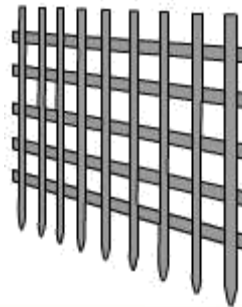


# Attacking and Defending a Castle

1066–1500



This icon indicates the slide contains activities created in Flash. These activities are not editable.

For more detailed instructions, see the *Getting Started* presentation.



This presentation covers:

1. Why castles were built.
2. The different ways to **attack** a castle.
3. The different ways to **defend** a castle.
4. How you might plan to attack a castle.



# Why castles?

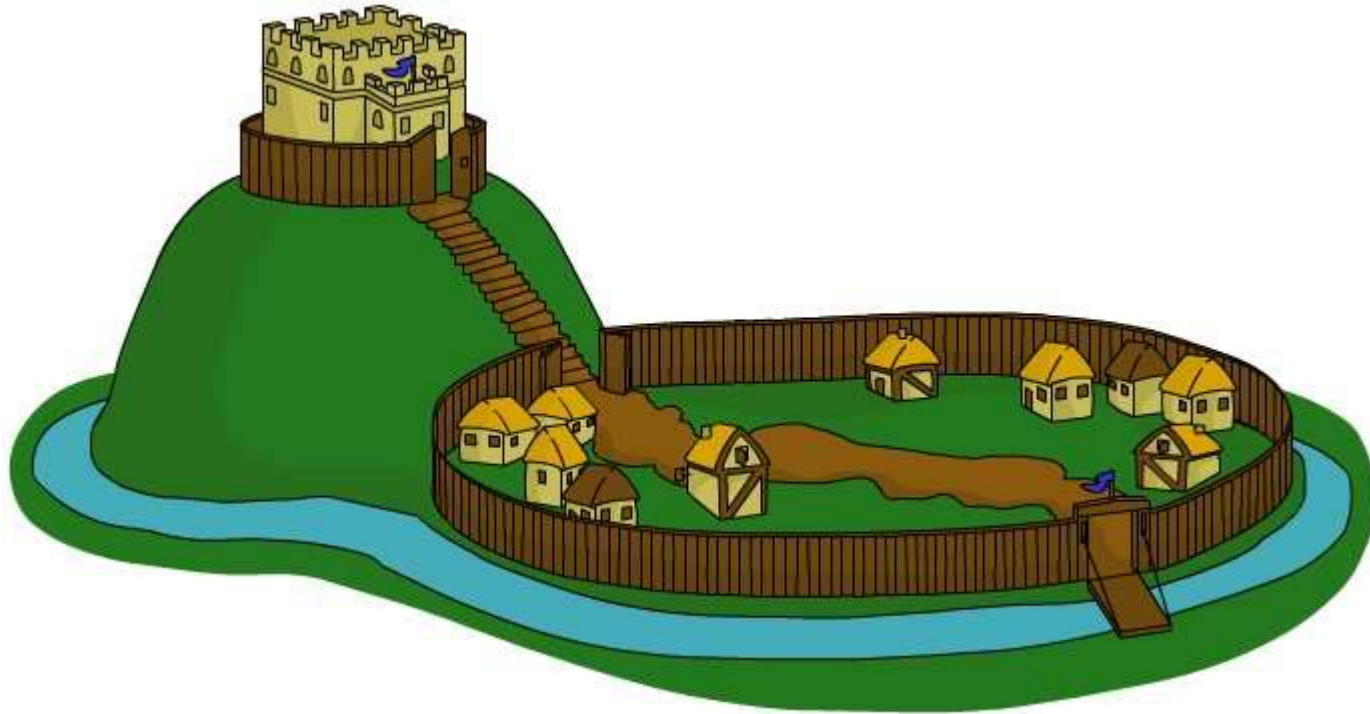
When William invaded England he did not have many troops so he needed a way of making sure they were used **effectively**. This led to the rise of the castle.



The castles **dominated** the landscape. Because they were carefully **located**, any **rebellion** had to be made against a castle.



The **motte and bailey** castle design that William first used was good as a start but not as effective in the **long term**.



This is because castles needed to be strong enough to survive an attack by **any means**.



## Barbican

The extra gatehouse at the front of the castle.

