

Teachers' Kit

Helmsley Castle

This kit helps teachers plan a visit to Helmsley Castle, one of the north of England's most impressive castles. Use these resources before, during and after your visit to help students get the most out of their learning.

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Share your visit with us @EHEducation



Welcome

This Teachers' Kit for Helmsley Castle has been designed for teachers and group leaders to support a free self-led visit to the site. It includes a variety of materials suited to teaching a wide range of subjects and key stages, with practical information, activities for use on site and ideas to support follow-up learning. To further support learning, there are three bookable resources available:

- A sensory handling bag to support the sensory trail.
- A class set of compasses (15) to use for the on-site medieval maths activity.
- A handling box, which includes a range of objects with supporting information to help groups investigate daily life at Helmsley Castle.

Please request these resources when you make your booking, so that we can ensure they are available.

We know that each class and study group is different, so we have collated our resources into one kit allowing you to decide which materials are best suited to your needs. Please use the contents page, which has been colour-coded to help you easily locate what you need and view individual sections. All our activities have clear guidance on the intended use for study so you can adapt them for your desired learning outcomes.

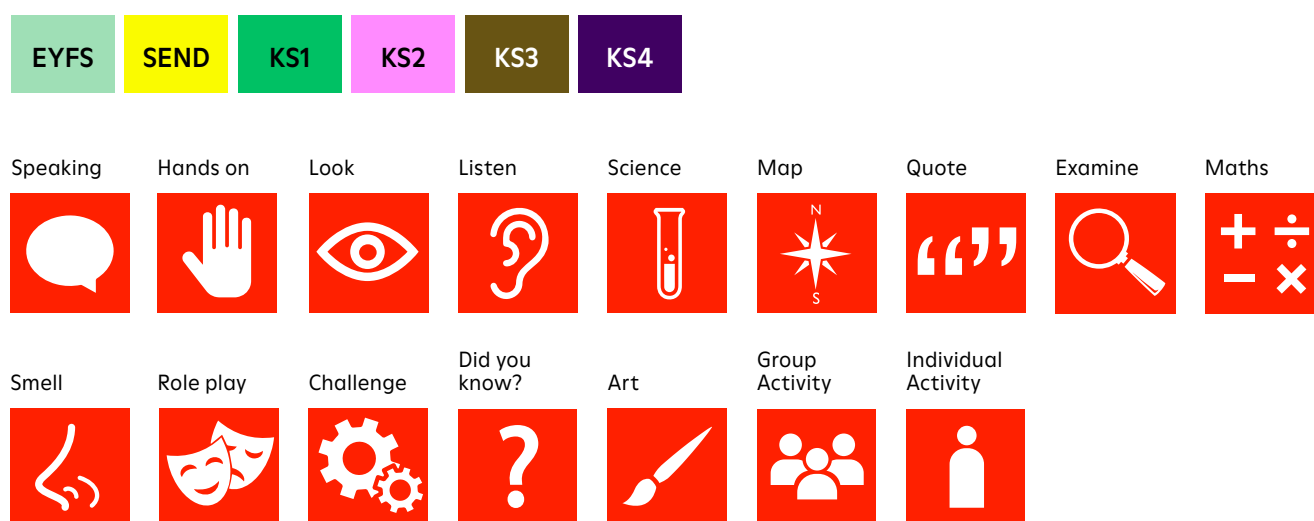
To further aid your planning, we have created Hazard Information, which you can download from the Helmsley Castle [School Visits](#) page. You can find more practical information about your booked visit to Helmsley Castle on your Education Visit Permit and in our What You Need to Know document.

We hope you enjoy your visit and find this Teachers' Kit useful. If you have any queries, please don't hesitate to get in touch with a member of our team either via bookeducation@english-heritage.org.uk or on 0370 333 0606.

English Heritage Learning Team

Icon key

The icons below will help you quickly identify the types of activities and information presented.















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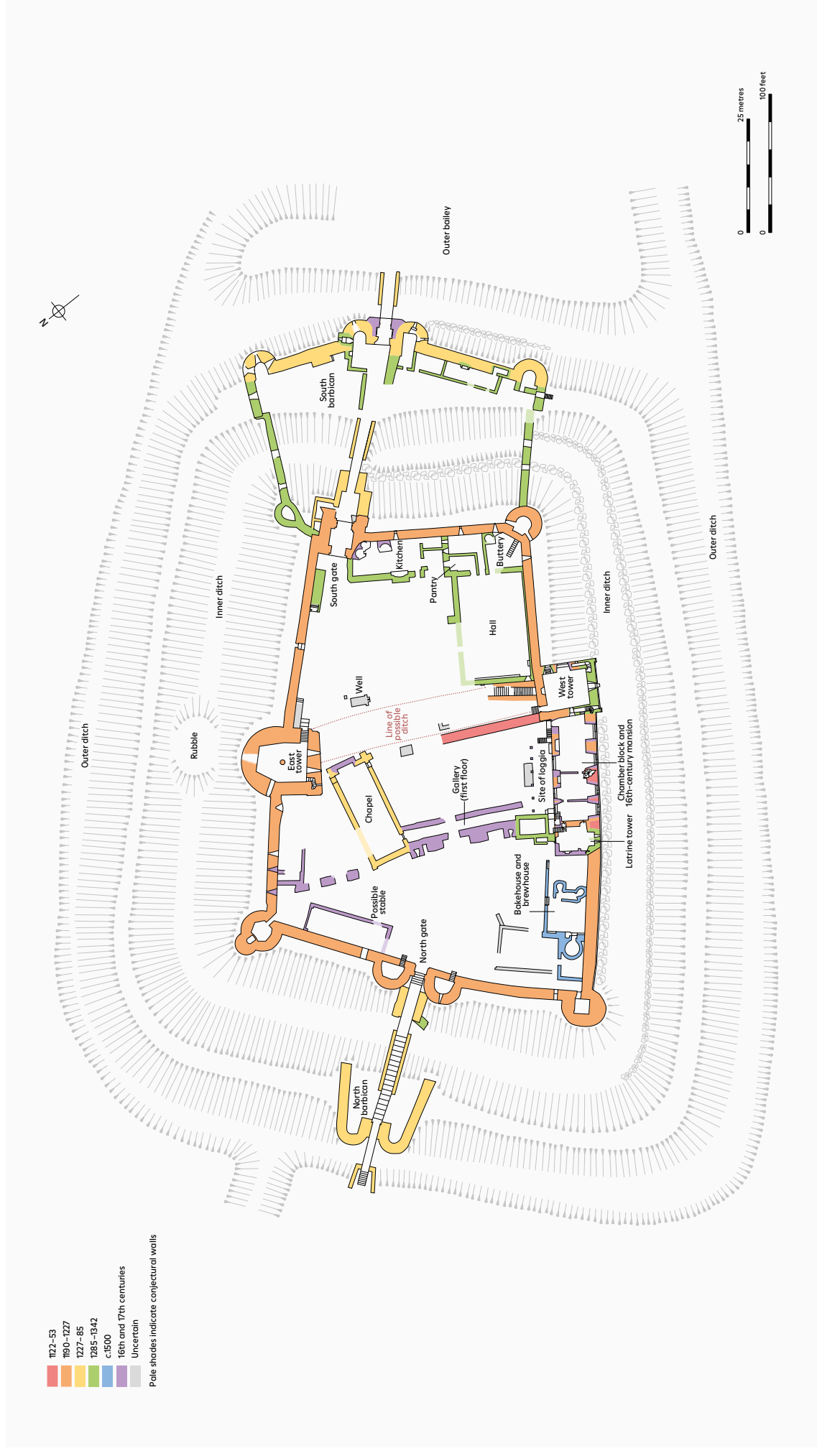
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Pre-visit

Information and activities you can use in the classroom before your visit.

Helmsley Castle Site plan



Helmsley Castle

Orientation photos



Coaches will drop off in the coach park. Follow this path for about 20 metres to the Visitor Centre.



This is the Visitor Centre. You will enter the site here, through the glass doors. It can be echoey in here.



The uniform you will often see around the castle worn by all English Heritage volunteers.



There are three toilets in the Visitor Centre – one labelled as male, one as female and a gender-neutral accessible toilet.



You will walk over a bridge to get into the castle. The bridge may creak. Most places to look at are outside. You can picnic on the grass.



There are some rooms indoors. The rooms are echoey, the lighting may be low and the floor is uneven.

Historical information

Discover the story of Helmsley Castle

Below is a short history of Helmsley Castle. Use this information to learn how the site has changed over time. You'll find the definitions of the key words in the Glossary.

Before the castle

Very little is known about Helmsley before the castle was built. Evidence of prehistoric activity, including **round barrows**, can be seen in the surrounding countryside. There was an important Neolithic monument around 25 miles away, near Ripon – search the English Heritage website for Thornborough Henges to learn about this.

One mile to the east of Helmsley was a large Roman villa at Beadlam.

More information about the villa is on the English Heritage website – search for Beadlam Villa. A **hoard** of Roman silver denarii coins from the 3rd century was found at Helmsley. They were probably hidden around the year AD 218.

Local place names indicate that there were both Viking and Saxon settlements nearby. Before the Norman Conquest in 1066, the owner of the Manor of Helmsley in the **hundred** of Maneshou was a noble called Uhtred, who owned several manors in the vicinity.

Written sources show different spellings of Helmsley over time. It is recorded as Elmeslac in **Domesday Book** (1086) and with other spellings such as Hamelak and Haumesley during the medieval period.



Roman coins found at Helmsley. Images used with kind permission of Helmsley Town Council.



The Norman Conquest and Robert de Mortain (1066–1100)

After the Norman Conquest, William the Conqueror (r.1066–1087) gave the land that Helmsley Castle is on now to Robert, Count of Mortain (his half-brother). Robert appears on the **Bayeux Tapestry**, sitting next to William. Robert played an important role in William's invasion of England – he sat on the **invasion** planning council and gave William 120 boats to use.

There's no evidence that Robert de Mortain built on the land at Helmsley, but he did collect **taxes** from the people living there.

By 1069, William the Conqueror was faced with growing rebellion from people living in the north of England. They were unhappy about rising taxes and land being taken away from them. To try to stop the rebellion, William ordered the destruction of crops, **livestock** and food in large parts of the north during the winter of 1069–70. This became known as the Harrying of the North.

The effect of the Harrying on Helmsley is seen in the records. Evidence from the **Domesday survey** carried out in 1086 shows that the land was worth 10 **shillings**, in comparison to the 32 shillings it had been worth at the time of the previous king, Edward the Confessor (r.1042–66). One priest, six villagers and their families (around 30 people) lived in the area. However, the entry shows that although there was some wasteland around the settlement, there was also woodland, **pasture** and **arable** land. If the area had been destroyed, people had already begun to rebuild it.

Count Robert had his land taken away when he rebelled against William the Conqueror's son, William II (r.1097–1100). The land was later returned to the family but lost again by Robert's son William when he rebelled against King Henry I (r.1100–35).

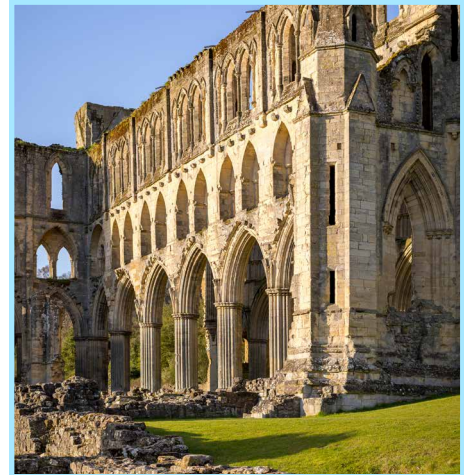


Bayeux Tapestry showing Robert de Mortain (labelled Rotbert) to the right of William the Conqueror. Also in the picture is Bishop Odo, William's brother.

Walter Espec and the first castle (1122–1191)

Walter Espec was given the land at Helmsley around 1122 by King Henry I (r.1100–35). Walter served Henry loyally. England was invaded by David I of Scotland in 1138 and Walter helped Henry defeat him at the Battle of the Standard near Northallerton.

Walter built the first castle at Helmsley, but very little of it survives. The castle was built on the rocky ridge and was probably surrounded by earth **ramparts** and ditches, topped with a wooden **palisade**. The castle was made of stone – the **footings** of the original **curtain wall** can still be seen.



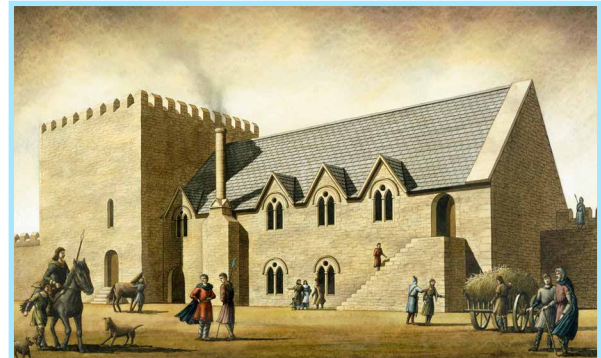
Walter Espec donated the land on which Rievaulx Abbey was built. It is now in ruins.

Walter was the **patron** of Rievaulx Abbey, a short distance away from Helmsley Castle. It's thought that he retired there in the 1150s and died in 1154. He had no children and passed Helmsley Castle on to Peter de Ros I, who was married to his sister Adelina.

The de Ros family build (1191–1215)

Robert de Ros II (also known as Fursan) was Peter and Adelina de Ros' great-grandson. He took charge of Helmsley Castle in 1191, during the reign of King Richard I (r.1189–1199).

Helmsley Castle was his main residence and most of what can be seen today was built by him. He replaced the earth and timber defences with a stone curtain wall and built defensive towers along it. He also built both gatehouses and the west tower, containing his private apartments.



Reconstruction drawing of Helmsley Castle's hall and west tower in the 12th century by Simon Hayfield.

In addition to building at the castle, Robert de Ros rearranged the settlement of Helmsley town and gave it the status of a borough, allowing it to hold markets. He also paid for a leper hospital, or leprosarium, to be established nearby. Leprosy (now known as Hansen's disease) is an infectious disease that affects the skin and nervous system. It is treatable now, but in the 1100s there was no cure. People with leprosy lived in leprosaria and were allowed limited contact with their local communities.



Robert de Ros, King John and Magna Carta (1215–16)

King John (r.1199–1216) became king following the death of his brother Richard I. John inherited a tough financial situation – Richard had spent a lot of money on the **Crusades** and England was in debt. John then lost control of some of the **territories** that England controlled in France. In an attempt to win the territories back, he decided to take an army to France. He raised taxes on the **nobility** to fund this.

By 1215, a large group of English barons had rebelled against John's government and tax regime. They laid **siege** to royal castles and captured London, beginning the **First Barons' War** (1215–17). Robert de Ros had generally been supportive of King John but sided with the barons during their revolt against him.

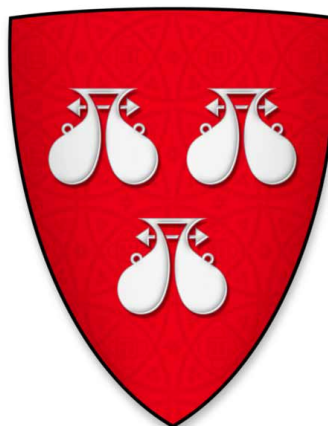
John had little option but to agree to a set of restrictions on his rule, set out in a document called **Magna Carta**. Robert was one of the 25 lords chosen to ensure that John followed the rules in the Magna Carta. However, John probably had no intention of honouring the agreement and it wasn't long before both sides resumed fighting. With John making progress towards winning, the barons enlisted the support of the French king's son, Prince Louis (the 'Lion').

According to the **chronicler** Matthew Paris, Robert successfully held Helmsley Castle against King John during his northern campaign in 1216.

On 18 October 1216, King John died. His son became Henry III of England at the age of 9.



An illustration of King John.



Robert de Ros' coat of arms. The symbols represent water carriers, usually used on horses. By Rs-nourse, CC BY-SA 3.

The visit of King Edward III (1334)



A reconstruction drawing showing Helmsley Castle as it may have appeared at the time of Edward III's visit in 1334. By Peter Urmston (2017).

William de Ros I inherited Helmsley Castle from his father. Both he and his son, Robert de Ros III, continued to support the barons against the reigning monarchs. On 14 August 1265 Robert was pardoned for his opposition to King Henry III. He married the heiress to the Belvoir estate, Isabelle d'Aubigny, and it may have been her wealth that allowed further developments at Helmsley Castle.

Robert's son, William de Ros II and his son William de Ros III continued to make improvements to the castle. In 1334, King Edward III stayed at the castle for five days and it is possible that some of these improvements were carried out specifically for his visit – making the east tower taller, building a new hall and adding a kitchen, pantry and **buttery**.

An **inquisition** following the death of William de Ros III in 1343 tells us what the castle was like at this time. The record mentions parks and **orchards** surrounding the castle. It also shows that there was a **parker**, a **constable** and a **chaplain** employed at Helmsley Castle.



A coin from the reign of Edward III.



Royal plots (1464–1586)

In 1464, Thomas de Ros III was executed for his part in the **Wars of the Roses**. Helmsley Castle passed into the ownership of **the Crown**, and in 1478 was owned by Richard of Gloucester, the future King Richard III (r.1483–85). When Henry VII (r.1485–1509) defeated Richard at the Battle of Bosworth, Helmsley Castle was returned to the de Ros family.



A reconstruction drawing of Helmsley Castle in the 1600s, with the Tudor range visible. By Peter Urmston (2017).

Around 1492, an **Act of Parliament** was passed granting Sir Thomas Lovel the right to manage Helmsley Castle. Thomas was married to Isabel, sister to Edmund, Lord de Ros. Thomas had presented a petition to Parliament, representing Edmund as 'not of sufficient discretion to guide himself and his livelihood; nor able to serve his sovereign after his duty'. It is possible that Edmund had a developmental disability, but the historical record is not clear.

