

Explore Edinburgh Castle Life



Learner trail



Stop 1: Esplanade

For hundreds of years, people have stood where you stand waiting to enter Edinburgh Castle: knights planning attacks, queens ready to rule, prisoners fearing their fate – now you.

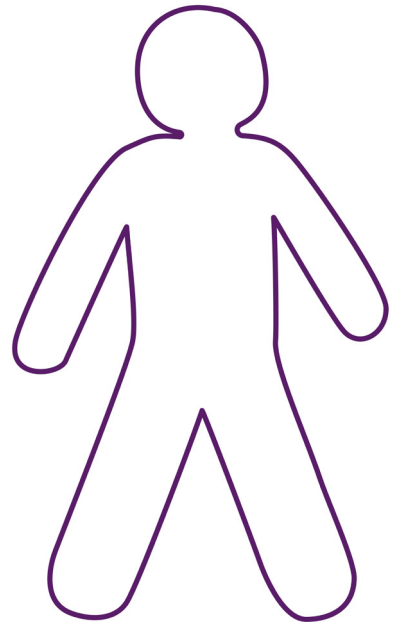


Challenge

All those visitors will have seen, heard, and felt different things. Take a moment to listen and look around you.

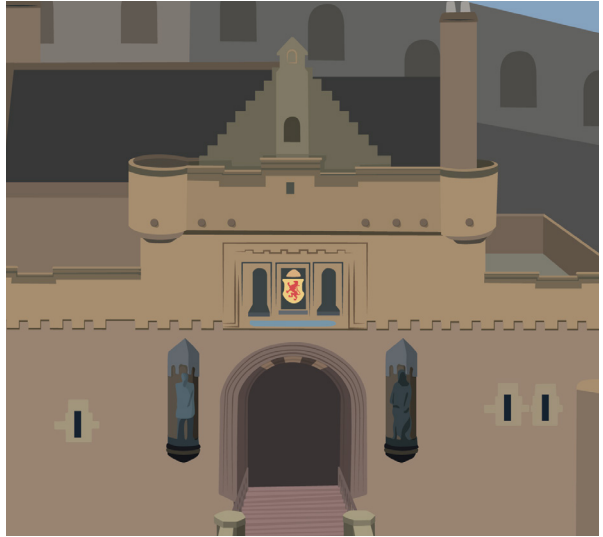
In and around the body shape to the right, write some words to describe the castle and how it makes you feel.

Think about what you can see, hear, feel, smell and any emotions you have.



Stop 2: Gatehouse

A gatehouse is the entrance to a castle; they were built to protect castles and to impress visitors. This gatehouse's design includes clues about who this castle belonged to.



Challenge

Look closely at the gatehouse, find the shield with an animal on it.

Write or draw the animal in the shield.

Underneath the shield is a **motto** (a saying that represents values or behaviour). It's written in Latin but in English it means "If you hit me, I'll hit you back harder".

