

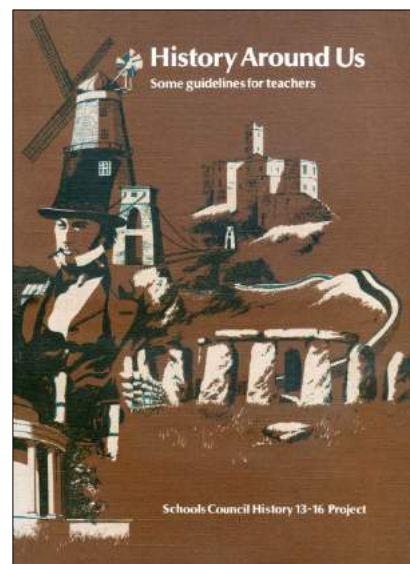
HISTORY AROUND US: Rochester Castle

Part 1: GUIDANCE

History Around Us has been a part of SHP courses since the beginning of the then Schools Council History 13-16 Project in the early 1970s. At the time this study, lasting approximately 10-12 weeks, was innovatory for a public History examination course in several ways:

- it emphasised the importance of physical remains of the past in the local environment as sources of historical evidence
- central to the study was a visit to an historic site chosen by teachers
- due to the local nature of its content there were no textbooks for this part of the course ; teachers had to find their own resources and suitable teaching materials
- pupils' work was assessed by coursework rather than examination

Today, over forty years later, the influence of History Around Us can be seen in all of the 2016 GCSE History specifications. Most of them contain a study of the 'Historic Environment', usually tied to one of the other units, but the site is chosen by the examination board and, in most cases, changed annually. Only the OCR B specification allows teachers to choose the site to be studied (subject to OCR approval – see pages 16-17 of the specification). All the new GCSE courses must conform to the new content and assessment objectives issued by the DfE in June 2013 ; they no longer allow coursework in GCSE History examinations so History Around Us is now an examined part of the course (worth 20% of the OCR B course).



'HISTORY AROUND US: SOME GUIDELINES FOR TEACHERS' was published by Holmes McDougall in 1976. Now long out of print, it provided detailed advice and recommended useful resources for teachers.

This case study for History Around Us focuses on Rochester Castle in Kent. It is based on many years of teaching experience but reflects the requirements of the new 2016 OCR B specification. Its approaches can easily be adapted for other castles and other types of historic site. It consists of three parts:

1. **Guidance** (this document) : detailed advice in five 'steps' for planning your History Around Us course
2. **Activity booklet** : a series of activities for students to work through during their site visit
3. **Sources and interpretations** : a selection of sources and interpretations for follow up work in the classroom

What makes a good site for History Around Us?

When planning your History Around Us course your choice of site is crucial. Will it engage your students as well as fulfil the requirement of the examination board?

Rochester Castle makes a good site for History Around Us because:

- it is a big enough site but not too big. It takes about 2 hours to examine the whole site fully. Some sites, however, are just too big and complex to be studied in a day visit and are too confusing for students; in such cases it would be wiser to concentrate on just one part or parts of the site.
- it is in a ruined condition, for example the floors and roof of the keep have not survived, and there are remains dating from different periods. This provides students with plenty of puzzles to explore during their visit. Some sites have been so fully restored or heavily interpreted for visitors that it is difficult to students to see original parts of the building.
- it has a fascinating recorded history ; there were no less than three major sieges of Rochester Castle during the Middle Ages reflecting its strategic importance at the time
- there are plenty of different kinds of sources and interpretations available to help students investigate aspects of the site's history that cannot be told simply from the visible remains (see **Part 3 Sources and Interpretations**)
- it can be studied with any of the other OCR B Depth Studies ; although there is a link with The Norman Conquest, 1065–1087, there is no duplication of content because most of the castle's history is between c1100 and 1500. For further guidance see <http://www.ocr.org.uk/Images/314738-guide-to-avoiding-site-study-overlap.pdf> (note that the first castle is in fact Kenilworth not Rochester!)
- it is an English Heritage site so pre-booked school visits are free. A guidebook and Teachers' Handbook, are available ; the Teachers' Handbook is downloadable from here : <https://www.tes.com/teaching-resource/rochester-castle-teacher-s-handbook-6305991> In addition there are several useful images of Rochester Castle in the Historic England archive : <http://archive.historicengland.org.uk/>

