



II Castles

A castle is a fortified building or stronghold. Generally it was the residence of the king or lord of the territory in which stood. Castles became popular in Europe from the 9th century.

In the Middle Ages, noblemen and knights lived in castles. They lived with servants and soldiers. Big castles had courtyards and a church. Knights protected the peasants that lived in the villages close to the castle. The peasants worked the lands and produced food for the people in the castle. They were very poor.

Originally castles were made of wood, but they were too easy to burn down. By the 11th century, most castles were built of stone. There were big **walls** surrounding the castle and usually there was a **moat** filled with water to stop enemies from entering the castle, which was crossed by a **drawbridge** that could be raised from inside. The gateway itself was heavily protected and often defended by a watchtower. A **gatehouse**¹ was built into the wall. There were **towers** by the castle walls, and sometimes the lord of the castle kept prisoners in them. Soldiers stood guard on the castle walls. Castles were usually built on top of a hill. This meant that the guards could see attackers approaching more easily.

Today there are still hundreds of castles around Europe and a lot of them are open to the public.

1. Answer the following wh-questions

- Who lives in the castle? _____
- Where are the prisoners? _____
- Where are the soldiers? _____
- Who works in the castle? _____

2. Re-arrange the words to make a new word connected with a castle.

(An anagram is a word made by using letters of another word in a different order)

ATOM	
HOLD STRONG	
RAIN ROPES	
GET A HOUSE!	
BRIGADE WARD	
WROTE	

¹ A house connected or associated with a gate.

3. Complete the sentences

gatehouse moats drawbridge wall towers peasants

The only way to cross a moat was on the _____.

_____ were filled with water to prevent enemies from coming into the castle.

A _____ was built into the wall.

_____ allowed people to keep watch outside the castles walls.

The _____ surrounding the castles were very strong.

The _____ worked the lands near to the castle.

4. True/false sentences

- A castle is a large fortified building.
- Peasants lived in castles.
- Big walls and a moat surrounded castles in the Middle Ages.
- Small castles had a church.
- A drawbridge is a bridge over water that may be raised.

5. Write 100 words about a castle. ² Use an encyclopaedia or the Internet.

6. Draw a castle and write the parts of a castle.

² Online activities

Visit a castle http://www.nationalgeographic.com/castles/enter_castle.html

Castle's virtual visit: <http://www.kidsonthenet.com/castle/view.html>

http://www.kidsonthenet.com/teachers/downloads/Y4t1obj14experiencepoems1_as.doc

To draw a castle <http://www.schoolsliaison.org.uk/2004/weoley/resources/reconstruction.htm>

Castle' attack <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/nova/lostempires/trebuchet/race.html>

Describe a castle: <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/nova/lostempires/trebuchet/destroy.html>



Mora d'Ebre's castle

Mora d'Ebre's castle is located in the highest part of the historical centre of the village. It has good views of the beautiful landscape and the Ebro River.

From 714 AD onwards the Ebro River became a natural frontier between Muslims and Franks and Mora d'Ebre castle formed part of the Muslim strongholds' line on the right side of the Ebro's riverbank. **Since** 799 Charlemagne made his first attempts to conquer the Moors, but it was only later, in 1153, that Barcelona's Count, Ramon Berenguer IV, and his army could get hold of the castle. About a century before, the knight Mir Gilavert who was the grandson of Count II Borrell, not only failed in the conquest of the Muslim fortification but he also died in the attack (circa 1060).

From 1174 to 1837, Mora d'Ebre area and the castle were part of a big fief known as the Entença's Barony. During this period there were several Lords in the Barony (Castellvell, Subirats, Sant Marti, Entença, Prades, Cardona and Medinacelli) who had civil, criminal, fiscal and political jurisdiction of the territory until the Mendizabal's *desamortization* or disentanglement* in the 19th century.
[*sale of the Church and the Noble lands]

1. Vocabulary work

fief

stronghold

jurisdiction

riverbank

2. Answer the following questions.

Who did the castle belong to in 714 AD? _____

Who tried to conquer the Moors and take the castle? _____

What happened in 1153? _____

What happened when Mir Gilavert tried to attack the castle? _____

For how long did the Lords in the Barony of Entença have control over the castle? _____

3. Solve the following anagrams which appear in the text.

act sale _____

fife _____

rooms _____

sand palace _____

bean carol _____



1. Castle in Mora d'Ebre. (Top right).

4. Look at the map and make questions to your partner. Follow the examples.³

- Where is Mora d'Ebre? Mora d'Ebre is in the north east of the **Califate** of Cordoba.
- Where is the March of Spain? It is in the north east of Spain.
- Is Leon's Kingdom in the south of Spain? No, it isn't. It is in the northwest of Spain.

