

Questioning: *Keys to the Castle*

Texts for the Online Activity

Castles around the World

Door 1

Title and image



Door 2

Castles are located all around the world. They are found on every continent except Antarctica. No two castles are exactly the same. Not only do they look different, but they were also built for different reasons.

Door 3

This is Bran Castle. It is in Romania, which is a country in Europe. Bran Castle was built in 1212 to help protect the people living in the area. It is made out of wood, and has 57 rooms. Some say Bran Castle is where Dracula lived. Dracula is a character in a book, so he did not really live there.



Door 4

Castle of Good Hope is in South Africa. It took 13 years to build, and was finished in 1679. It is shaped like a pentagon. The Dutch built this castle for protection. They were worried that war was going to break out with the British.



Door 5

This is Matsumoto (Mat-su-mo-toh) Castle. It is in Japan. The lords (called daimyos), who ruled the land, built it for protection. The castle's nickname is Crow Castle because the outside is black. Matsumoto Castle is six stories tall!



Door 6

New York even has castles! George Boldt, a millionaire, started building Boldt Castle in 1900. He built it to show his wife how much he loved her. George's wife suddenly died in 1904. He was so sad that he stopped building the castle. Boldt Castle was sold in 1977, and the new owners finished building it. Now it has 120 rooms, and it is open for tours.



Life in a Castle

Door 1

Title and image



Door 2

Castles still exist today, but most of them were built a long time ago. Life in a castle could be very hard. We are now going to take a look at what life was like in an English castle during the 1400s.

Door 3

Sounds and Smells

Some castles were small, but others were very large. More than 100 people could live in a big castle! These castles could be very noisy. Inside, it was hard to see. Electricity was not invented yet, so torches were used for light. Castles were cold inside because they did not have heaters. People sat close to the fireplace to stay warm.

Door 4

People Inside

Kings and queens changed homes a lot. So a lord and lady were usually in charge of the castle, not the king and queen. Many families lived in the castle. Some were rich and others were poor. The poor people were usually servants who did most of the work. Each castle also had guards like watchmen and knights.

Door 5

Children's Lives

Kids' days in a castle were filled with work, but they also had time for play. Every day they had to do chores like feeding the farm animals. Children had to carry water into the castle because there was no running water. After their chores were done, kids liked to play a lot of chasing and ball games. They also liked to play pretend.

Door 6

Everyday Life

The lord and lady were the only two people with their own bedroom. Everyone else slept in the Great Hall. People also ate in this big room. Castles did not have bathrooms. People went to the bathroom in a garderobe. This was a seat on the castle wall that had a hole in it that led to the outside. Most people took baths one to four times per year.

Knights in the 1400s

Door 1

Title and image



Door 2

A knight's job in the 1400s was to protect the castle. These are some of the tools they used.

Door 3

Knights wore armor made of iron and chains. It was very heavy. It could weigh up to 50 pounds! Armor helped protect knights during battles.



Door 4

Knights also used shield to protect themselves when they were in battle. Shields were often decorated with a Coat of Arms. This was a design made of symbols that represented the knight's family.



Door 5

Not every knight used the same weapon. Some used swords like this. Others used battle axes, maces, or crossbows.



Door 6

Many knights also had horses. They helped the knights travel long distances and move quickly when fighting. Some knights even put armor on their horses to protect the animal during battle.



The Silver Hearth

Door 1

Title and illustration

Door 2

Once upon a time, there was a poor farmer and his wife. The farmer worked in his fields all day, but he earned only enough money for a simple life. He did not complain about his life, but he did dream of a day when he might be rich.

Door 3

While plowing the field one day, the farmer discovered an ancient jar buried in the ground. Inside were hundreds of silver coins! But the farmer was worried. How could he know if these coins were meant for him? He decided to leave the jar in the ground.

Door 4

That evening, he told his wife about the jar of silver coins. “You fool!” she said. She stormed out of the house and went to a neighbor. “My husband is foolish. He found a jar of silver coins in his field today, but he refuses to bring them home. Will you go find the jar and share the coins with me?”

Door 5

So the neighbor searched the fields and found the jar. But it did not contain silver coins. Instead, it was full of poisonous snakes! The neighbor was very angry at the farmer’s wife. “She must be my enemy!” he thought. “She hoped I would put my hand into the jar to be bitten and poisoned by these snakes!”

Door 6

The neighbor decided to get revenge on the farmer’s wife. He carried the jar back and poured the snakes down the chimney of their house. The next morning, the farmer awoke at his usual time. As the morning sun shone on his hearth, he stared in disbelief. Silver coins filled the hearth. “These silver coins have appeared in my own house!” the farmer cried. “They must be meant for me!” He now knew that he could keep the coins and live his dreams of becoming rich.

Four Friends

Door 1

Title and illustration

Door 2

Once upon a time lived four friends in a forest. These four friends should have been enemies, for they were a mouse, a crow, a deer and a tortoise. But they overcame their differences and always helped each other out. That was especially true one day when a hunter came into their woods.

Door 3

One day, the mouse, crow and deer were sitting under an old oak tree. Their friendly chat was interrupted by a terrible scream. It was their friend, the tortoise! The hunter had trapped him in a net. "Oh dear!" said the deer. "What can we do to help him?"

Door 4

"I have a plan," said the mouse. The deer and the crow leaned in to listen to the mouse's plan. They had no time to lose! The hunter had already gathered up the tortoise in the net, so they had to act fast. The deer ran ahead of the hunter and lay down, pretending to be dead. The crow landed on the deer and began pecking away, as if eating the dead body.

Door 5

The hunter noticed the deer lying on the ground. "Why, here is a deer ready for the taking." He put down the net and crouched next to the deer. The crow blocked him, flapping its wings in the hunter's face. Meanwhile, the mouse started chewing through the threads of the net holding the tortoise.

Door 6

As soon as the tortoise was free, the deer leaped to its feet and ran away. The hunter stood up, shocked. He was shocked again when he saw that the tortoise had escaped. "If only I hadn't been so greedy," he sighed. The four friends met up under the tree, safe and sound. They laughed and laughed at their trick on the hunter. Helping each other in such a clever way made their friendship stronger than ever.

Two Brothers

Door 1

Title and Illustration

Door 2

Once upon a time lived two brothers. After their father died, they divided his land equally and made their homes. As the years passed, the older brother got married and had six children. The younger brother remained single but became quite wealthy.

Door 3

Lying in bed one night, the younger brother thought, “My brother has so many children to feed, but he has just the same amount of land as I do. I should share my grain with him.” So he went to his silo, filled a large bushel with grain, and carried it over to his brother’s farm. He poured the grain into his brother’s silo.

Door 4

That very same night, the older brother lay in bed thinking, “What will my brother do in his old age, without children to care for him? I should share my grain so he can save money for his old age.” And he went to his silo, filled a large bushel with grain, and carried it over to his brother’s farm. He poured the grain into his brother’s silo.

Door 5

The next morning, each brother was puzzled to see that his silo had as much grain as the day before. Each one thought, “I must share more of my grain with my brother.” And so that night, each brother filled a bushel with grain and carried it over to his brother’s silo.

Door 6

This went on for three nights. Then, on the night of the full moon, each one was halfway across the field when he saw someone in the moonlight. They approached cautiously. But as soon as they recognized each other, they realized what was happening. They had been trading grain every night! They dropped their bushels and embraced, full of love for each other.