Following Edmund's death, Helmsley Castle passed to the Manners family. In 1513 Thomas Manners inherited it from his father, George. Thomas was a member of Henry VIII's (r.1509–47) court and became Earl of Rutland. His son Edward Manners (1549–87) refurbished Helmsley Castle as a grand country house, creating a new wing in the old medieval range and new apartments.

At the age of 20, Edward Manners served as a commander of Queen Elizabeth I (r.1558–1603)'s forces against the northern earls who rebelled in support of Mary, Queen of Scots and her possible marriage to the Catholic Duke of Norfolk. In 1586 he was one of the commissioners who tried and condemned Mary, Queen of Scots as a result of the Babington **plot**.

Edward's style of living was very expensive; when he went with his countess to London in around 1586, he had with him forty-one servants, including a chaplain, trumpeter, gardener and **apothecary**.

Did you know?

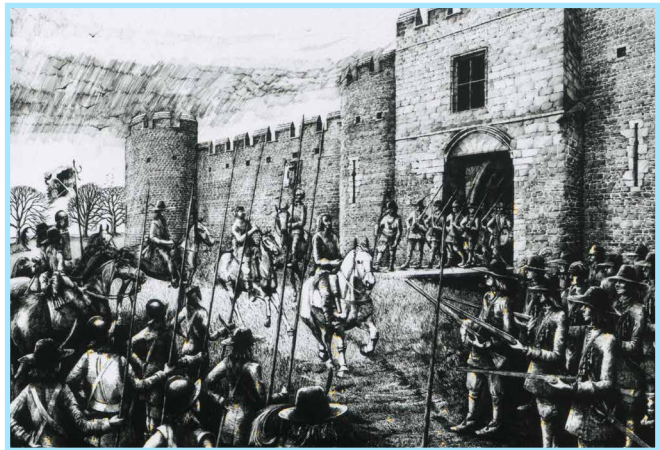


Mary, Queen of Scots was the queen of both Scotland and, briefly, France. She was born in 1542 and was a cousin of Queen Elizabeth I. Mary was the Catholic heiress to Scotland's throne and had some claim to the English crown. Elizabeth was a Protestant and many Catholic people in England wanted Mary to be queen. After the nobles in Scotland turned against Mary, she fled to England. She was kept prisoner in England for 19 years and executed for treason on 8 February 1587.



Civil War and the beginning of the castle's decline (1632–44)

Katherine Manners, Duchess of Buckingham, inherited Helmsley Castle in 1632. She had been married to George Villiers, 1st Duke of Buckingham (d.1528), who had a close relationship with King James I (r.1603–25). Katherine was a popular member of the court of King James' son, King Charles I (r.1625–49).

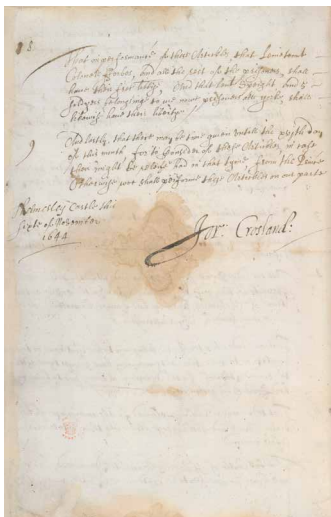


An illustration of the surrender of Helmsley Castle during the Civil War by an unknown artist.

During the Civil War (1642–51), Helmsley was **garrisoned** by around 200 **Royalists**, under the command of Sir Jordan Crosland, the son of the castle's steward. Thomas Fairfax, commander of the **Parliamentarian** forces, had recently been victorious at the Battle of Marston Moor (July 1644). He now turned his attention to Helmsley Castle.

By 6 September 1644, Fairfax had surrounded Helmsley Castle with cannon. Not all was going well for Fairfax though, as he was shot in the shoulder at the castle, from which he subsequently recovered.

The siege turned out to be one of the longest sieges of the Civil War. Royalist **cavalry** from Pontefract, Skipton and Knaresborough tried to lift the siege in early November but were fought off. With supplies running low, and realising he was unlikely to win, Sir Jordan Crosland negotiated a surrender. He and his troops were allowed to leave freely to join the Royalist garrison at Scarborough Castle.



The terms of the surrender of Helmsley Castle, signed by Jordan Crosland
© British Library Board.

As part of the terms of surrender, it was agreed that Helmsley Castle would be 'absolutely demolished and that no garrison hereafter to be kept there, by either party'. The walls and gates were blasted open and the east tower split in two. This was the beginning of the castle's decline.

The castle and the community (1695–present)

Charles Duncombe, a wealthy London banker, purchased Helmsley Castle and its **estate** in 1695. The Duncombe family built a new house in Duncombe Park, with Helmsley Castle included in the surrounding parkland.

By this point, the castle was in a ruined state. Many 18th- and 19th-century artists passed through Helmsley and some, like JMW Turner, sketched or painted the ruins of Helmsley Castle.

The castle started to be used for community events. A local vicar, Charles Norris Gray, organised parish events such as fêtes, historical **pageants** and even agricultural shows within the castle grounds in the late 1800s. Helmsley Tennis Club had their courts within the main enclosure.

Since 1983, the castle has been looked after by English Heritage and is now a visitor attraction.



Photographs of a historical pageant held at the castle in 1867 and tennis courts in the inner bailey.

Glossary

Tricky terms and what they mean

Below is a list of words you might come across while exploring the history of Helmsley Castle. Use this Glossary to find out what they mean.

Act of Parliament – creates a new law or changes an existing law

apothecary – a (historical) person who gave medical advice and created medicines. The modern equivalent would be a pharmacist.

arable – land used for producing crops

Bayeux Tapestry – an embroidered cloth showing the events leading up to, and including, the Norman Conquest of England by William I in 1066

buttery – a room in a castle where wine and ale were stored. The word buttery comes from the French and Latin words for bottle or cask.

cavalry –
(historically)
soldiers who
fought on
horseback

a medieval chaplain – a member of the clergy attached to a community e.g. a noble's estate, who served in their chapel



An illustration of a medieval chaplain.

chronicler – a person who made a record of events

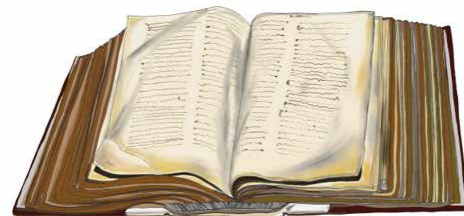
constable – the governor of a castle, responsible for its security and defence

Crown – the monarchy; the ruling king and/or queen

Crusades – a series of medieval military expeditions made by several groups from Europe to territories controlled by Muslim rulers in the Holy Land in the eastern Mediterranean, with the purpose of conquering lands previously controlled by Christians

curtain wall – a strong wall around a medieval castle or abbey, often with defensive towers

Domesday Book – the information gathered in the Domesday survey



Domesday Book.

Domesday survey – a record which listed the extent, value and ownership of land in England, made in 1086 by order of William I

estate – a large area of farming land, usually including a house, owned by one person/family

First Barons' War (1215–17) – a civil war between a group of rebellious barons, supported by the French king, Philip II Augustus, and King John. In 1215 at Runnymede, John agreed to the terms of Magna Carta but failed to honour them. Warfare, which had begun before Magna Carta, resumed. The rebel barons, led by Robert Fitzwalter, offered the crown to Louis, Dauphin of France, in return for his help to defeat John. He landed in Kent in 1216. John's death in October 1216 and the reissue of Magna Carta by his son, Henry III, and the return of many barons to the young king's side gradually led to the end of the war in 1217.

footing – a base upon which something can be built

garrisoned – provide (a place) with troops for defence

hoard – a (usually hidden) supply of money or valuable objects

hundred – part of a county, or shire, which had its own court

inquisition – inquisitions post-mortem were investigations into what property a person held after the land owner died, to work out who should inherit the land and whether the Crown was owed any money

invasion – entrance of an enemy army into a kingdom or country

livestock – farm animals, such as cows and sheep

Magna Carta – the document agreed to by King John in 1215, placing limits on his power. Most English barons and the Church felt that King John was abusing his power. By signing Magna Carta, he managed to calm the rebellion, but not for long. He didn't stick to the rules set out in Magna Carta, which made people angry and caused the First Barons' War.



An illustration of King John.

nobility – the group of people who belong to the aristocracy, for example earls, lords and barons

orchard – a place where fruit trees are grown

pageant – an entertainment where people act out scenes from history or legends

palisade – a high, defensive wooden wall

parker – a person who looked after the park, the enclosed land where nobles would hunt animals

Parliamentarians – a group of people who fought on the side of Parliament in the Civil War. They believed the king was corrupt, that he should be removed from the throne and that England should be ruled by Parliament instead.

pasture – land that animals graze on

patron – a person who gives generous support or approval

plot – a secret plan

ramparts – a defensive mound of earth or a stone wall

round barrow – a large mound of earth, often with a ditch around it, used for burials and community rituals in prehistory

Royalists – a group of people who fought on the side of the monarchy in the Civil War. They believed the king, Charles I, should remain on the throne and keep his law-making power.

shilling – an old unit of English money. There were 20 shillings in a pound.

siege – a military tactic in which an army surrounds a place in order to cut off essential supplies (for example, food and weapons) and force the people inside to surrender

taxes – money that people must pay to the government or local authorities, usually used for public services

territories – areas of land ruled by a leader (for example, a monarch or an emperor/empress) or a government

Wars of the Roses – a series of battles between two rival houses: the House of York and the House of Lancaster. Both groups wanted control of the throne. Traditionally it was said that the two rival dynasties adopted roses as their emblems, and these were worn as badges by their supporters: a red rose for the House of Lancaster, and a white rose for the House of York. In practice, the houses used many emblems, not just roses.



A Royalist Civil War soldier.

Key dates

Helmsley Castle

- **1066** – William the Conqueror gives the land that Helmsley Castle stands on to his half-brother, Robert de Mortain.
- **1069–70** – The Harrying of the North. The value of the land around the castle falls from 32 shillings to 10 shillings.
- **1122** – Walter Espec is given the land at Helmsley by King Henry I. He builds the first castle there, but there is little surviving evidence of it.
- **1191** – Robert de Ros II inherits the castle and starts building much of what can be seen today.
- **1215** – Robert becomes one of the barons holding King John to the conditions of Magna Carta. The following year, Robert successfully holds Helmsley Castle against King John during the First Barons' War.
- **1335** – King Edward III stays at Helmsley Castle for five days.
- **1464** – Thomas de Ros III is executed for his part in the Wars of the Roses. Helmsley Castle passes into the ownership of the Crown.
- **1485** – Henry VII grants Helmsley Castle back to the de Ros family.
- **1578** – Edward Manners, a relative of the de Ros family, begins to transform Helmsley Castle into a grand country house.
- **1642** – Helmsley Castle becomes a Royalist garrison during the first Civil War. The castle is besieged by Parliamentary troops for three months. The Royalists surrender and the slighting of the castle is ordered. This is the beginning of the castle becoming a ruin.
- **1800s** – The castle is used for community events such as pageants, agricultural shows and even tennis tournaments.
- **1983** – Helmsley Castle is taken into the care of English Heritage and becomes a tourist destination.

Why build here?



Recommended for

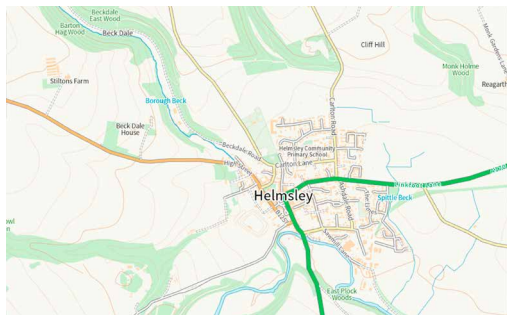
Geography, History

Learning objectives

- Explore the geographical features of the local area.
- Consider why Helmsley Castle was built in this location.

Time to complete

20 minutes



Use the larger map on page 71 to answer the questions in this activity.

Summary

Building a castle involved a large commitment of time and resources. They were symbols of power and used for defence. For these reasons, castle sites were chosen very carefully. In this activity, students will look for geographical features that informed the selection of Helmsley Castle's site.

Looking at sources

Give students a copy of the map on page 71. They could work individually, or in pairs or small groups.

First, ask students to locate Helmsley Castle on the map.

Then ask them to think about the following questions:

- Which materials might they need to build a castle? (They may want to make a list). Can they see anywhere on the local map where they might be able to source these materials?
- Are there any other features in the local area that make it a good place to site a castle – for example, is there a nearby water supply?
- Are there any other reasons why the castle was built where it was? (The contour lines on the map show that the area around Helmsley is relatively flat. Castles were often built on high ground, to help with defence.) Why might Walter Espec have chosen this site?

Students can also use Source 2 (aerial photo) on page 72 to find further evidence for their conclusions.

More learning ideas

Looking at the map, could students propose a better site for the castle? Where would be the best place for a castle in their local area? Why?

Why build here?

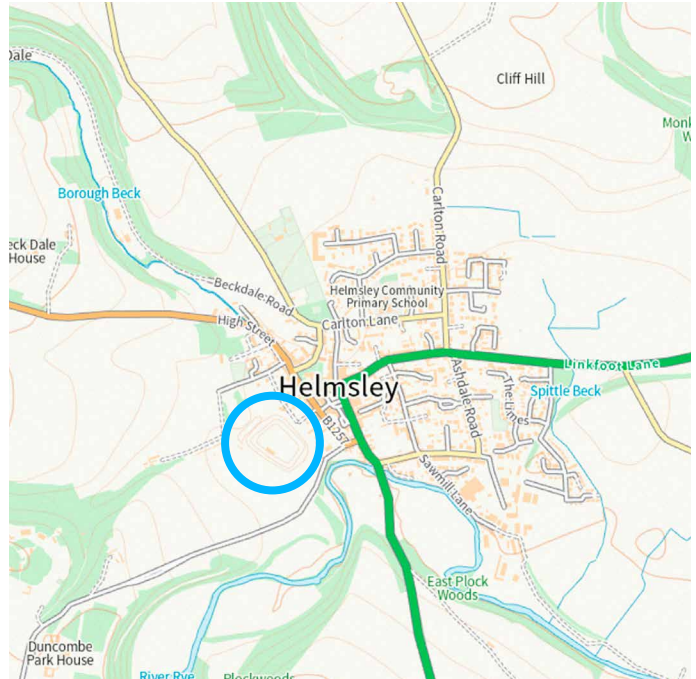
Finding the castle on the map

Helmsley Castle is on the western edge of Helmsley town. You can see its rectangular earthworks (circled in blue) on the map.

Features that would help with building the castle

Wood

- We know from the Domesday survey that there was woodland in the local area.
- There are still several woods in the local area – Beckdale East Wood, Barton Hag Wood, Monk Holme Wood, Plockwoods Bank Wood, East Plock Wood.
- Wood would have been an important material when building the castle, but also for heating and repairs when people were living there.



Water

- Helmsley is near the River Rye and Borough Beck, both of which would provide a water supply. There is archaeological evidence that the beck was diverted, to bring water supplies nearer to the castle.

Stone

- There is no evidence for a stone quarry on this map, but there is sandstone and limestone in the local area. The main walls of the castle are built from limestone rubble (unfinished blocks of stone). The roof tiles were made from sandstone.
- The stone dug out from the earthworks could have been used to build the first castle.

The ground

- As the contour lines are far apart around Helmsley Castle, it means the land is flat. This may have been one reason why a double ditch was dug, for defence.
- Walter Espec could have been prompted to build a castle at Helmsley following the defeat of King David I of Scotland in 1138 at the Battle of the Standard in Northallerton (around 20 miles away). Walter had been one of the commanders. He may have been trying to guard against further invasions from Scottish troops.
- Helmsley Castle's location was important because it was in the middle of the lands granted to Walter Espec by the king. Having the castle in the centre allowed him to easily control the lands on behalf of the king. The castle would have been an important centre of administration and local government and its central location meant it could be easily reached.

Medieval materials



Recommended for

Science, History, Design Technology

Learning objectives

- Identify different materials used to build a castle.
- Discuss the properties of materials and why they were used.

Time to complete

15–20 minutes



Use the larger version of this reconstruction drawing on page 73 to help with this activity.



Many medieval castles were built from stone.

Summary

Building a castle required many different materials and skilled craftspeople to work with these materials. In this activity, students will investigate the different materials that were used to build Helmsley Castle. They will consider why the materials were chosen, referring to their properties.

Begin by looking at sources 3 and 4 – a reconstruction drawing of Helmsley Castle during the 1400s on page 73 and a reconstruction of the south gate, also on page 73. Ask students to identify the materials that they can see in the pictures and identify which parts of the castle are made from which materials.

On page 22 there is a student activity sheet where students can match the materials to the castle part. They can also identify the properties of the materials that make them suitable.

Alternatively, you could print out the reconstruction picture on page 73 and ask students to label the different parts of the castle with the materials they are made from. They could also write the properties of the materials that make them suitable.

More learning ideas

Use the area map on page 71 to work out where some of the materials might come from. Compare modern building materials to the ones used for medieval castles. Consider why some are the same and some have changed.

Helmsley Castle

Building materials



Match the materials that Helmsley Castle is made from.

- 1** Draw lines from the name of the material to the part(s) of the castle made from that material. One is done already as an example.

