SELF-LED ACTIVITY
POWER ON THE TOWER

KS1–2 KS3

Recommended for

KS2–3 (History, Art and Design)

Learning objectives

- Understand the history of heraldry and mottos.
- Investigate the heraldic displays on the Lion Tower and Great Tower at Warkworth Castle.
- Use medieval heraldic symbols to develop new coats of arms.

Time to complete

Approx. 60 minutes

A reconstruction of the heraldry displayed on the Lion Tower.

SUMMARY

The Percys used heraldry at Warkworth Castle to strengthen and promote their identity during the Middle Ages. This activity will help students understand the meanings behind heraldic symbols and motifs. They will also reflect on the ways the Percys used heraldry in the development of Warkworth Castle to create their own coats of arms.

Aristocratic families started to use heraldry to distinguish themselves from each other during the 12th century. They created badges or logos which evolved into coats of arms, shields, banners and mottos. These distinctive heraldic designs were worn on clothing by men, women, children and servants. They represented particular families and became as recognisable as modern brands or sports team logos.

INVESTIGATING AND DEVELOPING HERALDRY

Show students an image of the Lion Tower (Source 3, page 45) and ask them to identify any heraldic features they can see. Use the Teachers' Notes on page 51 to help facilitate discussion.

Students can use the activity sheets on pages 52–54 as a guide for developing their own coats of arms. They could choose to represent themselves, their families, their class or even their school.

You could also search the English Heritage website for our online beginner's guide to heraldry for more ideas.

MORE LEARNING IDEAS

Students could deepen their understanding of their own family or local heraldry by searching for information online and using it to develop their designs. They could build on this by making their designs into a medieval shield or banner. Search English Heritage's YouTube channel for our short cardboard shield tutorial (1 min 54 secs) to help with this.

POWER ON THE TOWER
TEACHERS' NOTES

You can see the remains of Percy heraldry on the Lion Tower. This was the grand entrance to the great hall, a place where the household would meet for feasting and entertainments during the 14th and 15th centuries.

The heraldry shown here is made up of symbols that were important to the Percy family. The meanings behind these suggest how the Percys wanted to be seen. Some of the symbols also referenced the Percys' ties to other important families.

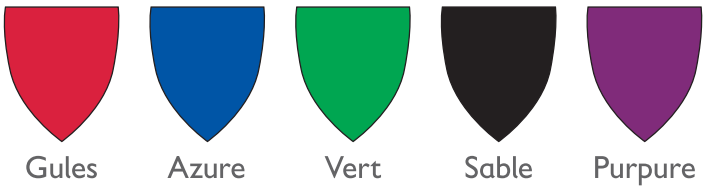
1. The Percy lion – a symbol of power and bravery used by the Earl of Northumberland and his family. Its collar includes the Percy's war-cry 'Esperaunce en Dieu', meaning 'Hope in God'.
2. The old Percy coat of arms – diamonds in a row on a shield. The Percy family stopped using this symbol in 1343 and replaced it with a lion when it became more fashionable.
3. The Percy family badge – a small moon shape or crescent.
4. The Lucy coat of arms – three fish (or 'luces') on a shield – a play on the name of the Lucy family who the Percys inherited land, buildings and money from in the 1380s.

MAKE YOUR OWN COAT OF ARMS

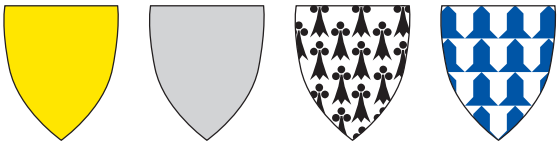
Create a coat of arms that represents you. Follow these heraldic rules:

1 BACKGROUND

The first step in making your coat of arms.



Gules Azure Vert Sable Purpure



Or (Gold) Argent (Silver) Ermine Vair (Furs)

Fess Pale Bend

Chevron Cross Saltire

Chief Bordure Pile

2 ORDINARY

A simple shape that goes over the top of your background.

TIP

Use the 'Guide to Heraldry' on the English website to help you.

3 CHARGE

Emblems that can go anywhere on your coat of arms.

HINT

The Percys used fish (luces) on their coat of arms because they had inherited land from the Lucy family.

Cross Star Ring

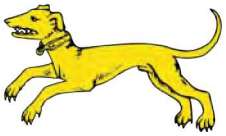
Balls Crescent Diamond

MAKE YOUR OWN COAT OF ARMS

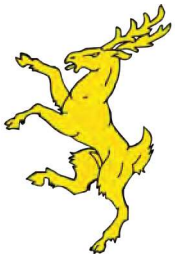
4 ANIMAL

You could use an animal as your charge. Choose one of these, or pick your own.

