

SELF-LED ACTIVITY

A SIEGE OF TWO SIDES



KS3

KS4+

Recommended for

KS3 and KS4 (History, English)

Learning objectives

- Identify how, by comparing different sources about the same event, historians can make judgements about utility and reliability.
- Analyse techniques of language used to persuade.

Time to complete

Approx. 30 minutes



During the 1216 siege of Dover Castle, French miners tunnelled beneath the north gatehouse and its eastern tower collapsed, but, the English forces fought off the invaders.

SUMMARY

Students can compare Sources 1 and 2 (on pages 69 and 70), which both describe the siege of Dover Castle in 1216, but from French and English perspectives.

Students should first work in pairs or small groups and look for similarities and differences in the content of the sources – do they describe the events differently? They should then think about why the authors might want to portray the event and those involved in a particular way. It is important to consider who the authors of the sources were, and why they were writing. How might this affect the sources' reliability?

Next, students can look at specific language techniques used by both authors. How do they use language to portray the event and the people involved from their point of view? For example, use of imagery, interesting adjectives and active verbs. They can circle these words or phrases on their copies of the sources and discuss their effect with a partner, before sharing with the whole class.

MORE LEARNING IDEAS

Students could imagine that they are involved in the siege of 1265, when Eleanor de Montfort tried to hold the castle against Prince Edward. They should choose a side – either supporting Eleanor and the rebel barons or the king, Henry III – and write an account of the siege that uses language techniques to portray their leader in a favourable light. They should try not to stray too far from the facts!