Castles



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What Is a Castle?



Castles are a type of home. The people who lived in castles were usually kings, queens or lords and their families.

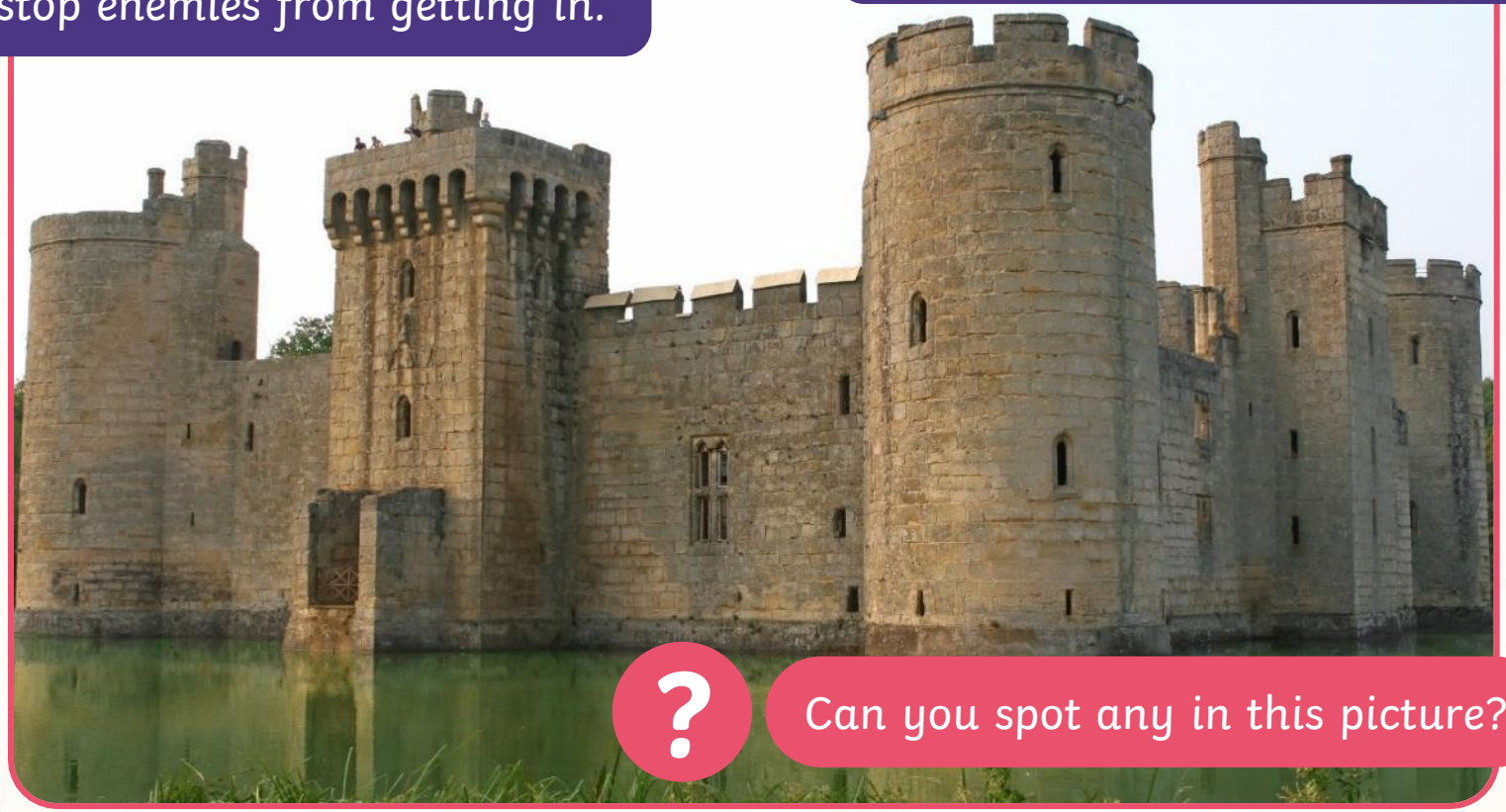
There would also be soldiers, cooks, cleaners and other people who lived inside and helped to look after and protect the king, queen or lord.

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Castles

Castles were designed to keep the people inside safe and to stop enemies from getting in.

Castles have many features to stop people from attacking.

