



The Norman Conquest



Learning Objective:

To find out why the Normans built castles

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After he was crowned king of England on Christmas Day in 1066, William needed to ensure that he kept England under his control in the **long term**. The Normans were still greatly outnumbered by the English, many of whom were still very angry about William being their king.



How do you think he achieved this?

Think, pair, then share your ideas.

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William ordered the building of lots of **castles** along the coast and all over the country. They were especially built in areas where there was resistance to the new king.



This map shows the approximate locations of some of the castles built by William.

It is thought that altogether, between 500 and 1000 castles were built in England during William's reign.



What **advantages** might having lots of castles have given William?

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Advantages of William's castles

The castles provided **protection** for William and his fellow Normans.

They were a show of **strength** and **power**, and were a reminder to the English people that the Norman soldiers were never far away, and were ready to fight off any attempts at rebellion.

They could easily be seen and **intimidated** people - this made them scared and wary of rebelling against William.



They became a very effective way of **controlling** the angry, unhappy population of England.

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What do you think William's castles
looked like?
What materials were they made from?

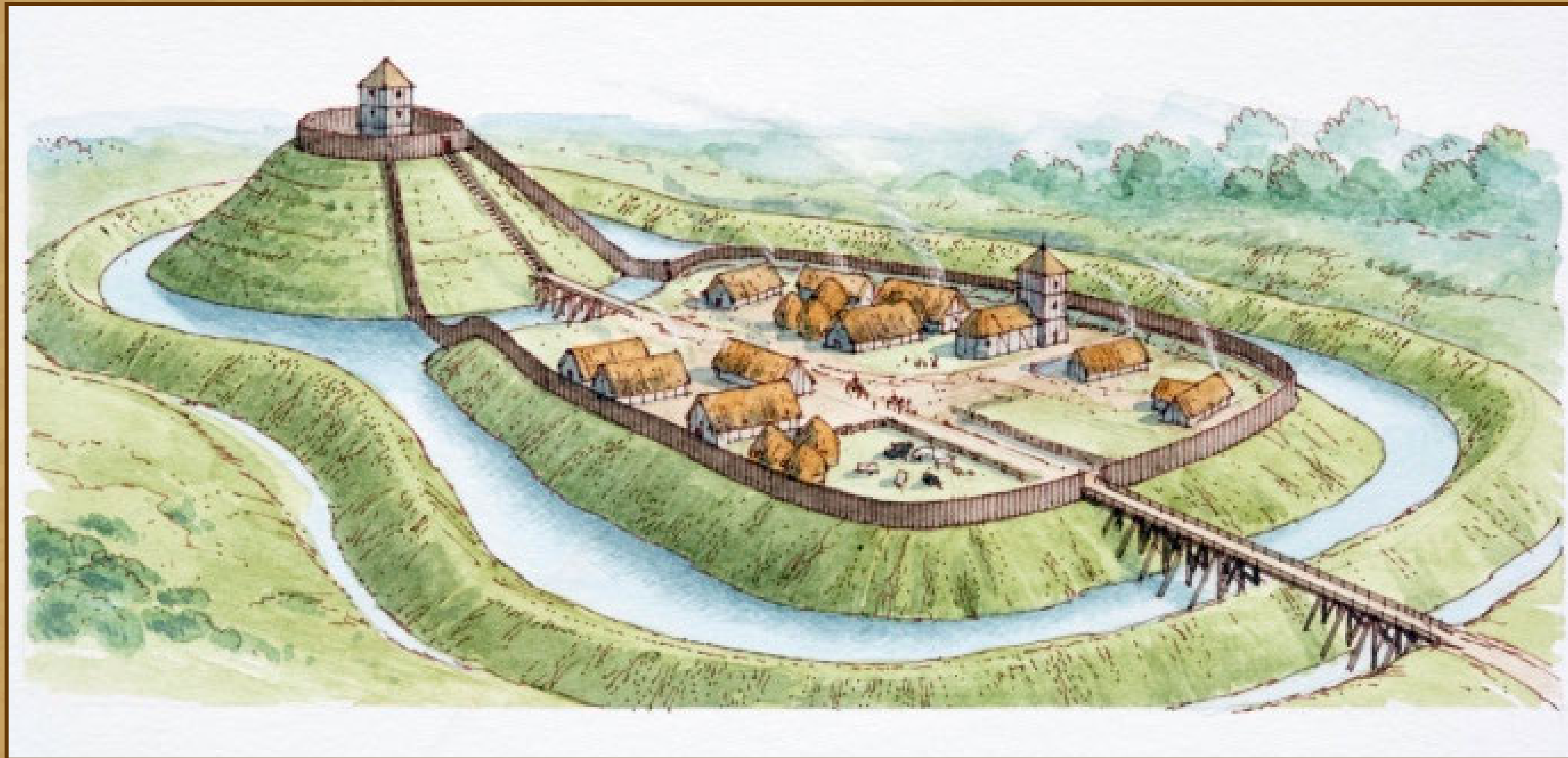


**Think, pair, then
share your ideas.**

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This is a drawing of the first type of castle that William built in England. It is called a **motte and bailey castle**.



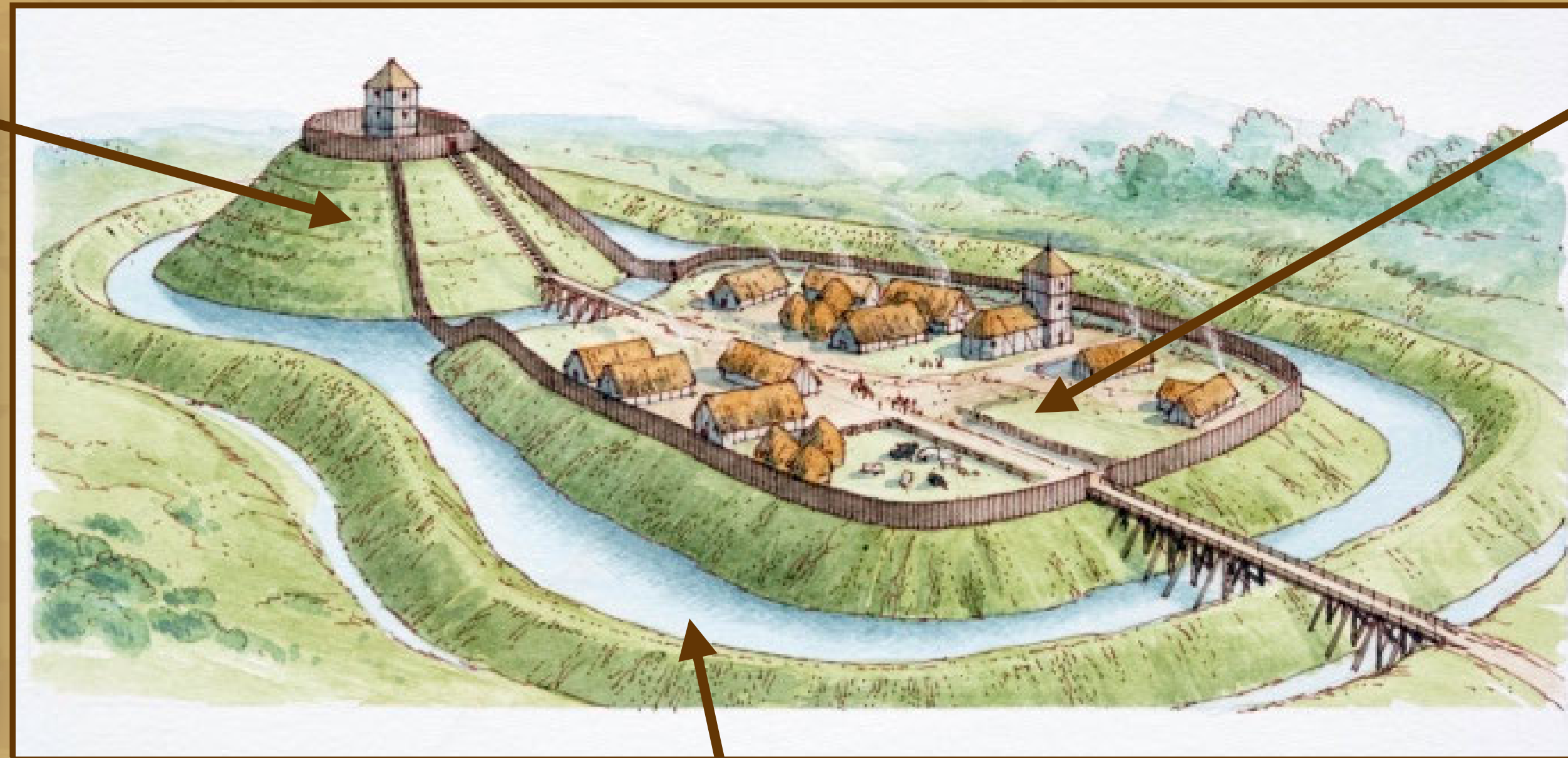
What can you see?

