

# CASTLE

## Activities

The Normans are famous for their castles. The first were built mainly of wood on mounds of earth and later were rebuilt out of large blocks of stone. A Norman castle was not really a single building, more of a 'compound' with the main tower (The Keep) overlooking smaller buildings where the workers would live.

These activities will help you see what clever castle builders the Normans were and give you some ideas for building, living in and defending your own castles.

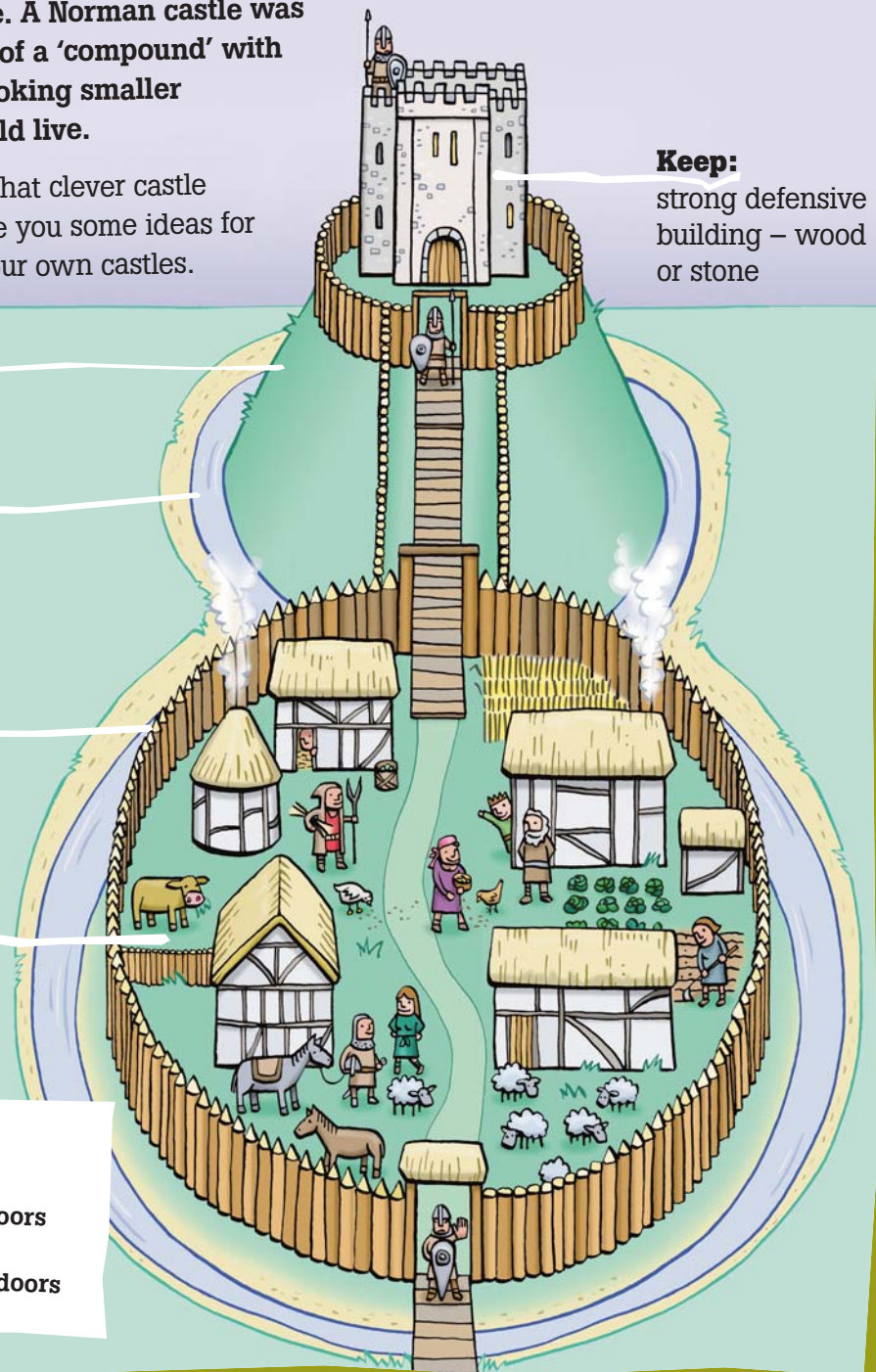
**Keep:**  
strong defensive building – wood or stone