## Portcullis

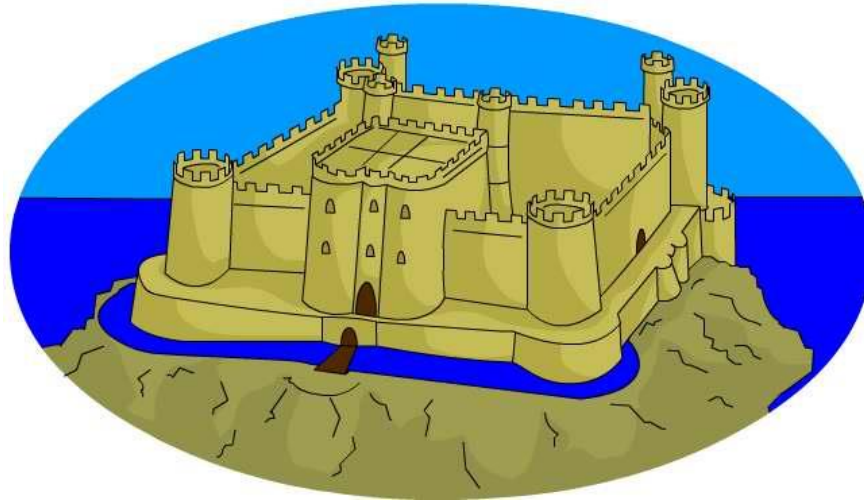
The strong oak and metal gate at the front of the castle (one pence coins carry an image of them).

## Murder holes

Holes that soldiers could pour hot sand, water and lime through to kill and wound an enemy.



- The first defence a castle had was its **location**.
- Harlech Castle was almost impossible to surround – why?