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The name came from the French words '**motte**' which meant '**mound of earth**', and '**bailey**' which meant '**enclosure**'.

The **motte** was a large hill, on top of which was a wooden **keep**, or lookout. It was surrounded by a wooden fence called a **palisade**.



The **bailey** was where people lived and animals were kept. It was separated from the motte by a wooden bridge. It was also surrounded by a palisade.

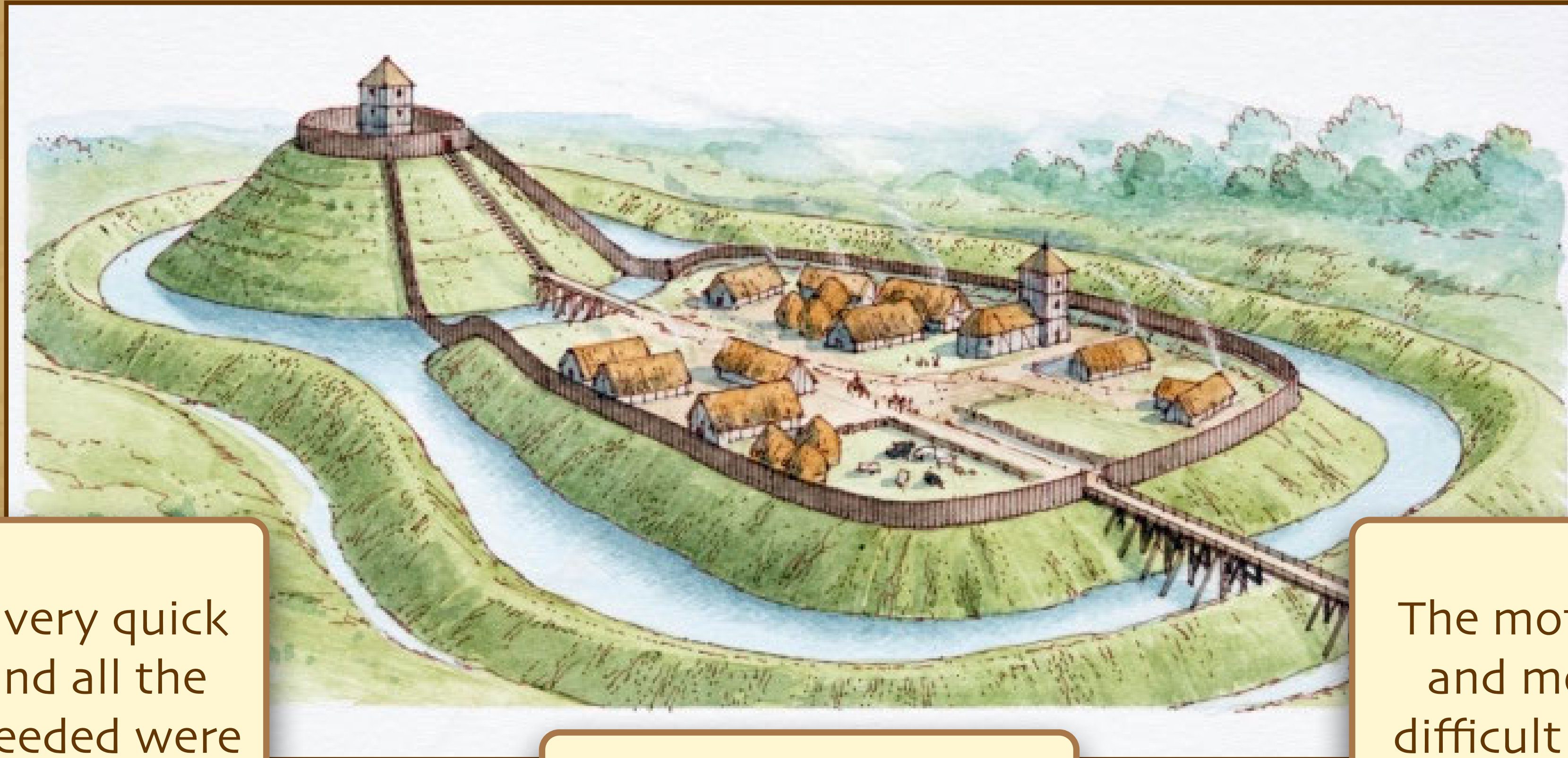
The motte and bailey were surrounded by a ditch, which when filled with water, became a **moat**.

