

LESSON PLAN: STRUCTURE OF A CASTLE

OBJECTIVES:

Language Arts

- Students will be able to determine the meaning of new vocabulary.

Social Studies

- Students will be able to explain the cultural make-up of the structure of different communities.

Science

- Students will be able to interpret information to construct reasonable explanations from direct (observable) evidence.

MATERIALS

- Dictionary

PROCEDURES:

Students will use a dictionary to determine the meaning of the following words as they relate to a Middle Ages castle.

Buttress

Moat

Arrow Slits

Tower

Flags

Stone Wall

Narrow Slit Window

Portcullis

Battlements

Gateway

Students will label the diagram of a castle in the Middle Ages.

STRUCTURE OF A CASTLE

Student Handout

Use a dictionary to determine the meaning of the following words as they relate to the Middle Ages Castle

Buttress _____

Tower _____

Narrow Slit Windows _____

Gateway _____

Moat _____

Flags _____

Portcullis _____

Arrow Slits _____

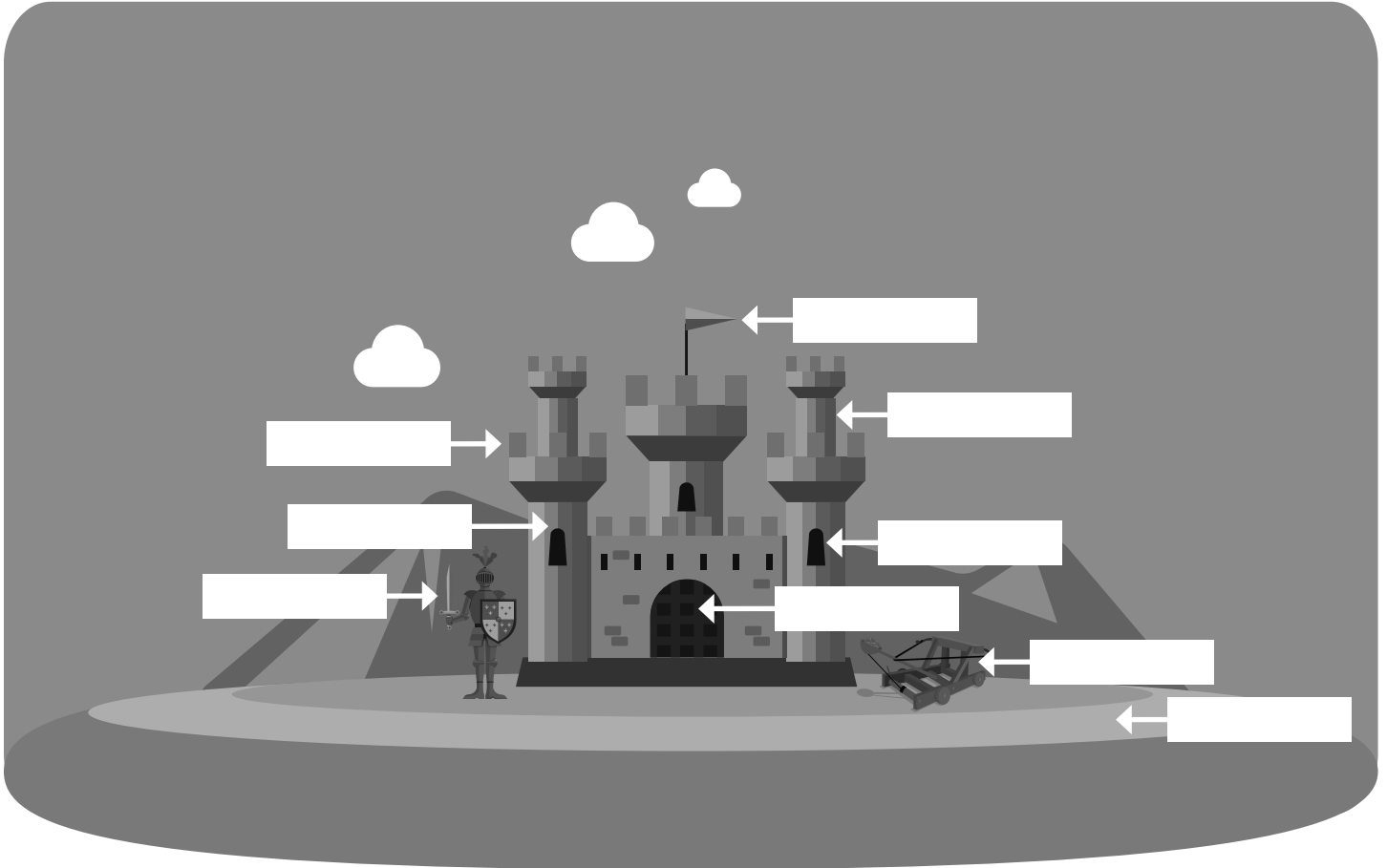
Stone Wall _____

Battlements _____

STRUCTURE OF A CASTLE

Student Handout

Label the parts of a castle.



Word Bank:

Buttress

Gateway

Portcullis

Tower

Moat

Stone Wall

Narrow Slit Window

Flags

Battlements

STRUCTURE OF A CASTLE

Answer Key

Use a dictionary to determine the meaning of the following words as they relate to the Middle Ages Castle

Buttress

The extra thick part of the outer walls that assist in strengthening the structure.