Materials

stone



glass



wood



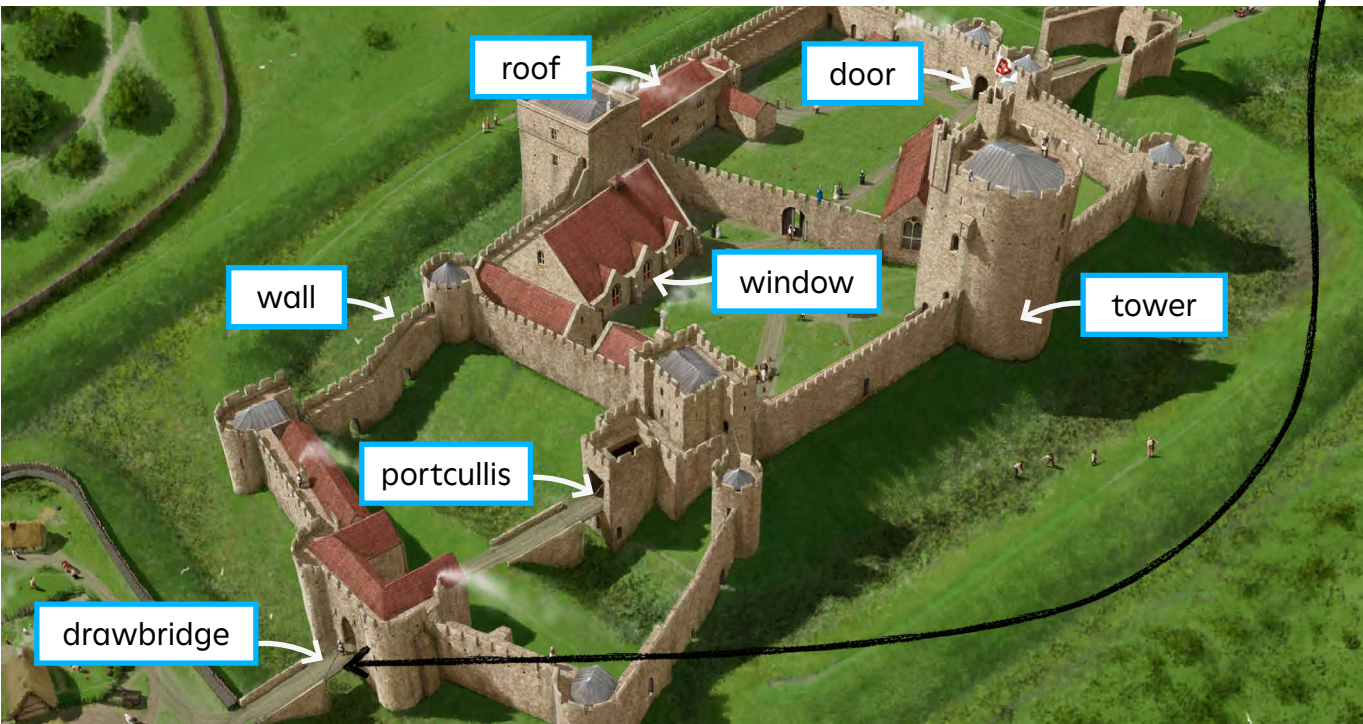
metal



fabric



ceramic



- 2** **Challenge:** Write the properties of the material underneath each one.

Properties

hard	rough	smooth	transparent
flexible	soft	shiny	opaque
strong	rigid	dull	waterproof

How to build a castle



Recommended for

Design Technology, History

Learning objectives

- Know some of the tools used to build a medieval castle.
- Understand some of the challenges in building a castle.
- Evaluate sources.

Time to complete

15–20 minutes

Summary

Primary sources exist which show the tools and techniques that medieval builders used. In this activity, students will look at two sources to draw conclusions about how a castle was built. Source 5 is an illustration from the Maciejowski Bible, created in Paris, France in the 1240s. Source 6 shows parts of the Bayeux Tapestry, created between 1067 and 1069.



An illustration of a medieval tower being built.

Looking at the sources

Students should work on this activity in pairs or small groups. Start by asking students to look at sources 5 and 6 on pages 74 and 75.

Students could consider the following questions:

- What is happening in the sources?
- Can they identify any of the tools used?
- Are there similarities with tools that are used today?
- What can they infer from these sources about medieval building techniques?
- Thinking about the materials used to make a castle, which tools do they think would be needed to make which parts of the castle? Use the reconstruction drawing on page 73 to help with this.

Finally, ask students to consider the sources. How accurate do we think they are in telling us about medieval building techniques. How might we be able to check their accuracy?

More learning ideas

Students could find other sources about medieval building and compare them to Sources 5 and 6. Research Guédelon Castle in France – this is a new castle being constructed solely using medieval design, materials and techniques.

How to build a castle

Things to note from the sources:

Students should consider whether they think two sources are enough to be able to make an informed decision about accuracy. They could consider where else they might look for information about medieval building techniques, to help them support their conclusions.

The ladders in both sources look like they are in the wrong place. Medieval drawings often lack depth or perspective. Students might use this as a measure of the building techniques of the drawings.

There are things the sources don't tell us. For example, there is evidence that there were female builders but there are none depicted in these sources.

Students could contrast modern and medieval building sites. They could compare the type of tools used and the Health and Safety measures in place.

Main jobs on a medieval building site:

The words in bold correspond to the building tool illustrations in the student activity.

Stonelaying – constructing walls and other features made from stone. Masons used a **trowel** to add **mortar** between stones to hold them in place, a **plumbline** to check vertical alignment of walls, a level to check horizontal alignment and various carriers for the mortar. In source 5 there is a mason applying mortar at the top of the tower.

Stonemason – creating dressed (finished) and rubble (unfinished) stone blocks and sculptural parts of the building from stone. They used hammers, picks and axes to carve rough or large pieces of rock, and a hammer or **mallet** and **chisel** for precise dressing, shaping and carving. In source 5 there is a stonemason using a chisel and mallet to carve a piece of stone.

Carpenter – creating parts of the castle from wood. They used axes and **saws** to cut the wood, planes to smooth and shape it, and chisels to carve out pieces. They also raised the **scaffolding**. In source 6, there are people felling trees with axes. In source 5, there is a carpenter using a chisel to cut into a right-angled piece of wood.

General labourer – digging foundations and ensuring materials were delivered to the right parts of the site, sometimes using a **wheelbarrow**. In source 5, labourers are carrying stones and mortar up a **ladder**, and one labourer in a **treadwheel** is helping to raise a basket of stone to the top of the tower. In source 6, someone on a ladder is placing a weathervane at the top of a building, and several workers are digging with spades and picks. A couple of them seem to have got distracted and are using the spades as weapons!

Helmsley Castle

Building tools

Discuss which tools you think might have been used to build the castle, who used them and which parts of the castle they were used to build.

- 1** Draw a line from the building tools to the parts of the castle you think they were used on.

wheelbarrow



Tools

trowel and mortar



treadwheel



plumbline



mallet and chisel



logsaw and trestle



ladder and scaffolding



Discover defence

Recommended for

History, Design and Technology

Learning objectives

- Identify some of the defensive features of Helmsley Castle.
- Discuss what the features tell us about the castle's use.

Time to complete

20-30 minutes



Medieval arrowheads and crossbow heads found at Helmsley Castle.

Summary

Robert de Ros added defensive features to Helmsley Castle when he had it constructed. Students can use source 3 – the large illustration of Helmsley Castle during the 1400s on page 73 – to discover the main ones.

Defence investigation

Give pairs or small groups of students a large copy of Source 3. They should study the illustration carefully to identify any features that would help to defend the castle against attack.

Students should consider the following, to make sure they have found all the defensive features:

- Would the people inside see enemies coming from far away?
- Is there anything to protect the outside of the castle?
- Are there multiple obstacles that an invader would need to get through?
- Is there a way of stopping enemies getting to the main doors?
- Is there a way of preventing weapons being used?
- Where might food be stored in case of a siege?
- Where might fresh water come from in case of a siege?
- Which features may no longer be visible? Why?

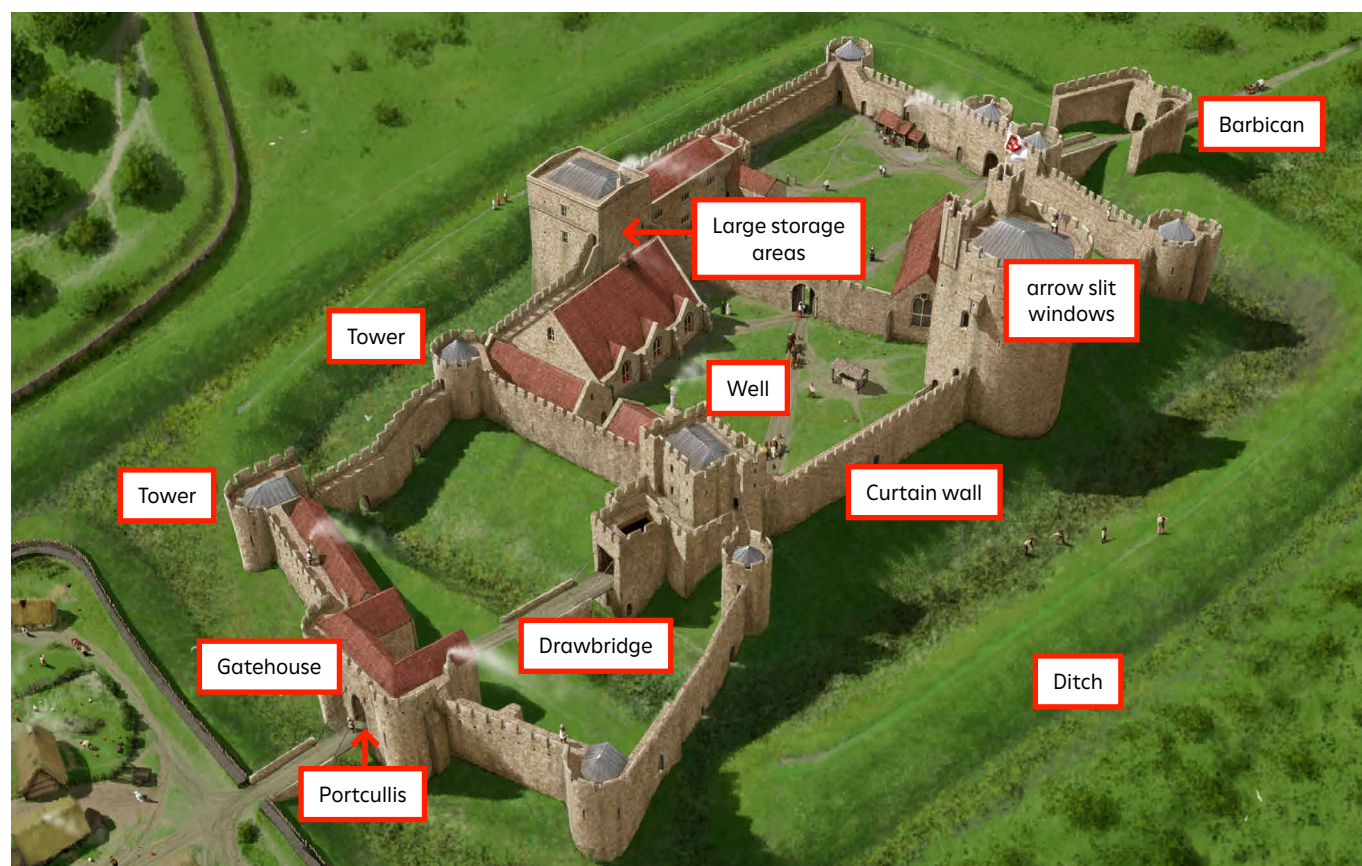
Discuss what the defensive features tell us about the way the castle was used. Ask students whether they think the de Ros family thought defence was important.

Students can also look at Source 8 – a quote from Abbot Aelred about what makes a perfect castle on page 76. Ask them to consider if these are the only features a castle needs.

More learning ideas

Build a castle from building blocks, adding defensive features. Compare Source 3 and Source 7 to see how Helmsley Castle's defences changed over time. Consider the differences and what they tell us about how the castle's use changed.

Discover defence



Defensive features are as follows:

Ditch – this would have taken a long time to dig out and was an important defensive feature. As Helmsley Castle was on low ground, the steep walls of the ditch were important to prevent intruders being able to reach the castle walls easily.

Curtain wall – this tall enclosing wall surrounded the castle to form a barrier. Wall walks at the top of the curtain wall enabled defenders to view the surrounding area. They could also launch missiles on intruders from this high vantage point.

Gatehouse – this was one of the most vulnerable parts of the castle as it formed part of the entrance. Often, extra defensive features were added such as a drawbridge, portcullis or murder holes (holes where you could drop heavy objects or hot materials onto intruders).

Drawbridge – this was a large wooden walkway over the ditch that could be raised by metal chains to prevent intruders from being able to approach the castle.

Portcullis – a heavy metal grille that was lowered to shut off an entrance to the castle.

Barbican – this was an extra layer of defence, using towers and walls, and was usually in front of the gatehouse.

Teachers' notes **Discover defence**

Towers – these were both in the gatehouses and along the curtain walls. In times of peace, they housed apartments and stores. In war they were used for observation and to launch attacks from. The entrance to the tower was often on the first floor, with wooden steps leading up to it. This meant that the entrance could more easily be protected against multiple attackers.

Arrow slit windows – these windows were wider on the inside and very narrow on the outside. This gave the defenders an advantage – it was easy to shoot arrows out, but very hard to shoot arrows in.

Large storage areas in both towers – if the castle came under siege, it was very hard to get food in. Large storage areas meant that a supply of food could be kept ready.

Well – if the castle came under siege, the occupants needed a guaranteed source of fresh water.

Top tip

When you visit Helmsley Castle, in the exhibition in the west range there is an exhibit that shows how some of the defensive features were also used for comfort. This can help students to understand the different roles that castles had to hold at the same time, and some of the dilemmas faced by castle designers.

Medieval money



Recommended for

Maths, History

Learning objectives

- Carry out maths calculations based on medieval money values.
- Calculate the wages of some of the workers at Helmsley Castle.

Time to complete

30 minutes

Summary

Whilst the pound is one of the oldest forms of currency, many of the coin values we have today did not exist during the medieval period. This activity will introduce students to the shilling and help them to make calculations based on its worth.

How much was Helmsley worth?

We know from the Domesday survey of 1086 that the manor of Helmsley (where the castle is today) was worth 10 shillings. At this time, a shilling was not an actual coin. It was an Anglo-Saxon accounting term – used to represent a value when making calculations. Before the Norman Conquest, various amounts had been known as shillings. The Normans standardised the value of a shilling as 12p.

Before the Norman Conquest of 1066, we know that Helmsley manor was worth 32 shillings. The drop in worth after the Conquest may have been due to the Harrying of the North in 1069–70.

Students can use the activity sheets on pages 31–32 to calculate how much the land at Helmsley was worth at different times.

They can also carry out calculations based on the wages of some of the people that worked at the castle.



A penny coin from the reign of Edward III.

More learning ideas

Use an online calculator to find out how much the money would be worth today.

Medieval maths



Helmsley Castle value

Worth of the manor in 1065 (before the Conquest): $32 \times 12 = 384$ pence.

Worth of the manor in 1068 (Domesday survey): $10 \times 12 = 120$ pence.

Difference in worth is $384 - 120 = 264$ pence.

Challenge 1 – the worth of the manor in pounds:

1065: it was worth **£1, 12 shillings**. (384 pence altogether – £1 = 240 pence, there is 144 pence remaining, divide that by 12 makes 12 shillings.)

1086: it was worth $\frac{1}{2}$ of **£1**. (120 pence is half of 240 pence.)

Challenge 2 – the annual cost of running the castle (£6.13.4) in pence:

£6: multiply by 240 to find the number of pence = 1440 pence.

13 shillings: multiply by 12 to find the number of pence = 156 pence.

Add the last 4 pence.

The total is: **1600 pence**.

Challenge 3 – the parker's annual wage in pounds, shillings and pence:

1.5 pence (daily pay) $\times 365$ (days in year) = 547.50. This is the wage in pence per year.

Calculate the number of pounds ($547.50 \div 240$): £2 (480 pence), with 67.5 pence remaining.

Divide the pence (67.5) by 12 to find the number of shillings. This is 5, with 7.5 pence remaining.

So the wage in pounds and pence is **£2, 5 shillings, 7.5 pence**.

Challenge 4 – the chaplain's annual wage in pounds, shillings and pence:

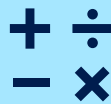
Calculate the worth of a mark: 13 shillings $\times 12 = 156$ pence. Add the 4 pence = 160 pence.

Therefore, one mark is 160p. (This information can be found in the quick convertor.)

Multiply 160×5 to calculate five marks in pence = 800 pence.

In pounds this would be **£3, 80 pence**, or **£3, 6 shillings and 8 pence**.

Medieval money



See the table at the bottom of the page for medieval money conversion rates.

1065 Worth = 32 shillings.	Multiply each shilling by 12 to find the number of pence.	Partition 32 $30 \times 12 = 360$ $2 \times 12 = 24$ $360 + 24 = 384$	The land is worth 384 pence.
1086 Worth = 10 shillings.	Multiply each shilling by 12 to find the number of pence.	$\underline{\hspace{1cm}} \times 12 = \underline{\hspace{1cm}}$	The land is worth $\underline{\hspace{1cm}}$ pence.

The difference in the land value between 1065 and 1086 is $\underline{\hspace{1cm}}$ pence.

Challenge 1

A pound sterling during the medieval period was equivalent to 240 pence. Work out the worth of the land at Helmsley in 1065 and 1086 in pounds and pence.

Answer 1065: £ $\underline{\hspace{1cm}}$, $\underline{\hspace{1cm}}$ pence.

Answer 1086: £ $\underline{\hspace{1cm}}$, $\underline{\hspace{1cm}}$ pence.

Challenge 2

In 1343, it cost £6, 13 shillings and 4 pence (or £6.13.4) a year to run Helmsley Castle. How much is this in pence?

Answer: $\underline{\hspace{1cm}}$ pence.

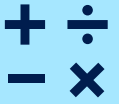
Quick converter

1 shilling = 12 pence

1 pound = 240 pence

1 mark = 160 pence

Medieval money



Medieval wages

Challenge 3

In 1345, William de Middleton was employed as a parker (looking after the hunting park around the castle). He was paid 1 ½ pence a day. Work out his annual salary: _____ pence.