**Motte:**  
earth mound with steep sides





**Moat:**  
sometimes a simple ditch, or with defensive spikes or water

**Palisade:**  
the outer defensive wall made of wood

**Bailey:**  
the castle compound – like a small village



### Key to icons

- |  |  |
|--|--|
|  Estimated time |  Indoors  |
|  Completion     |  Outdoors |

# Activity 1



## BUILD YOUR OWN CASTLE

**Great for: an extended holiday project for children or the whole family. You can each take responsibility for different sections of the castle.**

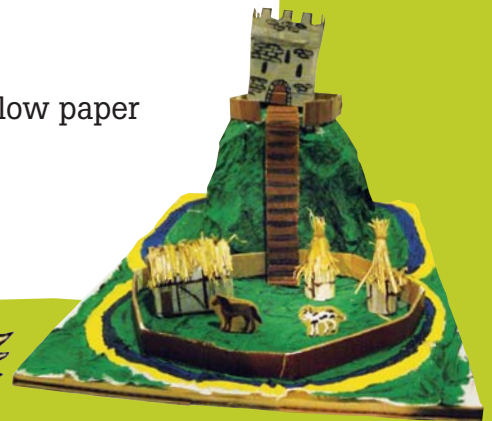
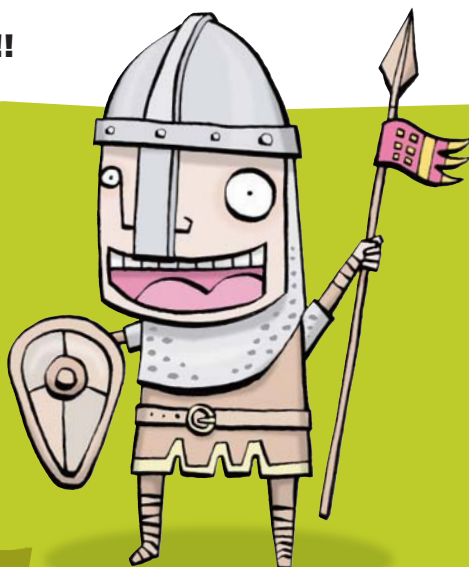
If you have a garden you may want to build your castle outside (it can get a bit messy!) or you could build a Norman sand-castle in a sand-pit or on the beach.

Use the illustrations provided as a guide for building your castle.

### You will need:

- A large sheet of cardboard (or a box folded out)
- A range of cardboard packaging boxes and sheets
- Toilet rolls
- PVA glue and/or sticky tape
- Paints and/or pens to decorate
- Straw (available from most pet shops) or yellow paper
- Tissue paper (optional)

### Get building!!

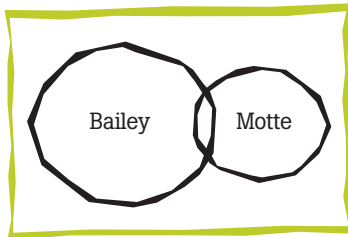


# Activity 1

BUILD YOUR OWN CASTLE

## Castle platform

- First find a large piece of cardboard to use as a platform to build on.
- Sketch a figure of eight onto it to create the shape for your motte and your bailey (don't worry about it being a bit messy, you'll paint over this later).



## The Motte (Mound)

- Find a small square box to start off your mound.
- Stick the box on the motte end of your platform using sticky tape or glue.
- Screw up old newspaper into balls. Use them to build up the sides of your mound around the box using glue or sticky tape. Make sure it's wider at the bottom and narrower towards the top.
- Once you're happy with the shape of your mound, stick a layer of ripped-up newspaper or tissue paper on it to create a smooth surface – don't worry if there are some lumps and bumps underneath, it's made from 'earth' after all!
- Paint the mound green to make it look as if it is covered in grass. Paint the circular bailey end of the platform at this point too. You can add a layer of tissue paper first to create texture.
- Leave to dry.