Tower

Tall and square and enabled long distance surveillance. Originally the corners were square, but later designs were rounded or cylindrical. Squared corners were more vulnerable to damage by projectiles like boulders from catapults.

Narrow Slit Windows

Were slim on the inside, but flared wider on the outside. This made it difficult for the enemy to hit the defenders, but enabled those inside with a wider range of motion for attacking the enemy.

Gateway

The fore building was the gateway into the castle. It was usually positioned forward from the castle, on higher ground or upstairs from ground level making it more difficult to gain entry. Gateways were protected with a massive iron gate, a heavy wooden door or both.

Moat

A deep ditch surrounding a castle, typically filled with water, intended as a defense against attack.

Flags

A piece of fabric attached to a pole with a rope. It is used as a symbol or emblem of a country or kingdom.

Portcullis

A large, latticed gate typically made of metal or wood that slides down to block entry into the gateway

Stone Wall

A wall made of stones created to protect a city or Castle

Battlements

The most upper walled part of a Castle. It allows archers and bowmen to shoot from the open spaces

LIFE AT THE CASTLE

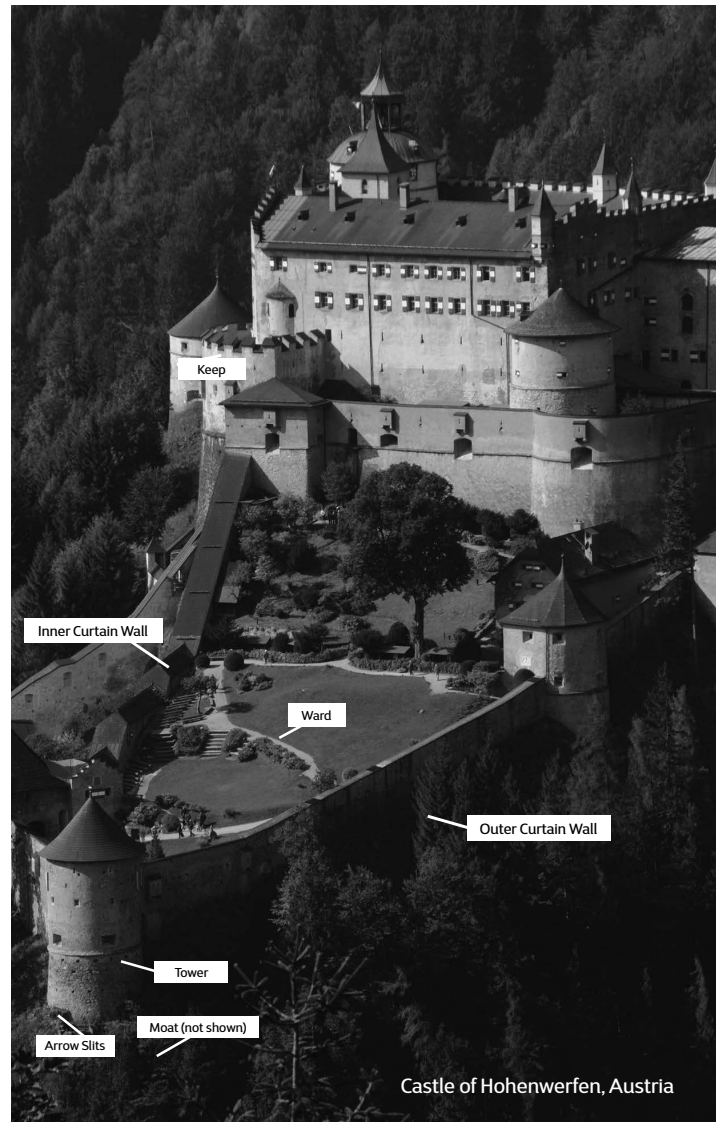
Student & Teacher Source

Castles belonged to the wealthy, important, and powerful people of the land – King or Queens, nobles, and knights. Castles were designed to be difficult to attack and easy to defend. Castles protected owners from rivals and invaders; however, castles were also used to protect the local citizens.

Early castles were built in the 9th and 10th centuries and were constructed of earth and wood; usually constructed on higher ground. Castles from the 11th century and later were always built of rocks and stones on high ground and often surrounded by water such as a lake of wide, deep water called a moat. Stone castles had massive walls that were between 15 and 20 feet thick.

Here are the five key castle structures and how they help castle defense:

1. **Buttresses** are the extra thick part of the outer walls that assist in strengthening the structure.
2. **Towers and keeps** were tall and square and enabled long distance surveillance. Originally the corners were square, but later designs were rounded or cylindrical. Squared corners were more vulnerable to damage by projectiles like boulders from catapults.
3. **Spiral staircases** inside castles were specifically designed to inhibit right-handed invaders by forcing the attacker's balance to the left side while stonework defeated his ability to swing his sword properly.
4. **Narrow slit windows** were slim on the inside, but flared wider on the outside. This made it difficult for the enemy to hit the defenders, but enabled those inside with a wider range of motion for attacking the enemy.
5. The fore building was the **gateway** into the castle. It was usually positioned forward from the castle, on higher ground or upstairs from ground level making it more difficult to gain entry. Gateways were protected with a massive iron gate, a heavy wooden door or both.



Castle of Hohenwerfen, Austria