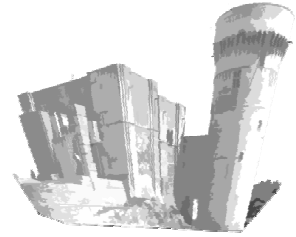


A TRICKY CASTLE QUIZ
TEACHERS EDITION

ANSWERS



This quiz is designed to introduce students with various key-terms of a medieval castle. Most of the items presented in the quiz can be seen during the tour of the keeps, so as to encourage the students to listen and look around. The terms are not always self-explanatory and are sometimes rather mysterious : the idea is to get the students to think about the meaning of each word in a light and entertaining way.

The teachers' edition of the quiz provides the answers to the questions, as well as more detailed definitions for each term in order to make the corrections more beneficial.

Finally, there is an additional question in the quiz : how many items can be seen during the tour of the keeps? The answer is 14 (these are specified in the answers below).

1) What is an arbalester?

a. A crossbow-man

The crossbow was a deadly weapon, so deadly in fact that the Church banned its use several times in the 11th and 12th century for fights between Christians. It could shoot bolts as far as 250m (270 yards) away. However, its weak point was its shot rate : 2 or 3 a minute only, compared to the longbow (10 or 12 arrows a minute).

2) What is a drum tower?

b. A tower that is round.

The Talbot Tower of the castle of Falaise is a drum tower. This is a "standardized" tower, built on a predefined model and a known cost (1500 pounds). It enhanced the castle's defences, and helped Philip Augustus, the king of France, in 1207, to display his newly gained power and to signal the end of the Anglo-Norman saga.

3) What is a dressed stone?

c. A stone worked into a smooth molded face and used to outline angles, windows, and doors.

The keeps of the castle of Falaise are built mainly with dressed *pierre de Caen* (Caen stone), a light creamy-yellow Jurassic limestone. This local stone was so famous that many castles and churches in England, following William's Conquest, were built with it, the most famous example being the Tower of London. As well, there are parts of the White House, in Washington, that are built with it

4) What is a belfry?

a. A wooden tower mounted on wheels or rollers so that attackers could fight their way across on to the towers or the wall-walks.

It is also called "siege tower". It was very heavy and cumbersome and was used as a last resort when all other assault techniques had failed. It was vulnerable to fire, so the attackers would cover its front with animal skins and pour cold water over them to keep them damp. There is a model on display inside the great keep of Falaise.

5) What is a buttress?

a. The thickening of a wall for strength and support.

Typical Anglo-Norman square keeps have flat buttresses around them, and Falaise is no exception. These architectural artefacts are clearly visible on the great keep, and are necessary especially for tall and thick walls.

6) What is chivalry?

c. The rules of polite and honourable behaviour that knights were supposed to follow.

These rules were designed in relation to fellow countrymen and Christians, to God and to women. The main virtues of a knight were : mercy, courage, valor, fairness, protection of the weak and the poor, and the servant-hood of the knight to his lord.

7) What are crenels?

b. The lower sections of battlements.

That is where the firing was done from. The opposite of a crenel is a merlon. Some merlons sported archer loops so that defenders could be sheltered and shoot at the same time.

8) What is an escalade?

b. The assault on a wall or a palisade with scaling ladders.

The idea was to climb on top of a curtain wall and fight off the defenders of a castle. The secret to a successful escalade was to climb as quickly as possible and in several spots simultaneously so as to split and weaken the defences of the opposing soldiers.

9) What is a forebuilding?

a. A projecting defensive work screening the entrance of keep from direct attack.

In early motte and bailey castles (wooden towers on top of earth mounds), the only access to the entrance of the square tower, always located at the first floor, was possible through a removable ladder. When stone keeps replaced the wooden towers, this protection evolved into fully defensive forebuildings. Castle Rising, in Norfolk, still features an original forebuilding.

10) What is a garderobe?

c. The latrine, or toilet, and a room used as a wardrobe.

Garderobes were medieval toilets in large public buildings and castles. They were often holes in the outer walls of these buildings which dropped into cess pits or moats. There is a garderobe adjacent to the great hall of the great keep of Falaise. Later, the term evolved and referred to a private room where the noble resident of a castle could spend time alone, reading or working.

11) What is a gong farmer?

c. The person who cleans the latrine.

Definitely not the most enviable job in a castle, but the gong farmer could sell his "harvest" as manure and make a small profit out of it.

12) What is herringbone masonry?

a. Stone or brick laid diagonally instead of horizontally.

