

## Key Vocabulary

**abbey:** A building where many monks or nuns live.

**archer:** A person who shoots with a bow and arrows.

**arrow loops:** Narrow windows in the wall that could be used to shoot arrows through.

**bailey:** A courtyard within the walls of a castle.

**barbican:** A stone gatehouse which protected the gate to the castle. It usually had a small tower on each side of the gate.

**battlement or crenelations:** A narrow wall built along the top of the castle wall to protect soldiers from attack.

**chain mail:** A type of armour worn over the chest made from small rings of metal that are all joined together.

**chivalry:** A knight's social, moral and religious code or rules.

**coat of arms:** A symbol used by knights on their shield, banner and armour so people could tell knights apart.

**drawbridge:** A wooden bridge across a moat that can be raised or lowered.

**dry moat:** A moat with no water.

**dungeon:** A deep dark prison usually under the castle.

**keep:** A structure, often cuboid in shape, that could be defended. This was often the strongest and tallest part of the castle.

**kingdom:** Land ruled by a king.

**knight:** A special soldier who rides a horse and wears armour.

**liege:** A lord, baron or other ruler.

**moat:** A deep trench usually filled with water.

**motte:** A hill in the middle of a castle.

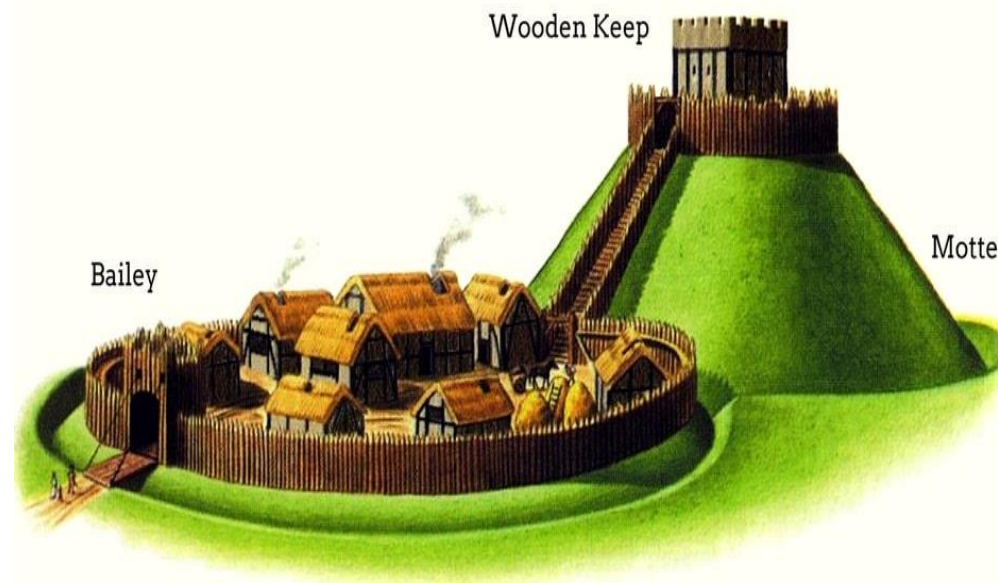
**murder hole:** An opening in the roof of a gateway over an entrance, usually used to drop rocks or heated sand through.

**noble:** Someone who is royal.

**portcullis:** A metal or wooden grate which can be raised or lowered to protect the castle entrance.

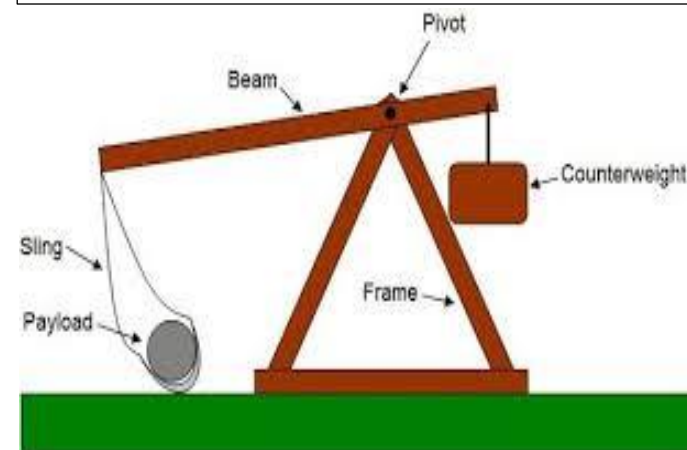
**rampart:** a defensive wall around a castle.