Now convert this into pounds, shillings and pence.

£ _____, _____ shillings _____ pence.

Challenge 4

The chaplain was paid 5 marks a year.
A mark was equivalent to 13 shillings and 4 pence.

Work out his annual salary in pounds, shillings and pence:

£ _____, _____ shillings _____ pence.

Quick converter

1 shilling = 12 pence

1 pound = 240 pence

1 mark = 160 pence

Castle Careers Fair



Recommended for

History

Learning objectives

- Understand some of the jobs done by people in a medieval castle.
- Investigate the hierarchy of medieval jobs.

Time to complete

20–30 minutes



A medieval gong scourer. Their job was to empty the waste pits from the latrines (toilets).

Summary

A medieval castle was a very busy place when the lord or lady was in residence. This activity helps students discover some of the jobs that were done by the people living at Helmsley Castle.

Castle careers

There are ten job cards on pages 35–44. Split your class into small groups and give each group one of the job cards. Ask them to read the information on the card and look at the illustration of the person doing the job.

You can either rotate the cards around all the groups, so that everyone looks at all the jobs, or ask each group to feed back the main information about that job, as if they were running a stand at a Careers Fair.

After this, ask the class to vote on which job they would like to do and to give their reasons.

Explain that there was a strict hierarchy within the castle. You could ask the students to get themselves into the order in which they think their jobs came in the hierarchy, then reveal the answers from the Teachers' notes.

More learning ideas

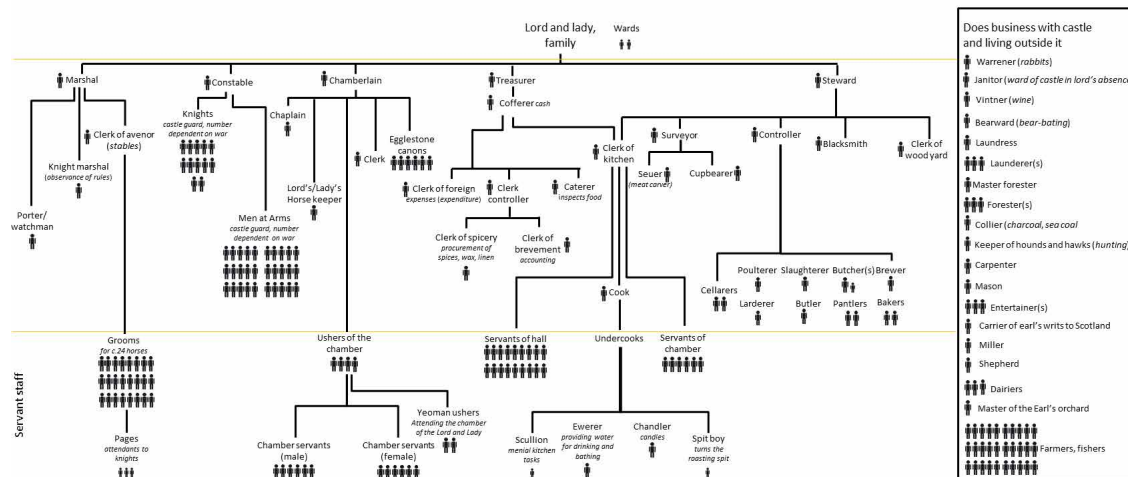
Look at the site plan on page 5 and decide where you think the different jobs were most likely to be based at the castle.

You could extend this activity when you visit Helmsley Castle by finding the places in the castle that the jobs were done. If you decide to do this, there are further instructions on page 46. A set of Careers Cards can be collected from the Visitor Centre.

Castle Careers Fair

The hierarchy of medieval jobs in a castle

The diagram below shows the staffing of a large medieval castle (Richmond Castle). Each castle was slightly different in the way its staffing was organised, depending on the wealth of the owner.



Based on the above hierarchy, the order in which the jobs from the job cards should be is:

Lady de Ros – at the head of the castle, alongside the lord.

Steward – in charge of all the domestic staff in the castle.

Chaplain – religion was very important, so this was a high-status role.

Cook – a role which oversees a large number of staff.

Porter – a role with a large amount of responsibility for castle security.

Butler – drinks were important, but this role did not have as much responsibility as the cook.

Falconer's assistant – an important role for hunting but supervised by higher status staff.

Laundress – often this person lived outside the castle but went there to work.

Minstrel – not every castle would employ entertainers; sometimes they travelled around, visiting castles and asking for work.

Gong scourer – the lowest status position, but still an important job.

To extend students' learning, there is a related activity to do at the castle on pages 49–50.

Gong scourer

Job description:

- Clear out the toilet pit, removing the waste so there is room for more.
- Take the waste in a basket or wheelbarrow to a suitable place and bury it.
- Must be able to work in confined spaces.

Skills needed:

- Strength.
- An ability to withstand strong smells.
- Vigilance – look out for attackers who may be using the latrines as an entry point.

Supervised by: Steward

Wage: £ – but you did get to keep anything that had fallen into the pit.



Castle Careers Fair

Cook

Job description:

Feed 2 meals a day to up to 200 people.

Skills needed:

- Knowledge of ingredients and recipes.
- Good time management.
- Able to shout instructions loudly.

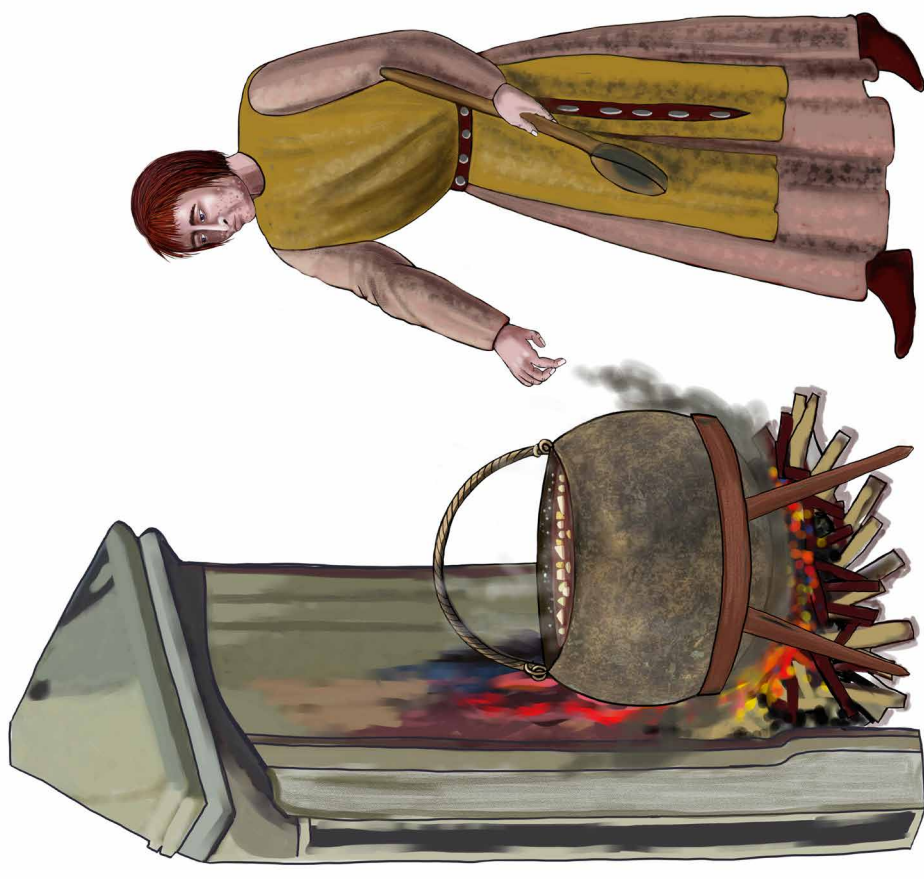
Supervise the following people:

- Saucerer (responsible for spicing food).
- Pantler (gets bread from the baker, from fine white wheat loaves for the lady's table to rough loaves made from barley, oats for servants; also manages tablecloths and cutlery).
- Scullions (carry out basic food preparation tasks).
- Spit-boy/girl – turns the meat on a spit placed over a fire to ensure it is cooked evenly.
- Ewerer – provides water for drinking and hand-washing.

Supervised by: Steward

Wage: ££

Cook



Steward

Job description:

- Make sure everyone else in the castle is doing their job!
- Manage the lord's estates. Collect dues (rental payments), which might be in money, crops, food or animals and store them in the lord's farms and barns. Sell or distribute them as needed.
- You may be asked to oversee the local court which takes place on the estates.
- Occasionally represent your lord further afield, such as at the royal court.

Skills needed:

- Excellent counting skills.
- Trustworthy.

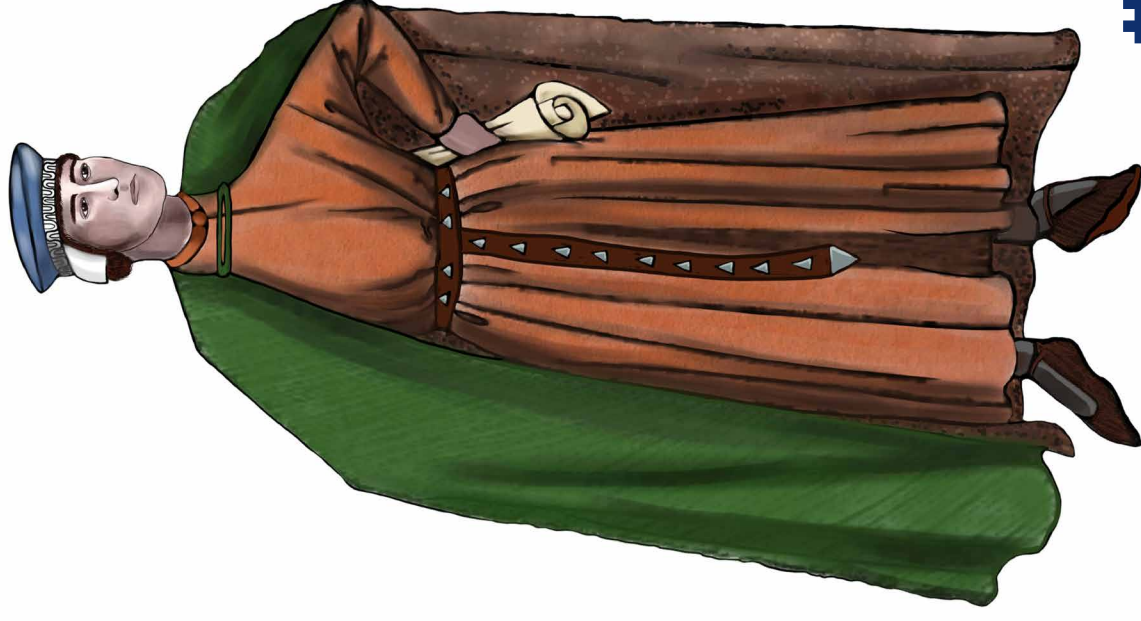
Supervise the following people:

All the other staff members in the castle.

Supervised by:

 The owners of the castle (lord or lady).

Wage: £££ – more often than not you had your own property already and may have been given more within or near the castle.



Minstrel

Job description:

- Keep the lord and lady of the castle and their guests entertained.

Skills needed:

- Ability to play an instrument – this may be the lute (like a guitar), recorder, shawm (like an oboe), vielle (violin) or percussion instruments (drums and bells), sing well, perform poems and plays.
- Sometimes be quick-witted and able to make people laugh (jester).

Supervise the following people:

All the other staff members in the castle.

Supervised by: Steward or Knight Marshal (responsible for good behaviour).

Wage: £-££



Falconer's Assistant

Job description:

- Look after the hunting birds belonging to the lord of the castle.
- Ensure the birds are fed the correct diet.
- Help train the birds to respond to commands.
- Make sure you have the correct equipment – hoods for the birds to prevent distraction, jesses (straps attached to the bird to hold onto), lures to use for training, thick leather gloves to protect your hand from sharp bird talons.

Skills needed:

- Patience and calmness.
- Ability to develop a bond with the bird you're training.
- Knowledge of bird training techniques.
- Organisation skills – you will need to make sure you have the correct equipment at all times.

Supervised by: Falconer

Wage: ££



Porter/Janitor

Job description:

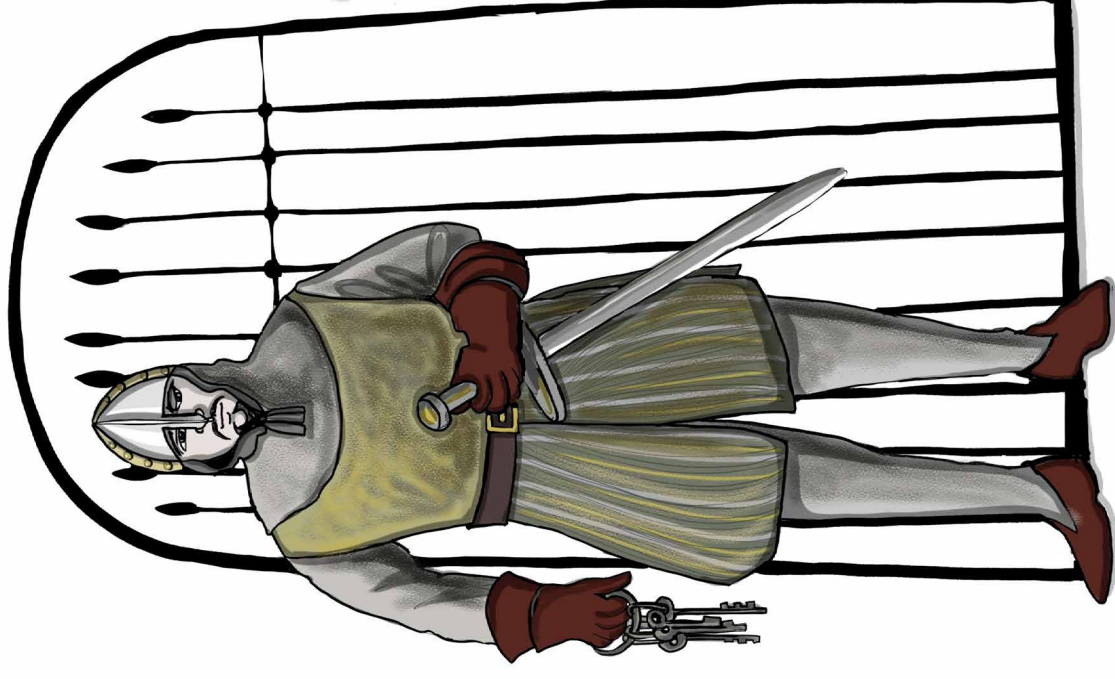
- Control who comes in and out of the castle at the castle gate(s).
- Operate the portcullis and drawbridge.
- Inspect incoming goods.
- Escort visitors inside the castle.
- Raise the alarm in case of a threat.

Skills needed:

- Vigilance – to ensure nothing gets past you.
- Confidence and bravery – to challenge unauthorised visitors.
- Strength – to lift the portcullis and drawbridge.

Supervised by: Constable

Wage: £



Lady of the Manor (Lady de Ros)

Job description:

- In charge of daily management of the castle and making sure supplies are kept well stocked.

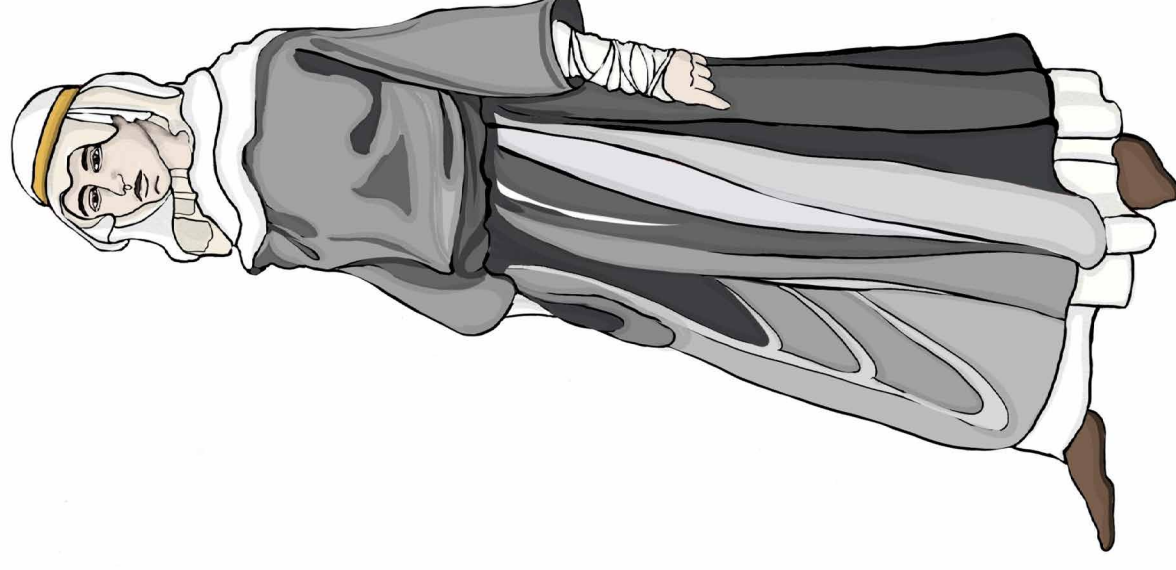
Skills needed:

- Budget management.
- Organisational skills.
- Knowledge of the roles of everyone in the castle.
- Teaching skills, to educate young pages (age 7–14).

Supervise the following people:

- Steward
- Ladies-in-waiting – female servants who attend to the needs of noblewomen, including the lord's wife and daughters. They are responsible for dressing their mistresses, arranging their hair, and accompanying them to social events.

Wage: £££ – income from the lands you own.