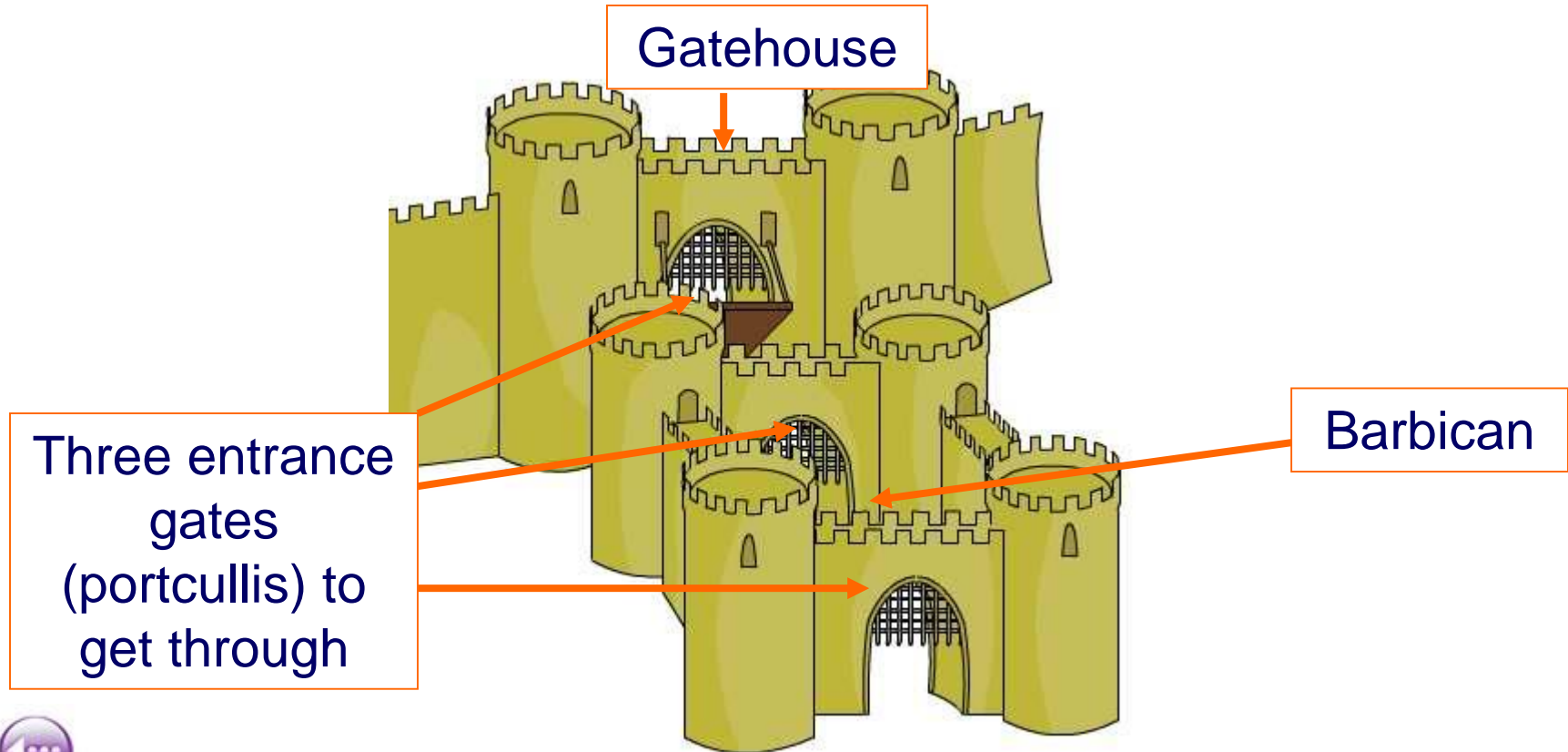
Harlech Castle

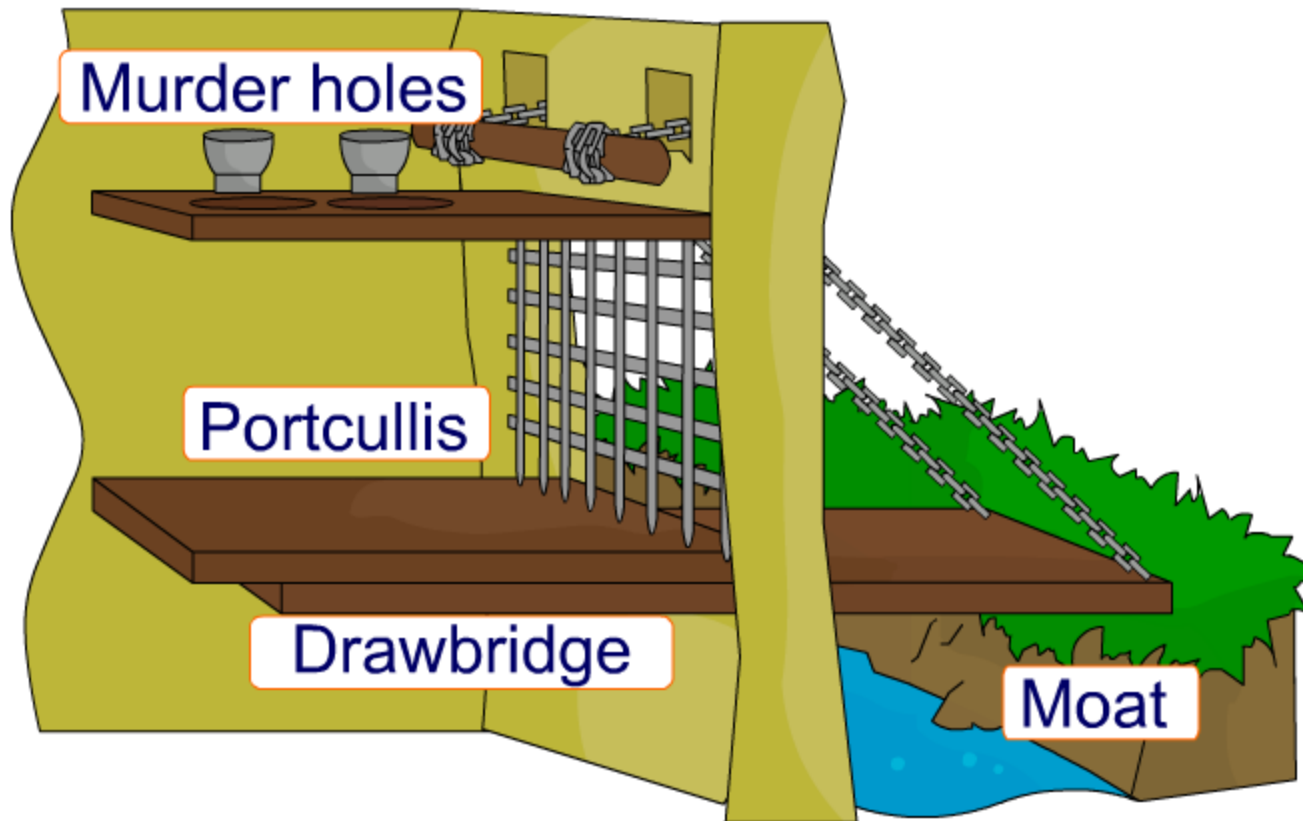
- Other castles were built on **hills**, such as Guildford and Conisbrough. This meant they could easily observe any enemy force approaching!



