

Learn About Sandcastles

To learn more about sandcastles and sandcastle building visit my web site.

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Learn about sandcastles and turn your sandcastle building adventure into knowledge as you learn about the physics of sandcastles and fun sand facts.

What is it about kids and sandcastles?

All kids love to make sandcastles at the beach!

When kids build sandcastles, they begin by gathering water from the ocean to wet the sand.

Not too much water or it gets too goopy -- just enough to make sand stick together without oozing.

Kids love to make sandcastles by letting watery, goopy sand drip from their fingertips, solidifying in place to form odd-looking stalagmites.

What's a stalagmite?

Oh, hey! I'm glad you asked!

Let's have an educational adventure and do some fun learning about sand and castle terminology and then see if you can put some of your new sand and castle terminology to use when you do your sandcastle building!

And hey, when you do build a sandcastle, remember to take a picture of it and [upload your sandcastle pictures here!](#)

You can make your very own web page too! It's easy!

Just [click here and follow the easy instructions!](#) Upload your pictures of sandcastles and tell us your story and make ***your very own web page right now!***

Or go to:

<http://www.i-love-delray-beach.com/build-a-sandcastle.html>

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Sand and Castle Terminology

Abiogenic Sands - Abiogenic sands are mineral sands which derive from non-living sources. Abiogenic sand particles are formed as rocks from the earth's crust break down through weathering and erosion.

Allure - Stone path running along the top of a wall behind the castle battlements.

Apse - A semi circular extension to a rectangular building. Sometimes found on Norman chapels.

Arcading - A row of columns supporting arches.

Arenophile - An arenophile (also called psammophile) is one who collects sand samples, the interest of the hobby lying in the variety of texture, color, mineralogy and location.

Arrow Loop - Vertical slits in a wall through which arrows can be fired. The horizontal slits were added to enable crossbows to have a better range.

Ashlar - A stone block finished with squared sides.

Artillery - Collective name for firearms such as cannons and handguns.

Bailey - Inner courtyard area of a castle.

Ballista - A huge crossbow that fired iron bolts.

Barbican - An extension to the outside of a gateway which improved the entrance's defense.

Barrel Vault - A half barrel shaped arch which makes a stone ceiling.

Bartizan - A small turret on the top corner of a wall or tower.

Bastion - A defensive tower or turret along the top of a wall.

Batter - Flared out stone base of a wall or keep to increase stability. Also known as a Talus.

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Battering Ram - Large, heavy beam used to breach castle walls. Often decorated with a ram's head.

Battlements - Parapet along the top of walls where soldiers could stand and fire at attackers. Also known as crenellations.

Belfry - A siege tower.

Berm - A flat strip of land between a ditch and bank or between the castle walls and moat.

Biogenic Sand - The skeletal remains of plants and animals are a second source of sands. Biogenic sands are also called organic sands or biological sands because they come from the remains of organisms which were once alive.

Bombard - Cannon that fires large stone balls.

Brattice - Generally temporary wooden platforms on the top of towers or walls upon which soldiers could stand to drop missiles. Also known as hoards or hoardings.

Brewhouse - Room or building where ale was brewed.

Buttery - A room where casks of beer and other drinks were stored. The main stock being kept in the cellars. A butler was in charge of the buttery.

Buttress - Vertical stone support built against a wall to strengthen it.

Castellan - An official in charge of a castle.

Castle - A large and stately residence with high walls and towers, that imitates the form of a medieval castle.

Catapult - A siege engine used for throwing large rocks.

Chainmail - Armor made from small interlocking metal rings.

Concentric Defensive Walls - The second outer ring of walling seen on some castles.

Chivalry - A knight's code of honor - covering such things as social, religious and moral ideals.

Citadel - A fortress guarding a city.

Coat of Arms - A visual representation of a noble family using heraldic symbols.

Constable - An official in charge of a castle in the absence of his master.

Courtyard Castle - A castle with a courtyard inside a stone curtain wall.

Crenel - Vertical opening along battlements from which an archer can load his bow and fire, and a gun can be positioned. Also known as an embrasure.

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Cross Wall - Internal dividing wall inside a large keep used to help support floors and roofs, as well as to further impede attackers.

Crystals - A clear, transparent mineral or glass resembling ice. Transparent form of crystallized quartz.

Curtain Wall - Short outer walls of a castle between towers.

Dog Legged Passage - Narrow passageway with angled turns, often found leading to the Garderobe.

