

HOUSES IN BRITAIN

Some of the oldest buildings in this country are the ruins left behind from the days of the Romans and Normans. The houses built by the common people have disappeared/ although if you walk through some of our oldest cities like Lincoln and Chester you will find buildings that are hundreds of years old.

The first people to settle in Britain had to build some form of shelter against the cold and damp climate. They naturally used the building material that was easily obtainable - wood. The very first British homes would have looked something like a tent of sacks covered with grass and heather. Later, wattle and daub huts were built. Wattle was a kind of basketwork and this was smeared with wet clay called daub. In Chester wattle and daub huts were built and then surrounded by a fence for protection. These were the first villages and were the kind of homes the British people were living in when the Romans arrived in our country.

The Romans were expert builders and used stone and tiles for their forts and villas, but the Saxons used wood for their buildings. They left the fine towns built by the Romans to fall into ruin. Many lived in mud huts, although the most important members of the community built large halls, like barns/ of timber andthatch.

When the Normans conquered the country they built large motte and bailey castles (in order to control the Saxons. The motte was the mound on which the living quarters were built and the bailey was the fortification or walls built around the motte. At first these castles were made of wood but later stone buildings were erected to replace them. After the Norman Conquest, towns began to grow up behind stout protective walls. As time went by more and more buildings were put up Inside the town wall and conditions became very cramped. York is a very good example of a walled town of the Middle Ages. If you visit that city and walk down the Shambles you will get a very good idea of what medieval streets and buildings were like.

(taken from the NLS Training Materials)

1. Mark in one colour the groups of people who have lived in Britain, according to the passage.
2. In another colour mark the different types of building materials which have been used to build houses in Britain.
3. Draw a time line to show the order in which the groups of people mentioned in the passage settled in Britain.

Against each group of people, list the building materials they used for houses.