# The castle entrance

The castle entrance often had a **barbican** attached. This extra gatehouse protected the weakest part of the castle. There would be extra soldiers, and several heavy oak doors and **portcullises** to get past.





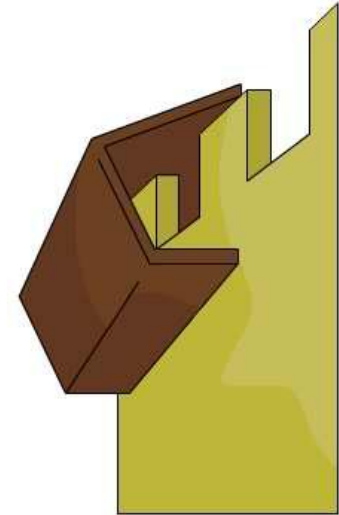
**Click on the murder holes, portcullis and drawbridge.**

Why do you think the main entrance had so much defence?





The castle **battlements** jutted out from the top of the wall so that soldiers could drop heavy stones and pour boiling tar onto the enemy below.



At the bottom of the **curtain wall** the walls were angled so that when stones were dropped they would bounce off the bottom and hit the attackers.



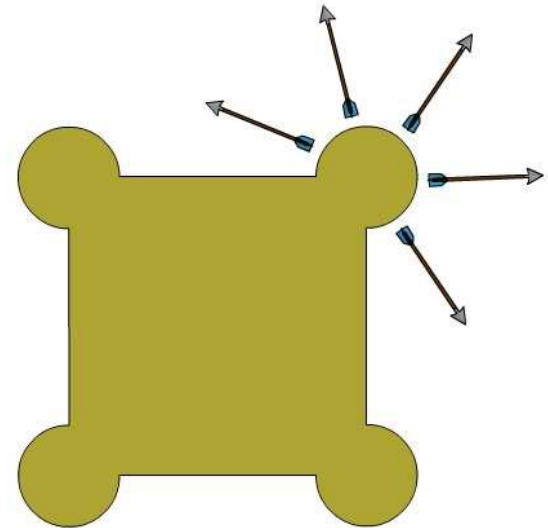
Castles were often built near rivers.



Why do you think this was?



There were a number of features which could be added to the castle to make it stronger. Most castles had **round towers** in their walls. This was so soldiers could fire in all directions along the front walls.



The strongest building was the **keep**. It had numerous defensive features including very thick walls, narrow staircases, big cellars for sieges. Even the entrance was **raised** and had drawbridges to stop an attack.

**Portcullis**

Allowed soldiers to fire arrows in all directions.

**Battlements**

Holes that hot sand, water and lime could be poured through.

**Barbican**

Strongest building with thick walls and a drawbridge.

**Keep**

Angled wall to allow dropped stones to hit the attackers.

**Murder holes**

The strong oak and metal gate at the front of the castle.

**Curtain wall**

Jutted away from the castle wall so boiling tar could be dropped on the enemies below.