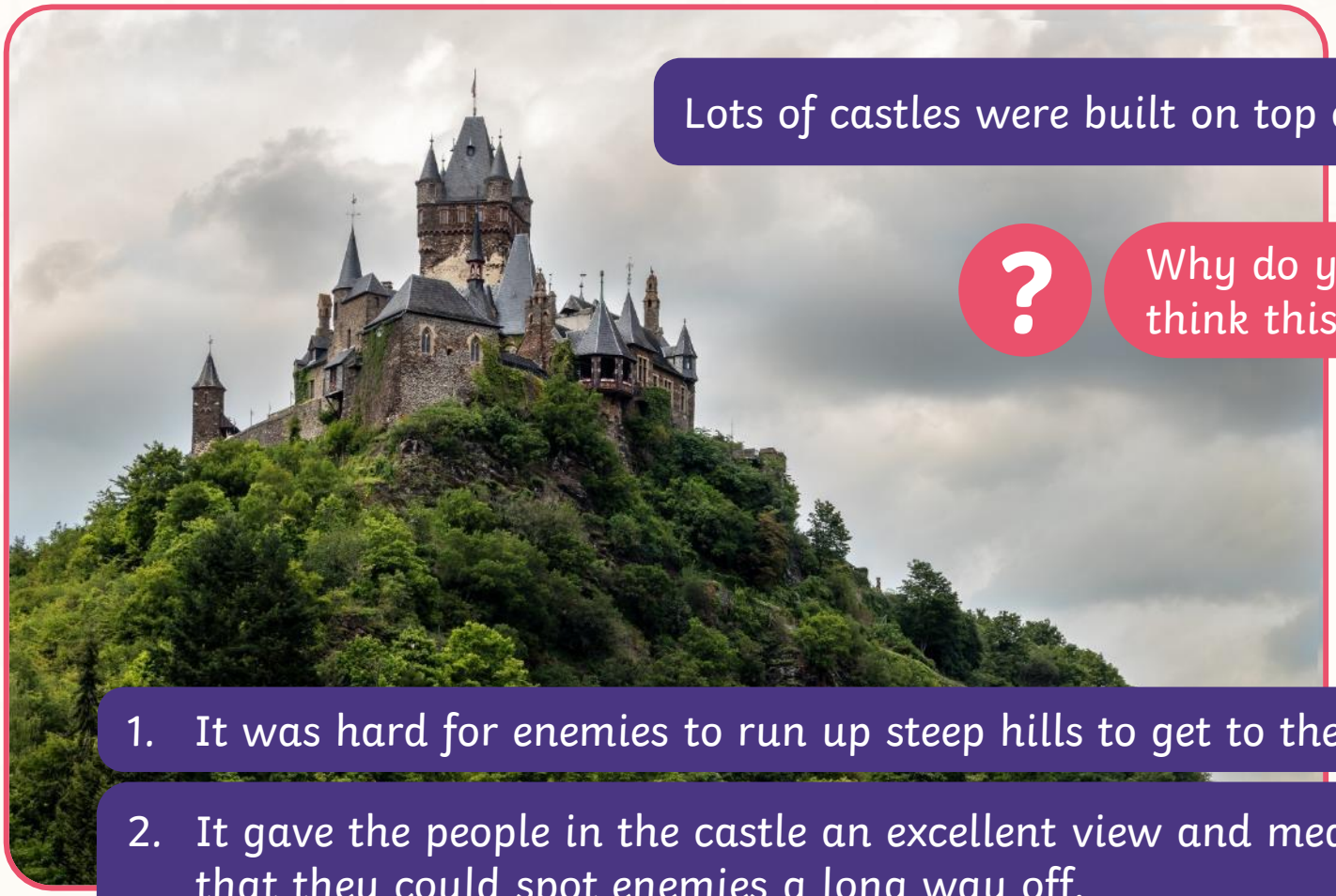


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Can you spot any in this picture?

