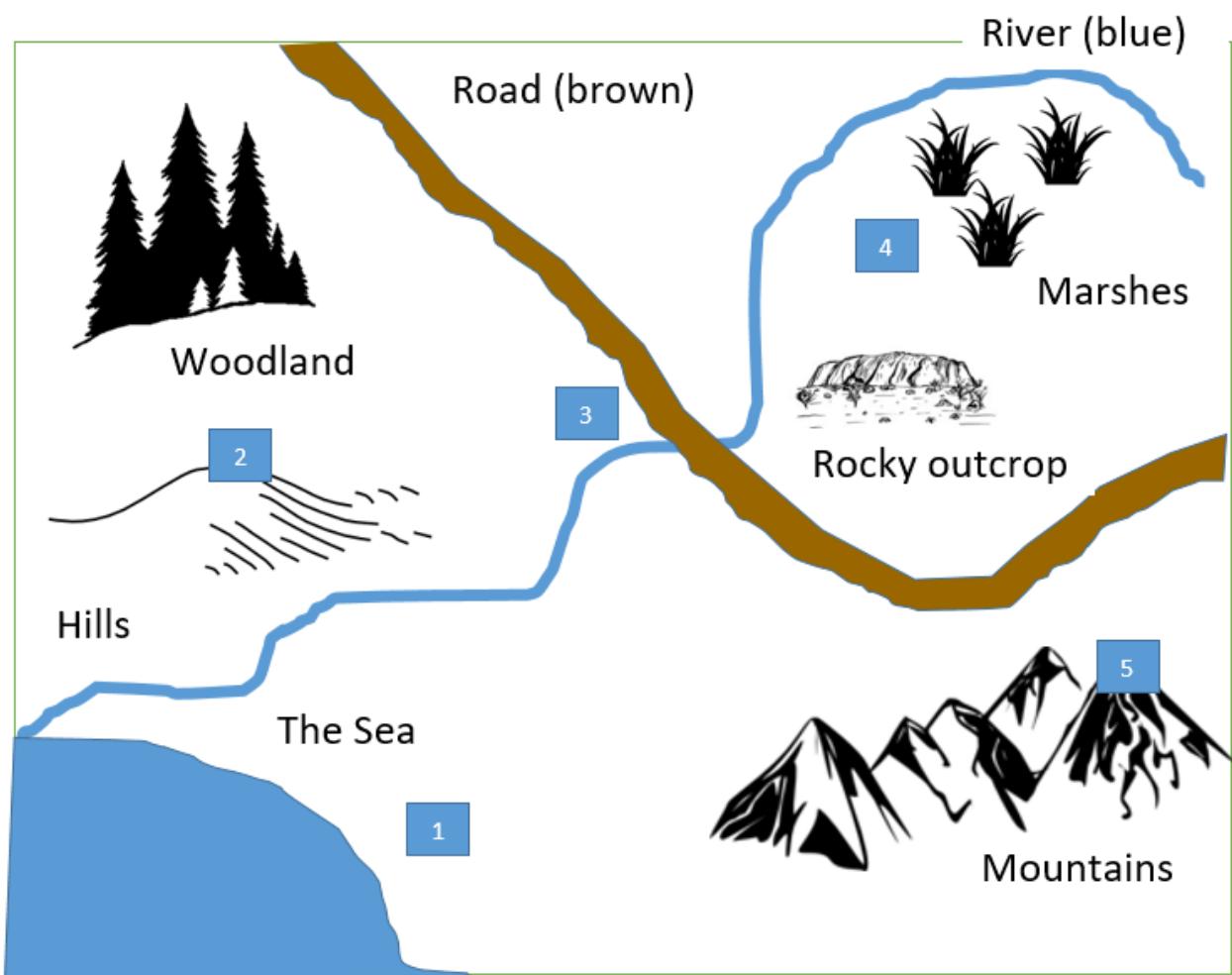
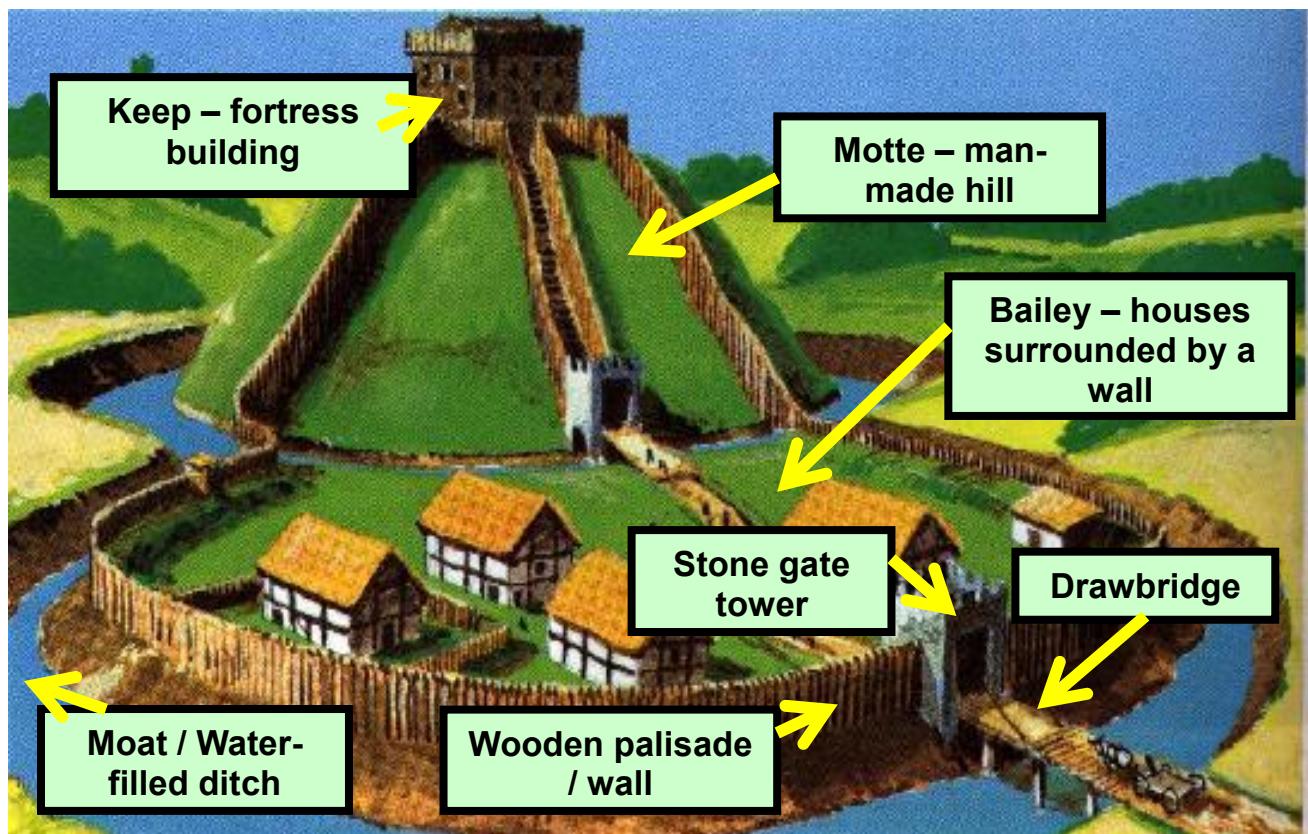


