



About the Book

Text Type: Nonfiction/Informational Page Count: 24 Word Count: 1,515

Book Summary

Castles is a factual text that delves into the intricacies of castle building. Details about interior and exterior features are included, as well as information about the people who lived in and around medieval castles. Photographs and illustrations support this informative text.

About the Lesson

Targeted Reading Strategy

- Summarize

Objectives

- Mentally summarize key information while reading
- Identify main idea and details in text
- Recognize subjects in sentences
- Identify and use content vocabulary

Materials

Green text indicates resources available on the website

- Book—**Castles** (copy for each student)
- Chalkboard or dry erase board
- **Main idea and details, content vocabulary worksheets**
- **Discussion cards**



Indicates an opportunity for students to mark in the book. (All activities may be demonstrated by projecting the book on interactive whiteboard or completed with paper and pencil if books are reused.)

Vocabulary

- **Content words:** *artisans, attackers, classes, commoners, craftsmen, farmers, knights, merchants, nobles*

Before Reading

Build Background

- Discuss castles. Ask students to tell what they think of when they hear the word, who they think lived or lives in castles, and where castles are located.

Preview the Book

Introduce the Book

- Give students a copy of the book and have them preview the front and back covers and read the title. Have students discuss what they see on the covers and offer ideas as to what kind of book this is and what it might be about.
- Direct students to the table of contents. Remind students that the table of contents provides an overview of the book. After reviewing the section titles, model using the table of contents to summarize what the book is about.

Introduce the Reading Strategy: **Summarize**

- Model summarizing.
Think-aloud: To summarize what I've read, I need to decide what's important and what isn't. Then, in my mind, I organize the important information into a few sentences and think about them for a couple of minutes. If I need to write a summary, I'll put the information into my own words. Since I haven't read the book yet, it's difficult to decide what's important and what isn't at this point, but as I read, I will think about what is important and what isn't.
- Show students the title page. Talk about the information on the page (title of book, author and illustrator's name).
- Have students preview the rest of the book, looking at photos and illustrations, as well as the captions.
- As students read, they should use other reading strategies in addition to the targeted strategy presented in this section.

Introduce the Vocabulary


- Remind students of the strategies they can use to work out words they don't know. For example, they can use what they know about letter and sound correspondence to figure out the word. They can look for words within words, prefixes, and suffixes. They can use the context to work out the meanings of unfamiliar words.
- Model how to apply word-attack strategies. Write the following sentence on the board: *Living outside the castle was another class of people called commoners.* Ask students to identify the base word (*common*) and to explain what it means (ordinary). Ask students how adding the *-er* suffix to a word changes its meaning (a person or thing that does something). Have students reword the sentence.
- Direct students to the bold word on page 5. Read the paragraph aloud. Tell students to look for clues to the word's meaning in sentences before and after the sentence containing the unfamiliar word. Ask students if the meaning they decided on fits with what they read in the paragraph.
- Remind students that they can check whether a word makes sense by rereading the sentence.

Set the Purpose

- Have students mentally summarize the important information in each section as they read about castles.

During Reading

Student Reading

- **Guide the reading:** Have students read to the end of page 7. Tell them to look for the important ideas in each section. Have them underline words or phrases in the book that contain important information. If they finish before everyone else, they can go back and reread.
 - When they have finished reading, have students recount the important information in each section. Write these main ideas on the board. Have students tell the important details and add these to the board. Model how to mentally summarize the information.
Think-aloud: When I think about what I've read and the list we've made on the board, I say to myself: Castles were built to protect the wealthy nobles from their enemies. The castles were strong buildings that had towers for the guards. The guards and other servants lived inside the castle with the nobles. Commoners lived outside the castle in small towns or villages. I'll pause and think this over for a couple of minutes before reading the next section.
 - Tell students to read the remainder of the book, looking for the more important information and mentally summarizing what they read.
-  Have students make a question mark in their book beside any word they do not understand or cannot pronounce. Encourage them to use the strategies they have learned to read each word and figure out its meaning.

After Reading


- Ask students what words, if any, they marked in their book. Use this opportunity to model how they can read these words using decoding strategies and context clues.

