

VOCABULARY

Abbey	– The highest rank of monastery.
Abbot	– the head of an abbey.
Abbess	– the (female) head of an abbey whose inhabitants are nuns.
Archbishop	– a ‘chief bishop’, who has authority over a group of other bishops in a defined region.
Archdeacon	– a senior clergyman, the bishop’s main assistant.
Archer	– a soldier who uses a long-bow.
Attillator	– someone who makes weaponry, especially arrowheads.
Auditor	– an official who examines financial accounts to check money paid out against proof of payment.
Bachelor	– a young knight, not old enough, or not having enough of his own men to have his own banner.
Baillie	– an important official in a burgh or county.
Banneret	– a senior knight, entitled to lead men onto the battle-field under his own banner.
Bowyer	– a person who makes long-bows.
Brattice	– also <i>bretask</i> or <i>bretach</i> – a temporary wooden battlement.
Burgess	– a property-owner in a burgh.
Burgh	– a town with special privileges, founded by the king, a bishop, or a lord.
Bushel	– a specific amount of food – usually grain – measured by weight.

Canon	– a clergyman who lives with other clergy at a cathedral according to the 'canons' or rules of that church. (Not to be confused with a 'cannon'!)
Cask	– a specific amount of food or drink measured by volume rather than weight.
Castellan	– the person in charge of a castle: the same as a constable or keeper.
Castle keeper	– the person in charge of a castle: the same as a constable or castellan.
Catapult	– a military machine for firing stones or other objects; the power to fire came from a strong lever held back with tightly twisted ropes and suddenly released.
Cellarer	– in a monastery, the monk in charge of the storage and distribution of food and drink.
Chamberlain	– the man responsible for running the king's household; in Scotland, also in charge of the finances of the kingdom.
Chanter	– the person in charge of all the singing in the Cathedral. Also known as the Precentor ('the one who sings first').
Chaplain	– 1. A clergyman employed by an important person as a personal priest and secretary. – 2. A priest employed to take services in a private chapel – in the king's palace or in a castle, rather than in a parish church or cathedral.
Chapter	– the collective term for the canons of a cathedral church.
Charter	– a document proving the transfer of property or rights from one person to another has taken place.
Chattels	– anything belonging to a person which can be moved or carried; property that is not land or a building.

Church	– The Church (capital C) in the middle ages meant all Christian people who were obedient to the Pope in Rome. A church (small c) means the local building where people went to worship God.
Clerk	– a man who could read and write, who acted as a kind of secretary for his employer, writing letters and other important documents and records. A man in holy orders.
Constable	– the person in charge of a castle: the same as a castellan or keeper.
Coroner	– the king's representative in a county whose role was to guard the king's rights over his property in that area.
Crossbow	– a very high-powered type of bow and arrow – it fired a bolt, a shorter version of an arrow. Windlass- or mechanical-crossbow – a more powerful type of crossbow where the string is pulled back using a winding-mechanism. Ballista – an even more powerful version of the mechanical crossbow, used against castles and forts. It was so big it could not be held by hand. Two-foot or manual-crossbow – a crossbow loaded manually, using both feet to steady the bow while the string is drawn back by hand.
Crossbow bolt	– the short arrow fired by a crossbow.
Crossbowman	– a soldier who used a crossbow.
Custodian of Scotland	– the English official during the Wars of Independence who governed the parts of Scotland under English control when the king of England was not in Scotland.

Customs of the March	– a collection of special rules for the settlement of disputes in the borderlands between Scotland and England.
Davoch	– a term used especially in the north and east of Scotland to describe a unit of land that could be ploughed by four ploughs.
Deacon	– a clerk in holy orders ranking below bishops and priests. The deacon's role is to help the priest at Mass and in visiting the sick.
Dean	– the most senior priest in the diocese, the dean is in charge of the cathedral, and is head of the cathedral chapter.
Dean of Christianity	– The senior priest in one of the deaneries (administrative districts of a diocese, made up of several parishes).
Earl	– a noble of the highest rank at this time, with authority over a large area in the kingdom.
Earldom	– the area controlled by an earl.
Engineer	– someone who designs and makes machines for warfare, or who designs and builds structures for attack and defence.
Entreat	– to make a request in a court of law.
Escheat	– when a property reverts to the king's ownership because the owner has died without an heir.
Escheator	– an officer appointed to take notice of the escheats in the area to which he is appointed, and to report them into the Exchequer.
Exchequer	– the department of government responsible for collecting and counting the king's revenue (money from rents, taxes, and so on).