**Round towers**

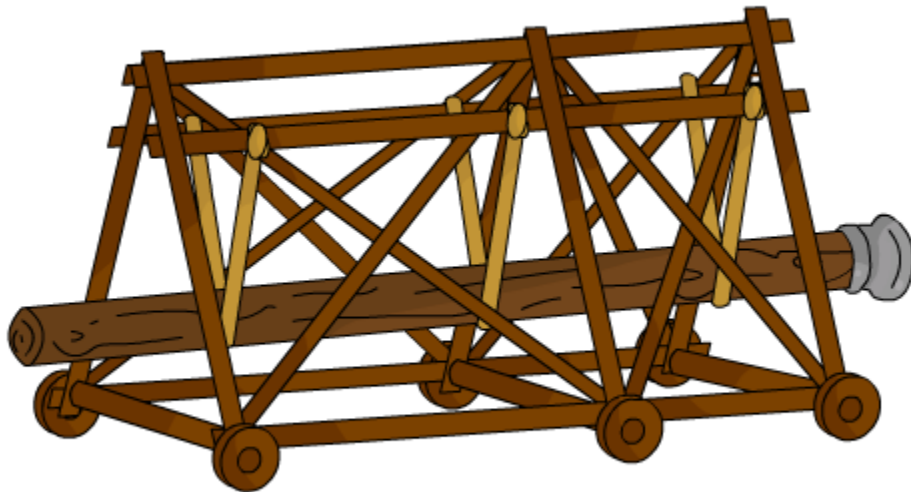
The extra gatehouse at the front of the castle.



# Why did castles develop?

As castles were frequently under attack, they had to be as strong as possible.

As the attackers improved their methods of **attack**, so the castle builders had to improve the castle's ability to **defend**.



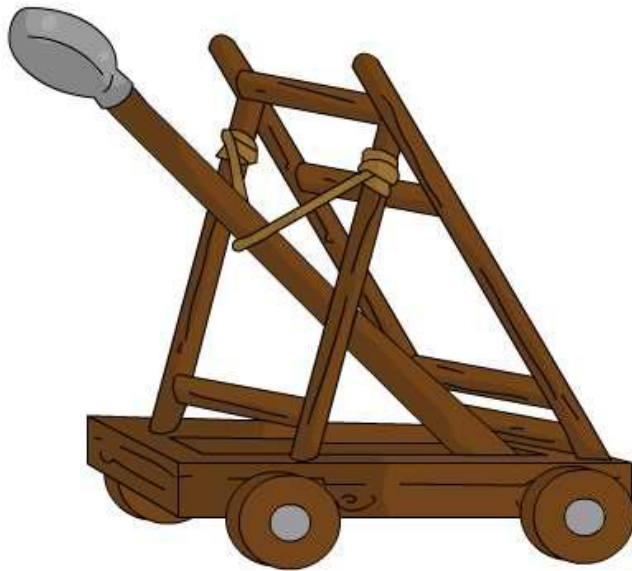
How do you think a battering ram was used to attack a castle?

# Castle attack

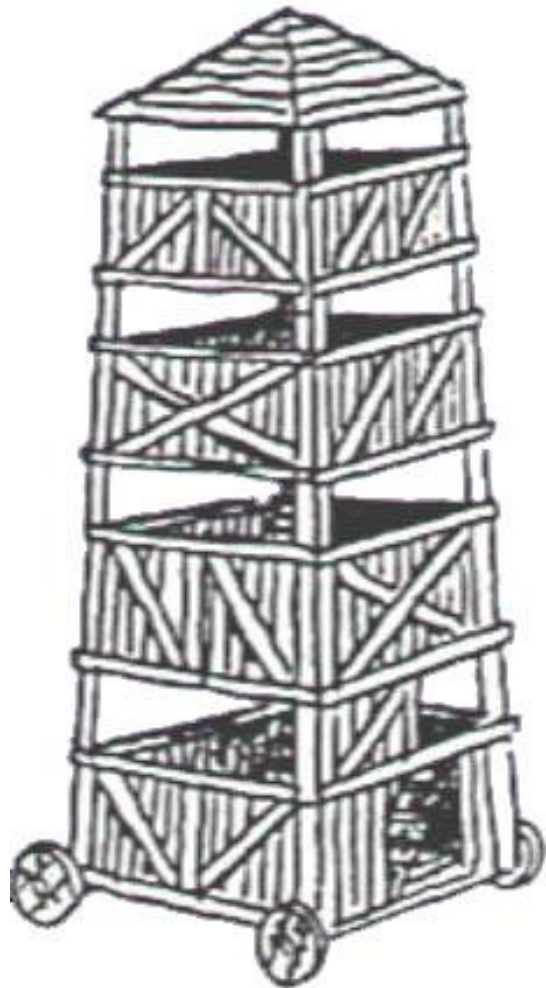
In this picture the attackers are tunnelling. They would mine underneath the castle hoping to collapse it!