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Location



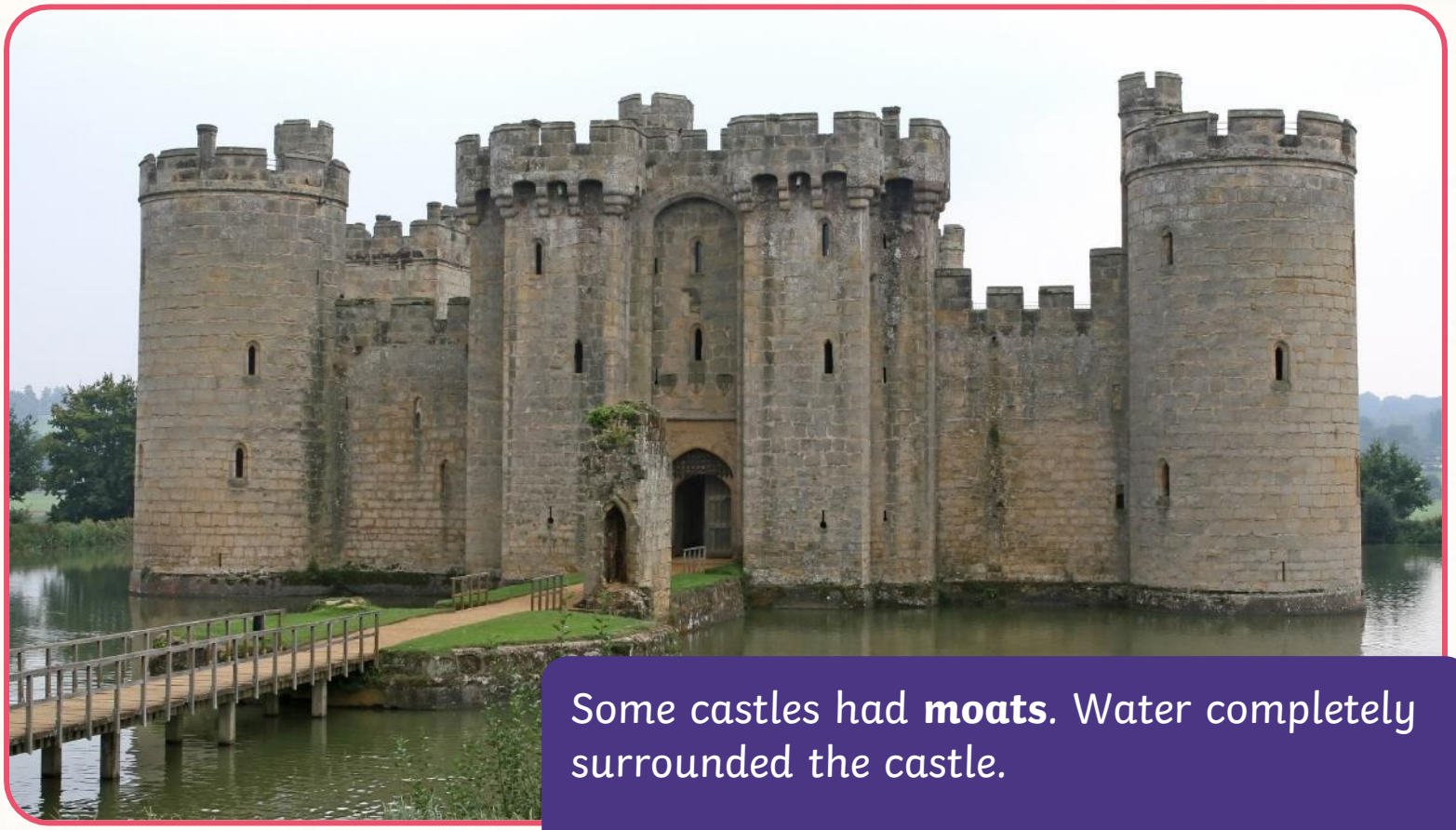
Lots of castles were built on top of hills.

? Why do you think this was?

1. It was hard for enemies to run up steep hills to get to the castle.
2. It gave the people in the castle an excellent view and meant that they could spot enemies a long way off.

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Moat



Some castles had **moats**. Water completely surrounded the castle.

This made it hard for people to attack it.

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Design

Some castles had flat walls and corners.



Some had rounded walls.



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Which design do you think was strongest?

Rounded towers without corners were less likely to collapse.

Square towers were more likely to fall if attackers dug away at the base.

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High Walls

It was important that the castle walls were very high.

This made it harder for attackers to climb over the walls.



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Can you see the tiny people in this photo? This shows us how tall the building is.

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Turrets

Turrets are small towers built on top of a tower or wall in a castle.

The turrets gave great views from different angles.



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How many turrets can you spot on this castle?