Step 1: Introducing the course

One way of introducing the course is to make a collection of photographs of some well known historic sites; include several types from different periods. Ask your students to sort them into different types and explain their choice of categories; they might categorise them by type (churches, country houses, castles etc), by function (religious, domestic, military etc) or time period. Ask them to identify the castles in the collection; this is not as simple as it seems – for example, Maiden Castle in Dorset is not a castle but the Tower of London is, even though it isn't called 'London Castle'! You could include a picture of a Disneyworld 'castle' to illustrate popular, romanticised views of a castle.

Take this a step further by asking them to define what a castle is – it is not just an old building! You could provide them with some brief historical information about each castle to help them reach a more accurate definition; they might notice, for example, that:

- most castles were built in, or shortly after, 1066 ; so there is a connection with the Norman Conquest
- they were built by Norman lords both as defensive strongholds and places to live ; this dual function is important as students will find out later.

NOTE: that for the purpose of the remainder of these materials, a castle is defined as 'the fortified residence of a medieval lord'. Iron Age hill-forts, Roman forts and later fortifications are therefore **not** included.

Step 2: The general development of castles

Starting the unit with a short taught course about the general development of castles will provide students with some essential historical context for their site visit and subsequent follow up work. For example, it will help them to:

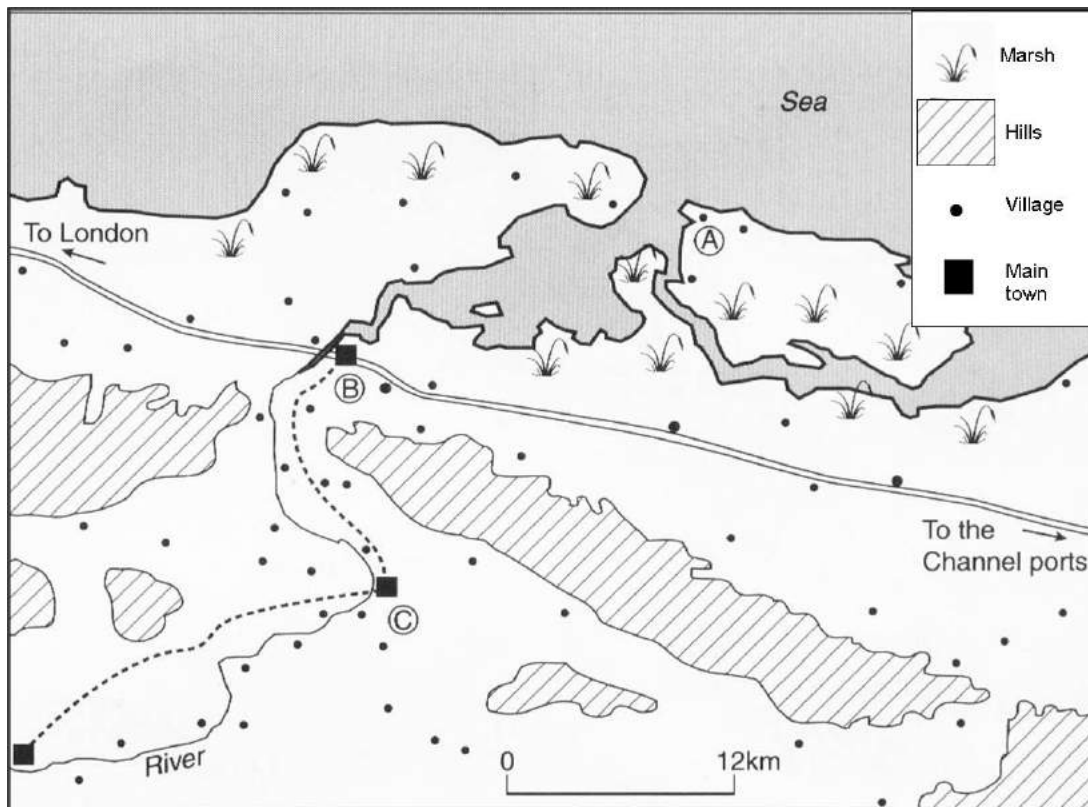
- know which features to look for during their visit
- identify typical and atypical features
- identify when different parts of the castle were built
- reach overall conclusions about the typicality of the castle and its history