Butler

Job description:

- Provide drinks for everyone in the castle.
- Oversee the buttery (where the wine and ale is kept, as well as honey to add to drinks) and keep a good stock of wines.
- Serve wine and ale during meals. All people, whether rich or poor, drank ale. It was much less alcoholic than ale today.

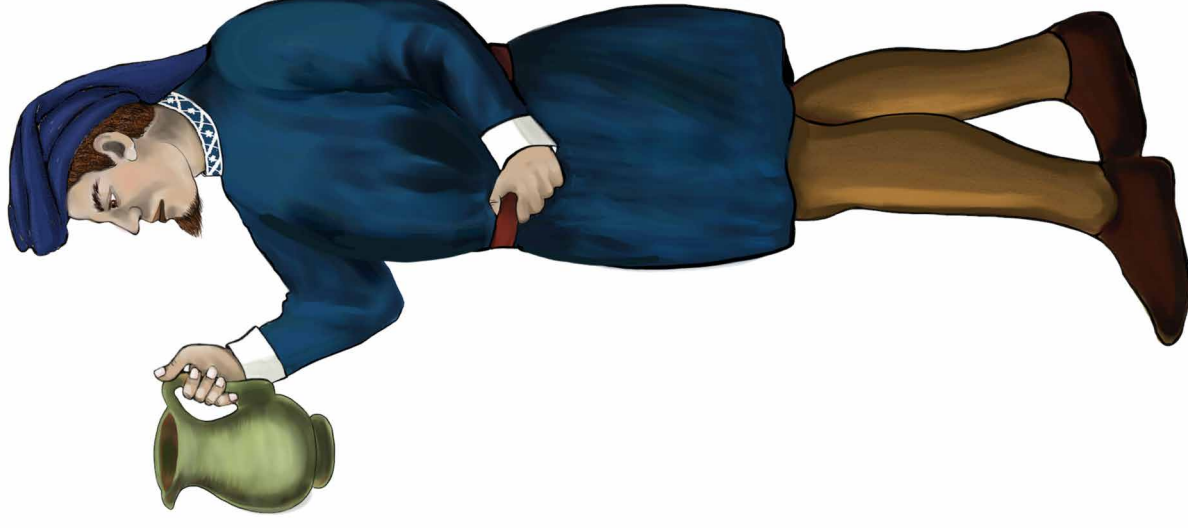
Skills needed:

- Knowledge of where to source different drinks and their ingredients.
- Resource management to ensure you have enough drinks in stock.
- Hospitality skills to serve drinks.

Supervise the following people:

Brewer – makes and stores the beer and ale. Most medieval households and communities had to make beer, as they often had no means of filtering and testing their water and did not know if it was safe to drink. The process of brewing kills microscopic organisms in it. Weak beer, known as ‘small ale’, was made for daily use for both adults and children.

Wage: ££



Chaplain

Job description:

- Deliver daily religious services for the lord and his family.
- Ensure business and personal letters for the castle's lord are written and sent.
- Educate the noble children of the castle.

Skills needed:

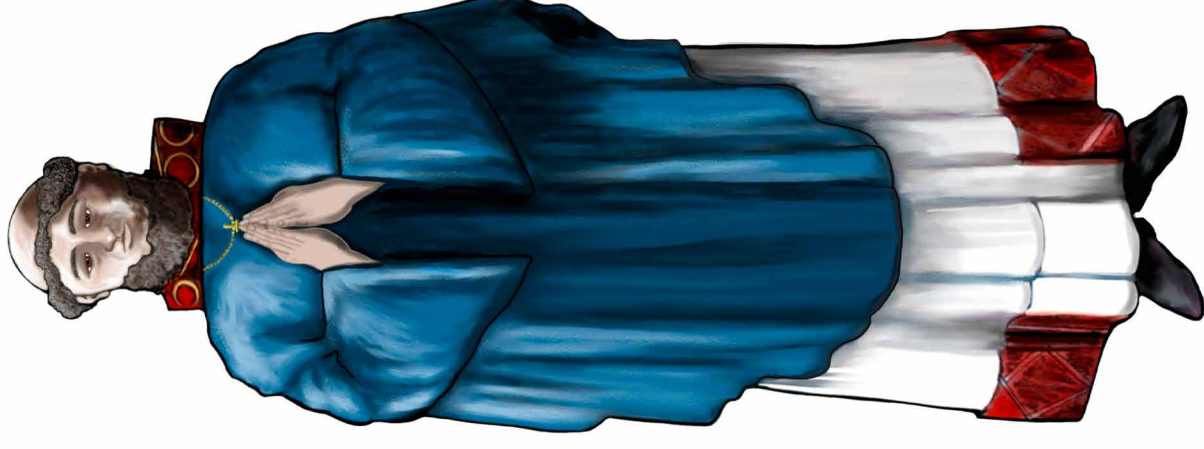
- Teaching skills.
- A good level of spoken and written English, Latin and French.
- Ability to travel frequently with your lord.

Supervise the following people:

- Clerks – they draft letters, organise paperwork and help to greet visitors.
- Almoner – gives out daily alms to the poor, particularly dinner leftovers and any unwanted clothes.

Wage: ££

Chaplain



Laundress

Job description:

- Ensure that all clothes, sheets, towels and tablecloths are clean.
- You may sometimes be asked to wash Lady de Ros' hair.

Skills needed:

- Strength – able to lift and carry large buckets of water to the trough used for washing.
- Good knowledge of stain removal methods, such as using egg yolk (for dirt), ashes (for sweat) and clay (for wagon grease).

Supervise the following people:

- Launderers – they help to wash the clothes.

Wage: £



At the castle

Activities for students to do at Helmsley Castle to help them get the most out of their learning.

Castle careers trail



Recommended for

History

Learning objectives

- Know some of the job roles in a medieval castle.
- Identify the parts of the castle where some medieval jobs were carried out.

Time to complete

Up to 60 minutes



The steward had one of the key roles in a medieval castle and was responsible for ensuring other members of castle staff did their jobs.

Summary

Helmsley Castle would have employed a large number of staff in various job roles. This activity is linked to the pre-visit Castle Careers Fair activity, although students don't need to have done this activity in advance. Through investigating where different jobs would have been carried out in the castle, students will gain an overview of how the castle functioned as a workplace.

Exploring a medieval workplace

You will need a set of Careers Cards – these can be collected from the Visitor Centre.

1. Put students into small groups and give each group a Castle Careers card. There are ten cards, each showing a different job at the castle.
2. Ask each group to read their card.
3. The groups could present their information to the whole group at this point, or you can reveal each job when you reach the correct area of the castle.
4. Tour the castle, using the map on page 47 to ensure you visit each of the ten job areas. Note: there are two for the butler and porter.
5. At each area, ask students whether they think their person might have worked there. Reveal the answers on page 48.

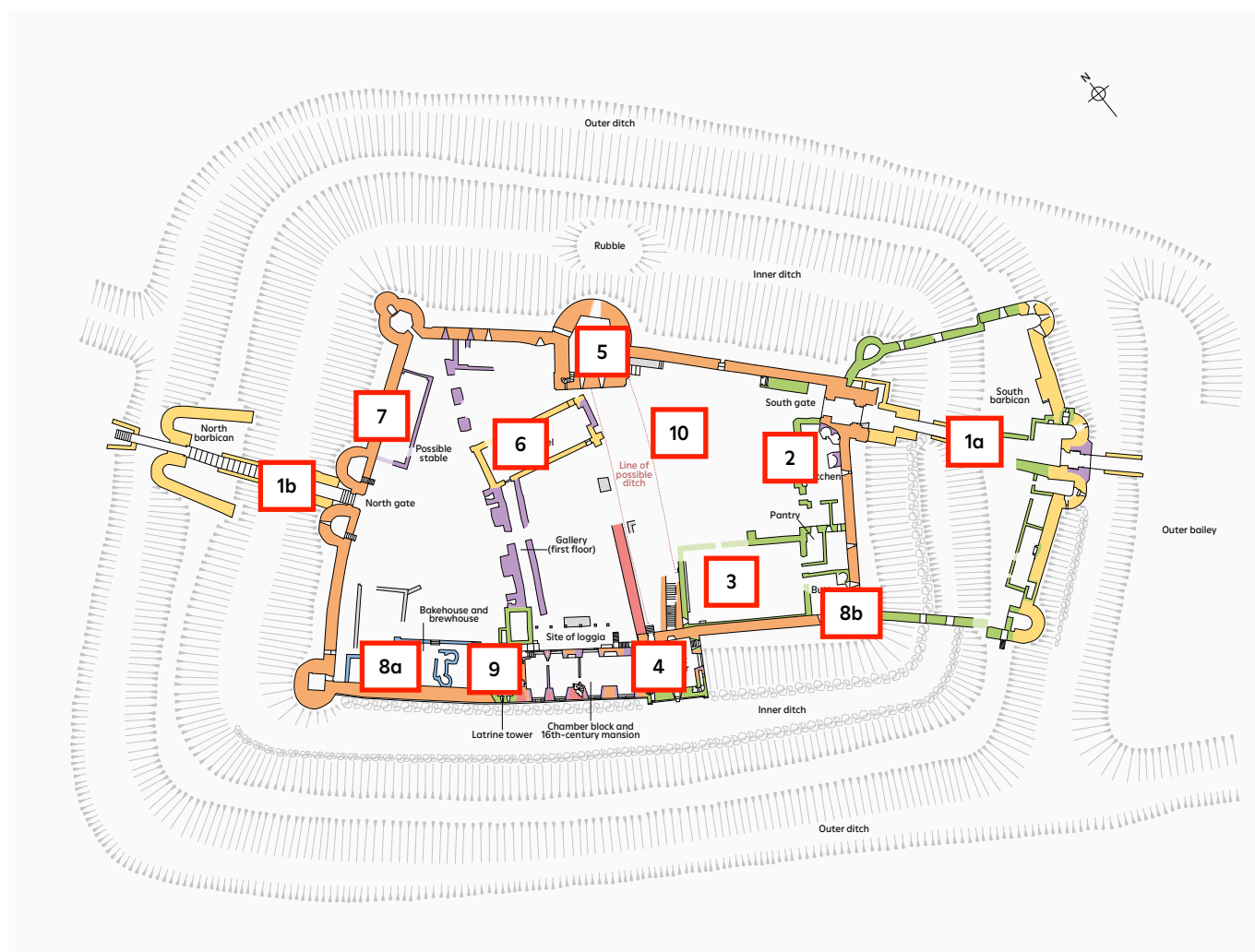
Please return the Careers Cards to the Visitor Centre when you have completed the activity. For a simpler version of this activity (or if students have already identified areas where the jobs were carried out as a pre-visit activity) students can use the map trail sheet on page 49 to tour the different areas where people worked.

More learning ideas

'Freeze frame' the jobs being carried out in the ten areas. Take pictures. Use these to create a Careers Map of the castle at school.

Castle careers trail

Map



The answers are:

1a and 1b South gate/barbican and north gate/barbican

Porter

The porter worked within these two areas, checking who was coming and going, locking and unlocking the heavy wooden doors and raising the portcullis. The grooves for the portcullis can still be seen in the walls of the south gate.

3 Hall

Minstrel

The hall was the heart of the castle's social space. The castle's owners hosted important guests here. The minstrel's job was to entertain them. For feasts, the hall was full of tables and benches. An open fire in the centre provided warmth.

5 East tower

Steward

This tower contained a grand chamber on the first floor, which was possibly used by the castle's owners for conducting business, or by the steward in the owners' absence. The spiral staircase goes down to the large basement storage area.

7 Stables

Falconer's assistant

Falcons were expensive to buy and were kept in a building called a mews. Archaeological evidence does not prove the exact location of the mews. The horses in the stables were also used for hunting, so the falconer's assistant would have worked near here.

9 Latrines (toilets)

Gong scourer

The quality of the stonework in the latrines indicates that they were used by the castle owner's family. Other residents used chamber pots. All human waste was emptied into the outside ditch below. The gong scourer worked in the ditch, clearing the waste.

2 Kitchen

Cook

The cook prepared meals for the occupants of the castle. The kitchen was a hot and busy place, full of workers. Two pastry ovens are in the south corner of this room and there is a fireplace, where large joints of meat were roasted on a spit.

4 West tower

Lady de Ros

This tower held the solar, or private apartments, of the castle's owners. In the 1200s, it had two floors above a vaulted basement. The other floors were added later. Lady de Ros spent her leisure time here, perhaps reading and sewing or planning charitable work.

6 Chapel

Chaplain

The chapel was used daily by the chaplain to conduct religious services for the castle's occupants. It is likely the chapel had a mosaic floor, window glass and green roof tiles. In the 1500s, the chapel was converted to a kitchen. The kitchen's fireplace can be seen.

8a Brewhouse 8b Buttery

Butler

The butler visited these areas regularly to check the amount of wine (in the buttery) and ale (in the brewhouse). Ale was part of people's daily diet. It didn't stay fresh for long, so more was made every day. The round spaces for the brewing vats can still be seen (at 8a).

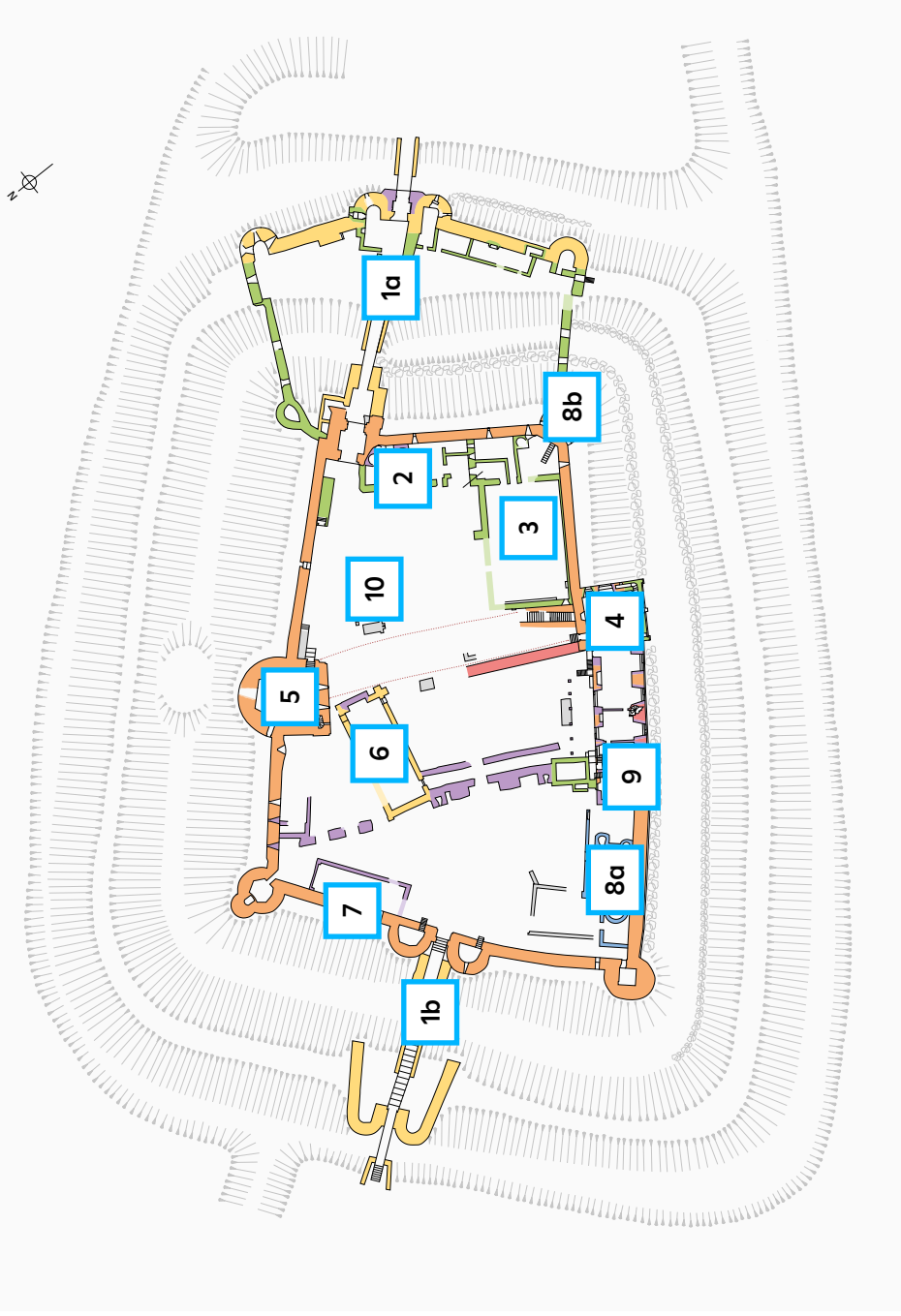
10 Well

Laundress

The laundress used the well frequently, drawing up water to wash clothes, towels and table linen. The well was the only water source in the castle. Its original depth is unknown, but it would have taken years to dig the shaft down to the water source.

Castle careers trail

Using the map, find the places at Helmsley Castle where some medieval jobs were carried out. Tick them off as you find them.



