Why Medieval People Built Castles

KS2 HISTORY | MEDIEVAL PERIOD | Ages 9-12 | ⏰ 3 min read

Protection from Attack

During the **Middle Ages** (roughly **1066 to 1485** in England), life could be dangerous and uncertain. **Castles** were built as fortresses to protect people from attacks by enemies, rival nobles, and raiders. The thick stone walls, high towers, and narrow windows made castles very difficult to attack and easy to defend.

Think of it like a fort made of LEGO — you build strong walls around your toys to keep them safe from being knocked over or stolen.

Controlling Land and Power

Medieval **lords** and **kings** built castles to show they owned and controlled the surrounding land. A castle in the middle of a region was like planting a flag that said "this land is mine!" Castles helped nobles keep watch over their territory, collect taxes from people living nearby, and make sure nobody challenged their power.

Think of it like a security camera in your house — it helps you see what's happening and reminds everyone that you're in charge.

Places to Live and Work

Castles weren't just for fighting. They were also homes for nobles and their families. Inside, castles had **great halls** for feasts, kitchens, bedrooms, storage rooms, and dungeons for prisoners. Important meetings and decisions about the kingdom happened inside castle walls.

Symbols of Strength

Building a massive stone castle took years and cost enormous amounts of money. Only the richest and most powerful people could afford to build them. This made castles symbols of wealth and power — everyone in the area could see the castle and know that someone important lived there. The bigger and more impressive the castle, the more powerful the owner appeared to be.

Think of it like wearing a really cool, expensive jacket to school — everyone notices it and knows you have something special.

Why They're Not Built Anymore

As weapons improved and warfare changed, castles became less useful for protection. By the **1500s and 1600s**, cannons could break through castle walls, and armies fought differently. Today, castles are mostly **historical monuments** that remind us of medieval life and the power struggles of the past.

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