

THE IMPOSSIBLE QUEST

GLOSSARY OF CASTLE TERMS

Arrow Loop – A narrow vertical slit cut into a wall through which arrows can be fired from inside.

Bailey – The ward or courtyard inside the castle walls; includes exercise area, parade ground, emergency corral.

Barbican – The gateway or outworks defending the drawbridge.

Bastion – A small tower at the end of a curtain wall or in the middle of the outside wall; solid masonry projection; structural rather than inhabitable.

Battlement – Parapet with indentations or embrasures, with raised portions (merlons) between; crenellations; a narrow wall built along the outer edge of the wall-walk for protection against attack.

Buttery – Next to the kitchen, a room from where wine is dispensed.

Buttress – Wall projection for extra support; flying - narrow, arched bridge against the main structure; pilaster - gradually recedes into the structure as it ascends.

Cesspit – The opening in a wall in which the waste from one or more garderobes is collected.

Crenellation – Battlement at the top of a tower or wall.

Drawbridge – A heavy timber platform built to span a moat between a gatehouse and surrounding land that can be raised when required to block an entrance.

Dungeon – A small, dark cell, usually underground.

Gallery – Long passage or room.

Garderobe – A small latrine or toilet either built into the thickness of the wall or projected out from it.

Gate House – The complex of towers, bridges and barriers built to protect each entrance through a castle or town wall.

Great Hall – The building in the inner ward that houses the main meeting and dining area for the castle's residents.

Inner Ward – The open area in the centre of a castle.

Keep – A strong stone tower; main tower; dungeon (or donjon); stronghold.

Lancet – Long, narrow window with pointed head.

Loophole – Narrow, tall opening in wall for light, air, or shooting through.

Moat – A deep trench usually filled with water that surrounds a castle.

Murder Holes – A section between the main gate and an inner portcullis where arrows, rocks, and hot oil can be dropped from the roof through holes. Provides good cover for defenders and leaves the attackers exposed. Only used when outer gate has been breached.

Oubliette – A dungeon reached by a trap door; starvation hole.

Outer Curtain – The wall that encloses the outer ward.

Outer Ward – The space between the inner and outer walls – often used for knights' training and exercise.

Parapet – Low wall on outer side of main wall.

Portcullis – A heavy timber or metal grille that protects the castle entrance and can be raised or lowered from within the castle.

Postern Gate – A side or less important gate into a castle; usually for peacetime use by pedestrians.

Rampart – Defensive stone or earth wall surrounding castle.

Sally-port – Small, heavily fortified side door from which defenders can rush out, strike, and retire.

Solar – Upper living room, often over the great hall; the lord's private living room.

Turret – Small tower, round or polygonal; often a lookout.

Vault – Stone roofing.

Wall-stair – Staircase built into the thickness of a wall.

Wall-walk – Passage along castle wall; may be roofed.