- a) _____
- b) _____
- c) _____
- d) _____
- e) _____
- f) _____
- g) _____
- h) _____

³ <http://www.euratlas.com>
http://www.euratlas.com/travel_time/europe_south_west_1000.html



Miravet's castle

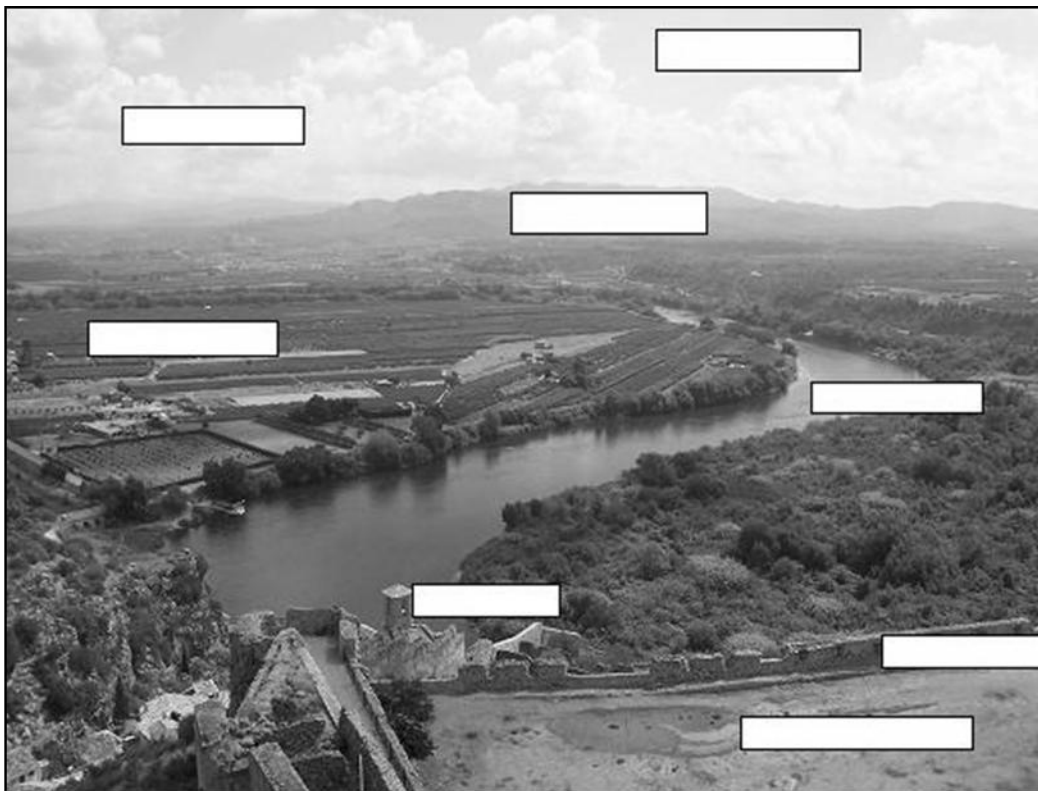
The castle of Miravet (Tarragona) stands on the top of a hill next to the Ebro River. It was built in 1153 on an old Muslim fortress. Ramon Berenguer IV, count of Barcelona, took this Muslim stronghold from the Moors. Once he held the fortress he gave it to the **order of Templars**, because they had fought together in the conquest.

The Miravet fortress became an extraordinary castle, inhabited by knights that prayed, worked and fought for Christ. There was a main monk who ruled not only the castle but also the area nearby which was called a **dominion** or **command**.

The Miravet castle was an important place as some important meetings were held in it. Miravet Templars knights helped in the conquest of the kingdom of Valencia and guarded vital documents and treasures from the order itself and from the kings.

In 1307, Templars were persecuted in Europe, but Miravet monks wouldn't give up at first. In the end they surrendered without any violence. In Catalonia the castle and the Templars' belongings went to the Hospital order.

1. Fill in the blanks.



1. Ebro river's sight from Miravet's castle.

2. Fill in the missing letter to complete the word.

ca__tle

com__and

mon__s

or__er

ru__ed

hil__s

for__ress

stron__hold

so__dier

do__inion

cou__t

king__om

3. Read the text and answer the questions.

1. Where is Miravet's castle?

2. What is the name of the river next to the castle?

3. Where was it built?

4. When was it built?

5. What is the name of the monks that lived in it?

6. For how many years did the Templars rule the lands near the castle?

7. What is the meaning of the word *order*?

8. Can you name other orders' names?

4. Fill in the grid with the irregular verbs from the text.

Present	Past	Past participle	Meaning
be			
become			
build			
fight			
give			
go			
hold			
take			
stand			

5. Find the synonyms.

give up _____

fortress _____

muslim _____

dominion _____