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Battlements

At the top of the castle walls were the **battlements**.

The battlements look a bit like teeth.



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Can you spot the battlements?

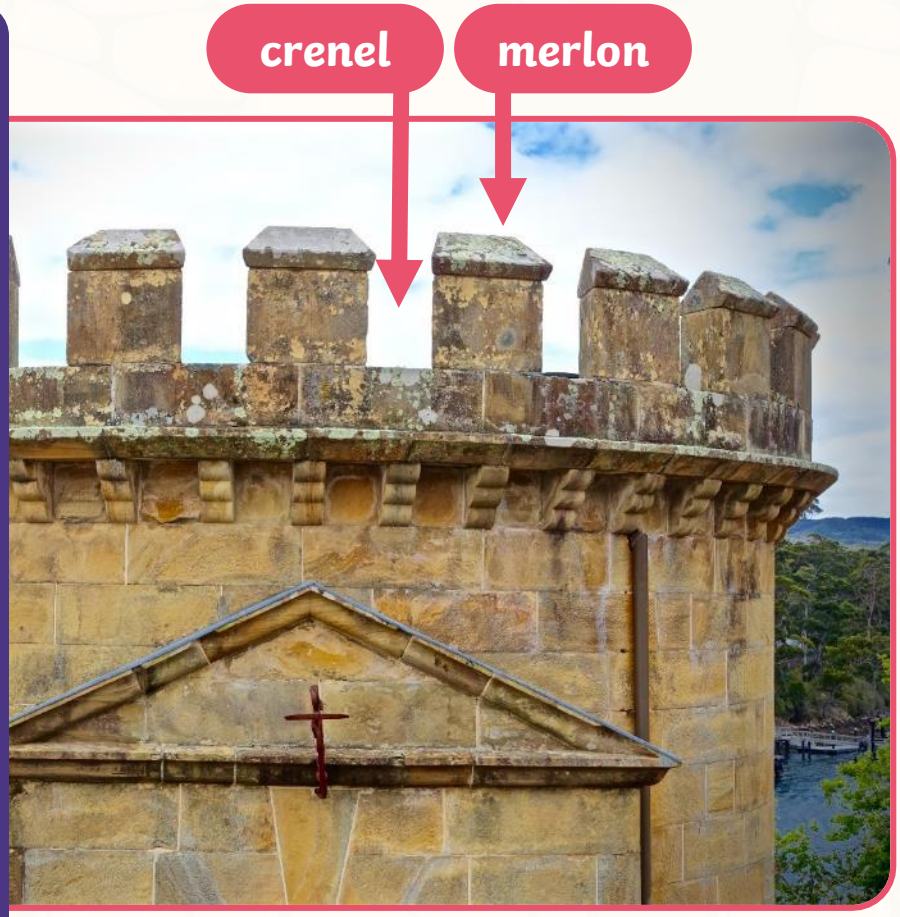
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Battlements

The soldiers stood behind the wall and tried to protect the people inside the castle.

They looked through the gaps (called **crenels**) and shot arrows at any attackers.

They shielded their bodies behind the raised sections (called **merlons**) to avoid being shot at themselves.



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Arrow Slits

Some castles also had **arrow slits**.

Soldiers could see and shoot arrows through these thin gaps in the wall, without getting shot.



