



# Culture and Traditions

Short-answer questions: Corfe Castle | Cambridge IGCSE ESL 0510/0511

## 1. Lead-in discussion

Talk with a partner before you read.

1. Why do people visit ruined castles?
2. Should old buildings be repaired or left as ruins?
3. What can castles show us about power?
4. How can tourism help protect historic places?

### Exercise 1 at a glance

Read one factual text. Answers are in the text. Copy exact words and check the question carefully before choosing your answer.

## 2. Read for overall understanding

Read the text. Why is Corfe Castle an important historic site?

### Corfe Castle

Corfe Castle stands on a hill above the village of Corfe in Dorset. The position made it a powerful place because it controlled a gap in the Purbeck hills. People travelling through the area could be seen from the castle, and the high ground made the site easier to defend. The ruins are now looked after by the National Trust.

The castle has a history of more than a thousand years. A fortification existed there before the Norman period, but the stone castle became especially important after the Norman Conquest. Kings used Corfe as a royal stronghold, and its thick walls, towers and gatehouse showed both military strength and political power.

Corfe Castle was not only a defensive building. It was also a place where important people stayed, prisoners were held and valuable goods could be protected. The castle's position between countryside, coast and village helped make it useful for controlling the surrounding area.

One of the most dramatic periods in the castle's history came during the English Civil War in the seventeenth century. The castle was defended for the royalist side by Lady Mary Bankes. Parliamentarian forces attacked it more than once, but the defenders resisted for a long time. The castle eventually fell after betrayal from inside the garrison.

After the Civil War, Parliament ordered the castle to be deliberately damaged so it could not be used as a fortress again. This process is called slighting. Walls were broken, towers collapsed and the castle became the ruined landmark visitors see today. The ruins may look romantic, but they are also evidence of political conflict.

Modern conservation work tries to keep the ruins safe without rebuilding the castle as if nothing had happened. Visitors can walk through the remains, look over the village and learn how the building changed over time. Corfe Castle is therefore valuable not because it is complete, but because its broken walls tell a long story of defence, power, conflict and preservation.

The castle is also closely linked to the village below it. Stone from the damaged castle was reused in local buildings, so the history of the fortress did not disappear completely when the walls fell. Visitors can therefore see the relationship between the ruin, the village and the wider landscape. This makes the site useful for understanding how historic buildings can continue to shape everyday places long after their original purpose has ended.

Because it is a ruin, Corfe Castle needs constant care. Loose stone, weather, plants and large numbers of visitors can all cause damage. Conservation teams have to make the site safe without making it look new. This careful balance helps explain why old places are not simply left alone; they need skilled work if future visitors are to understand them.

### 3. Strategy focus

#### Check the period of history

A historical text may mention several periods. Check whether the question asks about early history, the Civil War, or the castle today.

### 4. Exam-style short-answer questions

Answer the questions using words from the text.

1. What did the castle control in the Purbeck hills? [1]

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2. Who looks after the ruins today? [1]

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3. What did the castle's thick walls, towers and gatehouse show besides military strength? [1]

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4. Who defended the castle for the royalist side? [1]

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5. What is the process of deliberately damaging a castle called? [1]

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6. According to the text, what are three reasons Corfe Castle was useful or important? [3]

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### 5. Vocabulary notebook

Underline five useful words or phrases. Check their meaning, then record them in your vocabulary notebook.

### 6. Follow-up tasks

1. Discussion: Should ruined castles be rebuilt?
2. Summary: Summarise Corfe Castle in about 50 words.
3. Creative task: Write a visitor sign for one part of the castle.
4. Research: Find another British castle with a dramatic history.

# Culture and Traditions

Short-answer questions: Corfe Castle

## 2. Read for overall understanding

Suggested answer: Corfe Castle is important because it has a long history, shows how castles were used for power and defence, and is now protected as a historic ruin for visitors.

## 4. Exam-style short-answer questions

1. a gap in the Purbeck hills
2. the National Trust
3. political power
4. Lady Mary Bankes
5. slighting
6. Any three from: controlled a gap in the Purbeck hills; high ground made it easier to defend; royal stronghold; place where important people stayed; prisoners were held; valuable goods could be protected.

## Notes for checking

1. Answers should be short and clearly based on the text.
2. Accept bracketed or optional wording if the meaning is clear.
3. For the final question, learners need three separate details.