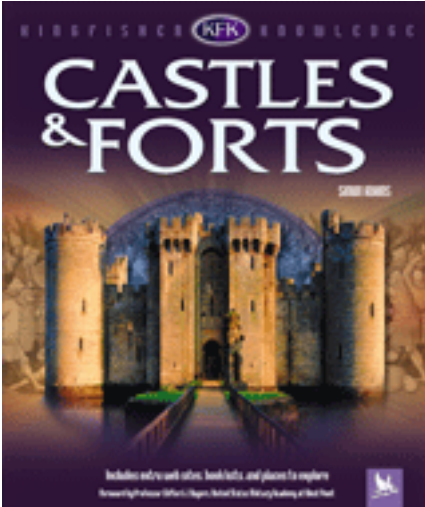


A Teacher's Guide



Castles & Forts

by Simon Adams

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About the Book

In his introduction to *Castles & Forts*, Professor Clifford J. Rogers remarks that although few American young people have seen forts or castles firsthand, most have imagined them. Castles and palaces are the settings for the history they study of Europe in the Middle Ages and figure in works of fiction from fairy tales to today's popular works of fantasy.

Forts and castles developed because of the "world's warlike history." They were built to protect, to intimidate, and to guard. As your students are introduced to each of the castles or forts discussed in this book, they will begin to see how similar the history of various places and cultures in the world is and how much the same people are—even in different places and times.

This book will connect to your history and geography curriculums and extend to literature, language arts, and art.

Reading Comprehension

Give your students time to read the book on their own or in small groups. To get a sense of their understanding and how much they are learning and retaining, use the chapter summaries to open discussions. It is easy to turn the straightforward review sentences in these summaries into questions to pose to your students. For example:

- Chapter 1, page 20, "The First Forts": Ask your students to discuss the reasons that castles and forts were built. "Location, location, location" is a modern phrase used in the real estate industry. How does this relate to the placement of castles and forts?
- Chapter 2, page 44, "The Great Age of Castles": Have the students talk about how the structure of the castle kept invaders out. How did the invention of gunpowder change

the face of the castle?

- Chapter 3, page 59, "The End of an Era": Have the class discuss what brought about the decline of castles. There are still castles in existence today. What are they used for?

Standards:

Language Arts:

- Summarizes and paraphrases information in texts.
- Draws conclusions and makes inferences based on explicit and implicit texts.
- Uses new information to adjust and extend personal knowledge base.

Language Arts

If these walls could talk...Many castles lived several lives. They may have been built for one purpose but used for several others over the course of many years and many changes in power and politics. Have students write a story from the point of view of one of the castles in the book. The castle should be the narrator and tell about one period in its history: the people who lived there, fought there, attacked or defended it.

Standards:

Language Arts:

- Writes in response to literature.
- Writes expository compositions.
- Writes narrative accounts.

Art

Build a castle. After reading *Castles & Forts*, have your students, working in teams, design and build castle models out of cardboard boxes, oak tag, construction paper, paper towel tubes, etc. In designing their castles, your students should keep in mind:

- what era the castle is from
- where the castle is located—country and landscape
- the castle's purpose—is it a defensive or an offensive structure?
- the functions that the different parts of the castle would serve
- what life would be like for the people living in it

Your students should keep a "Builder's Journal" to record each step in the design and

building process.

In the Middle Ages people who lived in castles often had a crest that identified them as part of a family or clan. The crests would be seen on flags and pennants, drapery, shields, and armor. Have you students create their own family crests. Display them around the room.

Standards:

Visual Arts:

- Knows some of the effects of various visual structures.
- Knows how visual, spatial, and temporal concepts integrate with content to communicate intended meaning in one's artwork.

Language Arts:

- Prewriting: maintaining a journal.

Cooperative Learning:

- Works with others to produce a common goal.

History

1. Create a classroom timeline that begins in 200 B.C.E. and continues through the 1800s. As students read the book, have them place Post-its with the name, date, and location of the castles and forts they read about on the timeline.
2. In conjunction with the timeline, indicate the locations of the castles on a large world map. Create a key for the map. Assign each castle an identifying number. Write numbers on ½-inch-diameter self-sticking colored circles. Place the numbered circles on the map to show where each castle is located. Place the key next to the map for easy reference. Besides the name of the castle, the key can contain the year it was built, who built it, and whether it is intact or in ruins.