Try to cover, in approximately 6-8 lessons, each of the following:

- | | |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| • The Norman Conquest and the building of Motte and Bailey Castles, c 1066-80 | Norman methods of controlling the Saxon population, the main features and temporary nature of Motte and Bailey castles, factors involved in the siting of castles (see the activity on page 4), parts of Motte and Bailey castles likely to remain today |
| • Norman Stone Castles, c 1080 - 1200 | The building of stone castles, different defensive features, the design and layout of square keeps, other types of stone keep |
| • Methods of attacking castles | The mangonel, trebuchet, battering ram, ballista, siege tower, undermining, castle sieges |
| • Defensive improvements, c1200 - 1300 | Influence of Crusader castles, introduction of round towers, barbicans, machicolations, concentric defences |
| • Concentric castles | Edward I's conquest of North Wales, programme of castle building under Master James of St George, the design and main features of concentric castles |
| • Domestic life in castles | The diverse community of people who lived in a castle, living accommodation, domestic features in a keep : well, windows, fireplaces, garderobes, furniture and decoration, the development of domestic architecture : Norman and Gothic (Early English, Decorated and Perpendicular) |
| • The decline of castles | When and why castles ceased to be built; factors involved in the decline of castles including : the development of gunpowder, effects of the Wars of the Roses, establishment of a centralised Tudor monarchy, construction of fortified manor houses and country houses, Tudor coastal forts, the English Civil War. Castles in the 19 th and 20 th centuries |

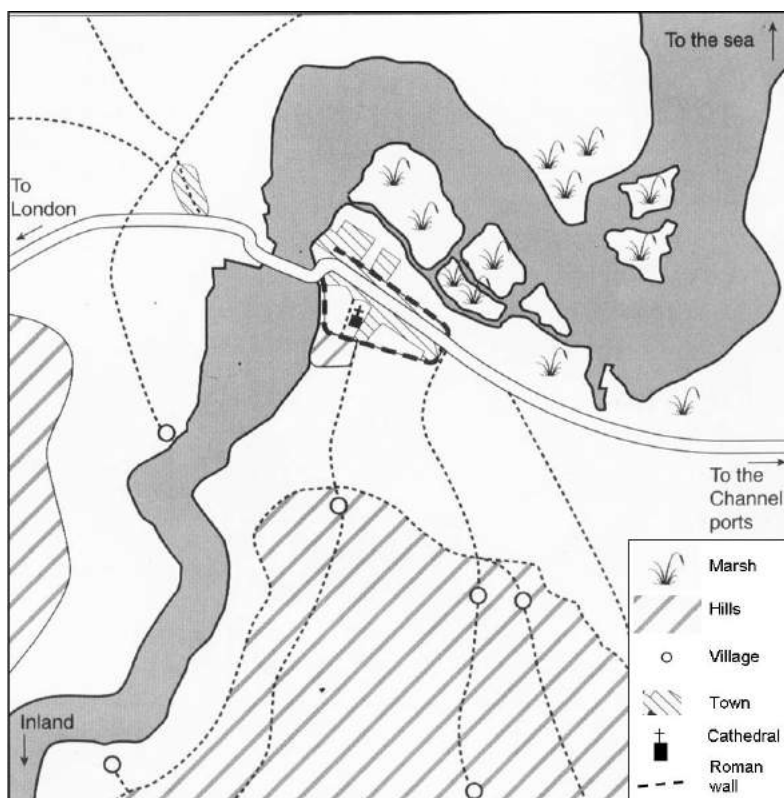
A CASTLE SITING ACTIVITY BASED ON ROCHESTER CASTLE

The first map shows North Kent in about 1066. Students have to choose one of the locations A,B or C for building a castle (B is Rochester). They should discuss the advantages and disadvantages of each one before making their choice.



