

Castles



Fun Facts!

A castle is a private fortified residence of a lord or noble, such as a King or Queen. Castles have similarities with other constructions like palaces, fortresses and fortified settlements, but they are not the same. Castles were first built over 1000 years ago. Earth and timber were originally used to build castles, but now stone is used.

Features of a Castle

- The main **castle gate** or **door** was hard to break through because it was usually made from thick, iron-studded wood.
- The **portcullis** was the spiked metal or wood barrier, which protected the doors.
- **Moats** surround the castle to make it harder for enemies to tunnel underground into the castle, and enemies could be spotted easily trying to swim or row across.
- **Drawbridges** could be pulled up and stop enemies getting across.
- **Gate towers** were useful for shooting down from.
- The **high ground** that castles were built on meant that the defenders could have a clear view of the surrounding area.
- **Ramparts** were the steep banks of earth or rubble surrounding the castle which made it harder for enemies to climb up.
- The **high walls** of the castle made it difficult for enemies to climb.
- Tall, thick **curtain walls** around the castle shielded the castle from attack.
- The **flanking towers** built in the curtain wall, were where defenders could view and attack enemies from.
- **Battlements** were the tooth shaped top of the castle walls where the defenders could hide behind and fire missiles through the gaps.

Famous Castles

- Dover Castle
- Kenilworth Castle
- Tintagel Castle
- Bolsover Castle
- Portchester Castle
- Warkworth Castle
- Dunstanburgh Castle
- Carisbrooke Castle
- Middleham Castle
- Beeston Castle



Dover Castle is often considered the most iconic of all English fortresses.

Questions About Castles



1. What other constructions do castles have similarities with?

2. How long ago were castles first built?

3. What were castles made from originally and after that?

4. What was usually made from thick, iron-studded wood and why was it useful?

5. Why was it good for castles to be built on high ground?

6. Why were moats useful?

7. What were the high walls and curtain walls good for?

8. What use were the battlements?

9. Name three famous castles.