Standards:

History:

- Knows how to construct and interpret timelines.
- Understands the characteristics and uses of maps.
- Understands that culture and experience influence people's perception of places and regions.

Research

1. Many of the battles fought during the Middle Ages were commemorated on tapestries. The illustration on pages 22 and 23 shows a small portion of the Bayeux tapestry, which depicts the Norman invasion of England in 1066 and the events that led up to it. In a time when the vast majority of the population was illiterate, the tapestry's images were designed to tell the story of the conquest of England from the Norman perspective. View more of the tapestry on the Internet at <http://hastings1066.com>.

Your class can create a tapestry or a series of panels similar to a tapestry based on the battle of Fort Ticonderoga, America's first victory in the Revolutionary War in 1775. Read pages 46 and 47, then go to the Web site: <http://www.fort-ticonderoga.org> to read more about the battle and to view the photo gallery. Students working together can draw panels that picture the events at Fort Ticonderoga. Then they should arrange the panels in chronological order and write brief descriptions. When they are finished, the panels can be linked together in tapestry format to tell the story of the battle. Some students might want to transfer their panels to canvas or linen and embroider them.

2. Compare the ancient fortress of Masada with Caerphilly Castle. Masada was built by Herod, the king of Judea, in the Judean desert between 37 B.C.E. and 31 B.C.E. Caerphilly castle was built in Wales during the great age of castles, between 1268 and 1271, for the English by Gilbert de Clare to thwart the rebellion of the Welsh inhabitants. Read the section on the mountaintop fortress Masada, pages 14 and 15, then go to the recommended Web site <http://mosaic.lk.net/g-masada.html> to find out what Israeli archaeologists learned when they began excavating the site in 1955–1956, and then in 1963–1965. Another excellent source on Masada is the Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs at <http://www.mfa.gov.il/mfa/go.asp?MFAH0dp00>.

Read about Caerphilly castle on pages 28 and 29 and then go to the recommended Web site <http://www.castlewales.com/caerphil.html> to learn more about it. Find similarities and differences in structure, purpose, and history between the two fortresses.

Standards:

Language Arts:

- Writes in response to literature
- Gathers information for research topics from the Internet

History:

- Knows how to identify patterns of change and continuity in the history of various cultures.

Literature

From *The Lord of the Rings* to *Harry Potter*, from *Rapunzel* to *Romeo and Juliet*, from *Star Trek* to *Star Wars*, castles and fortresses play an important role in literature and film. Create production teams and have each team write and produce a one-act play based on a story set in a castle or fortress. The productions can have scenery and costumes or they can be simple readings.

Standards:

Theater Arts:

- Understands that descriptions, dialogue, and actions are used to discover, articulate, and justify character motivation.
- Invents character behaviors.
- Understand the conventions of a variety of media.
- Uses dialogue.

Visual Arts:

- Knows the effect of visual structures.
- Knows what makes various organizational structures effective in the communication of ideas.
- Knows different subjects, themes, and symbols that convey intended meaning in artwork.

Discussion

1. Forts and castles were often built to protect people from enemies. Strong constructions, high walls, and moats were created to keep adversaries out. Now we face a different kind of adversary. Discuss the ways we try to keep safe in a post-9/11 world.
2. The book demonstrates that many improvements in castle building occurred in many different parts of the world over a relatively short span of time, for example, using wood instead of stone and building double walls. At a time when communication and transportation were difficult, how did ideas move from place to place?
3. Introduce these castle sayings: A person's home is his or her castle; He is king of the castle; Building castles in the air; It takes time to build a castle. Discuss their meanings.
4. Some castles and fortresses were not only large, imposing defensive or offensive structures but also beautiful buildings from an architectural standpoint. Glance through the pages and identify the castles your students consider beautiful. Talk

about the value of beauty in an often violent setting. Do the aesthetics of an environment affect the way people live their lives?

Standards:

Language Arts/Listening and Speaking:

- Contributes to group discussions.
- Responds to questions and comments.
- Listens in order to understand topic and purpose.
- Makes basic oral presentations.