The second map shows location B in more detail. This time students should choose an exact site for their castle and explain the reasons for their choice. Their site should be approximately this size: ☐

The actual site of Rochester Castle is the area immediately west of the cathedral, close to the bridge and inside the south-western corner of the Roman wall.



Your students will now have most of the knowledge they need for their site visit, but to prepare them more fully these activities will help them to apply and reinforce the knowledge they have acquired:

- show your students some photographs of a couple of different castles (aerial photographs work best) ; show them how it is possible to piece together the history of a castle by identifying, purely from the visible remains, features from different periods – e.g. the motte and/or bailey, 12th century features, 13th century features and so on. Then, provide them with photographs of some other castles so they can have a go themselves.
- get your students to brainstorm a list of questions to ask when visiting a castle ; you could use these questions as a framework for their visit.

SOME USEFUL RESOURCES FOR TEACHING ABOUT THE GENERAL DEVELOPMENT OF CASTLES:

Books for teachers:

- **Medieval Castles of England and Wales**, Bernard Lowry, Shire Publications 9781784422141 – recently published survey providing excellent background information for teachers
- **Life in a Medieval Castle**, Tony McAleavy, English Heritage (Gatekeeper series) 9781850746652 – beautifully illustrated survey of the development of castles and domestic life in them
- **The Observer's Book of Castles**, Brian K. Davison, Frederick Warne 9780723215936 – a classic introduction with useful line drawings, long out of print but copies are available online and in libraries
- **Castles**, Tom McNeill, English Heritage/Batsford 978-0713489934 – a comprehensive survey of the development and functions of castles with many maps, plans, reconstructions and photographs
- **Using Castles : A Teacher's Guide**, Tim Copeland and Mike Corbishley, English Heritage 9781850743279 – full of practical teaching ideas, from the definitive 1990s English Heritage series of teachers' guides to using different kinds of historic sites, downloadable from : <https://www.tes.com/teaching-resource/using-castles-a-teacher-s-guide-6059749>

Materials for students:

- **Castles and Cathedrals**, Steve Buxton, Tim Copeland and Colin Shephard, Hodder Education 9780719549526 - excellent KS3 textbook in the Discovering the Past series, full of useful activities and illustrations (just use the pages about castles!)
- **School History** : a selection of free lesson and learning materials about medieval castles, mostly for KS3 but easily adaptable for GCSE <https://schoolhistory.co.uk/medieval/castles/>
- **Schools History** : an extensive range of free materials on the development of castles, also mostly aimed at KS3 <http://www.schoolshistory.org.uk/gcse/castles/castlessection.htm>

Please note that the specification does not, for legal reasons, require students to visit the site. It is, however, highly desirable that they do so.

Step 3: The site visit

You will need to visit the site beforehand so

that you can plan your students' on site work very carefully. Aim to provide them with a guided investigation, in which they use what they already know about castles to investigate the site, **not a guided tour**. The visit should focus on students actively investigating **the visible remains** of the site.

Use your planning visit to identify the main features of the site and some 'puzzles' for students to investigate. Use the guidebook and interpretation panels to help you. The Education Officer, if there is one, will provide invaluable advice.

