

Educational approaches

Work based on Bolingbroke Castle and the moat restoration project can be used in many areas of the curriculum and at all Key Stages. However, this section focuses primarily on activities that are useful in a number of subjects at Key Stages 1 and 2 including:

Science at KS1 and 2:

- Plants and animals in their local environment
- Variation
- Habitats
- Life cycles

History at KS 1 and 2:

- What were homes like a long time ago?
- How were homes long ago different from homes today?
- What was it like to live here in the past?

Geography at KS 1 and 2:

- Investigating the local area
- Geographical enquiry and skills

Citizenship at KS 1 and 2:

- Taking part – developing skills of communication and participation
- Animals and us



The information contained in this education pack can be used to inform and support a variety of activities, either as part of an educational visit to Bolingbroke Castle or as classroom based work. The castle is open every day and visits are free of charge. Although facilities on site are limited, arrangements for toilets and wet weather picnics or classroom space in the village hall can usually be made for pre-booked school parties. Some suggested activities are as follows:

Bolingbroke Castle

1. Looking at the plant and animal life

Select a variety of areas around the castle site, for example:

- Near the moat on the south side of the castle (look in the water if you are with an adult to make sure that you don't fall in).
- Near the moat on the north side of the castle (again – make sure that there is no danger of you falling in).
- Part of the castle wall (it is dangerous to actually climb on the wall)
- In the rout yard
- Under the trees near to Moat Lane
- Inside the castle itself

Divide yourselves up into groups and give each group a different area to study. Describe the habitat of the area that you are studying. (Don't forget to think about what it might be like at different times of the year and in different weather conditions).

Study the area and see how many different plants you can find.

Are there any signs of animal life? (You could use magnifiers to help you look for very small plants and animals)

Record your observations – you could do this by writing, drawing, photography etc (or you could devise your own way of recording).

Compare your results with the results of the other groups.

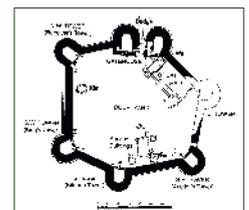
What differences and similarities do you see? Can you think of reasons for these?

You could make a chart or a plan of the castle site and record your discoveries on it.

2. Looking at the castle ruins

This can be done either individually or in groups, on site at the castle or in the classroom.

Each person or group will need a site plan and a copy of the artist's drawing of what the castle might have looked like. An aerial photograph or Google satellite image would also be very useful.





Bolingbroke Castle

Explore the castle ruins and see if you can label the drawing with these features:

- The site of the present causeway
- The gatehouse
- The Receiver's tower
- The King's tower
- The kitchen tower
- The surviving windows in the kitchen tower
- The Auditor's tower
- The Great Hall: Can you find the bumps in the grass that show where it once stood? You could pace them out and estimate how big the hall might have been.
- The kitchen
- The tower that is now missing (the east tower). Can you find where that once stood too?

If you are at the castle don't forget to look at the information boards around the site.

See if you can stand where the people in the castle courtyard are standing.

3. Why is Bolingbroke Castle a good place for newts to live?

How many different reasons can you think of?

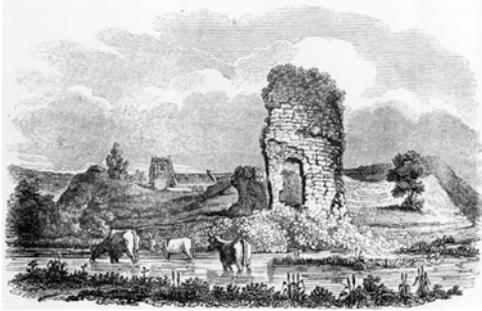
Answers: The moat – they need water to breed
The water plants – they lay their eggs on these
There are no fish in the moat – the eggs do not get eaten by fish
There are plenty of places for the newts to hide when they are on land
There are lots of areas of long grass where they can hunt for food on land

Bolingbroke Castle

4. Changes at the castle through time and chronological understanding:

Put these pictures in date order starting with the earliest:

a



b



c



d



e



f



g



h



Answers and how can you tell? h) the castle is complete, e) the castle walls are cracked and have plants growing on them and the people in the picture are wearing cavalier and roundhead Civil War clothes, a) there is only one broken tower left standing, c) the picture is taken from an aeroplane and the castle walls are covered with earth and grass, f) the remains of the castle walls have been excavated and there is water in the moat, b) the moat has been filled in by vegetation, g) the moat is being de-silted and d) the moat is newly restored and is filling with water.

Bolingbroke Castle

5. Another way of looking at changes at the castle through time:

The findings of the auger survey make a very useful basis for a classroom discussion about how the archaeology of the moat gives clues to the history of the castle site and changes in how it has been used over time. It also provides a very clear illustration of how the archaeology has built up in layers from the oldest at the bottom to the most recent at the top. Consideration of the ways that different materials decay could also be introduced.

See if you can draw your own cross section diagram of the silted-up moat that shows the castle's history. You could even add in some objects that people might have lost in the moat at different times in history.

6. Who lived in the castle?

What sort of person do you think would have owned the castle?

Did everybody live in houses like this?

How many people do you think lived here? (Think about all the jobs that would need doing)

7. Thinking about living in the castle

For the first part of this you will need to look at the artist's reconstruction drawing of the Great Hall.



Look at the drawing of the inside of the Great Hall:

The Great Hall was one of the most important rooms in the castle. In the medieval period the people who lived in the castle ate their meals together in this room and the Lord entertained guests and conducted his official business from here. Look at what the room is like and how it is furnished and heated. Think about your own house and your own mealtimes at home. In what ways do you think mealtimes at the castle would be different?

Bolingbroke Castle

Look at the reconstruction drawing of the castle and the castle plan showing the names of the different towers: The kitchen tower is so called because the kitchens were nearby in a separate building, not because they were inside it. Medieval kitchens were often separate from other buildings. Can you think why this might have been?

Medieval toilets were called garderobes. They consisted of a toilet seat set over a chute built into the wall, with the waste dropping straight down to the bottom of the chute. If you are visiting the castle look for the remains of the toilets built into the castle walls. If you are not at the castle look for the bottoms of the garderobe chutes in the reconstruction drawing of the castle and moat. In medieval times the moat came right up to the base of the walls and the garderobe chutes emptied into it. How is this different from the toilets that we have in our houses today?



8. The context of the castle

For this you will need an Ordnance Survey map for the area (e.g. O.S. Explorer sheet 273 Lincolnshire Wolds South 1: 25 000). It will also help if you can look at internet satellite images of the Old Bolingbroke area.

Look at the map and satellite images and try to describe the landscape around Bolingbroke Castle and the village of Old Bolingbroke from what you can see:

Is the countryside around flat or hilly? (The names of some of the roads might give you an extra clue). Is it more hilly in some places than others?

Is the castle built on a hill or on low ground? Can you think of reasons for this?

Can you tell what the fields are being used for?

How much woodland is there?

Are there any rivers or streams running through or near the village?

9. Identifying animals. What am I?

Match the pictures with the animal descriptions:

I can live in the water or on land.
I have four legs and a tail.
I have an orange belly with black spots.
I lay my eggs on the leaf of a water plant.

I live in the water.
I don't have any legs.
I have dark brown or grey skin.
I have a pointed shell.

I usually live in the water.
I have six legs
I have dark brown hard wing cases on my back.
I have strong jaws to catch my prey.
I can grow to be 3.5cm long

I live near water and can swim on top of it.
I have feathers.
I have a red beak.
My legs are yellow.

I can fly
I have a hooked beak and sharp claws.
I usually come out at night
I eat mice, voles and shrews.