Domesday Book - Record of the details of all buildings, land and resources of an estate for tax collecting purposes. Enacted by William I (William the Conqueror).

Donjon - Another word for a keep or great tower. Prisoners were often held here and this is where it is thought that the word Dungeon derives from.

Drawbridge - A wooden bridge that could be raised or lowered, by the use of chains, to shut off or open up the castle entrance.

Dribbling - A variant on the sandcastle is the drip sandcastle, made by mixing the sand with water and dripping it from a fist held above. Some refer to the technique as "dribbling."

Drip Castle - See Dribbling.

Dubbing - The ceremony which creates a knight, by the monarch tapping the shoulders with a sword.

Dungeon - Dank, dark room for holding prisoners.

Earthwork - A fortification made up of earth mounds, banks and ditches.

Feudal System - A political and economic system of Europe from the 9th to about the 15th century, based on the holding of all land in fief or fee and the resulting relation of lord to vassal and characterized by homage, legal and military service of tenants, and forfeiture.

Forebuilding - A protective building at the front of a keep which often housed the chapel and stairs.

Fort - A defensive stronghold usually housing soldiers and other non residents.

Garderobe - Toilet.

Garrison - Company of soldiers stationed in a fortress.

Gatehouse - Heavily fortified building set into the castle walls to protect the main entrance.

Gauntlet - Armored glove with a long cuff worn as part of a suit of armor. To "throw down the gauntlet" means to issue a challenge.

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Goopy - Characteristic of goop; sticky, viscous.

Great Tower - Also known as a Keep, the main tower of a castle which would have contained the great hall and the private quarters of the castle's owner.

Gun Loop - A hole in a wall through which guns could be fired.

Hall - The main reception room of a castle. Used to hold meetings, banquets and also where the servants would have slept.

Heraldry - A system of specific patterns, colors and symbols used to identify a family in their coat of arms.

Herisson - A beam or bar armed with iron spikes, and turning on a pivot used to block up a passage.

Hourglass - An instrument for measuring time, consisting of two bulbs of glass joined by a narrow passage through which a quantity of sand or mercury runs in just an hour.

Joust - A competition between two knights in which they ride towards each other and try to knock one another off their horse with a large pole.

Keep - Name commonly used for the Great Tower or Donjon.

Knight - Highly trained, armored soldier on horseback; usually of noble birth.

Lance Weapon. A long pole made of wood with a pointed metal end.

Lintel - Horizontal support at the top of a window. Usually stone.

Long Bow - Weapon. Large, powerful, long range bow.

Loophole - See arrow loop.

Lord - Male noble or knight. Often owner of a castle and estate, feudal superior.

Mace Weapon - A vicious club with a metal end which was often spiked.

Machicolations - Stone hoardings or brattices with holes for dropping missiles onto attackers below.

Manacle - Metal rings that could be locked to secure the hands of a prisoner.

Mangonel - Siege engine. Used to hurl large stones and other missiles.

Master mason - Skilled craftsman in the use of stone. Would have designed castles.

Merlon - Vertical solid parts of battlements which stood between the crenels.

Moat - A defensive ditch surrounding a castle. Usually filled with water.

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Molecule - The smallest physical unit of an element or compound, consisting of one or more like atoms in an element and two or more different atoms in a compound.

Molecular - Of or pertaining to or caused by molecules: molecular structure.

Motte - The mound - manmade or natural - upon which a castle was built. Usually associated with a bailey.

Murder Holes - Murder holes are sections between the cullis where arrows, rocks, and hot oil can be dropped from the roof through holes.

Newel - The Centre post of spiral staircase or the main post supporting the end of a balustrade.

Ocean - An ocean is a major body of saline water, and a principal component of the hydrosphere. Approximately 74% of the Earth's surface (an area of some 361 million square kilometers) is covered by ocean, a continuous body of water that is customarily divided into several principal oceans and smaller seas.

Oriel Window - A bay window located above the first floor, usually supported by brackets or corbels, it is a window, the structure of which projects out from its wall's surface.

Oubliette - A dungeon reached by a trap door. To exit an oubliette was impossible under any circumstances, without outside help.

Page - in castle terminology a page is a young male servant.

Palisade - A palisade or a Medieval wooden fence or wall of variable height, used as a defensive structure.

Pantry - A pantry in castle terminology is a room, usually near a kitchen in which provisions, crockery, cutlery etc. are kept.