Why did William I build motte and bailey castles?

TASK 1: Where would you build a castle, and why?



TASK 2: stick in the small diagram in your book. Label it using this picture.



TASK 3: Answer the following questions in full sentences in your book. You have not been given any information – you will have to think very hard!

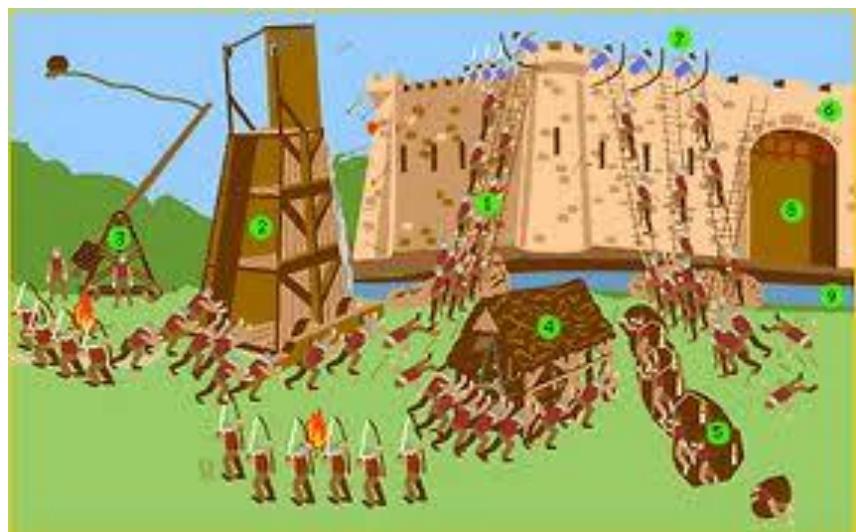
1. Write down as many reasons as you can why William needed castles.
2. What do you think was wrong with a Motte and Bailey castle? Why did they have to be changed into a different type of castle? (Think carefully!)
3. Why do you think William built wooden castles first?

