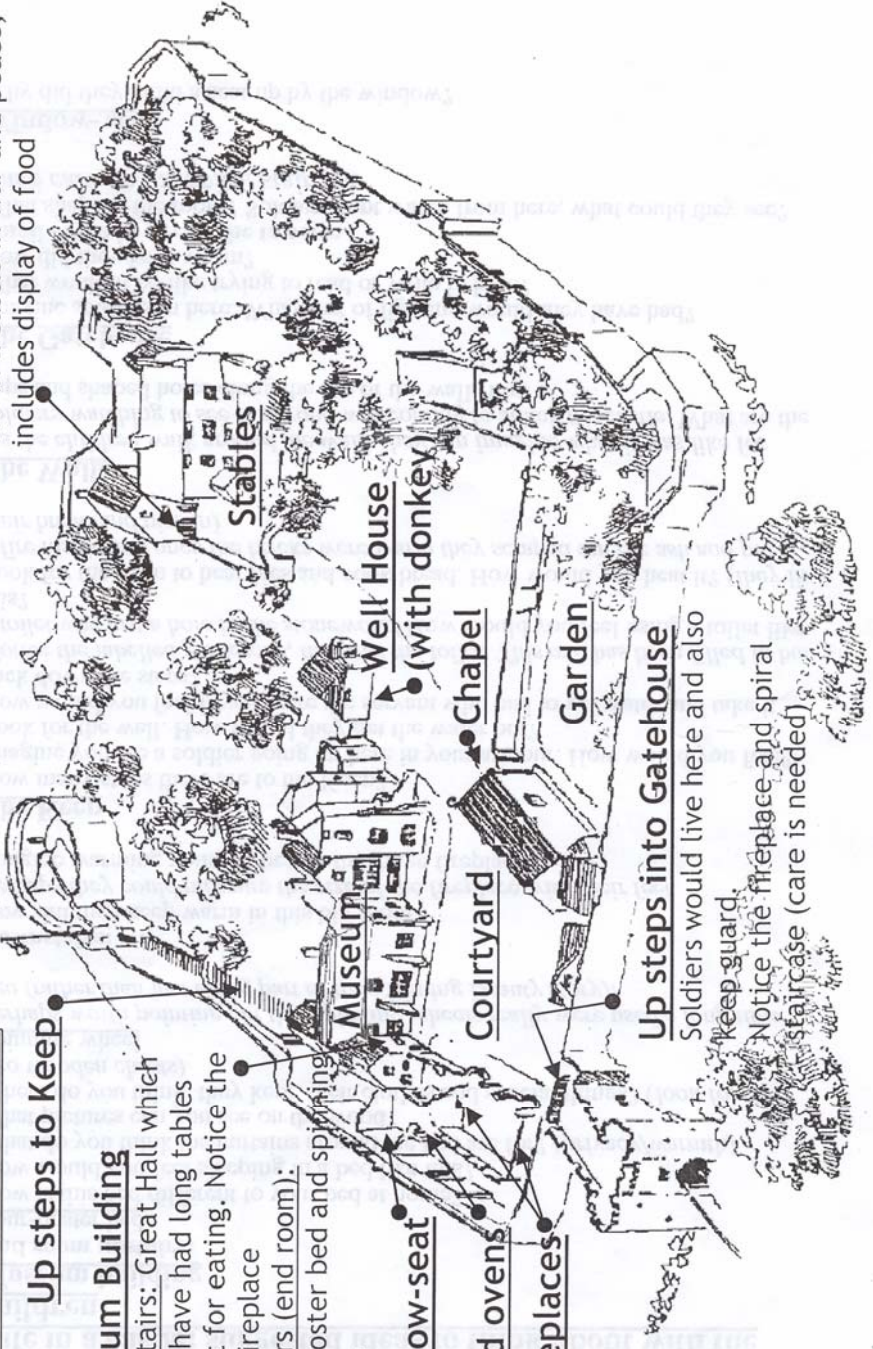
Upstairs (end room):

Four-poster bed and spinning wheel.

Window-seat

Bread ovens

3 fireplaces



Stables

Well House
(with donkey)

Chapel

Garden

Museum

Courtyard

Up steps into Gatehouse

Soldiers would live here and also keep guard.

Notice the fireplace and spiral staircase (care is needed)

Life in a castle: suggested ideas to think about with the children

Museum building

End room upstairs:

Four-poster bed

How is this bed different to your bed at home?

How would you feel sleeping in a bed like this?

What do you think the curtains around the bed are for? (*privacy/warmth*)

What pictures can you see on the wood?

Where do you think they kept their clothes and special things? (*look for the two wooden chests*)

Spinning wheel

Perhaps worth pointing out that spinning wheels really were used a long time ago (rather than just being part of the Sleeping Beauty story)!

Downstairs:

How did they keep warm in this big room?

Perhaps they could measure the size of the fireplace with their feet.

Imagine warming yourself beside this huge fireplace!

The Keep

How many steps there are to the Keep?

Imagine you are a soldier going up here in your armour. How would you feel?

Look for the well. How would they get the water out?

How would you feel if you were the servant who had to get water and take it back down the steps?

Notice the labelled garderobe, this was the toilet. This one has been filled in but a toilet was just a hole in the stonework! How would you feel using a toilet like this?

Look for the oven to heat pies and cook bread. How would you heat it? (*they lit a fire inside and once the bricks were warm they scraped out the ash and put their bread and pies in*)

The Walls

As the children walk around the walls they can imagine what it was like for soldiers watching to see if anyone was coming to attack the castle. What are the gaps and shaped holes along the top of the walls for?

The Gatehouse

Imagine soldiers in here. What sort of lighting would they have had?

What would it be like trying to read or write in here?

How did they keep warm?

Small room in one of the towers:

What shape is the room? Soldiers kept watch from here, what could they see?

Take care on the spiral staircase

Window-seat

Why did they build a seat up by the window?
