

France's new medieval castle takes shape

Deep in the forests of central France something totally unique is happening. A knight's castle is under construction. It's the vision of one man, Michel Guyot, whose idea was to build a complete 13th century castle by using only authentic tools and locally sourced materials. Every detail of the project is made as accurate as possible, even down to the clothes worn by the workers. If ropes are needed they are made on site; when stone is needed it needs to be quarried out of the ground etc. It's actually the first castle of its kind to be built for nearly 800 years. The Château de Guédelon, near the village of Saint-Fargeau in Burgundy, is probably the world's most unusual building site. It is an exercise in archaeology in reverse, **as it is discovery by building up, not by digging down**. The foundations were laid back in 1997. It is due to be completed in 2025, when it will be a full-sized castle with battlements and a moat and six towers. According to Monsieur Guyot it is based on the period of 1228.

There are 50 or so trained labourers who work in medieval style clothes building the castle, using only the building techniques and the materials of the Middle Ages. A committee of academic experts advise on what is mediievally correct. There is no electricity, power drills or cement mixers. Nor are there excavators, cranes, bulldozers or load bearing steel joists! Modern day health and safety meant the site had to develop a form of 13th-century wooden scaffolding that wasn't actually around then! Guédelon is an archaeological experiment. The chapel tower contains the first rib-vaulted roof to be made with purely medieval techniques for 600 years. Nearby a medieval village has sprung up with a wood-carver, a tile-maker, a rope maker and a weaver. There's even a forge and a mason's yard. All provide materials for the castle. Wooden rafts loaded with masonry are lifted to the battlements by rope pulleys driven by a worker in a wooden treadmill or "squirrel cage". Horses and carts deliver the stone and wood. Chicken and geese wander freely. The workers look like medieval peasants. The castle is open to visitors. In fact, the whole project is funded by them. Last year alone more than 300,000 came. Any visitor is bound to find their visit fascinating, as it's history in the making.

Category: History / France / Medieval castle

Level: Intermediate / Upper intermediate

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EXERCISES

1. Medieval Castles: Briefly, what three things do you know about medieval castles? Name one famous medieval person. Go round the room swapping details.

2. Geography: France: Where is France? What is its capital? What countries surround it? What seas surround it? Where is the area of Burgundy? Draw a map on the board then **look on Google maps** to help you.

3. Dictation: The teacher will read four to six lines of the article slowly and clearly. Students will write down what they hear. The teacher will repeat the passage slowly again. Self-correct your work from page one - filling in spaces and correcting mistakes. Be honest with yourself on the number of errors. Advise the teacher of your total number of errors. Less than five is very good. Ten is acceptable. Any more is room for improvement! More than twenty - we need to do some work!

4. Reading: The students should now read the article aloud, swapping readers every paragraph.

5. Vocabulary: Students should now look through the article and underline any vocabulary they do not know. Look in dictionaries. Discuss and help each other out. The teacher will go through and explain any unknown words or phrases.

6. The article: Students should look through the article with the teacher.

- a) What is the article about?
- b) What do you think about the article?

7. Let's draw a medieval castle: On the board/on paper draw a medieval castle. Include the following:-

Gatehouse	Courtyard
Great Tower/Towers	Battlements
Soldiers	Moat
Well	Arrow loops on walls / ladders / boiling oil
Great Hall	Guard room
Drawbridge	Chapel add your own features...

8. Let's think! Medieval trades! In pairs. Look at the different medieval trades listed. Think of three things that you know about each of them? Could you do any of these trades?

1) Stone masons /cutters	5) Basket-makers
2) Rope-maker	6) Tile-maker
3) Carpenters	7) Blacksmith
4) Carter	add you own medieval trades

The teacher will choose some pairs to discuss their findings in front of the class.

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9. Let's think! Medieval times 1: With your partner look at the following. Discuss each point. Think of three things about each.

1	Women/Men	5	Tapestries
2	Religion	6	Music
3	Castles	7	Housing
4	Entertainment	8	Food

The teacher will choose some pairs to discuss their findings in front of the class.

10. Let's think! Medieval times 2: With your partner look at the following. Discuss each point. Think of three things about each.

1	Jousting - lances	5	Battering ram
2	Knights	6	Torture
3	Swords/pikes	7	Horse riding
4	Shields	8	Weapons – arrows/crossbow

The teacher will choose some pairs to discuss their findings in front of the class.

11. Let's talk! In a pub: *In pairs:* Imagine you are in a pub. The conversation gets onto **castles you have visited**. Discuss. 5-minutes.

12. Let's do 'The Article Quiz': Have the students quiz each other in pairs. They score a point for each correct answer and half a point each time they have to look at the article for help. See who can get the highest score!

Student A

- 1) How many labourers are there building the castle?
- 2) How is the castle being funded?
- 3) What is the name of the castle?
- 4) Name three of the medieval trades.
- 5) Name three of the modern things not allowed.

Student B

- 1) What is a 'squirrel cage'?
- 2) What do horses and carts do?
- 3) How many visitors came to the castle last year?
- 4) What is special about the chapel?
- 5) What has sprung up near the castle?