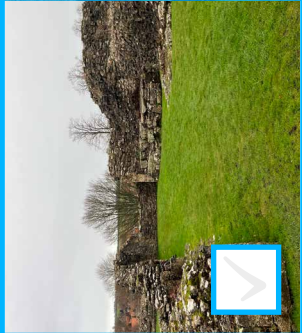
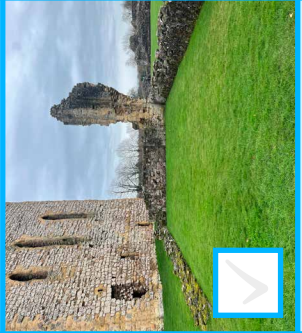
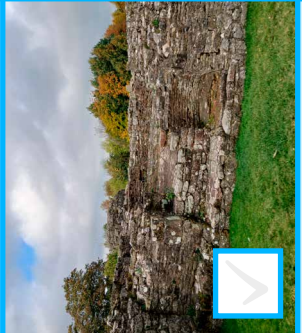
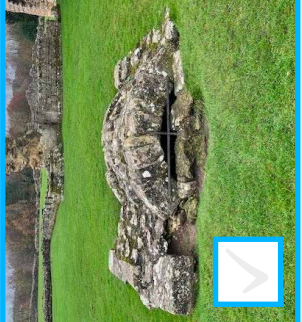
Areas and jobs

1a	South gate and barbican porter
1b	North gate and barbican porter
2	Hall minstrel
3	Kitchen cook
4	West tower Lady de Ros
5	East tower steward
6	Chapel chaplain
7	Stables falconer's assistant
8a	Brewhouse butler
8b	Buttery butler
9	Latrines gong scourer
10	Well laundress

Castle careers trail

See if you can find all these things. Tick each one off as you find it.



1a Porter	 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	1b Porter	 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	2 Cook	 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	3 Minstrel	 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	4 Lady de Ros	 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	5 Steward	 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
South gate and barbican	North gate and barbican	Kitchen	Hall	West tower	East tower						
6 Chaplain	 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	7 Falconer's assistant	 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	8a Butler	 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	8b Butler	 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	9 Gong scourer	 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	10 Laundress	 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Chapel	Stables	Brewhouse	Buttery	Latrines (toilets)	Well						

Quirky castle – unusual things to see

Find these places and **complete** each challenge. Teachers can guide their groups, reading the information before students complete the challenges. Or, students may like to lead their own learning in small groups with support.

Can't find your way?
Use the map on page 57 to help.



1 Old graffiti

Before people understood how much graffiti could damage a building, they carved their names into the stonework. You can see lots of people's initials here, and the dates they have carved them.

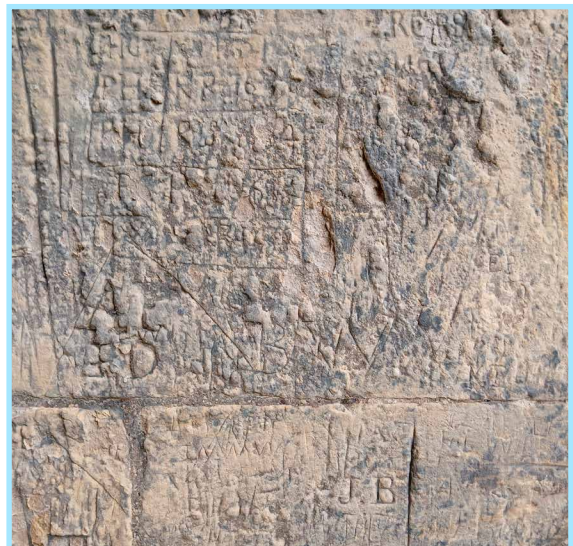


Where is it?

South barbican gatehouse



Did you find it?



Graffiti on the south barbican of Helmsley Castle.

Did you know?



Graffiti is one of the biggest problems for conservators (people looking after old buildings) – it is very hard to remove. Some graffiti also might be quite old, so conservators don't always want to remove it. It's against the law to add graffiti to the castle today.

Challenge time!



Find the oldest piece of graffiti on the wall.

Hint – it is a date in the 1600s

2 Carved head

This worn carving seems to be of an imp – a small, mischievous devil or sprite. Notice its large ears. It's unclear why it has been carved into the arch, but it might have been a fun decoration to amuse people, or a protective symbol.

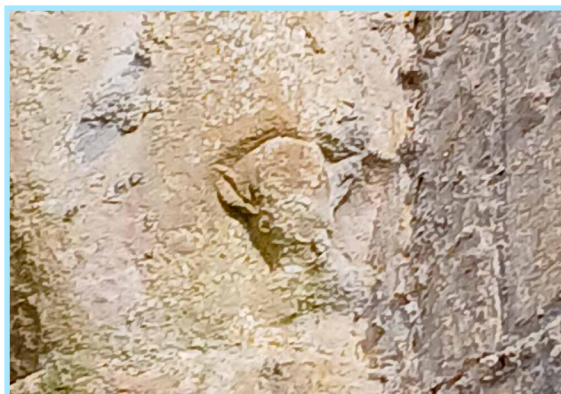


Where is it?

South barbican.



Did you find it?



A carving of an imp on the south barbican.

Did you know?



Medieval people carved all sorts of protection marks into buildings – they believed that it would protect the building from evil.

Challenge time!



Imagine what the expression on the imp's face might be – see if you can pull the same one!

3 Ear turrets

Ear turrets are turrets (small towers attached to larger ones) in pairs that stick out from the top of a tower, like a pair of rabbit's ears. They make the tower appear taller and more impressive to people approaching the castle.



Where is it?

East tower



Did you find it?



Ear turrets were designed to make the building look taller.

Did you know?



There are similar 'ear turrets' on the Beauchamp Tower at the Tower of London.

Challenge time!



Walk as far away from the tower as you can, then march towards it imagining you are seeing it for the first time. How do you feel?

4 Serving window

This window goes directly from the kitchen into the serving area. Here, the cook checked the quality of the food before allowing it to be served in the Great Hall.



Where is it?

Inner bailey



Did you

find it?



The serving window allowed food to be served quickly.

Did you know?



The lord and lady sat at the top table, which was often raised up on a dais, and were served their food first.

Challenge time!



Find the oven and see how quickly you could walk a pie from there to the serving hatch.

Hint – look in the far corner of the kitchen for the oven.

5 1582 carving

This carving is on the fireplace surround and tells us the date that the fireplace was made. It was a new piece of furniture when the chamber block was converted into a luxurious home by the Manners family.



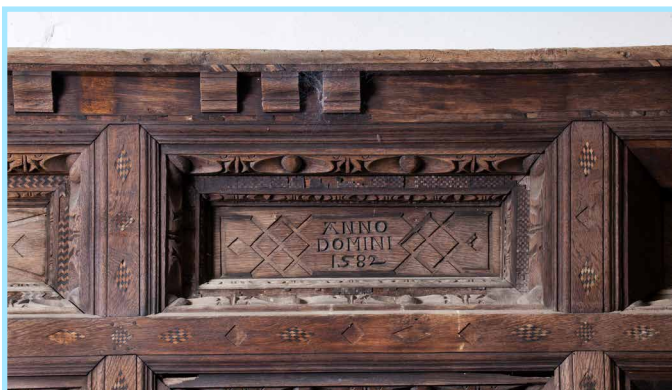
Where is it?

Elizabethan range, upstairs.



Did you

find it?



This carving tells us the year that the fireplace was made.

Did you know?



Wood was a key material for decorating Tudor houses. **Spot** wood panelling in some of the other rooms on this floor.

Challenge time!



Calculate how many years ago the carving was made.

6 Keys

These keys date from the 1200s to the 1700s. Often the lady of the castle had overall control of the management of the castle, including the keys.



Where is it?

Exhibition



Did you

find it?



A set of keys from different periods in the castle's history.

Did you know?



Keys were made by a blacksmith. There was probably a blacksmith working at the castle, who made all the metal objects.

Challenge time!



As you walk around, see if you can find anything that would need a key to open it.

Hint – there may not be doors surviving in the castle any more, but people often kept precious items in chests.

7 William's windows

In 1696, King William III introduced a 'window tax'. People had to pay an amount of money, based on the number of windows in their houses. Many sealed up their windows to avoid the charge. The tax only stopped in 1851.



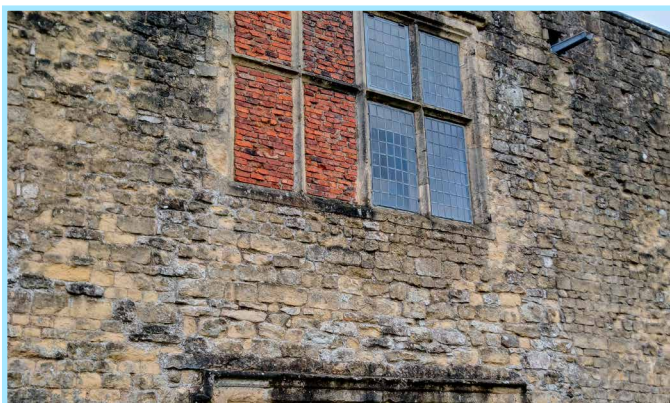
Where is it?

Elizabethan range



Did you

find it?



These windows were bricked up to avoid paying tax on them.

Did you know?



William's tax may be where the common phrase 'daylight robbery' comes from. It means to overcharge for something.

Challenge time!



Some of the windows had already been filled at an earlier time. Can you work out which ones they are?

Hint – brick was used in the 1700s, but different materials were used earlier.

8 Horse tether

A metal loop like this was used to tether horses securely. This one is very high up.

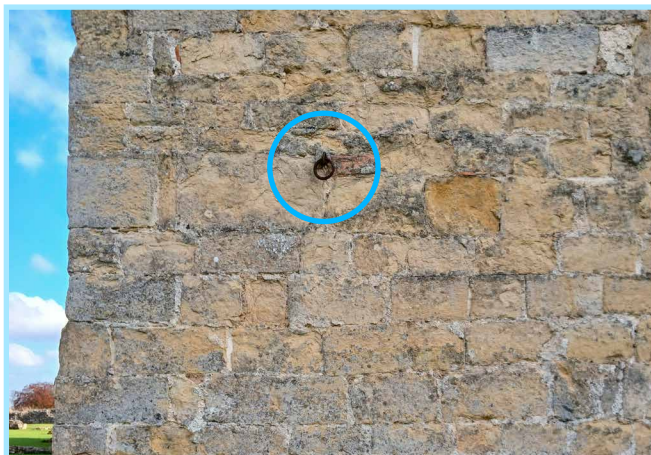


Where is it?

Inner bailey,
latrine wall



Did you
find it?



This horse tether is high up on the wall.

Did you know?



The loop is high because it was installed when the ground level was higher. Earth was later removed from the inner bailey to lower the ground level.

Challenge time!



Work out the height of the tether. Stand someone who knows their height below it and use their height to estimate how high it is.

9 Door to nowhere

This door originally opened onto a bridge over the inner ditch. Now the bridge is no longer there, it looks like a door to nowhere.

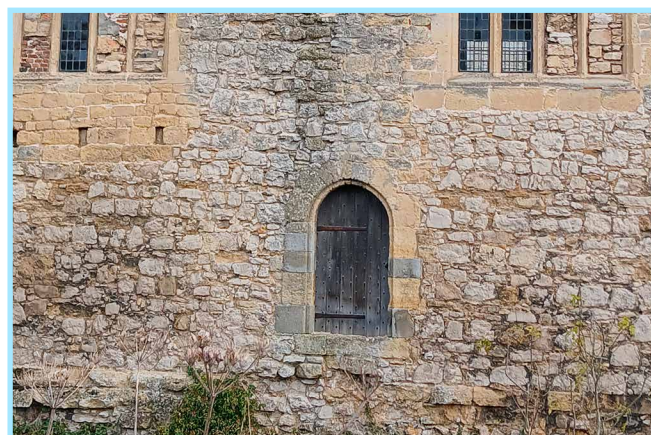


Where is it?

Outside castle,
west ditch.



Did you
find it?



This door originally led out onto a bridge.

Did you know?



The bridge was made of wood, an organic material which likely rotted away over time or was taken down and reused elsewhere.

Challenge time!



See if you can find any other 'doors to nowhere' around the castle.




Hint – look in the towers.

Explore Helmsley Castle

Quirky castle – unusual things to see

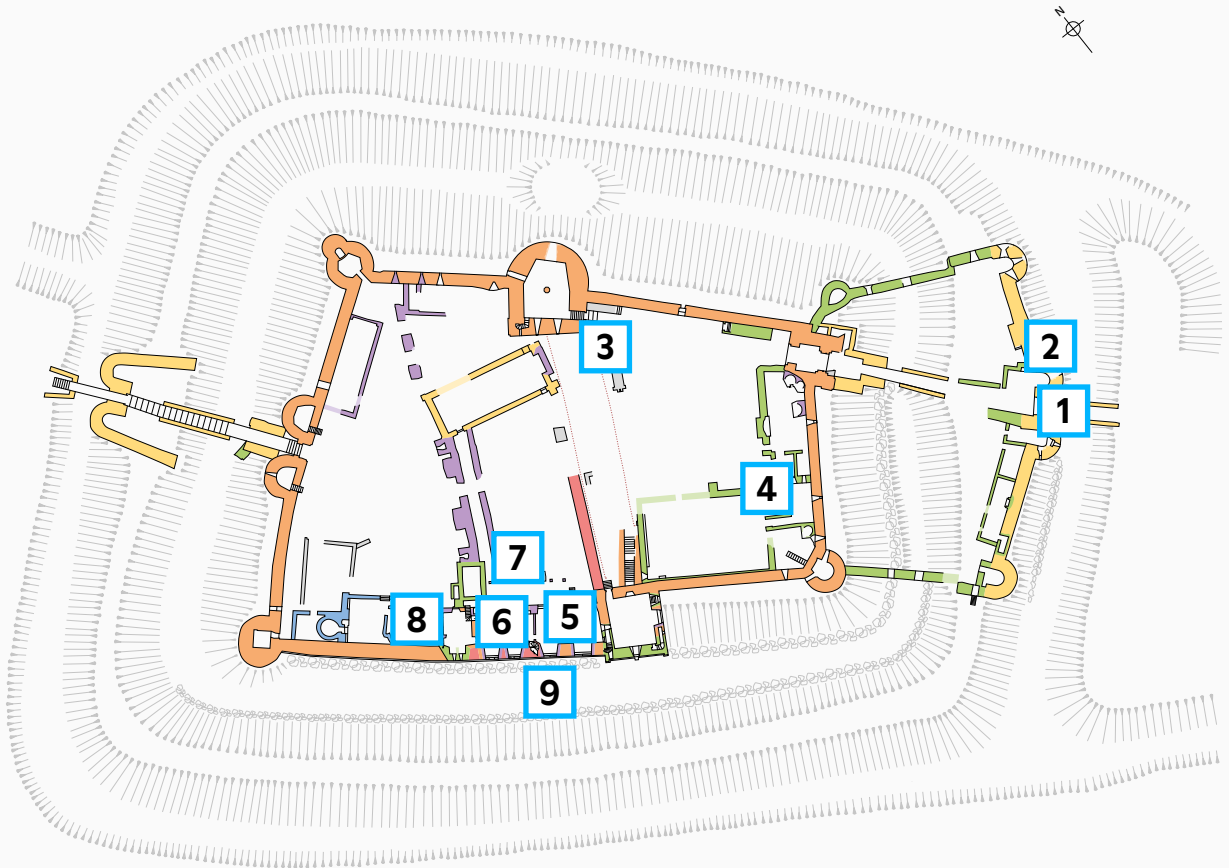
See if you can find all these things. Tick each one off as you find it.



1. Old graffiti <input type="checkbox"/>	2. Carved head <input type="checkbox"/>	3. Ear turrets <input type="checkbox"/>
		
4. Serving window <input type="checkbox"/>	5. 1582 carving (indoors, upstairs) <input type="checkbox"/>	6. Keys (indoors, downstairs) <input type="checkbox"/>
		
7. William's windows <input type="checkbox"/>	8. Horse tether <input type="checkbox"/>	9. Door to nowhere <input type="checkbox"/>
		

Helmsley Castle

Quirky castle – unusual things to see map.



Key

1

Old graffiti

2

Carved head

3

Ear turrets

4

Serving window

5

1582 carving

6

Keys

7

William's windows

8

Horse tether

9

Door to nowhere

Discover defence – on site

Crenellations:

These can be found on the east tower. It is likely there were crenellations on the other towers, but these can no longer be seen.

Curtain wall:

This ran the whole way around the inner bailey.

Tower:

There are a number of ruined towers in the south barbican and around the curtain walls. It's possible to walk down into the towers either side of the north gate.

Barbican:

The south barbican is better preserved than the north barbican.

Defensive ditch:

This is a rare example of a double ditch. If you stand outside the south barbican, you can see both ditches.

Portcullis:

The only surviving evidence is the groove for the portcullis in the south gate. It is likely there was also a portcullis at the north gate.

Arrow slit:

There are arrow slits in the east tower as well as in the curtain wall and south barbican.

Large storage areas:

The basements in both towers held large amounts of food or weapons.

Door lock/jamb/bar:

Extra security measures on doors delayed would-be attackers.

Students who looked at the reconstruction illustration of the south gate (page 73) as a pre-visit activity may recall that there was a drawbridge in the 1200s. As an extra challenge, students could try to find evidence for where the drawbridge sat. In the exhibition in the west range chamber block there is an exhibit that shows how some defensive features at Helmsley Castle were also used for comfort. This can help students to understand the different roles that castles held at the same time, and some of the dilemmas faced by castle designers.