Lions = bravery

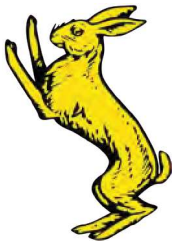


Dog = reliability



Stag = wisdom

Eagle = power



Hare = speed

DID YOU KNOW?

Elements of heraldry went in and out of fashion. The Percys replaced the diamonds on their coat of arms when lions became more fashionable.

The Royal Standard coat of arms. This includes a golden harp with silver strings symbolising Ireland and the Royal Banner of Scotland (the lion rampant with a blue tongue).

5 OBJECT

You can also choose any object that represents you. Here are some ideas:

- A musical instrument
- Sports equipment
- Your favourite book
- Someone in your family

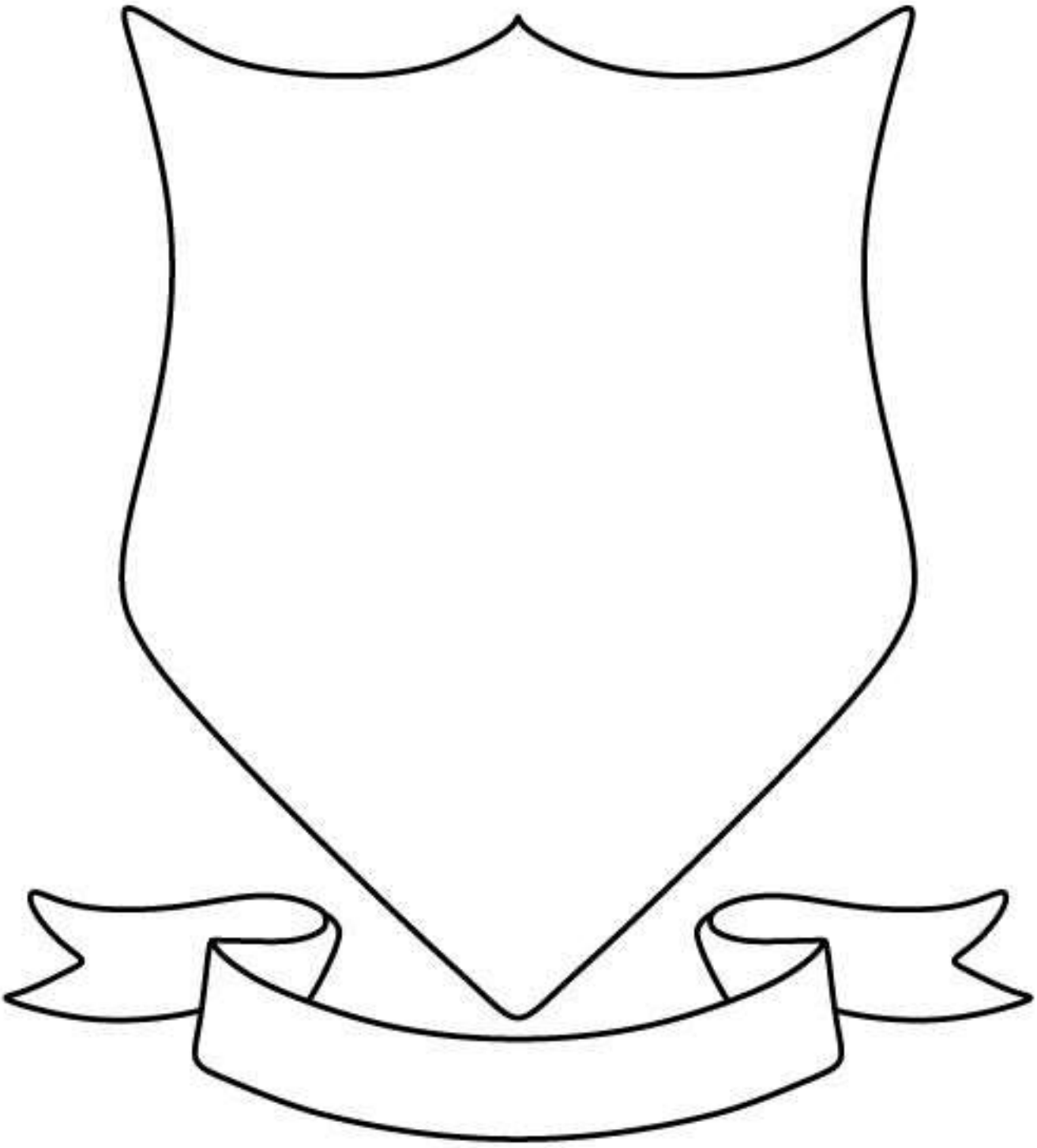
6 MOTTO

A motto is a short sentence that summarises what motivates you or what you think is important. For example, the Scout motto is 'Be Prepared'. *Dieu et mon droit* means 'God and my right'.

Don't worry, your motto doesn't have to be in Latin!

The royal coat of arms of the United Kingdom.

