



ENGLISH HERITAGE
EDUCATION

KS1–KS4

TEACHERS' ACTIVITY IDEAS

Warkworth Castle

This resource has been designed to help teachers plan a visit to Warkworth Castle, which provides essential insight into medieval England. Use these activity ideas in the classroom and on site to help students discover more about Warkworth Castle.



Get in touch with our Education Booking Team:

- ☎ 0370 333 0606
- ✉ bookeducation@english-heritage.org.uk
- 👉 <https://bookings.english-heritage.org.uk/education>

Don't forget to download our **Hazard Information Sheets** to help with planning.

Share your visit with us @EHEducation

Step into England's story

TOP 5 ACTIVITIES

LANDSCAPE OR MAN-MADE?

ON-SITE
ACTIVITY

Recommended For

KS2 & KS3
(History, Geography)

Learning Objectives

- Identify the difference between natural and man-made defensive features of the castle.
- Consider how these features work together to create strong defences.



ACTIVITY 1

Summary

During your visit, ask students to look for these defensive features:

- The River Coquet
- Tree lines
- Steep slopes
- High ground
- Curtain wall
- Banks
- Ditches
- Towers
- Keep
- Gatehouse
- Arrow loops
- Ramparts

Students could take photos on their phones or draw the features when they find them. As they gather evidence, they could discuss and make notes about whether they are landscape features or man-made features. While on site, ask students to think about how they might beat each defensive feature and what might happen to them if they fail!

Back in the classroom, get students to sort the features they identified into two categories: 'landscape' or 'man-made', e.g. river = landscape, curtain wall = man-made. You could use the photos they have taken during the visit and do this as a visual sorting exercise. Students could then discuss the importance of each defensive feature and try to rank them in order of most to least important. What might happen to the castle if you removed one or two of them? Are there any that are absolutely central to defending the castle?

MORE LEARNING IDEAS

You could use the Google Earth function on Google Maps to give your class an aerial view of Warkworth. This should show the features of the landscape and the layout of the castle. You could also compile student photos into a class archive.

ACTIVITY 2

Recommended For

KS2 & KS3
(History, Art)

Learning Objectives

- Understand the history of heraldry and mottos.
- Investigate the heraldic display on the Lion Tower at Warkworth Castle.



Summary

Before your visit, read ‘Our Guide to Heraldry’ with your students: www.english-heritage.org.uk/easter/preparing-for-easter-adventure-quests/our-guide-to-heraldry

Ask students to draw a symbol to represent their family, invent a family motto and explain why they have chosen this symbol and motto. They could do the same for their school or favourite sports team.

During your visit, take students to stand in front of the Lion Tower. The carvings above the door are an excellent example of family heraldry. The display was created in about 1480 as a symbol of power by Henry Percy, the 4th Earl of Northumberland. The sculptures would have originally been painted in bright colours.

Ask students to look for:

- 1) The Percy lion – a symbol of power and bravery used by Earl Percy of Northumberland and his family. Its collar includes the word ‘Esperance’ from the Percy family motto ‘Esperance 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 the lion because it was more fashionable.
- 3) The Percy family badge – a small moon shape or crescent.
- 4) The Lucy coat of arms – three fish (or ‘lucis’) on a shield – a play on the name of the Lucy family from whom the Percys inherited land, buildings and money in the 1380s.

MORE LEARNING IDEAS

Back in the classroom, students could conduct further research into the history of their family surname, motto and coat of arms. This would be a good opportunity to research the origin of their surname and the way that language has developed over time.

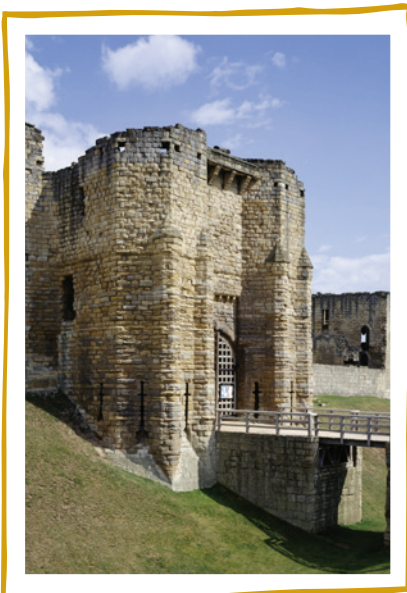
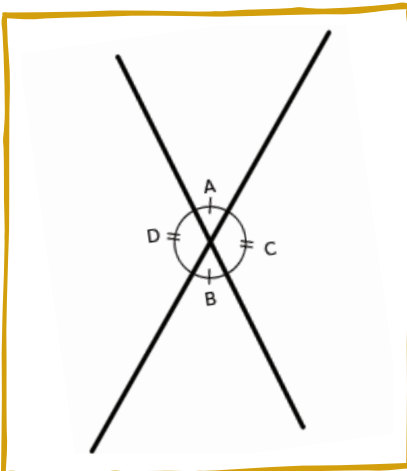
This website would be a good starting point for research into family history and the changing language of surnames: www.surnamedb.com/Surname

Recommended For

KS3 & KS4
(History, Maths, Design & Technology, Engineering)

Learning Objectives

- Understand how the gatehouse was engineered for defence.
- Measure arrow loop angles and explore fields of fire.