How easy was it to attack a Medieval castle?

War in medieval times was about the control of land. Knights and other soldiers who lived in castles controlled the land around their stone fortresses. To conquer a territory, an attacking army would have to strike and take these castles. To do so, they would launch a siege. Here we describe some of the major weapons and strategies.

1. Direct Assault

A direct assault was the most dangerous way for attackers to try to take a castle. Soldiers either scaled walls with **ladders** or overran castle walls *breached* (broken by) by **battering rams, or cannons**.



Sometimes they attacked two or three spots around the castle at once to surprise the defenders. Sometimes they approached the wall whilst hidden within a trench. Archers would cover the soldiers while they tried to break a wall.

Defenders, perched on the castle wall or in narrow windows called loopholes, literally had the upper hand. Archers rained arrows down on the attackers, while soldiers pushed ladders off the wall with forked poles, dropped rocks or firepots filled with burning tar, or poured scalding water, wine, or hot sand (which could enter armour) down onto those below (sometimes through 'murder holes').

Attacking armies sometimes blockaded a castle instead. Though safer than fighting, starving occupants out of a castle was not always straightforward. Castle dwellers kept stockpiles of food and drilled water wells.

2. Siege Tower

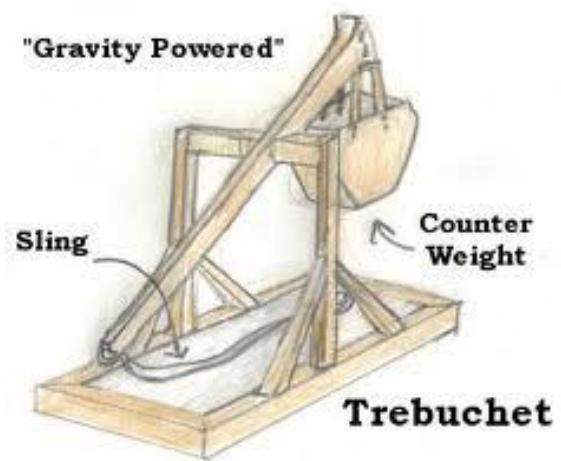
Attackers sometimes built a siege tower to scale castle walls. Soldiers lay in wait inside the structure as others wheeled it to the castle. Once there, the soldiers lowered a drawbridge at the top of the tower onto the castle wall. Some towers were almost 100 feet high, and in the siege of Kenilworth Castle, 200 archers and 11 catapults were crowded into a single tower.



Siege towers were difficult and time-consuming to build, however, and castle defenders could burn them down with fire arrows or firepots (launched pots filled with flaming liquids such as tar). To protect their siege engine, attackers draped it with rawhides of mules or oxen.

3. Trebuchet

During peacetime, castle commanders used trebuchets to launch roses at ladies during tournaments. But during a siege, these missile launchers were one of the most fearsome weapons of medieval times.



Early trebuchets were powered by muscle, but later versions relied on a huge counterweight that swung a long arm. When the counterweight was dropped, the device launched a missile from a sling at the end of the arm.

Trebuchets could launch missiles hundreds of yards in large, lobbing arcs at or even over a castle wall. The best trebuchets fired stone missiles weighing up to 400 pounds—big enough to do serious damage to a castle wall. Attackers also used them to launch dung or dead animals into the castle with the intention of spreading disease. Sometimes they even shot out the severed heads of enemy soldiers or even messengers who delivered unsatisfactory peace terms.

If a trebuchet was set up too close to a castle, archers would harass its builders with arrows shot from bows or bolts from crossbows. Castle defenders also

would try to destroy rising trebuchets with catapults shot from the castle wall or with sneak attacks to burn it down.

4. Tunnel

Men called “sappers” sometimes dug tunnels to gain entrance to a castle and thereby launch a sneak attack, but more often, these miners dug tunnels beneath a castle wall to destabilize and topple it. They supported their tunnels with timbers, which they then burned to collapse the tunnel—and, hopefully, the wall above.

To defend themselves, castle dwellers put out a bowl of water and watched for ripples that might indicate digging. Sometimes the castle's garrison built counter-tunnels; if the two tunnels met, fierce battles ensued underground.