There should be plenty of incomplete and missing features, blocked up doorways and windows and so on. For example, the keep at Rochester Castle has no floors and many of the dividing walls which separated the different rooms have gone; it also has three square corner towers and one round one! There should be plenty of clues to help students work out what different parts of the castle were like in the past, for example:

- joist holes show them where the floors were and how many there were
- traces of the interior walls can help them to work out the layout of rooms
- the remains of windows, fireplaces (or the absence of them), spiral staircases, the well and the size of the rooms can help to reveal the purpose of the different rooms : the Great Hall, the basement, the kitchen and so on ...
- the shapes of towers, windows and doorways can help them work out roughly when different parts of the castle were built

Once you have explored the remains you will be aware of the main historical issues they pose. You can turn these into enquiry questions for your students to investigate during their visit and devise some activities and materials to help them. Possible enquiry questions might include:

- why was a castle built on this particular site?
- is there any evidence that there was once a motte and bailey castle on the site ?
- how was the castle defended against attackers ?
- when was the keep built ?
- what were the different rooms in the keep used for ?
- where was the main entrance to the castle ?
- what can you tell from the remains about the castle in the 13th and 14th centuries ?
- how accurate is this modern interpretation (*a reconstruction drawing for example*) of the castle in the Middle Ages ?

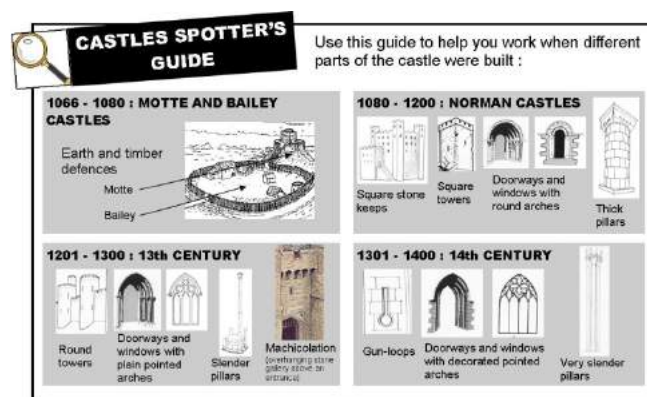
For some examples of on-site activities based upon enquiry questions like these see the **Activity Booklet** which accompanies this **Guidance**.

Make sure that you provide students with adequate support for the work they do at the site. They will need help, for example, when trying to work out when different parts of the castle were built. Provide them with a visual 'spotter's guide' showing the main stages in castle development and

medieval architecture. Alternatively (or additionally) you could use Ian Coulson's brilliant guide to medieval architecture using only your fingers! See :

<http://www.thinkinghistory.co.uk/diary/2016/02/ian-coulsons-handly-guide-to-medieval-architecture/>

Make sure that your students are aware that there is nothing wrong with not finding definite answers to some questions. Tell them that even the experts are not sure about some aspects of most castles' histories because of the incomplete nature of the physical remains. At Rochester, for example, the use of some of the rooms in the keep is not obvious from the visible remains. Students should be prepared to look for clues, think through different possibilities and, using 'uncertainty language' where appropriate, sometimes suggest two or three alternative theories (based of course on the evidence they have seen) rather than always trying to find a single definite answer.



CAUTION! Using castle guide-books with pupils:

I would not recommend having copies of the castle guide-book available for students during the visit. They often use them uncritically as 'sources of correct information' and this detracts from the main purpose of the visit: personal observation and investigation of the visible remains. Interpretation panels at the site can have a similar effect (I have been known to obscure them by placing my coat over them!). This is not to say, however, that guidebooks and interpretation panels are of no use during the course; far from it. They often include useful source material, plans and reconstruction drawings which can be used either during the site visit or for follow-up work in the classroom. The text, which in guide-books can be very detailed and complex especially for less able pupils, is an interpretation of the site and should be treated as such: it should be analysed and evaluated. It is best used in short extracts for particular parts of their work on site or follow-up work.

Step 4: Following up the site visit

When you get back to school, get your students to discuss their findings so far:

- which questions have they been able to answer?
- which questions have they not been able to answer and why? For example, there are no visible remains of a Motte and Bailey castle at Rochester; also, although students can tell from the remains that the keep was built sometime in the 12th century, they cannot tell exactly when it was built or by whom – these are questions which physical remains cannot answer.
- do they have any new questions?

Then discuss what kinds of sources they could use to find out more about the castle and its history.