What do you think the **advantages** and **disadvantages** of this type of castle were?

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Advantages of a motte and bailey castle:



They were very quick to build, and all the materials needed were easily available.

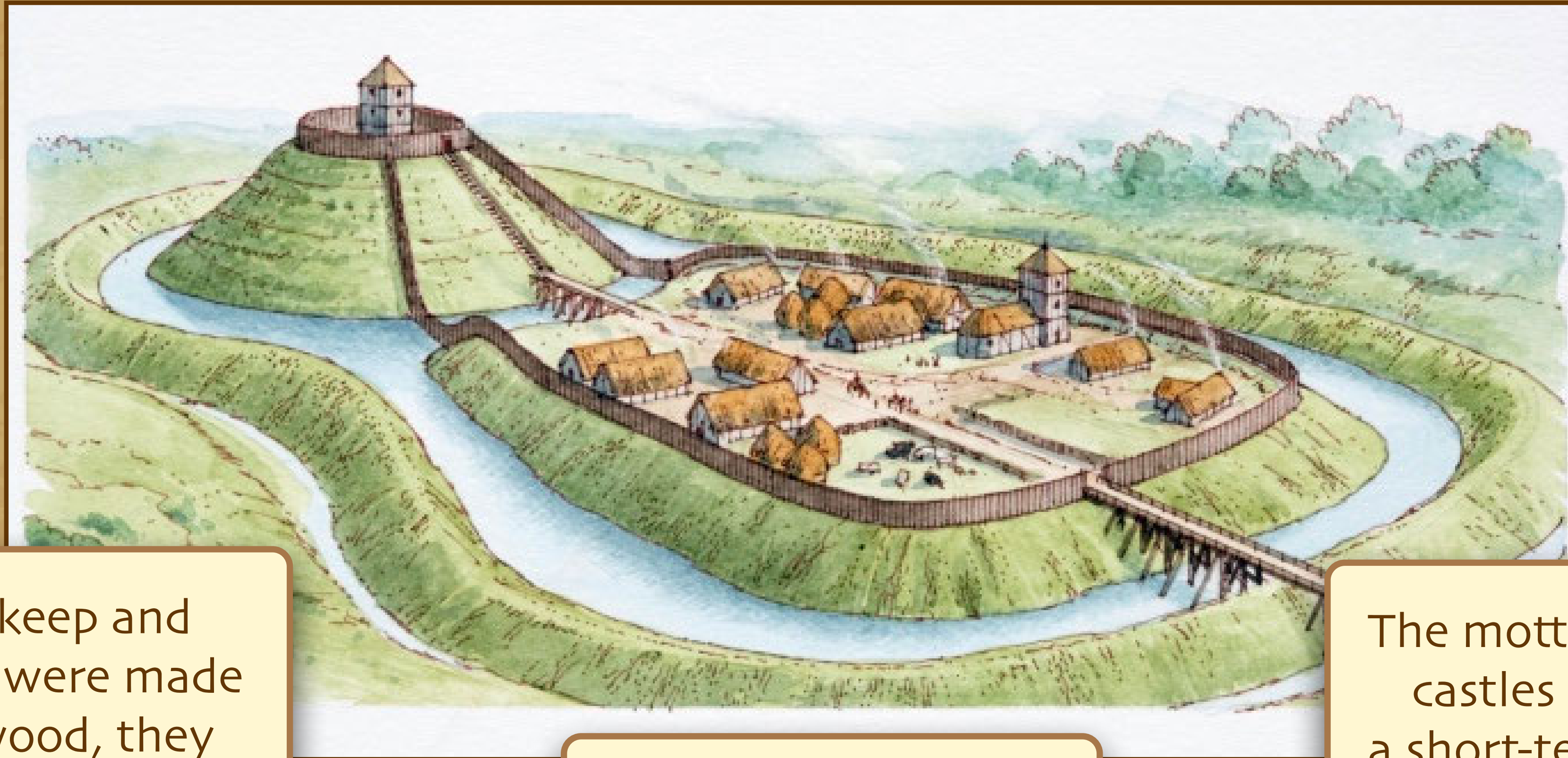
They could house lots of people and livestock safely.