There is a visible example of herringbone masonry inside the small keep of the castle of Falaise (inside the fireplace). This herringbone bond was decorative, and typical of the Anglo-Norman building technique, but was also very practical, as it could resist much better against heat.

13) What is a loophole?

b. A vertical slit for air, light, or shooting through.

Its narrow slit made it very difficult for an outsider to hit a defending soldier with an arrow. There are three kinds of loopholes: for bows (narrow slit), for crossbows (narrow slit with two larger holes in the middle) and for cannons (with a large opening at the bottom). The castle of Falaise features all of these.

14) What is machicolation?

b. Holes through which defenders could drop or shoot missiles vertically on attackers below.

There are machicolations on top of the drum tower of the castle of Falaise, with a 35m (115ft) drop below. The idea was to defend the base of the tower. Rocks, arrows, boiling water or hot sand, everything at hand was useful to ward off the enemy. Contrary to popular belief, hot oil was never used, as it was very expensive and was used for many other purposes (heating, lighting, insulation).

15) What is a motte?

a. An artificial or improved natural mound on which castle is built.

On the request of local lords, peasants would dig up a circular ditch and fill up the center with an earth mound. On top of it, a wooden tower would be built, completing the model of early castles of the 11th century, which were called "motte and bailey castles". Such a building can be seen on the Bayeux Tapestry. The castle of Falaise didn't require the digging of motte, as its rocky spur a more than enough to make it easy to defend.

16) What are murder holes?

c. The openings in the roofs of passageways through which missiles and liquids could be dropped onto attackers.

There is a murder hole visible inside the castle of Falaise : it can be found on the terrace linking the square keeps to the drum tower. Its target is the passageway between the small keep and the drum tower (visible as you look up just after the large bay leading toward the tower).

17) What is a palisade?

b. A wooden fence used for a fortification.

A palisade is an ancestor to stone fortifications, and was used commonly by Romans or Gauls in order to protect their forts. Sometimes, ditches fitted with wooden spikes were excavated before these fences.

18) What is a portcullis?

a. A heavy wooden or iron grille protecting an entrance that is raised and lowered by winches inside the gatehouse.

Each portcullis was mounted in vertical grooves in castle walls and could be raised or lowered quickly by means of chains or ropes attached to an internal winch. The word comes from the French « porte coulisse », meaning « sliding gate ».

19) What is a postern?

a. A small door or gate often hidden to allow defenders to enter and exit a castle without detection.

There is a postern visible in the castle of Falaise : it is located immediately on the left as the visitors exit the last room (the Lower Halls) of the tour and re-enter the forbuilding at ground level.

20) What is a quarrel?

a. An arrow for a crossbow.

Its name comes from *quadrum*, which is latin for “square”. The iron tip of a quarrel was indeed square.

21) What is a squire?

b. A trainee knight who served as an assistant to the knight.

This was the period when a future knight would learn all about manners, etiquette, horses or combat among other subjects. A squire was usually sent at age 7 to a famous nobleman, and would start off as a page, learning the essentials of chivalry.

22) What is a trebuchet?

a. A giant siege engine in the form of a boulder-firing catapult.

Trebuchets were fearsome machines, hurling stone balls to curtains walls and opening up breaches. They were however very costly to build, as the specialists of the matter, the “siege engineers”, were very expensive to hire. There is a model of a trebuchet on display inside the great keep of the castle of Falaise.

23) What is a turret?

b. A small tower

Those small towers were often built to watch over the surrounding area, and to send signals to other castles in sight.

24) What is a vault?

c. An arched roof usually of stone

Either plain or interconnected, these arches are typical of the Romanesque and Gothic styles. Some examples can be seen inside the palatial chapel of the great keep of Falaise.

25) What is a shell keep?

a. A great Anglo-Norman square keep

This model of keeps can be seen in many places in England and Normandy. The most famous example that comes to mind is of course the Tower of London and the castle of Falaise follows this architectural legacy. The ancestor of the shell keep is the motte and bailey castle.



Marking system :

► **Between 15 and 25 :**

Your days as a training squire are over, you are ready to be dubbed and become an accomplished knight.

► **Between 7 and 14 :**

Not bad at all, but it looks like you’ll need a little more practice before you know your way around a castle.

► **Between 0 and 6 :**

It’s a tough life living in a castle. Better luck next time!

Out of 25 questions, there are **14** items that can be seen during the tour.

Thank you for playing!