WHERE TO LOOK FOR ADDITIONAL SOURCES AND INTERPRETATIONS ABOUT THE

∴ This will lead naturally on to the next part of the course: a carefully prepared sequence of about 5-6 lessons in which students add further layers of detail to their investigation of the site by studying the **castle guidebook** which will include maps, plans, reconstruction drawings, extracts from sources and the other types of sources and interpretations. The next (best used in short extracts) is an interpretation

Some castles have **teachers' guides** ; English Heritage Teachers' Guides can be found at : <https://www.tes.com/member/EnglishHeritage>

The castle might have an **Education Officer** to help you – and/or put you in contact with other schools which visit the site

Look on the Local History shelves at the nearest main **library** ; local history books and county histories, whether old or new, often contain useful extracts from sources and illustrations. Some libraries contain a **Local Studies Centre** staffed by a specialist librarian who should be able to help you find materials.

Visit your **local museum** and talk to the Education Officer; he or she may have some useful artefacts from the site and other materials in the museum archive.

If your site is run by English Heritage find its pages on the **English Heritage website**: <http://www.english-heritage.org.uk/visit/places> You will find, as well as all the information you need for a visit, a detailed description of the site and its history, a plan of the site, several images and a list of sources many of which are accessible online (although be warned some of them are in their original Latin!)

There are thousands of images of historic sites (photographs, drawings, plans and reconstructions) at the **Historic England Archive** <http://archive.historicengland.org.uk/> and **Heritage Explorer Images for Learning** <http://www.heritage-explorer.co.uk/web/he/default.aspx>

Gatehouse Gazetteer is an amazingly comprehensive online gazetteer and bibliography of medieval castles and fortifications ; a good starting point for finding out about any castle <http://www.gatehouse-gazetteer.info/home.html>

At last, but certainly not least, use a search engine to discover what other materials you can find online ...

Once you have gathered your additional materials you will be able to identify the main issues and themes about the site's history which emerge from them; hopefully, they will coincide with most of the questions for further investigation which arose from the site visit. Now you can organise them into a series of lessons which are led by enquiry questions; for example:

- Did the Normans build a Motte and Bailey castle at Rochester?
- Why is it difficult to know what the first stone castle at Rochester looked like?
- Why does the Keep at Rochester Castle have one round tower and three square towers?

- How can we reconstruct what life was like at Rochester Castle in the later Middle Ages?
- What happened to the buildings of Rochester Castle after 1500 and why?