The motte, palisades and moat made it difficult for attackers to access the castle.

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Disadvantages of a motte and bailey castle:



As the keep and palisades were made out of wood, they could be easily burnt down.

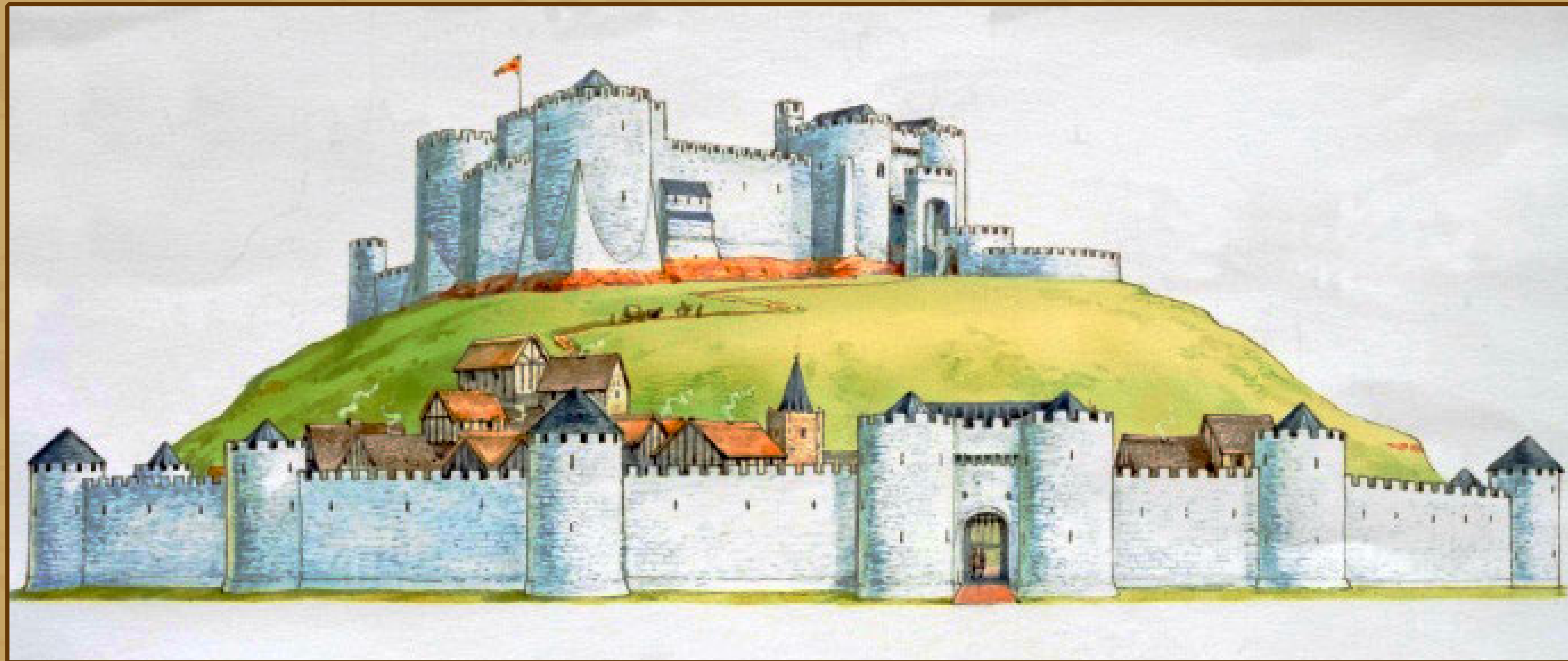
The wood could rot in wet weather, making the defences weaker.

The motte and bailey castles were only a short-term solution to a problem, and were not built to last.

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Over time, when William's reign over England became more secure, the wooden motte and bailey castles were replaced with **stone keep castles**. Why do you think this was?