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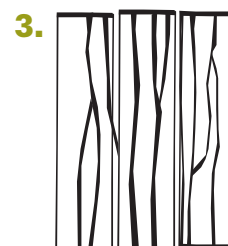
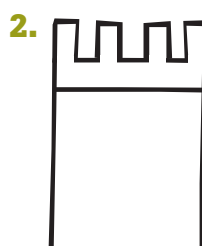
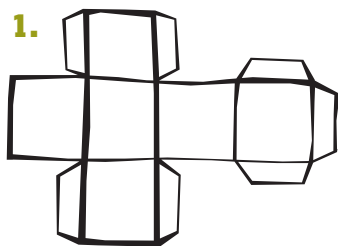
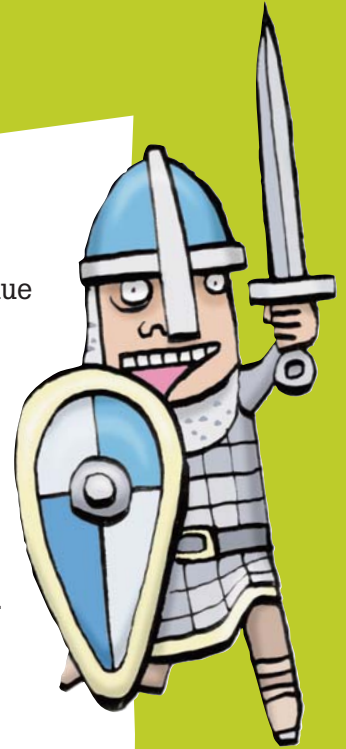
[bbc.co.uk/history](http://bbc.co.uk/history)

# Activity 1

BUILD YOUR OWN CASTLE

## The Keep

- Find a square or rectangular box, small enough to sit on the top of your motte, or make a box with card using a dab of glue on each tab. **See diagram 1.**
- Add some 'crenellation' detail to the top of your box – this means the square-shaped decorations you can see at the top of castles even today. Cut crenellations into strips of card, long enough to go around the top of the four sides of your box and attach with glue. **See diagram 2.**
- Paint the whole keep grey, adding some stone details in black.
- Add narrow windows on each wall and an arched front doorway in black.
- Place your keep on top of the motte and stick in place.
- Add a defensive wall around your keep using a strip of card painted to look as if it is made from strong wooden planks. **See diagram 3.** Bend the wall around the keep and attach to the mound with sticky tape.



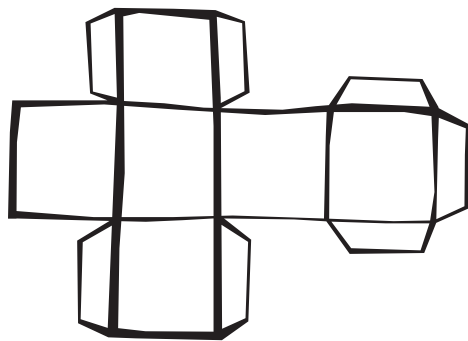
# Activity 1

BUILD YOUR OWN CASTLE

## The Bailey (Castle compound)

- Create houses out of old packaging boxes or cardboard using our box template. **See diagram.**
- Paint the houses brown to look like wood, or copy the 'wattle and daub' design on the castle illustration. Add windows and a door to each one.
- Create thatched roofs by building up a pointed roof using straw, or create a straw look by cutting fringing carefully into yellow paper.
- Build grain stores by cutting toilet rolls in half and adding 'straw' roofs.
- You may want to add farm animals too, using modelling clay, card or toys.
- Link your keep and bailey by a walkway, either by painting a path onto the motte in brown, or by adding a ramp made out of a strip of card.
- Add a palisade defensive wall around the bailey - to match the wall around your keep - by cutting a long strip of card (or several stuck together) and painting to look like a wooden fence.
- Use sticky tape to attach the wall to the platform, remembering to leave entrances where required.

For added defence, you can also paint a moat in blue around your entire castle and add a drawbridge painted brown.



**You've built a motte and bailey castle.**

# Activity 2



## BRING YOUR CASTLE TO LIFE

**Great for: quick game inside, or outside on a sunny day.**

Now that you have your castle, you can put people in it for a Norman adventure. You could:

- Collect together your toy figures.
- Draw figures on thick card and cut them out.
- Act out the adventures yourself with friends, imagining you're in your castle.

**You can make up your own stories for the characters in the castle or use our story starters to help you get going:**

- It's night time. The castle is asleep. Suddenly an arrow whisks through the air and strikes the lookout in his tower. He falls to the ground. From the surrounding countryside, invaders emerge. The castle is under attack!
- A beggar arrives at the castle gate saying he has news of attackers on the move. He is allowed into the castle – but is he telling the truth?
- A violent storm washes away the palisade and destroys the crops – many of the animals escape. How will the castle survive?

Pleased with your final story? You could write it down for others to read.