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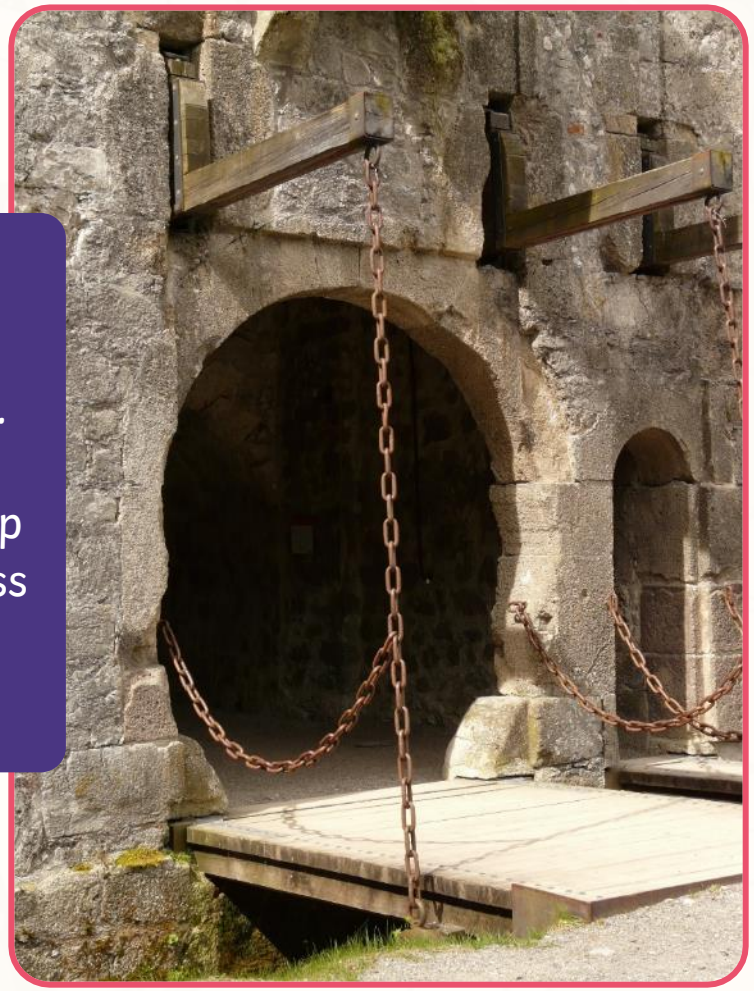
Can you spot the arrow slits?

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Drawbridge

Lots of castles had a bridge over the moat, that led to the entrance.

The **drawbridge** could be pulled up to stop enemies from getting across the water and reaching the castle.



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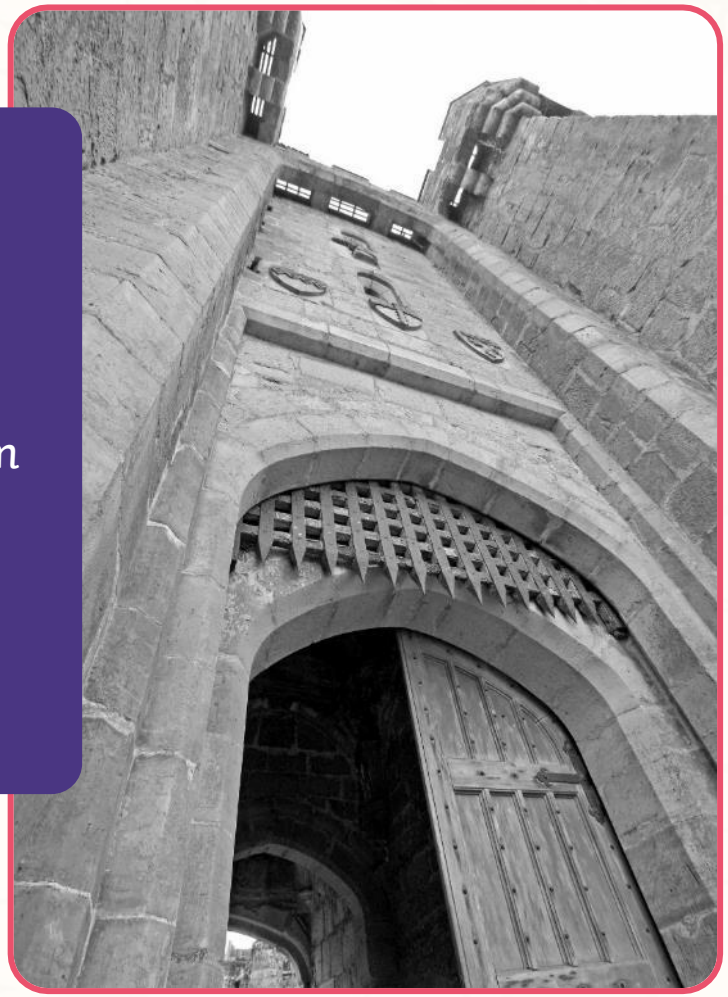
Portcullis

At the entrance to the castle, there was a **portcullis** covering the door.

This was made of metal or wood.

It was there to protect the door from being set on fire or being bashed in by enemies.

It could be lifted to let people in or out of the castle.



