

CE2 Entrance Test - 2023-2024

You have 10 minutes to read the story and then you will answer questions about the text.

Read this short story carefully:

Life in a castle

A castle was not only a fortress. It was normally the home of a community of men, women, children and animals. Though a castle may be a ruin nowadays, without a roof or floors to the rooms, we must not forget that these same rooms once had the furniture and atmosphere of a home and echoed to the daily noise of a community of people.

In the Great hall there were long trestle tables, with benches to sit on. If there were any chairs, the largest two would be placed at one end of the room to be used by the lord of the castle and his wife. Lesser people sat either on hard, wooden stools or on wooden storage chests. There were no carpets on the floor, just rushes or straw on the wooden boards or stone slabs.

In the sleeping quarters most people slept on straw mattresses on the floor. A bed was a most important and valuable piece of furniture in those days, and only the lord and his wife were likely to have one.

Sanitation in castles was relatively good. If you wanted to take a bath, water was heated and then poured into a wooden tub (as it was until quite recent times in many houses).

The castle lavatories, or garderobes, were generally set in small rooms built into the thick outside walls. They were reached down a short passage, so that they were away from the living quarters. Usually there were some on each floor. There was a simple stone seat, and sewage went down a chute on the exterior wall into the moat or convenient river or into a pit at the base of the wall.

The important rooms in early castles were heated either by a fire in the centre of the room or by portable braziers. That is why ceilings were often high - they had to allow room for the smoke to circulate. In the twelfth century, however, it became more usual for fireplaces and chimneys to be built into the walls of rooms.

Questions to accompany the text:

- 1) What were the two main uses of a castle?
- 2) What was used to cover the floor?
- 3) What furniture would you find in the Great Hall?
- 4) Where do most people sleep?
- 5) How was having a bath different from in our times?
- 6) There were no flush toilets in a castle. Explain how the castle lavatories work?
- 7) What is another word used in the passage that means “lavatory” or “toilet”.
- 8) What does “a portable brazier” mean?
- 9) Why did ceilings have to be high in the days when fires were in the centre of the rooms?
- 10) Write down two ways in which the lord of the castle and his wife lived a more comfortable life than other people in the castle.

Story Writing Section for 'Life in a Castle'

Choose **one** of the following:

1. Imagine writing a description of life in a modern house, in the same style as 'Life in a Castle'. Re-read carefully the text and make sure you include the same details in your piece about a modern house.
2. Write a diary entry as if you live in a castle and write about your day, paying attention to the information in the text.

To consider:

Write as much as you can about your chosen story, adding lots of detail and interest.

Consider how to make your story interesting, have you included adjectives, adverbs and powerful verbs?

Re-read to check for errors.

Does your writing follow a clear sequence?