13. A medieval feast: In pairs/groups. Each person chooses to be one of the following people. There is going to be a large medieval banquet next week in the Great Hall of the castle hosted by the King in honour of his daughter getting married to a fine prince. Preparations are underway. Create a short story about it. Tell it to your partner/group. Try to make it interesting! Students try to interlink or interact student storylines!

1	Medieval King	3	Cook in the kitchen
2	Princess awaiting marriage	4	Peasant

The teacher will choose some pairs to tell their stories in front of the class.

14. Let's write an e-mail: Write and send a 200 word e-mail to your teacher about: **Medieval castles**. Your e-mail can be read out in class.

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DISCUSSION

Student A questions

- 1) Did the headline make you want to read the article?
- 2) What three things do you know about the medieval period (1200-1450)?
- 3) What three bits of advice would you offer Monsieur Guyot?
- 4) How would you go to a medieval banquet?
- 5) How do you think water was used in medieval times?
- 6) Describe three things about a medieval castle's bedrooms, bathrooms and toilets.
- 7) Describe three things you might see in a Great Hall.
- 8) Describe three things you might see in a courtyard.
- 9) Why do you think the castle is so popular?
- 10) Would you like to visit the castle? Why? Why not?

Student B questions

- 1) What do you think about what you read?
- 2) Name three medieval foods.
- 3) Name three medieval Kings and Queens.
- 4) What's the difference between the term *Middle Ages* and *Medieval Period*?
- 5) Would you like to build a castle? Why? Why not?
- 6) As a kid did you used to build sandcastles?
- 7) Describe three things you might see in a medieval kitchen.
- 8) Compare three things today with how it was in the medieval period.
- 9) Describe three things you might see from the top of a tower in a castle.
- 10) Did you like this discussion?

SPEAKING

Let's debate! Medieval people

Allow 10-15 minutes – As a class / small groups / pairs / 1 to 1

Discuss the following people:-

Joan of Arc	Richard the Lionhearted
Catharine of Aragon	Marco Polo
Robin Hood	William Tell
Robert the Bruce	Martin Luther
Thomas Becket	King Louis IX of France
Dracula	King Arthur
Robin Hood	King John
Lancelot	

add your own medieval famous people and discuss...

The teacher can moderate the session.

GAP FILL: READING

Put the words into the gaps in the text.

Deep in the forests of central France something totally (1)_____ is happening. A (2)_____’s castle is under construction. It’s the vision of one man, Michel Guyot, whose idea was to build a complete 13th century castle by using only authentic tools and locally sourced materials. Every detail of the project is made as accurate as possible, even down to the clothes worn by the workers. If ropes are needed they are made on site; when stone is needed it needs to be quarried out of the ground etc. It’s actually the first (3)_____ of its kind to be built for nearly 800 years. The Château de Guédelon, near the village of Saint-Fargeau in Burgundy, is probably the world’s most unusual building site. It is an exercise in archaeology in reverse, as it is discovery by building up, not by digging down. The (4)_____ were laid back in 1997. It is due to be completed in 2025, when it will be a full-sized castle with (5)_____ and a (6)_____ and six (7)_____. According to Monsieur Guyot it is based on the (8)_____ of 1228.

There are 50 or so trained labourers who work in (1)_____ style clothes building the castle, using only the building techniques and the materials of the Middle Ages. A committee of academic experts advise on what is mediievally correct. There is no electricity, power drills or cement mixers. Nor are there excavators, cranes, bulldozers or load bearing steel joists! Modern day health and safety meant the site had to develop a form of 13th-century wooden scaffolding that wasn’t actually around then! Guédelon is an archaeological experiment. The chapel tower contains the first rib-vaulted roof to be made with purely medieval techniques for 600 years. Nearby a medieval village has sprung up with a wood-carver, a tile-maker, a rope maker and a (2)_____. There’s even a (3)_____ and a mason’s yard. All provide materials for the castle. Wooden rafts loaded with (4)_____ are lifted to the battlements by rope pulleys driven by a worker in a wooden (5)_____ or “squirrel cage”. Horses and (6)_____ deliver the stone and wood. Chicken and geese wander freely. The workers look like medieval (7)_____. The castle is open to visitors. In fact, the whole project is funded by them. Last year alone more than 300,000 came. Any visitor is bound to find their visit fascinating, as it’s (8)_____ in the making.

moat

battlements

castle

unique

towers

foundations

period

knight

peasants

carts

weaver

forge

history

treadmill

masonry

medieval

GAP FILL: LISTENING

Listen and fill in the spaces.

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GRAMMAR

Put the words into the gaps in the text.

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SPELLING TEST

The teacher will ask the class individually to spell the following words that are in the article. Afterwards, check your answers with your teacher, using the following ratings: **Pass = 12, Good = 15, Very good = 18, Excellent = 20**

1	weaver	11	masonry
2	peasants	12	treadmill
3	construction	13	academic
4	archaeology	14	foundations
5	moat	15	techniques
6	unique	16	actually
7	knight	17	medieval
8	accurate	18	squirrel
9	committee	19	fascinating
10	scaffolding	20	battlements

LINKS

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/10440300>

<http://www.apartmenttherapy.com/sf/building-a-brand-new-medieval-castle-in-france-120977>

<http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/medieval-history-in-the-making-2034074.html>

<http://www.guedelon.fr/>

ANSWERS

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