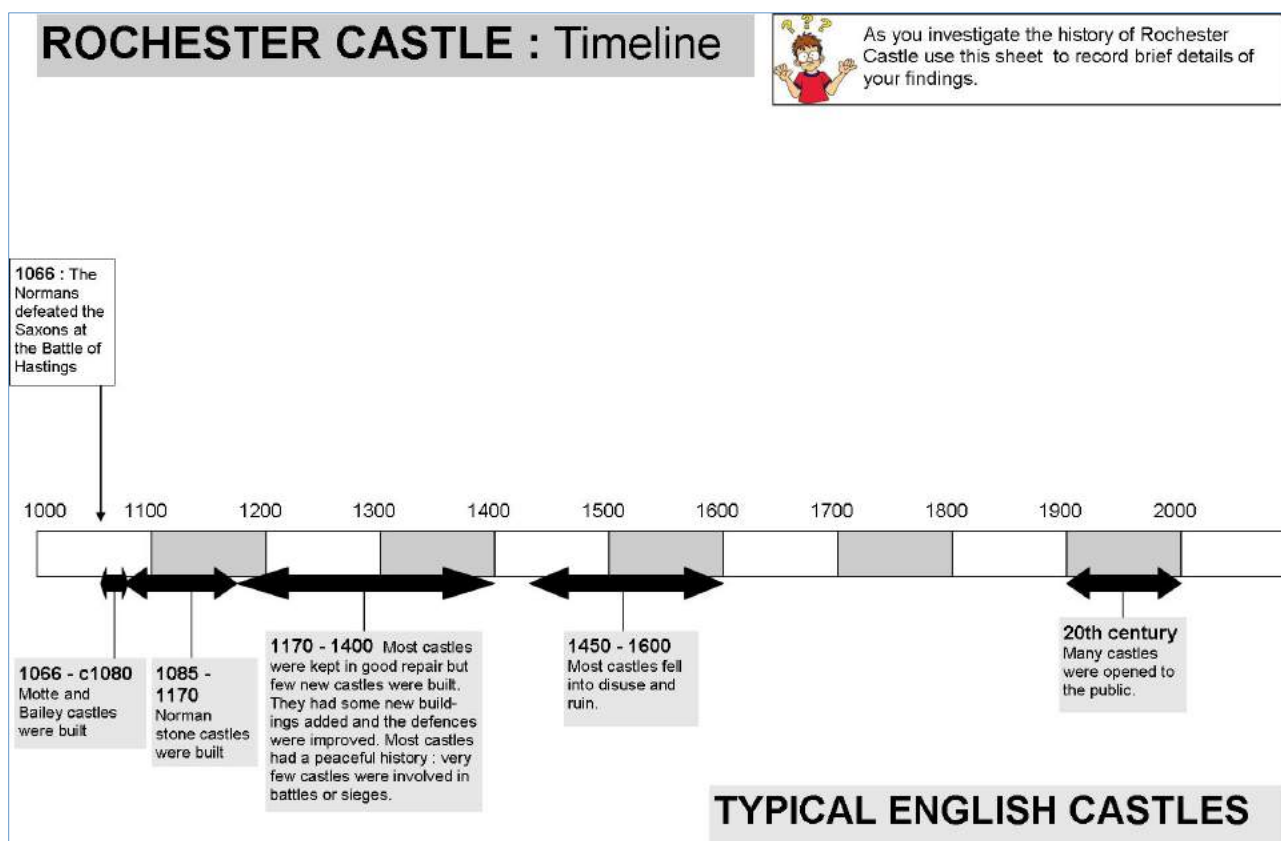
and to conclude the study :

- How typical is Rochester Castle and its history of castles during the Middle Ages?
- How historically significant was Rochester Castle during the Middle Ages?

These lessons should provide students with opportunities to:

- increase their knowledge about the history and development of the site
- develop their skills in cross-referencing, analysing and evaluating sources and interpretations
- reach overall conclusions about how the site changed over time, its typicality and historical significance

Students could summarise their main findings on a timeline like the one below:



Part 3 of this case study contains a collection of sources and interpretations of Rochester Castle, organised chronologically, which could be used for this sequence of lessons. You will need to select the sources you wish to use, taking into account both the issues you wish to cover, the learning needs of your students and the time available; be prepared, if necessary, to reduce the length of lengthy written sources by providing extracts and simplify their language (and/or provide a glossary).

a checklist for students

Step 5: Preparing for the examination

- ☒ Spend 30 minutes on each question
- ☒ Your students' History Around Us examination will be a 1 hour paper which is worth 20% of the whole History GCSE. For revision they will need access to all of the work they have done during this part of the course. They will need practice at planning answers to examination style questions
- ☒ Organise your answer around points which **directly answer the question**
- ☒ Explain and support your points by referring to the visible remains of the site **AND** your wider knowledge about the history and development of the site and other similar sites
- ☒ The examination will consist of three questions of which students must answer two. All questions are marked out of 20 so students should spend 30 minutes on each question. The questions will be marked out of 20 so students should spend 30 minutes on each question. The questions will be marked out of 20 so students should spend 30 minutes on each question.
- ☒ Write your answer in three or four paragraphs with a short conclusion
- ☒ Use dates and the names of historical periods to make clear **when** you are referring to in different parts of your answer
- ☒ Take care too. Your spelling, punctuation and grammar for the date worth 5 extra marks per question) will be awarded for spelling, punctuation, grammar and the use of specialist
- ☒ Use specialist terms associated with castles accurately : for example curtain wall, keep, forebuilding, portcullis and so on ...
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SO KEEP AN EYE ON THE CLOCK!

Good luck!