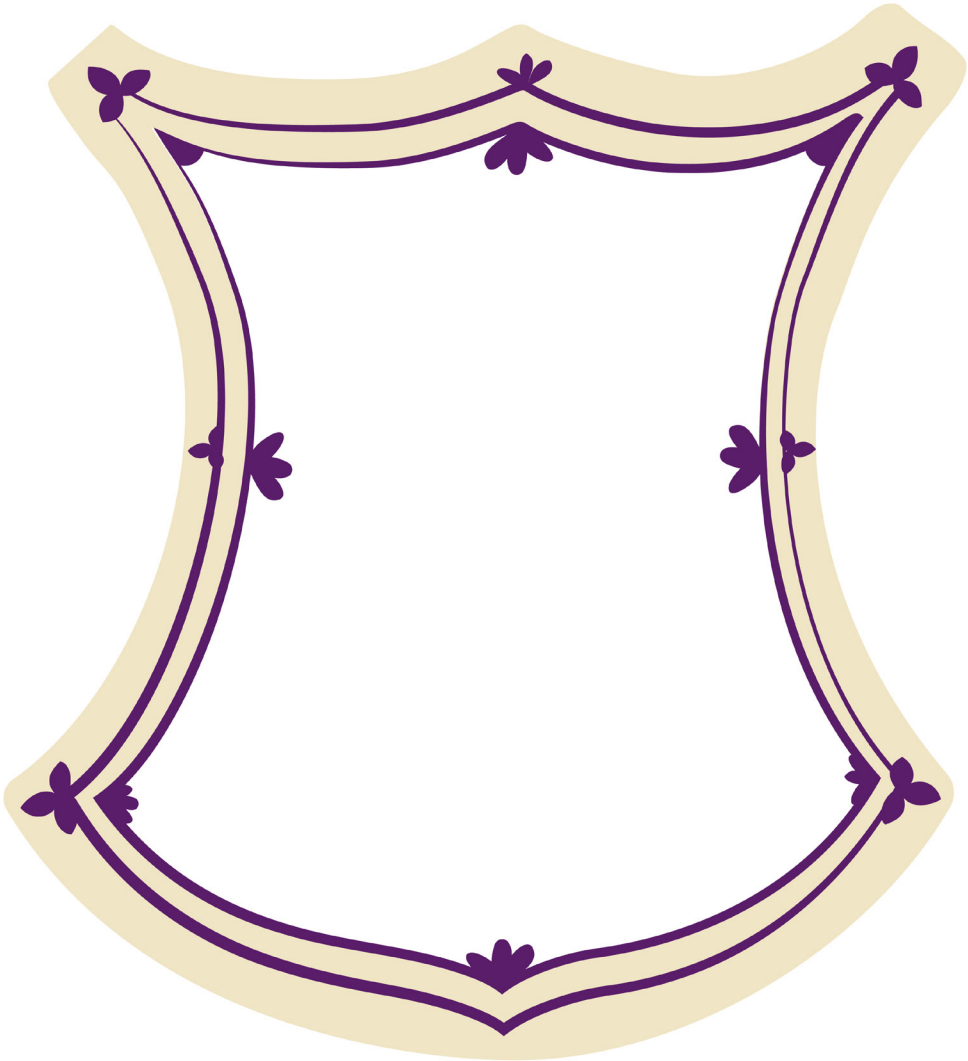
What motto would you pick for your family or yourself?



Reflect

Who do you think this castle belonged to?

Why do you think they chose that animal for their shield?



Stop 3: Defences

Edinburgh Castle was home to royals and riches that were important to keep safe. Enemies would always be looking for weak points to attack. The castle needed to have lots of defensive features.



Challenge

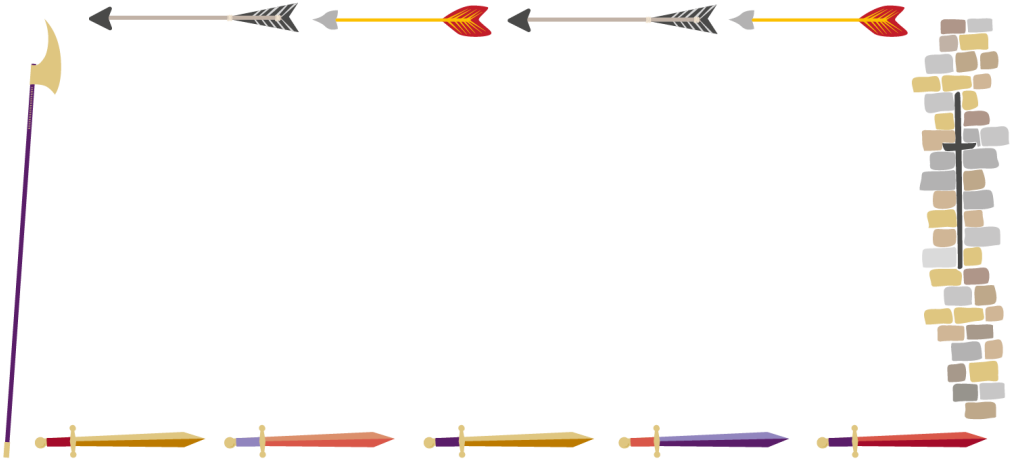
As you enter and explore the castle look for examples of **defensive features and weak points to attack**. Write or draw the ones you've spotted in this table.