Reflect on the Reading Strategy

- Reinforce how mentally summarizing the important information they found in each section keeps students actively engaged in what they are reading and helps them understand and remember what they have read.

Teach the Comprehension Skill: **Main idea and details**


- **Discussion:** Ask students what it must have been like to live during the time of castles. Have them talk about the everyday things they have that people who lived back then did not have. Ask students to suggest ways people communicated with each other, took care of health problems, traveled, and learned things.
- **Introduce and model:** Review or explain that many books are about one thing. Show students the book, and ask them to tell the topic of the book (castles). Draw a fact web with a large center circle and seven attached circles. Write the word *castles* in the center circle.
- Direct students to the table of contents. Explain that each section in this nonfiction book has a main idea and supporting details that provide additional information about the main idea. Have students look at the first section title. Explain that the main idea of this section tells what a castle is and that the details in the section tell more information. Write *What is a castle?* in one of the smaller circles. Ask students to provide details. Attach small circles for the details. Explain that finding the main idea and important details in text makes it easier for them to summarize and helps them understand and remember what the book is about.
- **Check for understanding:** Have students look at the second section title. Ask what they think the main idea might be. Write *The first castles* in another circle. Ask students to name some supporting details from this section, and write them on the board as before.
- **Independent practice:** Have students complete the [main idea-and-details worksheet](#). Discuss their responses.

 Instruct students to use the last page of the book to write four important facts they learned about castles. Have them share their list with the group.

Build Skills

Grammar and Mechanics: **Sentence subjects**

- Direct students to page 4 in the book. Read the first sentence. Ask students to tell who or what the sentence is about (many great castles). Review or explain that a sentence has two parts. One part is called the *subject*. The subject tells who or what the sentence is about.
- Write the following sentence on the board: *During the Middle Ages, many great castles were built across Europe.* Underline the words *many great castles* and explain that this is the complete subject. Explain that the introductory phrase could come instead at the end of the sentence.
- Have students read the next sentence and identify the subject (*The castles*). Tell students if they are unsure about the subject to ask the question “Who did what?” or “What did what?”

 **Check for understanding:** Have pairs of students work together to underline the subject of each sentence on pages 6 and 7. Monitor students’ understanding. Check their responses.

Word Work: **Content vocabulary**

- Tell students that many of the words they read in the book are used to tell about castles. Provide opportunities for students to talk about difficult words, such as *catapult* and *trebuchet*. Provide opportunities for students to say the new vocabulary words, talk about their meanings, and use the words in sentences.
- **Check for understanding:** Have students complete the [content vocabulary worksheet](#).

Build Fluency

Independent Reading

- Allow students to read their book independently. Additionally, allow partners to take turns reading parts of the book to each other.

Home Connection

- Give students their book to take home to read with parents, caregivers, siblings, or friends.

Extend the Reading

Informational Writing Connection

Have students write a first-person story about living in a castle. Show students how to make a character web before beginning to help them develop the character. Include information such as age, name, brothers/sisters, position or class, and pets. Encourage students to include details about the castle, including what it looks like, how big the rooms are, how many rooms there are, secret passages, the moat, drawbridges, and turrets. Have students share their stories with the group.

Visit [Writing A-Z](#) for a lesson and leveled materials on expository writing.

Social Studies Connection

Have students work cooperatively in small groups to research a castle. Provide written and online resources. Have each group present their findings to the class, including when and why the castle was built, who lived (or lives) there, and what the castle is used for today. Encourage students to make drawings or models of the castle.

Skill Review

[Discussion cards](#) covering comprehension skills and strategies not explicitly taught with the book are provided as an extension activity. The following is a list of some ways these cards can be used with students:

- Use as discussion starters for literature circles.
- Have students choose one or more cards and write a response, either as an essay or as a journal entry.
- Distribute before reading the book and have students use one of the questions as a purpose for reading.
- Cut apart and use the cards as game cards with a board game.
- Conduct a class discussion as a review before the book quiz.

Assessment

Monitor students to determine if they can:

- summarize details in their mind while they read
- identify, organize, and summarize main ideas and details on a worksheet
- recognize subjects in sentences in the book
- define and use content vocabulary on a worksheet

Comprehension Checks

- [Book Quiz](#)
- [Retelling Rubric](#)