**squire:** A young man who aids a knight and will learn the skills to become a knight.



### Trebuchet

The trebuchet was a type of catapult. It first appeared in ancient China. It was used to throw rocks at castle walls. They were also used to throw dead bodies, human heads, bee hives or human poo and wee in barrels over the walls. They hoped that this would scare the people inside the castle or pollute the castle's drinking water. The people in the castle would then surrender and the attackers could then use the castle without having to rebuild its walls.



### Arrow Loops (Arrow Slits)

These narrow, vertical windows allowed archers to fire their arrows from behind them safely as it was very difficult to fire an arrow through these loops from outside of the castle.

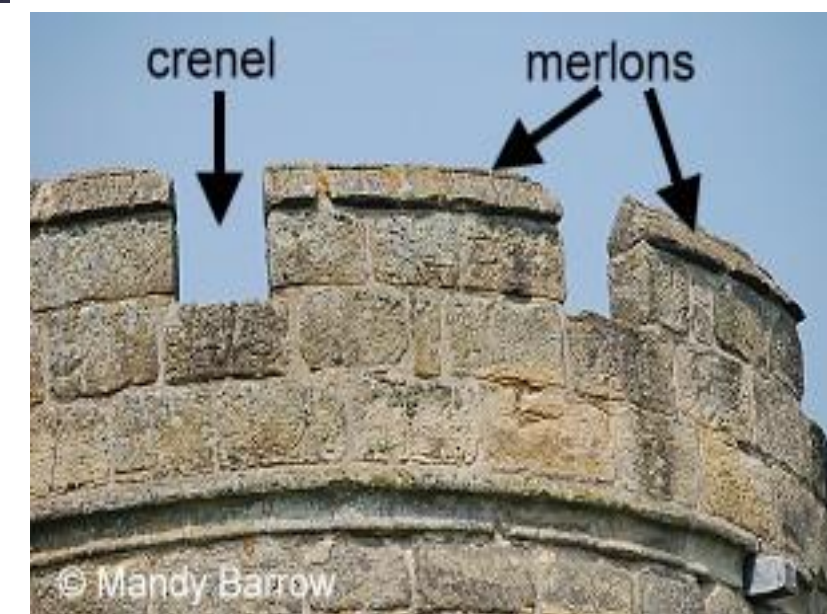


### Portcullis

This wooden or metal barrier helped protect the doors from fire and battering rams.

### Crenulations

You will find crenulations on the top of most castle walls. They were used to defend castles as soldiers could hide behind them to stop themselves being hit by arrows. Crenulations are made up of two parts, the merlon and the crenel (see below).



Dear Parents,

Our next topic is the Castles. Please help your children to prepare for this topic by helping them to learn the key words (in purple) and the facts on this sheet.

There are some homework activities on the back of this sheet. Your child can complete these at any time. Your child's teacher would love to see what they have created.

Thank you for your support.

Kind regards - Year 4

### Motte and Bailey Castles

These were the first type of castles. Almost 1000 of them were built in the U.K. A wooden fence, sometimes with a moat or ditch protected the settlement (the bailey). In the event of an attack, the people could retreat to the keep, which was on top of the Motte (a hill). The Motte was easier to defend as the attackers would have to climb up it to attack the people. Large Mottes could be as high as 30 metres.

