

**King John's Castle**  
Kings Island, Limerick  
**Junior Certificate Worksheet**  
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**Welcome to King John's Castle. We hope you enjoy your visit!**  
*Use your knowledge of the Junior Certificate course to answer the following questions. Please complete your answers on a separate answer sheet.*

## King John's Castle

In the early 13<sup>th</sup>. Century King John of England declared that there should be a castle in Limerick to serve and protect the interests of the crown. For many years thereafter Limerick Castle was one of the most important "royal" castles of Ireland, and eventually became popularly known as King John's Castle. King John was born around 1167 and he was the youngest son of Henry II. His father made him Lord of Ireland in 1177, but he visited the country only twice.



- (1) Why did the Normans change from building castles in wood to building castles in stone?
- (2) What was the purpose of a 'motte and bailey'? Is King John's Castle a 'motte and bailey' castle?
- (3) Name one material used to build an early Norman motte and bailey.
- (4) Explain the following terms below relating to castles during the Middle Ages. Mark with a tick those features which exist at King John's Castle.  
*Turret, Moat, Keep, Portcullis, Bailey, Battlements, Ramparts*
- (5) Why do you think King John's Castle was built?
- (6) Describe three ways an attacking army would have captured King John's Castle in the Middle Ages.
- (7) How did the occupants of King John's Castle protect themselves from an attack in the Middle Ages?
- (8) Name two defensive features of King John's Castle.
- (9) Give one reason why King John's Castle was built in the position it now stands on.
- (10) Give one reason why the windows in the castle were made so narrow.
- (11) What unique method of warfare was carried out at this castle during the siege of 1642. (clue: see the archaeological evidence)
- (12) During the Cromwellian period, what was the name of the commander of the parliamentarian army which captured the castle in 1651?

## Audio Visual (ground floor)

(13) Fill in the dates in the blank spaces provided below

In ..... AD Limerick was founded by the Vikings. In ..... King John grants a Royal Charter to Limerick. In ..... the building of King John's Castle is begun. In ..... A Royal Mint is opened in Limerick. In July ..... The Battle of the Boyne takes place. On Oct 3<sup>rd</sup> ..... the Treaty of Limerick is signed. In ..... the visitor centre at King John's Castle is opened to the public.

## Archaeology

The archaeological excavations at the castle in 1990 revealed the remains of a number of sunken-floored Ostman houses, an ancient fortification and the foundations of the Eastern wall of the castle. The remains of four mines and four counter mines were also found.



In 1993/94 excavation finds in the courtyard included the remains of a hall and storage area dating back to the late 13<sup>th</sup> century.

(14) How old are the sunken houses beneath the visitor centre building?

(15) Why are the stones numbered beneath the visitor centre building?

(16) Explain the following terms as used by archaeologists:

*Artefact, Megalith, Midden, Post-hole*

(17) Mention two types of primary source a historian can use.

(18) Name some of the items found by archaeologists at King John's Castle. What do these items tell us about life at various periods of history?



*This picture shows an archaeological excavation at King John's Castle. Study the picture and then answer the following questions.*

(19) Name two instruments an archaeologist would use while excavating a site like that at King John's Castle.

(20) Explain two methods used by archaeologists to try to date objects they find.

(21) Write a short piece about an archaeologist working on a dig. (Refer to King John's Castle in your answer)

## The Mint

The mint is a reconstruction of a medieval mint, similar to one that may have stood within the castle during the reign of King John in the early 13<sup>th</sup> Century. Coins would have been made here by the King's moneyer, Willem.



- (22) What did people use in order to buy goods before the invention of coins/money?

## Limerick

Viking raiders first appeared on the Shannon about AD 825. The Vikings laid the foundations of Limerick city in 922.

The Anglo-Norman Intruders arrived in 1172. In the thirteenth century one part to the north became known as English Town and was enclosed by a town wall. Irish Town appeared to the South of the Abbey River and also included a town wall. By 1641 Limerick was the third largest city in Ireland, with a population estimated at about 3500.

## Viking Period

- (23) Where did the Vikings come from?  
(24) In what year was Limerick founded?

## Medieval Life

- (25) In what year did the Normans arrive in Ireland?  
(26) Mention two consequences for Ireland of the Norman invasion in the twelfth century.  
(27) Give two reasons why the Norman invasion of Ireland was successful.  
(28) Mention two dangers faced by people living in Limerick city during the Middle Ages.  
(29) Describe briefly two places where medieval cities developed. (Refer to Limerick City in your answer)  
(30) Give two methods by which a medieval city such as Limerick was defended.  
(31) How did some medieval cities become wealthy and powerful?  
(32) What were guilds in a medieval city?  
(33) Describe how guilds operated.  
(34) Explain the following terms relating to towns in the Middle Ages  
Curfew, Guild, Toll, Charter

- (35) Name two trades you would find in a typical medieval city.
- (36) Write about a craftsman in a medieval town. Name the craft. You may use the following hints in your account. **Hints:** \*How the craftsman was trained  
\*Where the craft was practiced \*The Craft Guild \*The home life of the craftsman
- (37) Name two methods of punishment in medieval times.
- (38) Write about the following and you may, if you wish, use the hints to help you in your answer – **A Knight in Medieval times.** **Hints:** \*Training \*Weapons  
\*Armour \*Chivalry



**Thank you for visiting King John's Castle!**