What are the advantages of this method of attack?



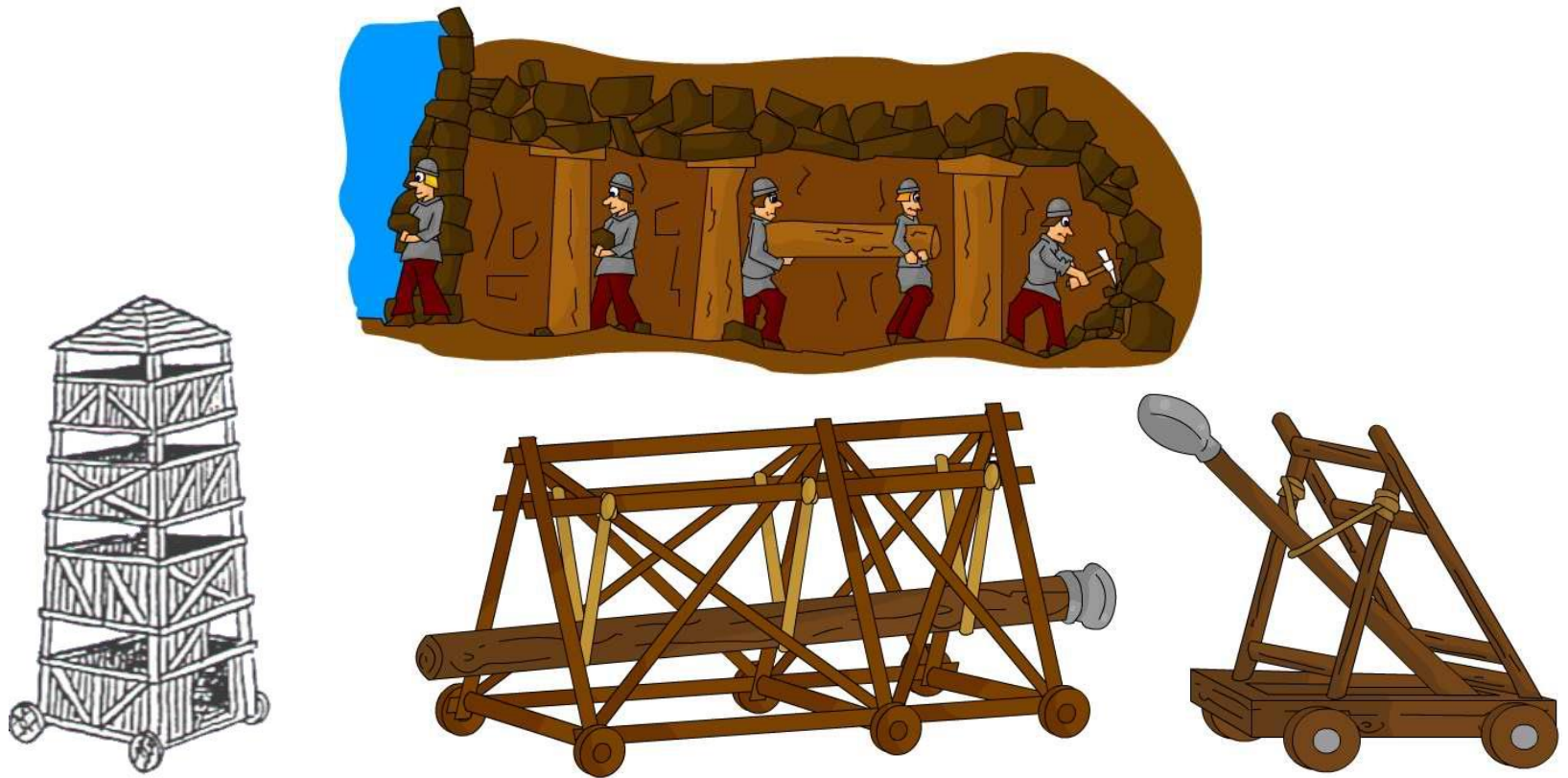
How would this catapult have worked?  
Do you think it would have been very effective? Why?