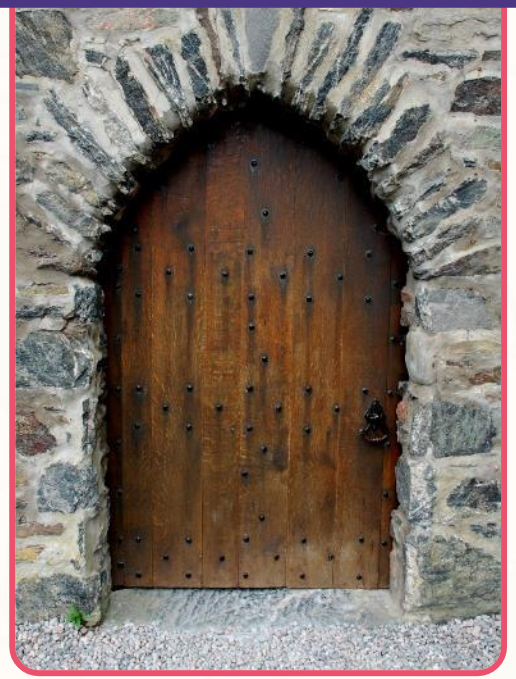
"Bodiam Castle portcullis and machicolations" by [exfordy] is licensed under CC BY 2.0

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Door

The entrance to the castle was protected by a thick, iron-studded wooden door.

It was big and strong so that enemies could not break the door down and enter the castle.