defensive features

weak points to attack



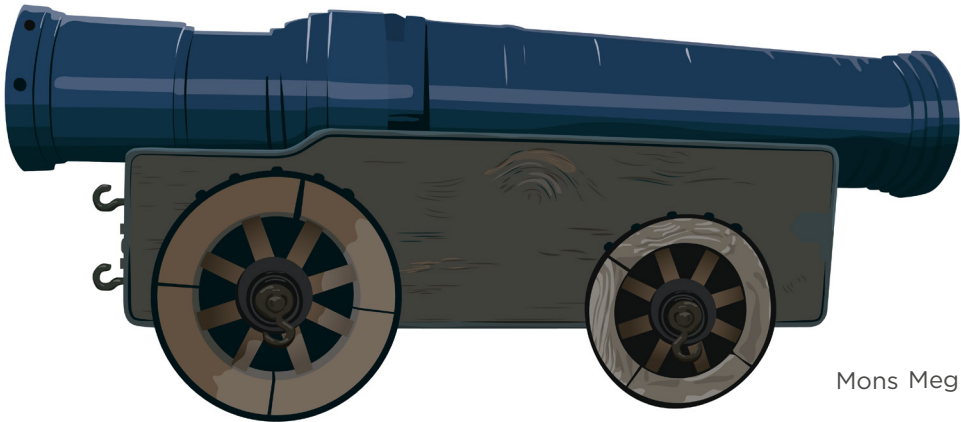
Do you think Edinburgh Castle is easier to attack or defend? Why?



 **Reflect**

Sieges were attacks on the castle and could last a long time. One siege at Edinburgh Castle lasted for two years.

How would it feel to be trapped inside the castle for so long whilst trying to keep enemies out?



Mons Meg

Stop 4: St Margaret's Chapel

Religion was a very important part of the life of kings and queens. They would have prayed regularly in chapels like this one or in their own rooms.



Challenge

This chapel is the oldest building in Edinburgh Castle.



Reflect

During one siege of the castle all the other buildings were destroyed but this chapel was left standing. This might be because religion was important to those destroying the castle. **What things, people or places would you like to protect because they are most special to you?**

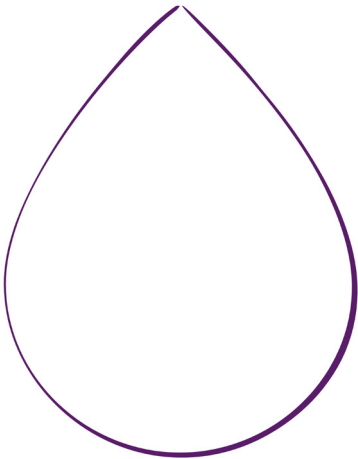
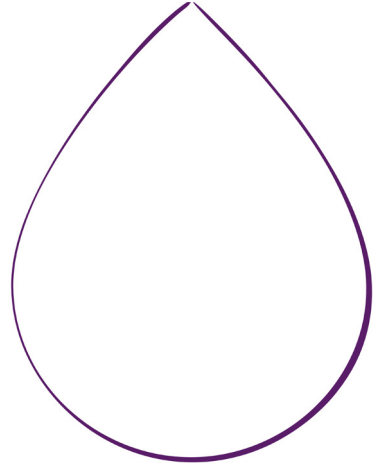
Stop 5: The Well

A well was vital to life in the castle. Water from this well would be carried all over the castle and used for all sorts of jobs, from washing clothes to filling huge cauldrons used for boiling meat and puddings.



Challenge

Water is so important to our lives. **Think about yesterday, what did you use water for?** Write or draw your answers in the first water drop.