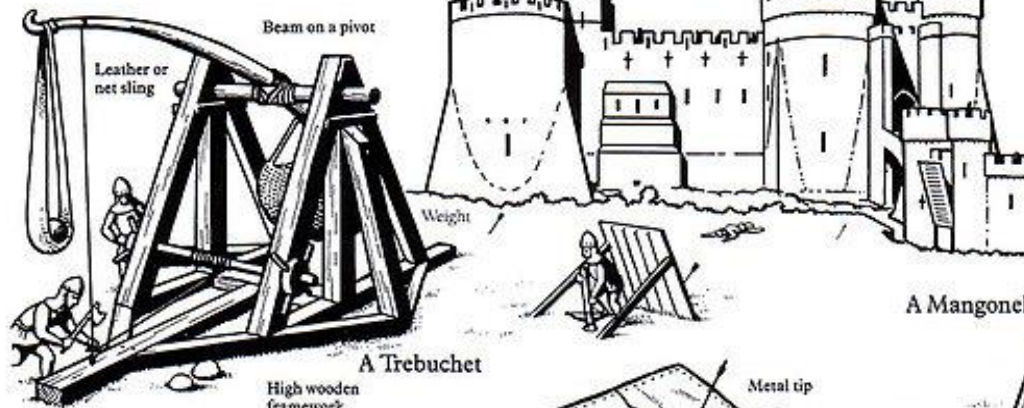
Because these castles were made of wood, they were easy to attack with fire. These were later replaced by stone castles.



# ATTACKING A CASTLE

An enemy army could attack in different ways

## Battering by siege machines



Lashings cut with an axe

A trebuchet threw its missile fast and high. Attackers might use rocks as missiles, or flaming materials to cause a fire, or even dead animals to spread disease.

A ram was a log hanging on chains and with a metal tip. If the attackers could get close enough they could use it against the walls or door. The ram needed level ground and about twelve men to operate it.

A bore had a pointed metal tip for dislodging stones. A shelter made of animal skins, called a penthouse, protected the ram or bore.

## Mining

Skilled miners, under cover of dark or the shelter of a penthouse, dug under the foundations of the wall or tower. They used wooden props to hold up the roof of their tunnel. When they came out they set fire to the props, and the wall above the tunnel collapsed.

A Trebuchet

High wooden framework

Log slung on chains

A Battering Ram

Penthouse

Penthouse covered with wet animal hides

A Mangonel

Tightly twisted ropes

Cog by which the ropes were tightened

Miners (Sappers) at work

Props to hold up the roof - later they would be burned to make the walls collapse

## Besieging

The simplest, but longest, way was to starve the castle into surrender. But the attackers needed food too, and if the defenders had been warned they would have gathered all the food in from the surrounding lands, leaving nothing for the enemy army.

## Surprise

Attacking by night was best, particularly if a spy in the castle opened the postern. An enemy might also try to get in by climbing up a garderobe (lavatory) drain which emptied its contents outside the walls.

Bar against which the beam hits forcing the missile to fly out

Spoon-shaped cup with missile

A mangonel worked like a catapult by hurling as much as 25 kilos of stone up to 200 metres.

## Climbing the walls

Ladders, ropes and grappling irons could be used.

## A siege tower

A siege tower protected the ladder. A platform was dropped onto the top of the wall for soldiers to storm across. But it needed level ground to get to the walls, and could not be used if there was a moat.

Soldiers climb the ladder, protected by the tower, and climb through the top onto the walls

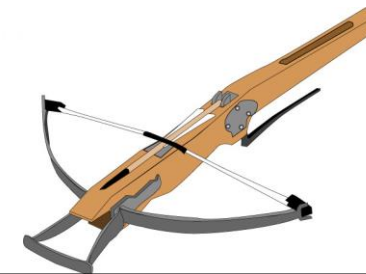
Hides covering a wooden framework

## Moats

Attackers were easy to shoot whilst swimming or rowing across the moats filled with water. Moats also reduced the risk of tunnelling under the castle. Some castles had dry moats (with no water). They would sometimes put traps in these which could injure attacking soldiers.

## How did people become knights?

There were two ways that a man could become a knight during the Middle Ages. The first was earning the right on the battlefield. If a soldier fought particularly bravely during a battle or war, he may be awarded knighthood by the king, a lord, or even another knight. The second way was to become an apprentice to a knight and earn the title through hard work and training.



## A crossbow

A crossbow fires arrows. This was much slower to fire than a normal bow as it had to be reset each time it was fired.

- Homework**
- Draw, paint/colour a knight on their horse.
  - Build a castle from an old cardboard box.



- Look at some examples of coats of arms. Design one to represent yourself.



- Make a knight's shield and sword from cardboard. Don't forget to put your coat of arms on the shield.



- Create a word search using castle vocabulary.
- Write a short story set in a castle.
- Make a castle on Minecraft. Remember to show your teacher a photo of it when you've completed it.
- Create a silhouette of a castle.