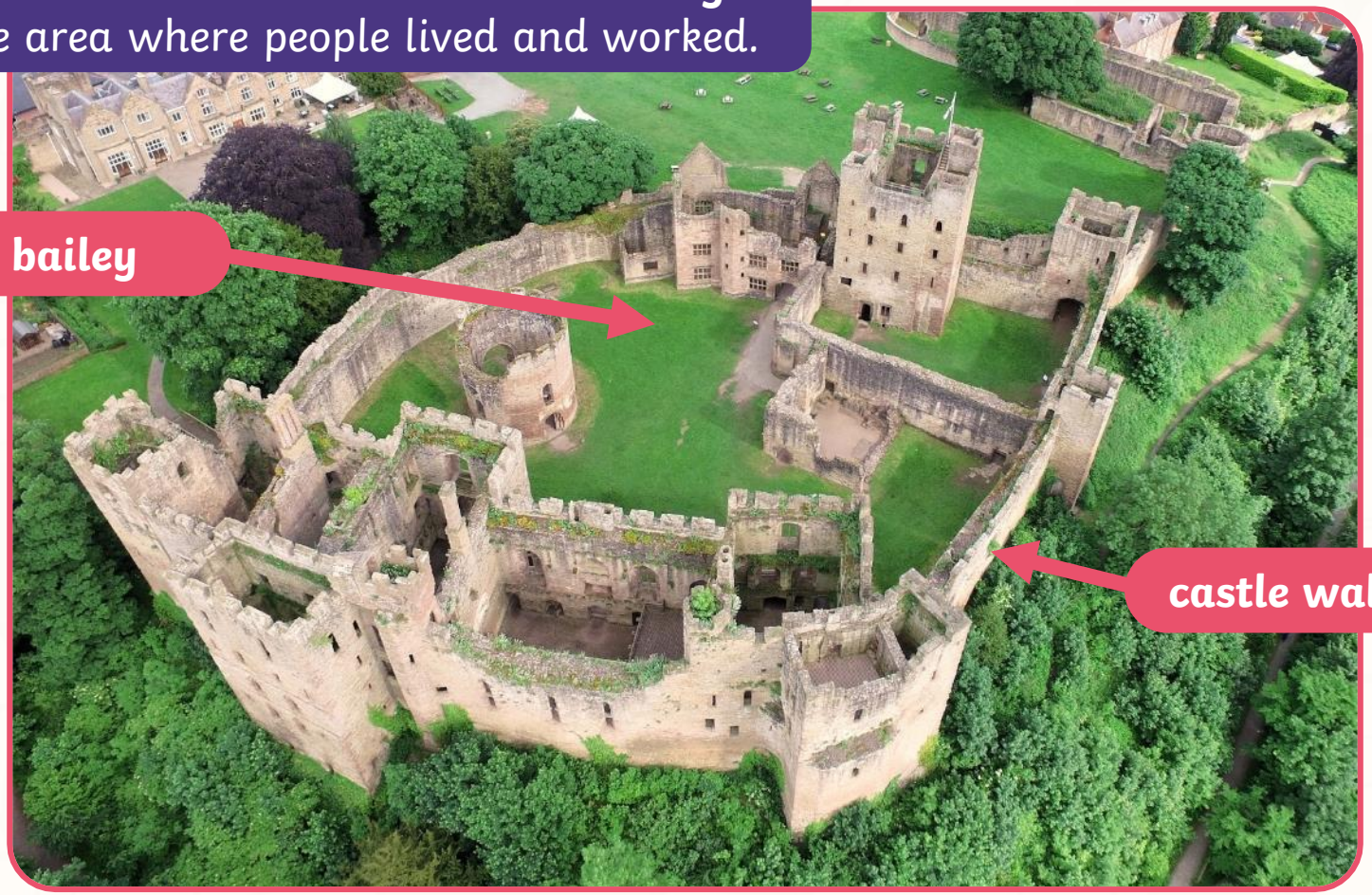




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Bailey

Inside the castles walls was the **bailey** – the area where people lived and worked.



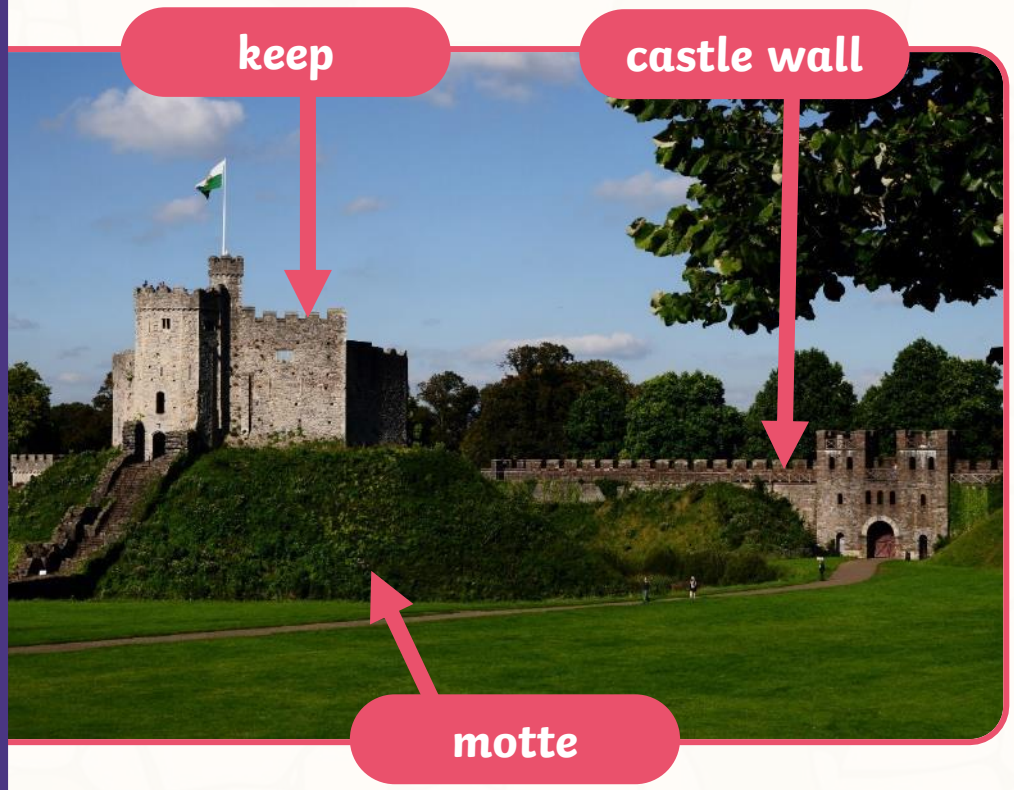
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Keep

Inside the castle walls was also the **keep**.

The keep was the safest part of the castle. The kings, queens or lords could hide here when the castle was in danger.

In some castles, the keep was built on a special mound called a **motte**.



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Castles Around the World



Lots of different castles were built in different countries around the world.

There are lots of different styles of castle.

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Neuschwanstein, Germany



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Eilean Donan Castle, Scotland



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Scaligero Castle, Italy



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Alnwick Castle, England



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Švihov Castle, Czechia



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Bobolice Castle, Poland



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Swallow's Nest, Crimea



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Would You Like to Live Here?



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Would you like to live in a castle? Why?

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