Now think what water might have been used for in the past, write your thoughts in the second water drop.



Reflect

Imagine that instead of turning on a tap to get water you have to come and fetch a bucket from the well.

What would that be like?



Stop 6: The Palace

The Palace is where the King or Queen would live and work. The Palace had lots of rooms. Two of the most important were the Laich Hall (where people met the King or Queen) and the bedchamber (where they would have slept).



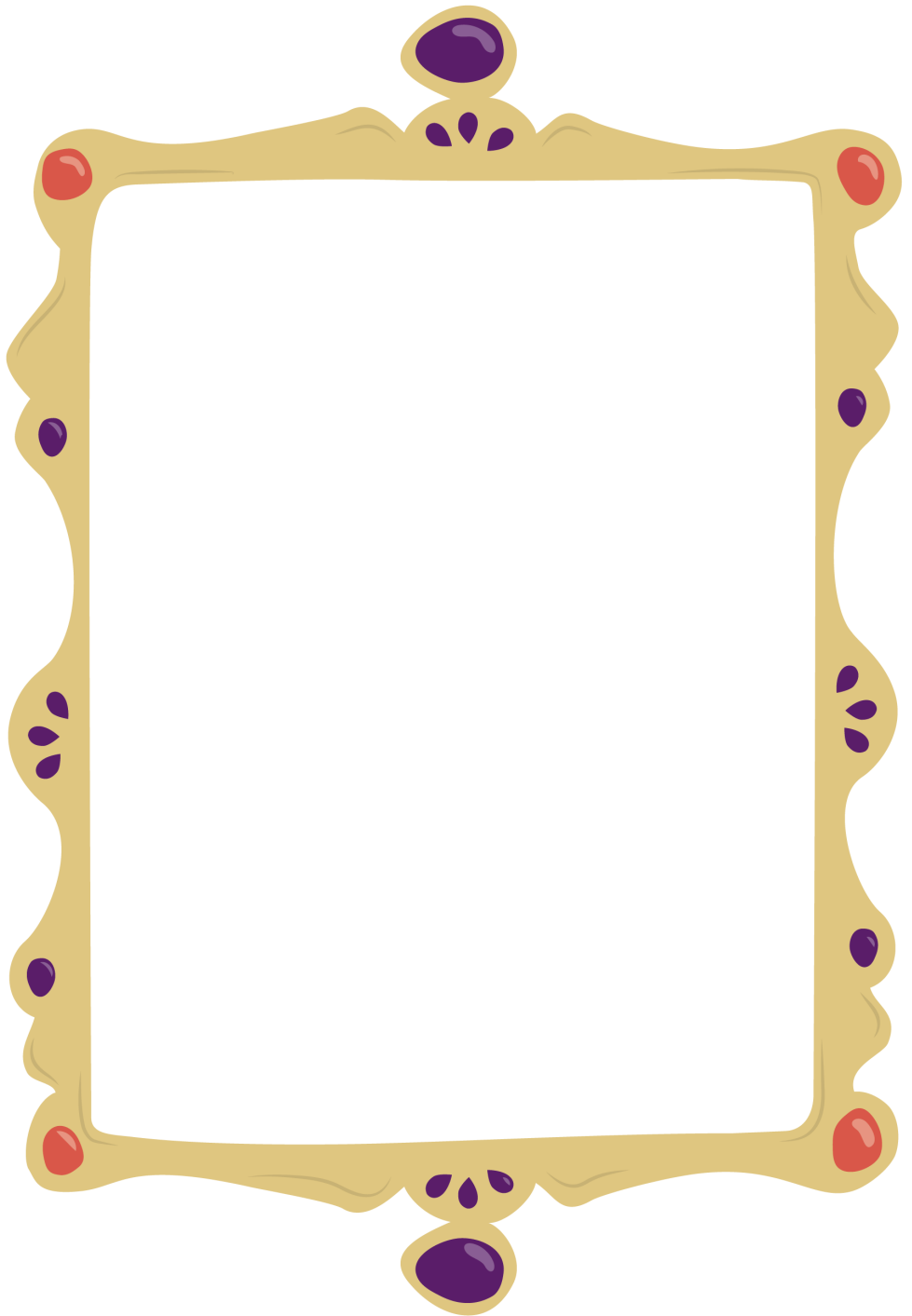
Challenge

Find the bedchamber. It is now an art gallery with lots of portraits. The bedchamber is where the royals would have dressed and got ready for the day.