Parapet - A portion of a vertical wall of a building that extends above the roofline, consists of a dwarf wall along the edge of a roof, or round a lead flat, terrace walk, etc., to prevent persons from falling over, and as a protection to the defenders in case of a siege.

Peasants - A peasant is an agricultural worker or farmer with roots in the countryside in which he dwells, either working for others or, more specifically, owning or renting and working by his own labor a small plot of ground.

Pele Tower or Peel Towers - A small fortified keep intended as watch tower where signal fires could be lit to warn of approaching danger.

Plate Armor - Plate armor is personal armor made from large metal plates, worn on the chest and sometimes the entire body, it is fitted body armor made of linked sheets of solid metal.

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Portcullis - A heavy timber or metal grill that protected a castle entrance. A portcullis could be raised or lowered from within the castle. It dropped vertically between grooves to block passage or barbican, or to trap attackers.

Postern Gate - A side gate or a castle gate that is a less important entry gate into a castle; usually for peacetime use by pedestrians.

Putlog Hole - A hole intentionally left in the surface of a wall for insertion of a horizontal pole.

Quoin - Dressed stone at angle of building. A rafter-part of the frame for a wooden roof, sloping down from the ridge and establishing the pitch.

Ribbed Vault - A vault that resembles a groined vault but has ribbed arches.

Rubble - Rough fragments of broken stone usually caused by geological processes.

Sally Port - A small, easily secured door in a castle wall or other fortification. During a siege, defending raiding parties would "sally forth" from these ports and attack the besiegers.

Salt - See Sodium Chloride.

Salt Water - Water containing a large amount of salt. Ocean water.

Sand - The more or less fine debris of rocks, consisting of small, loose grains, often of quartz.

Sandcastle - A small castle-like structure made of wet sand, as by children at a beach.

Sand Dollar - Any of various flat, disk-like sea urchins, as *Mellita testudinata* or *Echinarachnius parma*, that live on sandy bottoms off the coasts of the U.S.

Sand Dunes - Ridges of sand created by the wind; found in deserts or near lakes and oceans.

Sand Sculpture - A sand castle is a type of sand sculpture resembling a miniature building, often a castle. The two basic building ingredients, sand and water.

Sentry - A lookout: a person employed to watch for something to happen.

Siege - A military blockade of a town or fortified place such as a castle. The aim of a siege is to force its inhabitants to surrender by cutting communications and supply lines.

Siege Engine - A siege engine is a device that is designed to break or circumvent castle walls.

Siege Tower - A siege tower is a specialized siege engine, constructed to protect assailants and ladders whilst approaching the defensive walls of a castle.

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Slighting – The deliberate destruction of a castle without opposition from its builders, owners or its inhabitants.

Sodium Chloride - Also known as common salt, table salt, or halite, is an ionic compound with the formula NaCl. Sodium chloride is the salt most responsible for the salinity of the ocean and of the extracellular fluid of many multicellular organisms. As the major ingredient in edible salt, it is commonly used as a condiment and food preservative.

Solar - An upper living room. It is often situated over the castles great hall.

Squint - An observation hole in wall or room.

Squire – A young nobleman attendant on a knight. In medieval times a squire was a man-at-arms in the service of a knight, often as his apprentice in training to become a knight.

Stalagmite – A deposit, usually of calcium carbonate, more or less resembling an inverted stalactite, formed on the floor of a cave or the like by the dripping of percolating calcareous water.

Steward - The man responsible for running the day-to-day affairs of the castle in the absence of the lord of the castle.

Surface Tension - The cohesive forces between liquid molecules are responsible for the phenomenon known as surface tension.

Talus - The much thickened lower portion as part of a medieval castle curtain wall, designed to prevent attackers from getting too close to the base of the wall, where they might be hidden from the line of fire.

Tournament - A series of jousts between knights contesting for a prize.

Trebuchet - like a catapult: medieval artillery used during sieges. A trebuchet is literally a medieval siege engine used either to batter masonry or to throw projectiles over walls that worked by counter balancing weights or stones to generate propulsion for a swinging wooden arm used launch giant stones at castle walls.

Turret - A small slender tower on the upper part of a castle usually a used as a lookout. A Turret is often placed at an angle.

Vault - An arched roof usually of stone.

Visor - A helmet visor was used during the medieval times as part of armor.

Wall Walk – The wall walk is the area along the top of a castle's walls from which soldiers defended both castle and town, like a fighting platform atop the curtain wall.

Ward - Another name for a castle courtyard.

Wing Wall - An extension of a wall which projects out beyond the building itself.

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