Discover defence

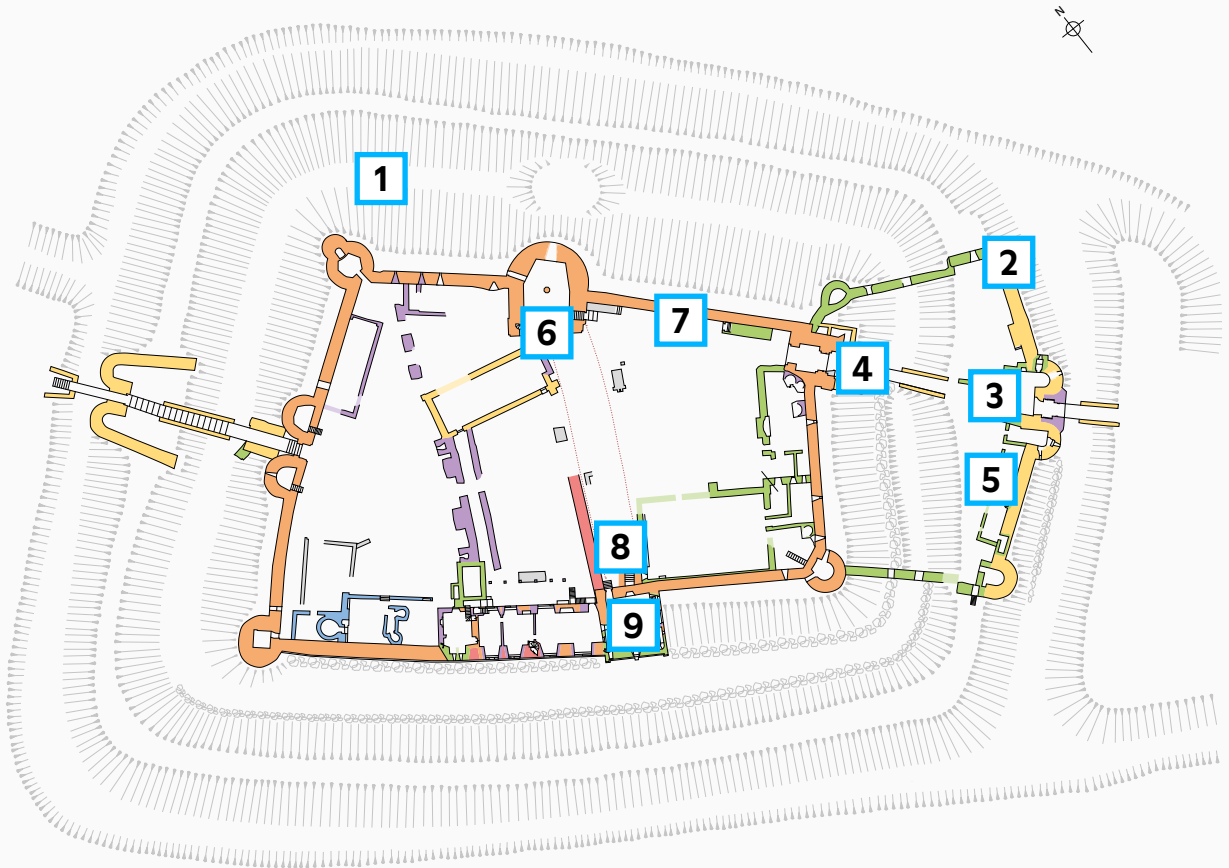
See if you can find all these things. Tick each one off as you find it.



1. Defensive ditch <input type="checkbox"/>	2. Tower <input type="checkbox"/>	3. Barbican <input type="checkbox"/>
		
4. Portcullis <input type="checkbox"/> Gatehouse <input type="checkbox"/>	5. Arrow slit <input type="checkbox"/>	6. Crenellations <input type="checkbox"/>
		
7. Curtain wall <input type="checkbox"/>	8. Large storage space <input type="checkbox"/>	9. Door lock/jamb/bar <input type="checkbox"/>
		

Helmsley Castle

Discover defence map



Key

1 Defensive ditch

2 Tower

3 Barbican

4 Portcullis

5 Arrow slit

6 Crenellations

7 Curtain wall

8 Large storage space

9 Door lock/jamb/bar

Sensory trail



Recommended for

History

Learning objectives

- Explore key areas of the castle and identify what they were used for.
- Develop sensory observation skills.

Time to complete

Approx. 45 minutes.



A medieval kitchen at Dover Castle. The kitchen at Helmsley Castle included similar items.

Summary

This trail takes the form of a story, with supporting sensory resources. It will help students to explore six key areas of Helmsley Castle in a multisensory way.

This resource can be pre-booked via the education bookings system.

Using this trail

Please print the Teachers' Notes and map (on pages 62–64). As you explore, use the story in the Teachers' Notes (pages 62–63) to help students understand the different parts of the castle and what they were used for. The resources for each area are in corresponding numbered bag(s) within the sensory trail resource bag.

The trail can be followed at the pace of the group and the stops can be visited in the order that best suits your group's needs. If any member of your group feels overwhelmed or overstimulated by the sensory input at any time, the chamber block in the west range (where the exhibition is) is generally quieter, or if it is a nice day you could go to the picnic bench in the outer bailey.

Health and safety

Although this is a sensory trail, please remind the group not to touch anything unless invited to. Please supervise students while using the resource.

Don't let students lick objects or place them in their mouths. This will help everyone to stay safe. Return the resources to the Visitor Centre at the end of your visit. Please leave the resource as you found it so that others can also benefit from it in the future and if anything gets damaged, please let us know.

More learning ideas

Create your own sensory story for visiting Helmsley Castle. Take photographs during the visit and think about some of the things students saw, heard and touched. Add objects or materials to bring back memories of the visit.

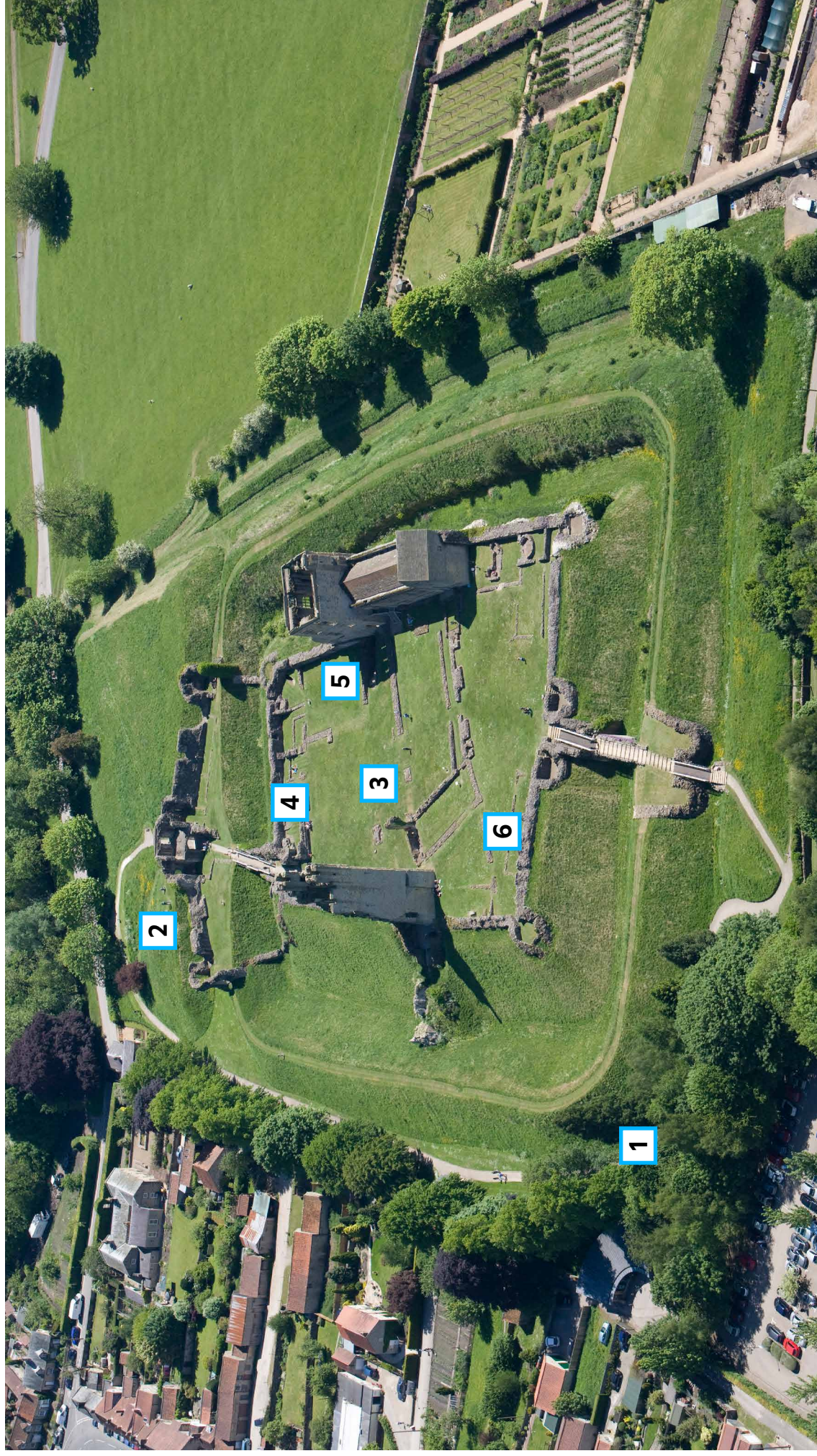
Teachers' notes

Sensory trail: Exploring Helmsley Castle

Location	Story	Objects	Get moving!	Challenge time
1 Model of the castle 	<p>(Exit the Visitor Centre and look straight ahead. This model shows how the castle would have looked in the past.</p> <p>Learners may want to feel the textures of the metal on the model.)</p> <p>Story:</p> <p>Clip clop, clip clop, we are riding our horse towards the castle to visit. We look up high to see the tower.</p> <p>(Now turn left and walk along the path to get to the south barbican.)</p>	Coconut shells – sound of horses	<p>Lots of people rode horses to get to the castle in the past – pretend to ride your horse all the way!</p>	<p>How did people travel in the Norman period? (horse, sailing boats, on foot)</p> <p>How did we travel here today?</p> <p>How do you travel to school?</p> <p>Have you ever ridden a horse?</p> <p>What was it like?</p>
2 South barbican and gatehouse 	<p>You get to the big wooden door. Clunk, clunk, scrape go the bolts as the porter undoes them. Walk over the bridge into the castle.</p>	Sound tile – bolt and creaking door noise	<p>Find a statue guarding the entrance.</p> <p>Strike the same pose!</p>	<p>The porter had a big bunch of keys to lock up the castle.</p> <p>Can you think of anything else that needs a key?</p>
3 Inner bailey and well 	<p>You need some water for your horse. It is very thirsty after all that riding! You can hear the water in the well – drip, drop, splash.</p>	<p>Piece of rope to feel</p> <p>Sound tile – splash</p>	<p>Pretend to heave a bucket of water up from the well. You might need your friends to stand in a line to help you.</p> <p>Say 'heave ho' as you pretend to pull.</p>	<p>Lots of people used the well each day, so it was a good place to meet friends.</p> <p>What do you like to talk about with your friends?</p>

Location	Story	Objects	Get moving!	Challenge time
4 Kitchen 	The kitchen is a busy place as the cook is making food for a feast. Sniff, sniff! The delicious smell of an apple pie is coming from the oven.	Wooden bowl and spoon Smell pot – apple pie	Imagine you are using a big wooden bowl and spoon to mix some filling for a pie. Now take some filling from the bowl and use your hands to make it into a ball shape. Splat the filling into a pie case and then put the pie in the oven in the corner.	Do you have cooks at school? Do you like to make food? What is your favourite thing to eat? What would you cook for the lord and his friends?
5 Hall 	Hustle, bustle! The hall is full of people eating, drinking and talking to each other. Some people are sat on benches at tables and some people are dancing.	Sound tile – medieval feast Sound tile – medieval music	Have a quick medieval dance. All stand in a circle – turn to the left, take one step then bring your feet back together – pause – take two steps, bringing your feet back together between the steps – pause. Turn to your right and repeat the steps.	Medieval people watched plays, listened to music and poetry and danced for fun. What do you like to do for fun? Is it the same or different to medieval people?
6 Stables 	Your horse needs to be groomed and fed so it is ready to ride home on. Neigh, neigh – the horse is happy to have some oats in its food bucket.	Horse brush Smell pot – stable and horses Sound tile – horse neigh Fabric – horsehair	Brush your horse. Hold your arm out straight in front of you and pretend you have a brush in your hand. Brush up and down the horse. Start at the head, brush down its neck, across its back then down its leg to the ground.	A horse's hearing is very sensitive. Listen carefully, like a horse would. What sounds can you hear?

Helmsley Castle [Sensory trail map](#)



Medieval maths – at the castle



Recommended for

Maths, Geography

Learning objectives

- Use a compass to follow directions.
- Use a compass to check the calculations of medieval builders.

Time to complete

15–30 minutes, depending on how many tasks students do.

Summary

Students will use compasses and follow a set of directions to discover different parts of the castle. They can also check whether medieval builders built parts of the castle facing the correct direction.

There are 15 compasses available to borrow from the Visitor Centre. Please book these in advance via Education Bookings, or you are welcome to bring your own.



Compasses are available to borrow – please book these via Education Bookings.

Prior learning

Students will need to know the eight different compass points – east, west, north, north-east, north-west, south, south-east, south-west. It would be useful if they understood how a compass works.

Doing this activity

Activity 1: Orienteering cards which students can use alongside the compasses to explore the castle grounds. These cards are shown on pages 66–67. There is no need to print them if you have pre-booked the teacher pack, as there is a set of cards included.

Activity 2: An opportunity to mark some medieval builders' homework! At Helmsley Castle, there is an east tower, a west tower, a south barbican and a north barbican. Students should use the compasses to check whether these are lined up correctly. You can identify which buildings they are from the map on page 5. The chapel should line up east to west. Students should check this too.

More learning ideas

Mark on a map of Helmsley Castle where you think the features of the castle should be, based on compass directions.

Medieval maths – at the castle

Work in small groups, with one compass per group.

T

- 1** Start from the well in the inner bailey (looks like a small bridge).
- 2** Go south-west to a large building with a roof.
- 3** Go in through the west door. You are in the latrine tower.
- Q** What is a latrine?
- 4** Go through the door to your left. **Q** Which direction are you moving in?
- 5** When you leave the building, walk in a south-east direction. Find the tower.
- Q** How many windows are there?
- Q** How many fireplaces can you see?
- Q** How many floors did it have?

O

- 1** Start from the well (looks like a small bridge).
- 2** Go east.
- 3** Turn right.
- 4** Follow the path over the wooden bridge to a large arch. This is the south gate.
- Q** Does it face south?
- 5** Find the carved head on the east side of the arch (the far side).
- Q** Which side is the arrow slit (narrow window for firing arrows through) – east or south?
- Q** Why do you think there are deep ditches here?
- 6** Walk back over the wooden bridge to the gatehouse.
- 7** Look for the groove for the portcullis.

W

- 1** Start from the well (looks like a small bridge).
- 2** Go west until you reach a gap in the ruined walls.
- 3** Go north-west until you reach the north gate on the outside wall of the castle.
- Q** We call it the North Gate – does it face north?
- 4** To your right is the stable block.
- Q** Why would the people living at the castle need horses?
- 5** Go south-west to the furthest wall of the castle. This is the bakehouse and brewhouse.
- Q** Why would you need these in a castle?

E

- 1** Start from the well (looks like a small bridge).
- 2** Go north-west.
- 3** Go into the rectangular enclosure.
- 4** You are in the chapel.
- 5** Altars are always placed at the east end. **Q** Which is the east end?
- Q** To which side of the chapel is the keep – north or south?
- Q** Can you find the walls of a corridor to the west?
- Q** It isn't on your plan – why might that be?

R

- 1** Start from the well (looks like a small bridge).
- 2** Walk south – to the corner.
- 3** You are in the buttery. The old word for barrel was butt.
- Q** What do you think was stored here?
- Q** Why have a cellar here? (Be careful when you go down.)
- Q** To one side there is a kitchen – is it to the east or west?

Medieval maths – at the castle

Start

All the tasks start from the well in the inner bailey. There are multiple sets of cards, so students could do one task at a time, returning to the well at the end to collect the next task. The five cards each have one letter from the word 'tower' on them. This should help students keep track of which cards they have already done.



Card T



[1–3] Students should head to the latrine block.



[4–5] They should then walk out of the latrine block and along the front of the 16th-century block, to find the west tower.

Answers:

[5] There are 18 windows, 6 fireplaces and 4 floors. Outside the building are 6 further small windows and there is one extra window in the basement.

Card O



[1–4] Students should head in the direction of the south gate.



[5] The arrow slit is on the south side.



[7] The groove for the portcullis looks like this.

Answer:

[5] The ditch was dug for defence.

Card W



[1–2] Students should head in the direction of this gap in the wall.



[3] They then should head towards the bridge leading to the north gate.



[4] When students turn right, they should see the stable block.



[5] Students should head towards the bakehouse and brewhouse.

Answers:

[3] No, it doesn't face north!

[4] Horses were used for transport (goods and people) and hunting.

[5] Bread was a main part of people's diets and would only keep for a few days, so a lot of bread was needed to feed everyone that lived in the castle. Bread would have been made in the bakehouse or sometimes brought in from a bakery in town. Wheat bread was only for wealthy people – most people ate oat or barley bread, or bread made of roughly milled wheat. The brewhouse made ale. Ale was sometimes safer to drink than water, so everyone drank ale – it was much weaker than the ale we have today.

Card E



[1–4] Students should head to the chapel.



[4] The walls of the corridor are here.

Answers:

[5] The east end is the one with an old fireplace and piece of wall still standing.

[5] The keep is to the north side.

[5] The 'corridor' is the stone footings of a wooden gallery, or walkway, that connected the west range to the chapel during the late 1500s. The wood has rotted away.

Card R



[1–2] Students should head towards the far corner of the castle.



[3] Students can go down the steps into the cellar of the buttery. Please be aware that it is dark inside.

The oven is in the far corner of the kitchen.

Answers:

[3] Wine and ale was stored in the buttery. The word 'buttery' comes from the Latin word 'bota', meaning the casks that drinks were stored in. The buttery was cut into the earth ditch, which meant it was underground and the room would stay cool. This was useful for storing food and drink.

[3] The kitchen is to the east.

Post-visit

Information and activities to help extend your students' learning back in the classroom.