**ACTIVITY 3****Summary**

Ask students to bring a pencil, a ruler, a protractor and some paper with them to Warkworth Castle.

During your visit, take your class to the gatehouse. Split your class into two groups. Group 1 should stay in the passageway through the gatehouse. Group 2 should go up the stairs to the first floor. Please ensure that both groups are accompanied by school staff.

A) GROUND FLOOR INSTRUCTIONS

In small groups, measure the height and width of one of the cross-shaped arrow slits. Then slide a piece of paper into the gap and follow the angle with a pencil to make a 'V' shape. Slide the paper back out and measure the angle using a protractor. The angle of fire outside the wall is the same as the angle inside the wall. This is called a vertically opposite angle (see diagram). Why is the angle inside and outside the wall important? Finally, discuss: what are the advantages of having six arrow loops in the passageway?

B) FIRST FLOOR INSTRUCTIONS

Find the arrow loop on the left at the top of the stairs. Take it in turns to stand in the gap and explore the range of movement you've got inside the wall. Remember that engineering an arrow loop required a balance between a thick enough wall, a big enough field of fire outside the wall, and enough space for the archer to move inside the wall. It was a feat of engineering! Call out different things you can see through the slit.

Now get groups 1 and 2 to swap over and complete the task they haven't yet done.

MORE LEARNING IDEAS

Back in the classroom, ask students to research advancements in defensive buildings and structures. How have tactics, engineering and technology changed or improved over time? They should consider the influence of medieval castles on the way we now think about defence.

ACTIVITY 4

Recommended For

KS3 & KS4
(History)

Learning Objectives

- Interrogate historical sources and gather information from them.
- Use sources to explore the way the English language has changed over time.

EXAMPLE

Original text from George Clarkson's 1567 survey: 'The castell of Warkworth ys situate one the ryver of Cockett.'

Standard English translation: 'Warkworth Castle is situated on the River Coquet.'



Summary

Before your visit, ask students to create a list of historical sources that they could use to learn about Warkworth Castle, e.g. objects, surveys, itineraries, artistic impressions, maps from different time periods, the building itself.

During your visit, encourage students to treat the site as an important primary source in its own right – they should take photos and note down their observations.

Back in the classroom, download and use the Sources document in the Teachers' Resource Pack to do some work on text-based sources.

You will notice that the old English has been maintained in some of the sources, to give students a feel for the way written language has changed over time.

For each source, students could work in pairs to do the following:

1. Read the source out loud to their partner. Focus on the sound of the words rather than the spelling.
2. Highlight the key words and look up any words they don't understand.
3. Try to translate the text into Standard English.
4. List the three most important pieces of historical information they have gathered from the source.

MORE LEARNING IDEAS

As an extension, you could use these sources to discuss issues of reliability and bias.

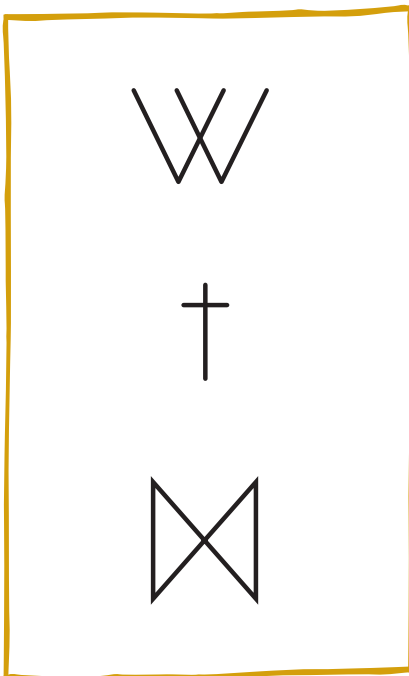
If students have access to a computer, they can use the URL beneath the source and have a look at the digitised version of the full text.

Recommended For

KS1 & KS2
(History, Geography, Art)

Learning Objectives

- Identify the masons' marks at Warkworth Castle and discuss their purpose.



ACTIVITY 5

Summary

Before your visit, introduce students to the term 'stonemason'. A stonemason is someone who takes a rough piece of stone and uses tools to shape it to create a building block or piece of artwork. Students could prepare a masons' marks tally sheet before their visit, ready to fill up as they explore the site.

During your visit, take students to the tunnel between the bailey and the Great Tower. Ask students to explore the walls of the tunnel and look for masons' marks. They should try to draw each mason's mark they find and tally how many they can see.

We don't know for sure, but historians think masons' marks could have various purposes:

- Like a signature, put there by a mason, in order to claim payment.
- To show the position in which a stone should be laid.
- To identify the part of the castle for which this stone is intended.
- To show which part of the country the stone came from.

Discuss what the masons' marks at Warkworth might have been used for.

As students continue to explore the rest of the castle, encourage them to look carefully at the stonework. They should add new masons' marks to their list, tally the frequency and make a note of where they found them.

MORE LEARNING IDEAS

Back in the classroom, students could compare their drawings and tallies and consider: is there a high concentration of one particular mark in a certain area? If so, why do they think this is?