Choose your favourite portrait and look at their clothing. **Use the frame to sketch it** or write a few words to describe it.

Now show your sketch or words to someone from your group without telling them which portrait - can they work out which portrait you have chosen?





Stop 6: The Palace (continued)

Explore the Palace and **find the Laich Hall**.

Chat to someone from your group and imagine you are meeting with the king or queen.

How would you greet them?



What do you want to ask them for?





How would you convince them to give it to you?



Reflection

What would it be like to wear the King or Queen's clothes? How would you feel? What things could you do or not do?



Stop 7: The Great Hall

The Great Hall would have been used for parties, feasts, dancing, and entertainment. There would have been long tables down the hall for eating all sorts of fancy foods, space for dancing and entertainers like musicians and jugglers.

Challenge

Look around the Great Hall. Imagine planning a party here. Jot down any reasons why the Great Hall would be a good place for a party and any reasons why it would be bad.





Reflect

Look at this image of a royal feast.

What do you imagine the Great Hall would have smelled and sounded like?



Good for a party because...

Bad for a party because...

Would you hold a party here?

Yes No

- 1: Esplanade p1
- 2: Gatehouse p2
- 3: Defences p4
- 4: St Margaret's Chapel p6
- 5: The Well p7
- 6: The Palace p8
- 7: The Great Hall p12





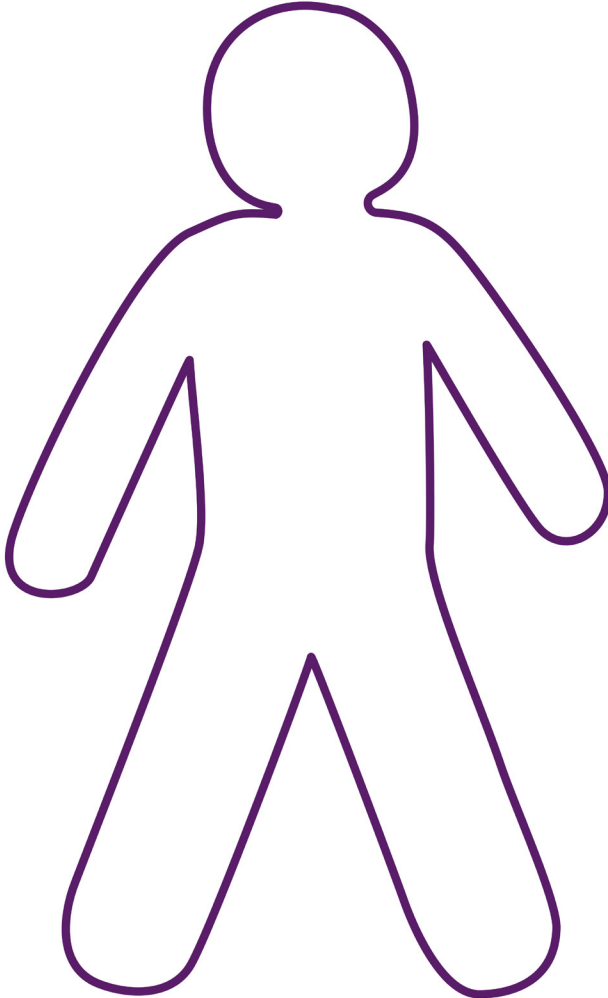
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Thank you for visiting!

Use this body shape to write down some words describing your thoughts or feelings about your visit.

Look back at your first thoughts and feelings, is anything different or the same?



EDINBURGH
CASTLE



Part of Historic
Environment
Scotland