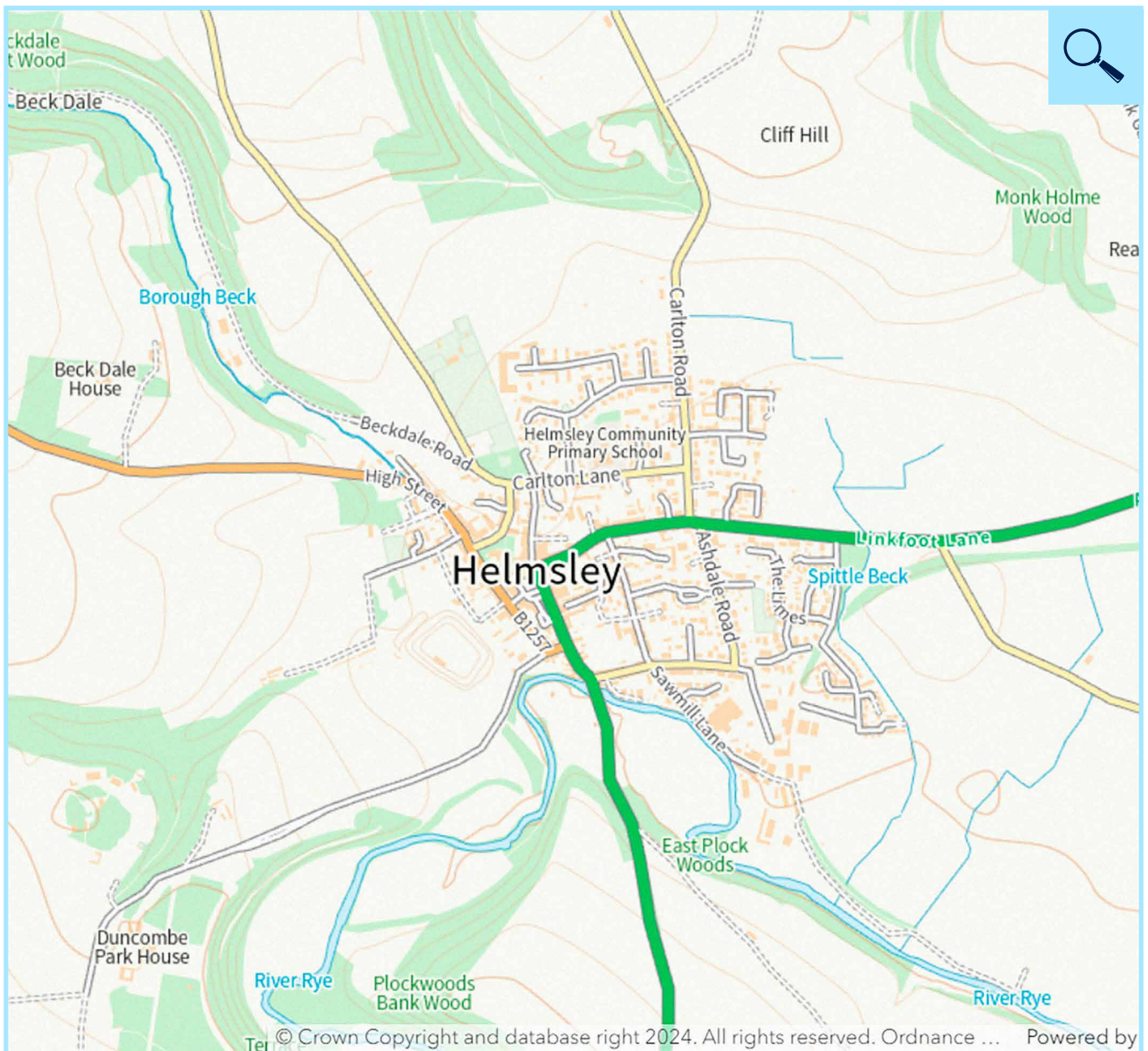
Sources

Peer into the past

A historical source is something that tells us about life in the past, such as a document, a picture or an object.

It may be a primary source, from the time, or a secondary source, created later. Our experts have chosen these sources to help you learn about Helmsley Castle's history.

Source 1 – Map of local area around Helmsley Castle



Map of local area around Helmsley Castle.

Source 2 – Aerial photograph of Helmsley Castle



Aerial photograph of Helmsley Castle.

Source 3 – reconstruction of Helmsley Castle during the 1400s



A reconstruction drawing of Helmsley Castle around 1400 by Peter Urmston (2017).

Source 4 – reconstruction of Helmsley Castle south gate



Reconstruction drawing by Philip Corke of Helmsley Castle's south gate in the 13th century.

Source 5 – contemporary illustration of medieval castle building



Illustration from the Maciejowski Bible – Tower of Babel. Image in the public domain.

Source 6 – Bayeux Tapestry



Bayeux Tapestry Museum, Public domain, via Wikimedia Commons.

Source 7 – illustration of Helmsley Castle during the 1600s



A reconstruction drawing by Peter Urmston of Helmsley Castle in around 1600. The Tudor long gallery and gardens are within the inner bailey.

Source 8

‘Three things make a castle strong: a moat, a wall and a tower. First the moat, then the wall rising above the moat, and finally the tower, which is stronger and more significant than the other two.’

This description was written by Abbot Aelred, who was abbot of Rievaulx Abbey in the 1100s. He was good friends with Walter Espec, the owner of Helmsley Castle, so his description may have been inspired by it.

A feast fit for a king



Recommended for

History, English

Learning objectives

- Learn about society in medieval England: dining, food and drink in a medieval castle.
- Develop instructional writing skills by designing your own recipe.

Time to complete

30–40 minutes



A ceramic jug used to hold liquid. There would have been a tap where the hole is.

KS1/KS2 students could act out a medieval feast, with students playing different roles.

KS3 – Through a whole-class discussion, explore what these roles reveal about medieval feasts, for example medieval etiquette, technologies, materials and ingredients.

Summary

The Great Hall at Helmsley Castle was occasionally used to host feasts for important guests. King Edward III visited in 1334. Medieval royal feasts often involved grand-scale and elaborate ceremony. In this activity, students will learn about the different roles at a medieval banquet, before taking part in role play or discussion.

Introduce the different roles at a medieval banquet to your students:

- cook – directing the assistants
- cook's assistants – stirring the sauces over the fire, chopping vegetables, mixing, basting the meat, whisking (with twigs!)
- carver – carving the meat at the table
- steward – directing the waiting servants
- spit boy/girl – turning the spit in the kitchen
- scullion (menial) – e.g. cleaning the spit
- sewer – head waiter and official taster of the food
- cup-bearer – bringing the king's cup to the table
- pot boy/girl – collecting empty glasses from the table, serving drinks
- washer boy/girl – washing up (scouring with twigs and sand)
- musicians – entertaining the guests and the king
- jesters – entertaining the guests and the king.

More learning ideas

Research medieval foods and how they were cooked. Students could use their research to design recipes and create a banquet for Helmsley Castle.

Challenge for students

How many deer do you need? The meat from an average deer would feed 125 people. If you invited 300 people to your feast, how many deer would you need? What if 700 people were coming?

Grand designs



Recommended for

Art, History, Science

Learning objectives

- Explore medieval patterns.
- Create a medieval tile pattern.

Time to complete

30 minutes

Medieval decoration

Archaeologists have found pieces of patterned tiles at Helmsley Castle. Tiles were used to decorate the interiors of Helmsley Castle and chapel. The chapel had green roof tiles. During this activity, students will learn about some of the patterns found on the tiles and will create their own patterned tile.



Part of a tile found at Helmsley Castle.

Making a ceramic tile was a long process – the clay was dug out in the winter, left to weather during spring and then shaped and fired during summer. Due to the long production time, tiles were expensive and were seen as a sign of wealth and power.

They were generally only used in religious buildings and the homes of the nobility. Tiles had to be fired to harden the clay. A temperature of around 1,000 degrees was needed. There were no thermometers to measure this, so people making the tiles had to guess when the temperature had been reached. For this reason, every batch of tiles came out looking slightly different.

Tiles were decorated with geometric patterns and decorative motifs. It is possible that some of the geometric patterns were influenced by the Islamic architecture seen by people who had taken part in the Crusades or travelled to Spain or Italy. Sometimes, noble families would decorate tiles with their family coat of arms.

More learning ideas

Make the tile designs from clay and put them on display in the classroom.

Medieval tile design

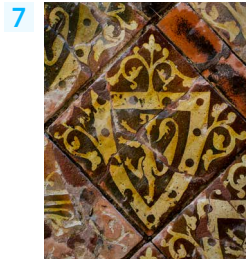


Use the square below to design your own tile. You could make your own design or use some of the tiles on this page as inspiration.

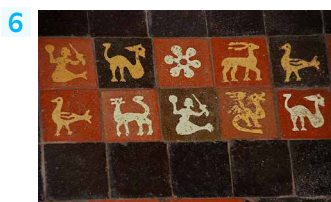
Geometric patterns:



Family crests:



Decorative motifs:



Tiles 1–5 – Metropolitan Museum of Art, licenced under CC0 1.0

Tile 6 – Thomasdybek – public domain.

Tile 8 – Daderot, licenced under CC0 1.0

Medieval games



Recommended for

History, PE

Learning objectives

- Investigate the type of games played in the medieval period.
- Play some medieval games.

Time to complete

Approx. 15 minutes, dependent upon tactics.



A public domain image by Alfonso X of Castile showing two medieval people playing Nine Men's Morris.



A Nine Men's Morris board found carved into a stone at Helmsley Castle.

Summary

Nine Men's Morris was a game played by lots of people during the medieval period. Archaeologists have found a Nine Men's Morris board carved into stone at Helmsley Castle. It is unclear who carved it.

About the game

Nine Men's Morris is a game of strategy, a bit like noughts and crosses. It is also known as Merrills, Mill and Merels.

One of the reasons for its popularity was because it didn't require much equipment. Boards could be drawn onto boxes, carved into stone or even drawn on the ground. We know that monks and priests played the game, as Nine Men's Morris boards have been found carved into stones and seats of cathedrals.

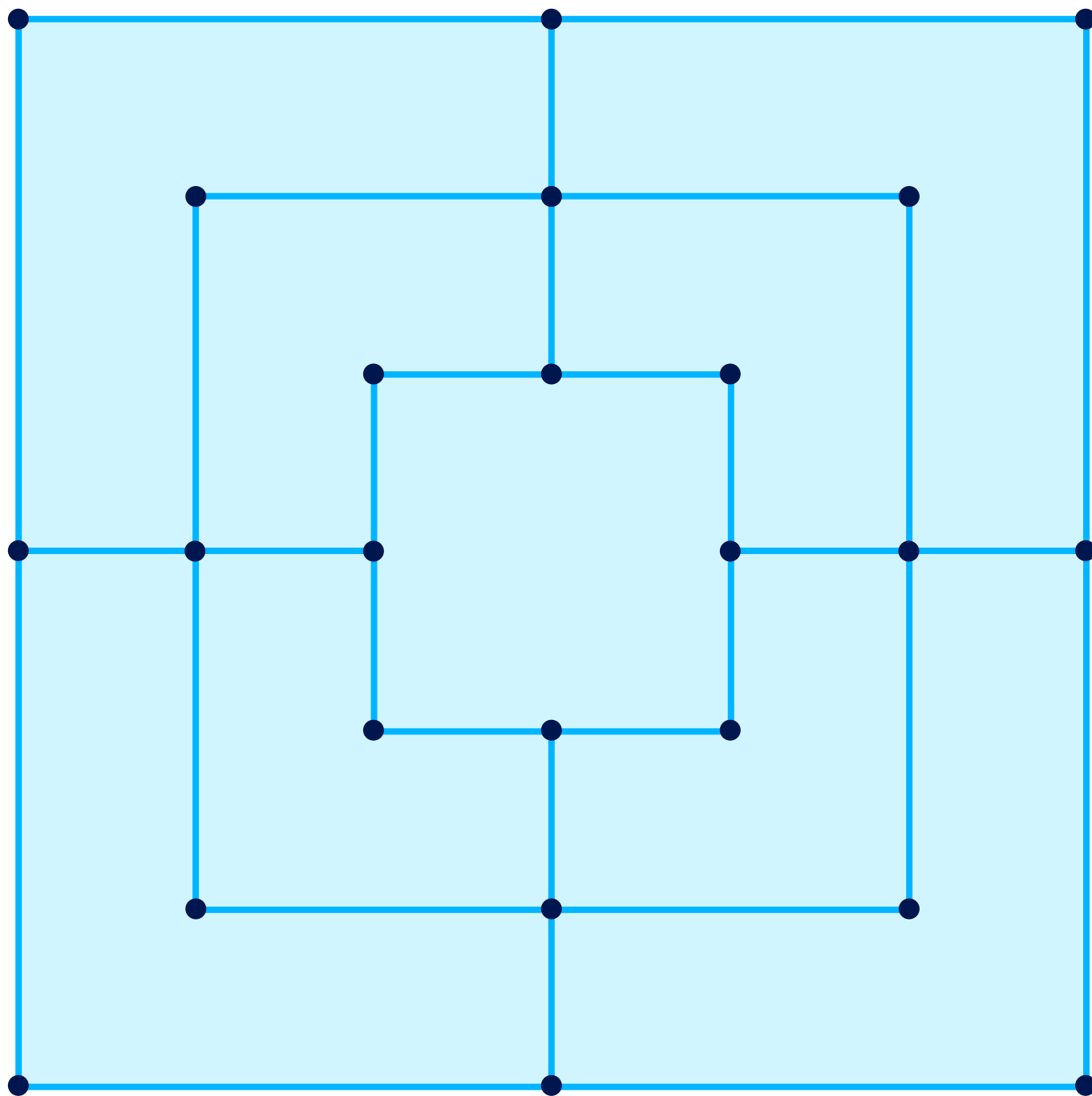
Sometimes dice were used as counters, like in the illustration opposite.

More learning ideas

Research medieval games online.

Hold a medieval games afternoon, either in the classroom or outside.

Nine Men's Morris board



Nine Men's Morris



How to play

You will need:

Two players.

9 counters in 2 different colours (18 counters altogether).

Each player has a different coloured counter.

Did you know?



Nine Men's Morris is a very old game. There is evidence it was played in Ancient Egypt.

- 1 Each person takes turns to place a counter on one of the black spots where the lines on the board join.
- 2 Once all 18 counters are on the board, players take turns to move one counter at a time.
- 3 If a player gets three counters in a row, this forms a 'mill'.
- 4 The player with the mill can remove one of the other player's counters, if it is not in a mill.
- 5 If all the other player's counters are in mills, a counter can be removed from a mill.
- 6 The game finishes when one player only has 2 counters left, or they are unable to make a move.

Conserving the castle



Recommended for

Science, Design Technology

Learning objectives

- Understand how climate change affects heritage.
- Create a solution to protect heritage.

Time to complete

60 minutes approximately, dependent on if you build models.



Old stonework at castles is affected by weather conditions.

Summary

Climate change poses a challenge to looking after and protecting heritage sites. This activity gives students the opportunity to come up with their own creative solutions to help protect Helmsley Castle from the effects of climate change.

English Heritage's role is to care for a collection of important historic buildings and objects. Conservation staff ensure these buildings and objects are protected, so they can continue to be enjoyed in the future.

Climate change is one of the greatest risks to these collections. More, and heavier, rain brings flooding to sites and causes leaks. This can increase mould within buildings. Stronger winds can erode land more quickly and cause damage to buildings. Colder temperatures in the winter can freeze water and affect old piping or damage the mortar that holds buildings together. Warmer temperatures in the summer can cause materials to expand and crack and increase the risk of fires. Sites that are on the coast are vulnerable to coastal erosion.

Due to the age of most of the buildings and objects, there are limitations on the type of materials that can be used for repair and protection. Underlying archaeology must be protected and the interaction of the materials with the local environment must be considered.

Visitors come to the sites, so the impact on their experience also needs to be considered. The following activity asks students to come up with a creative solution, within these limitations, to protect part of Helmsley Castle from climate change.

More learning ideas

It is important to protect biodiversity at sites. At Helmsley Castle there are bats roosting in the latrines. Find out some of the other species that are specifically protected by searching for the government's list of species of principal importance.

Conserving the castle



Your task: Heavy rain regularly hits the top of the south barbican and runs down the walls. This could cause damp and affect the fabric of the building. You are conservation experts who have been brought in to improve how we catch and drain the rainwater away. Work in groups to come up with a solution. Below is some information about some of the solutions you might consider – but you can be as creative as you like in thinking about this!

Solution	Positives	Negatives
Soft-capping (installing turf on the top of the walls).	Easy to install. Leads to more biodiversity. Low cost.	The turf can be damaged by hot weather and invasive woody species (plants with hard and strong stems). Affects the appearance of the building. Needs to be replaced every 10 years.
Add some sort of guttering.	This will drain the water away.	Affects the appearance of the building. Modern materials won't be in keeping with the building.
Add eaves at the top (a roof that overhangs the wall).	The rainwater is directed away from the walls.	Affects the appearance of the building. Hard to attach to the wall securely without making holes in it.

Limitations

1. You can't attach anything to the barbican – any structures you build would need to be freestanding.
2. Visitors still need to be able to see the barbican easily.
3. You can't dig into the ground and disturb the archaeology, so you will need to think about how to make any freestanding structures stable.

Things to think about:

1. Where will you drain the water to?
2. Can you use sustainable materials?
3. Could the water be collected and used for something else?
4. Could you make your solution into an interesting feature for visitors?

Draw your solution. Take turns to present the solutions to your class and vote on which one you think would work best.

Challenge:



Make a model of your solution – this could be via junk modelling, digital design or even in cake!

Bonus activity:



We also need to think about our visitors. To enable people to shelter from heavier rain and hotter sun, we would like to create a covered picnic area. Use the aerial photo on page 72 to work out the best place to construct this area. There is a lot of unexplored archaeology on this site that we wouldn't want to lose. Can you come up with a solution for covering a picnic area that doesn't involve digging into the ground, but won't be blown over by strong winds? Discuss your ideas with your group.