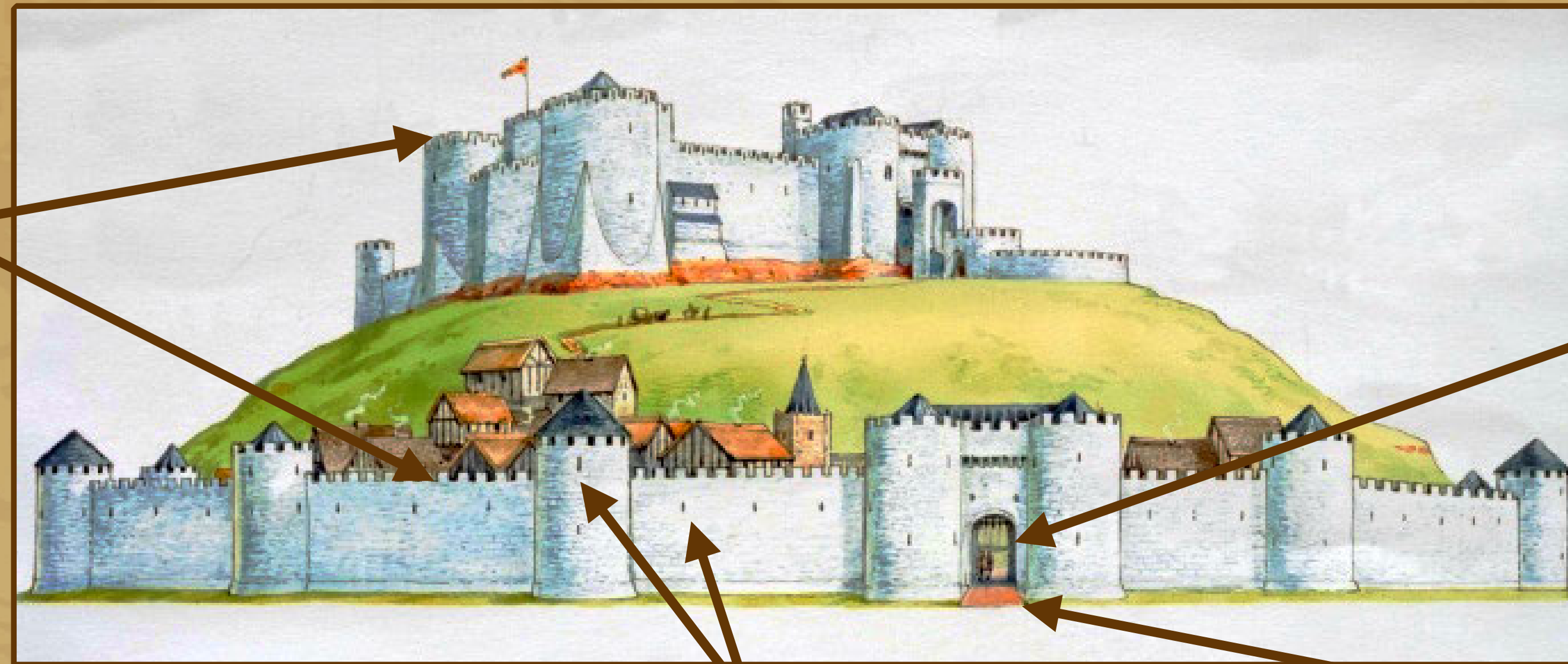


What can you see?

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Let's look at some of the features of stone keep castle:



The **battlements** were useful for observing, as well as firing arrows, from.

The **portcullis** (a strong, heavy barrier) could be lowered vertically at a gateway to block it.

The stone walls were between two and six metres thick.

Archers could fire from the narrow **arrowslits** in the walls.

A **drawbridge** over the moat could be raised or lowered.