**You've built all the sections of a Norman castle.**



# Activity 3



## MAKE A SHIELD

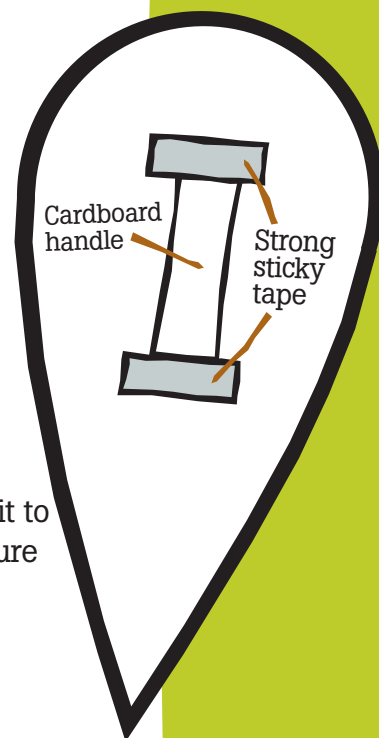
**Great for: creative time for kids – solo or with friends.**

### You will need:

- Large piece of strong card or unfolded box
- Strong sticky tape
- Scissors
- Coloured crayons, felt tip pens or paints

### Make your shield

- On your large piece of card, draw out a Norman Kite shield – shaped like a teardrop. You can use our shield template to create your design.
- Make a handle by cutting a strip of card and attaching it to the back of your shield with strong sticky tape. Make sure it's big enough to fit your arm through. **See diagram.**
- Paint the front of your shield with your own bold, clear design. It could be:
  - A simple, bright-coloured pattern, like a large cross
  - A monster to frighten your enemies! Many Normans painted a dragon on their shields
  - A picture of your castle – you are defending it after all
  - An image or crest to represent your family



**You've made your own Norman shield.**

### Creating a family crest

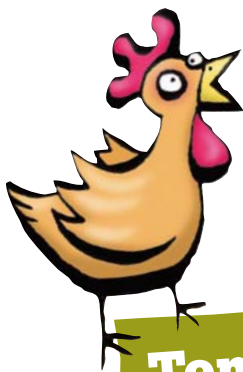
Some Norman shields were decorated with images of themselves or their 'tribe'; you can do the same to represent your family.

- Divide the front of your shield into four sections with paint.
- Choose four images that represent things that are important to your family – you may want to include a pet, your family name, an image of your house or something to represent your favourite hobbies (like football or reading).
- Draw one item in each of the four sections, first in pencil, then with paints.

**Now play our  
"Defend your  
castle" game**

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## Template

Plan the design for your shield



[bbc.co.uk/history](http://bbc.co.uk/history)



# Activity 4



## DEFEND YOUR CASTLE GAME

**Great for: a game for you and a friend**

**You will need:**

- A shield made out of cardboard (see activity 3 for instructions)
- At least three foam balls or screwed-up paper balls

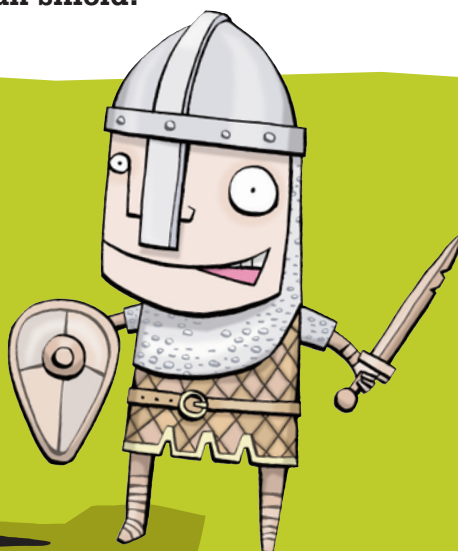
**Play the game:**

- One person is the Defender and one is the Attacker.
- The Defender stands in one spot with their shield. They are not allowed to step in any direction. But they are allowed to turn, twist, bend and reach.
- The Attacker can move anywhere around the Defender but mustn't get close enough to touch them.
- The Attacker has three balls to throw at the Defender to try to hit their legs, arms or body (but not head). If a ball bounces off, the Attacker can reuse it.
- The Defender must use their shield to stop the balls from hitting them.
- Once the Attacker scores three hits, the two players swap places.

Find castles to visit near you on our interactive map online – [bbc.co.uk/history/handsonhistory](http://bbc.co.uk/history/handsonhistory)



**You've defended your castle using your own Norman shield.**



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