MAKE YOUR OWN COAT OF ARMS

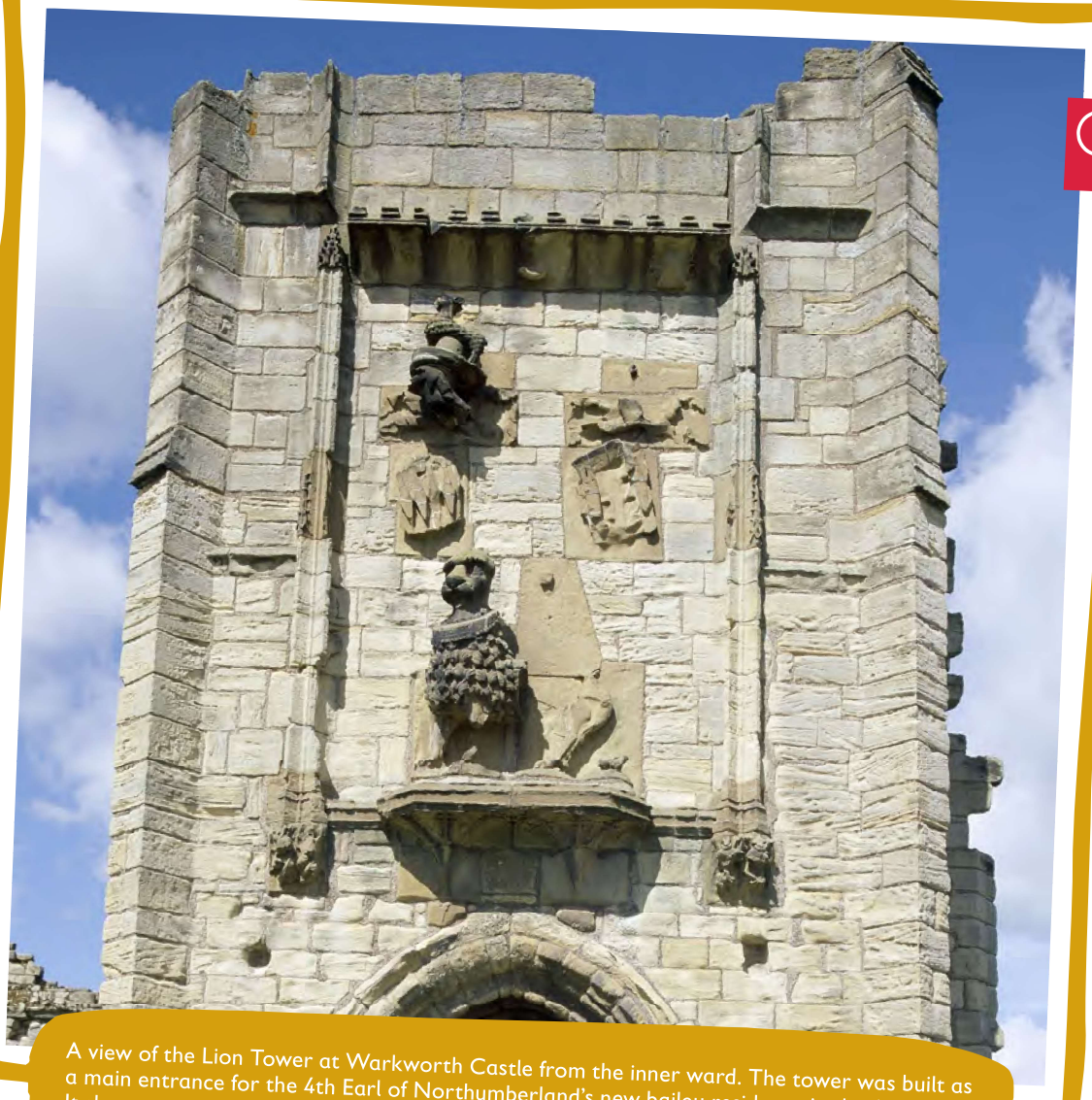


SOURCE 2

‘Henry Percy, first Earl of Northumberland, built a great tower on the motte of Warkworth Castle […] Its internal arrangements were extraordinarily complex, and included a great hall, chambers, kitchen, buttery, pantry and storerooms, all skilfully arranged around a central well which culminated in a tower-like lantern. Indeed, most of the great towers of the later Middle Ages displayed an extremely complex and ingenious internal planning, with interlocking halls and apartments, which contrasts with the relative simplicity of the hall- or tower-keep of the twelfth century.’

This extract is from *The Medieval Castle in England and Wales: A social and political history* by NJG Pounds (1991).

SOURCE 3



A view of the Lion Tower at Warkworth Castle from the inner ward. The tower was built as a main entrance for the 4th Earl of Northumberland’s new bailey residence in the 1480s. It shows a variety of heraldic symbols showing the power and prestige of the Percy family.