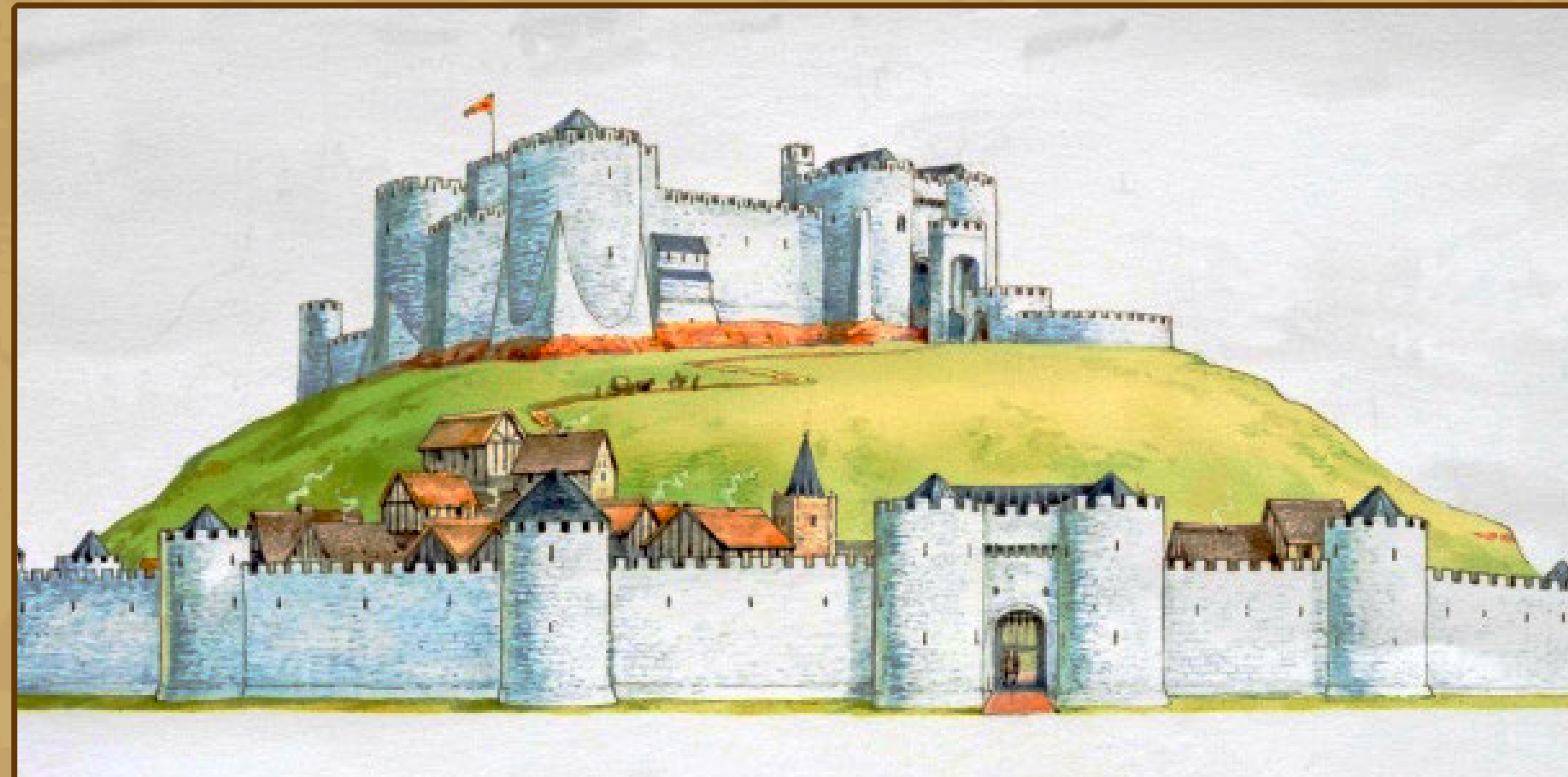
What do you think the **advantages** and **disadvantages** of this type of castle were?

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Advantages of a stone keep castle:

Visually, it was a more **impressive** and **intimidating** building which could be seen from miles away due to its height.



A stone castle could be built inside the walls of the motte and bailey castle, meaning that it could still be lived in whilst the changes were made.

It was easily **defendable** due to its special features.

Unlike a wooden castle, the stone keep would not rot or go up in flames.

It was much more **comfortable** and **safe** to live in.

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Disadvantages of a stone keep castle:

They were very **expensive** to build and maintain, so only the wealthiest could afford to live in them.



They could be badly **damaged** by weapons such as trebuchets, which could hurl heavy rocks at the walls.