These **siege towers** had a drawbridge at the top. The soldiers would climb up the tower and rush across the drawbridge onto the castle **hoarding** (the bit jutting out at the top of the castle). They were often covered in animal skins to provide further protection from arrows.

What do you think were the main disadvantages with this method of attack?





Which of the methods of attack do you think would have been the most effective? Why?

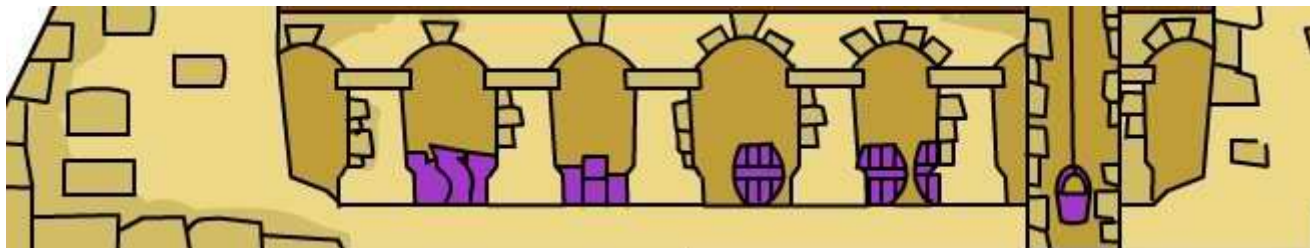
Can you suggest any other methods attackers might have used?



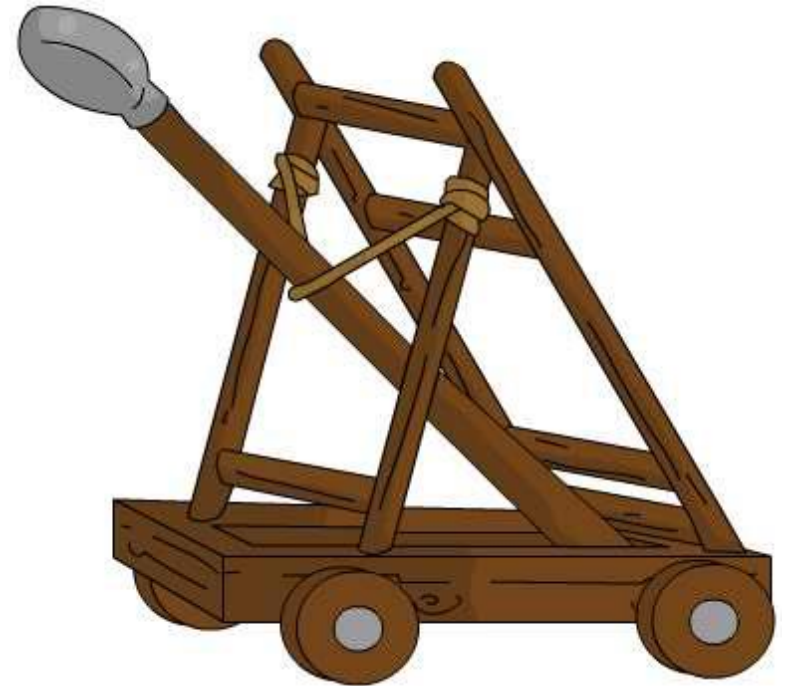


Castles were sometimes so strong that the only method of attack was to wait. This was called laying **siege**. It was basically staying out of arrow range and **surrounding** the castle until it was starved into submission.

Sieges could take a very long time to work. Many castles had **wells** in the keep and large **storerooms** always prepared in case of a siege. The best time to attack would be **spring** as all the winter food would be used up by then and the defenders would have little supplies to last on.



Sometimes attacking a castle involved more gruesome methods. In the fourteenth century one castle was subjected to an attack by having **plague victims** catapulted over the walls to spread the disease.



Other attacks included throwing over **rotten animal bodies** to spread disease and also the **heads** of executed prisoners!



Before becoming a fully fledged knight you must prove you can rise to even the most difficult of challenges. Read the following tasks and decide what the best method of castle attack is.

start





1. What is the name of this attacking weapon?



Siege tower.

Battering ram.

Catapult.

Portcullis.