Excommunicate	– a sentence passed by the Church, forbidding a person from receiving Holy Communion.
Farm	- a fixed amount paid as rent or tax every year.
Fealty	– an oath of obedience to a superior, usually to the king.
Fortify	– to add special features to a building, such as battlements, to defend it against attackers.
Friar	– like a monk, but living in towns and cities, preaching and ministering to the ordinary people, rather than living apart from the world in remote monasteries. They rely directly on charity for their livelihood.
Friars Minor	– friars of the religious order founded by Saint Francis of Assisi, also known as Franciscans, with a special ministry to the poor and sick.
Friars Preachers	– also known as Dominican Friars, belonging to the religious order founded by Saint Dominic, with a special ministry to preach.
Furtively	– doing something secretly or with the intention to steal.
Galley	– a ship propelled by oars and sails.
Great Seal	– the wax seal used to authenticate the king's most important and public documents.
Grieve	– an official in a burgh, also known as a provost
Holy Communion	– the consecrated bread and wine of the Mass, which represent the body and blood of Jesus Christ.
Holy Orders	– the three main ranks of the clergy: Bishop, Priest, and Deacon.

Homage	– formal and public act of loyalty, by which a landholder declares himself the vassal of the king or lord from whom he holds land; usually involves payment or obligations of military service.
Insurrection	– rising in arms or open resistance against the government; the beginning of a rebellion.
King's peace	– protection guaranteed by the king to his subjects – to be under the protection of the law.
Knight	– A highly trained soldier on horse-back, who has been given land by the king or other superior, on condition of serving on the battle-field.
Liege man	– a man who had promised to help his lord, especially in times of war, in return for protection from the lord in times of peace.
Lieutenant	– a deputy; one who takes the place of another; usually, an officer or official who acts for a superior.
Long-bow	– a bow drawn by hand and firing a long feathered arrow.
Man-at-arms	– a heavily armed soldier on horse-back, not necessarily a knight.
Marshal	– either a chief official in the royal household, or an officer of a court of law responsible for the prisoners.
Mass	– the most important service that takes place in a church; the service where the people may receive Holy Communion.
Minor Orders	– clergy set apart for work in the Church below the orders of Deacons, Priests and Bishops.
Monastery	– a group of buildings, including a church, where monks live, work, and pray.

Monk	– a man who lives in a community of other men who lead a life of prayer, manual labour, and study, apart from the rest of the world.
Muster	– to summon men to fight in the army.
Neyf	– an unfree person, bound in service to a landowner; could be bought and sold.
Nun	– a female monk.
Parson/Persona	– a person appointed to receive the income produced by a parish church, and admitted to that position by the bishop.
Parish	– the smallest unit of organisation within a diocese, usually equivalent to a village or town, and its surrounding district. Large towns could be made up of more than one parish.
Parish church	– the main church in a parish.
Penance	– performing an act to show you are sorry for doing something wrong.
Pope	– The Bishop of Rome, the most senior bishop in the West, to whom all bishops owed allegiance obedience.
Prelate	– A bishop or abbot
Priory	– a type of monastery, of lower rank than an abbey, sometimes dependent on an abbey.
Prior	– the head of a priory.
Prioress	– the head of a priory of nuns.
Privy Seal	– the wax seal used by the king to authenticate documents dealing with every-day and personal business.
Provost	– an important official in a burgh

Rebellion	– when an organised group of people try to overthrow the king with an army.
Receiver	– an official appointed by the king or other important person to collect money or goods owed to them.
Rector	– the same as a parson.
Religious Order	– a society of monks or friars or nuns with their own special rules for living a holy life.
Sacrilege	– the misuse or abuse of buildings or objects used for the worship of God, such as churches or altars.
Scottish service and aid	– service in the common army of the king of Scots.
Seditious	– this word describes the action of someone who is trying to overthrow the king.
Siege	– when an army cuts off a town or castle from all outside communication and in order to take it.
Siege-engine	– a machine used for attacking a castle.
Squire	– next in rank below a knight; a young soldier who assists a knight, and who is training to be a knight.
Steward	– the person who runs a household, organising the servants, the food, and the expenditure.
Steward <i>or</i> Stewart of Scotland	– The first officer of the king of Scots; he controlled the royal household, was very powerful in government, and had the right to lead the king's army into battle.
Sub-deacon	– a clerk in minor orders, whose role is to assist the deacon.

Sue/suit	– to ‘sue’, or ‘bring a suit’, is to take action against someone in a court of law.
Tally	– A stick or rod of wood, marked on one side with notches representing the amount of a debt or payment. The rod was split in two, the debtor and creditor each retaining one of the halves, the agreement or tallying of which constituted legal proof of the debt.
Treasurer	– one of the highest officials in the kingdom, in charge of the money.
Trespass	– an act intended to harm or damage a person’s property.
Tun	– a large cask or barrel
Valet	– usually an attendant or servant, similar to a squire.
Vassal	– a person subject to a superior, usually a landholder to his lord.
Vicar	- a priest in a parish, paid by the parson or rector to work in his place.
Wardrobe	– the department of the English government (a group of the king’s most important officials) responsible for paying out money to those who were doing any work for the king. The Keeper of the Wardrobe was the person in charge of the Wardrobe, and who gave permission for money to be paid out.
Wardship	– being under a protector, usually on account of being below the age of adulthood.