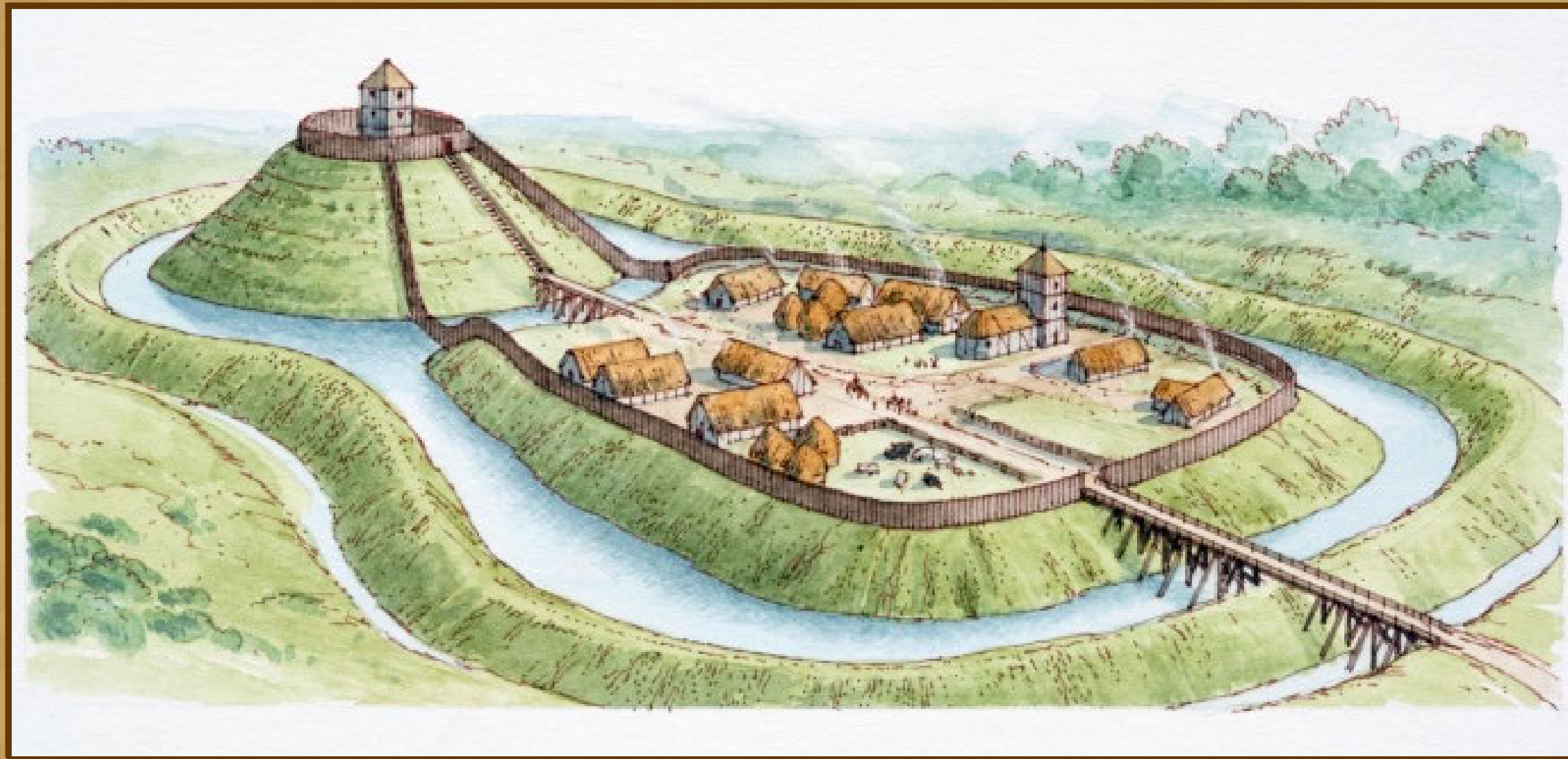
Attackers could tunnel underneath a corner of the castle to weaken it so that it would collapse.

They were very **time-consuming** to build.

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Motte and bailey castle



Stone keep castle



If you were an **Anglo-Saxon**, which type of castle would you rather attack, and why?



If you were a **Norman**, which type of castle would you rather live in, and why?

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Now that you know why William built castles, and what they looked like, it's time for you to conduct some of your own research to find out what they were like to live in!



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Plenary:

Explain to your partner why William the Conqueror built so many castles in England.



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