



LEEDS CASTLE  
LEARNING

CASTLES AND CROSSES

# Eleanor of Castile

This Guide & Activity Book  
belongs to:

.....

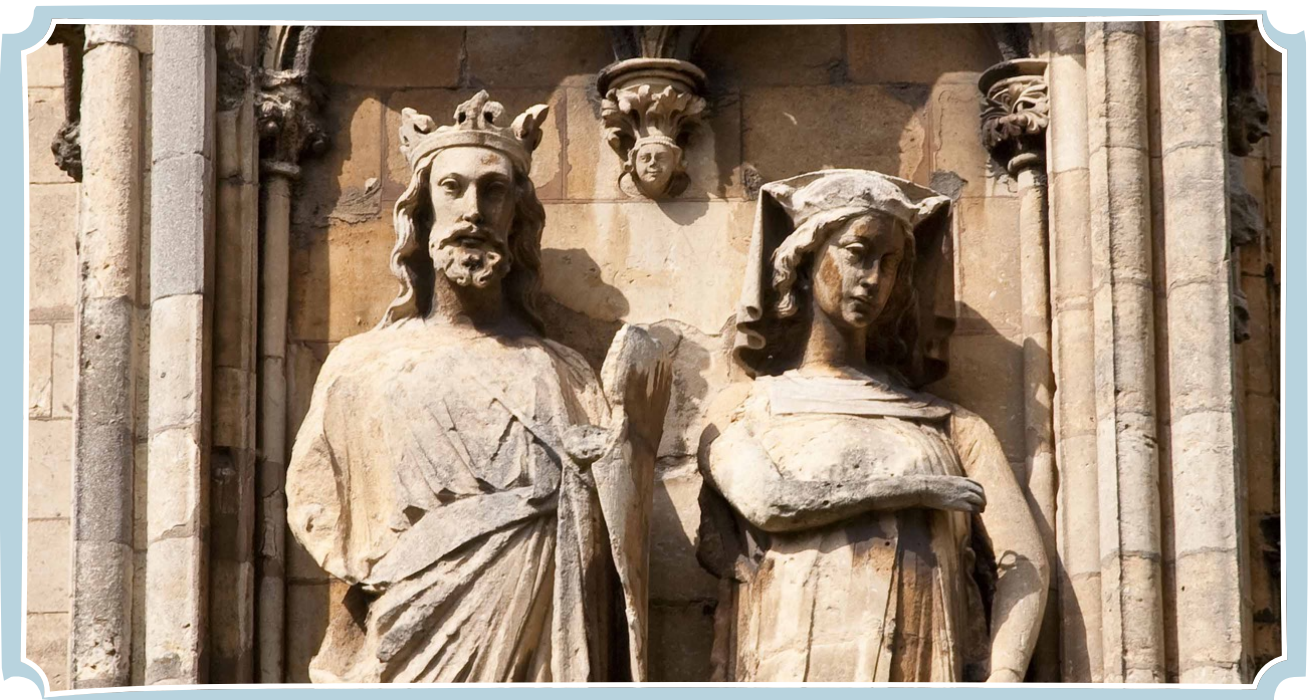




# Who is Eleanor?

Eleanor was born in 1241 in a place called Castile. Today, Castile is part of Spain, but back then Spain was split into smaller kingdoms. Her father was King Ferdinand III, and her mother was Queen Joan. Eleanor grew up in a royal family and learned how to be a queen from an early age.

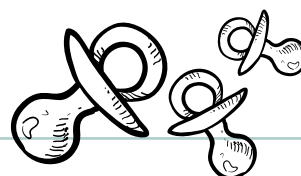
When Eleanor was only 12 years old she married the English Prince, Edward (who later became King Edward I). Marriages between royal families were often about making peace or alliances between countries, and this marriage made sure that England and Castile would be good friends.



*Statues of King Edward I and Queen Eleanor of Castile at Lincoln Cathedral.*

Eleanor left her warm home in the Spanish sunshine to come and live with Edward in cold and rainy England. To a 12 year old today, this sounds very scary! Can you imagine moving to a new country to marry someone you barely know? Luckily, Eleanor and Edward grew to really love each other. They had a very happy marriage and Eleanor grew to love her new home.

Eleanor and Edward had 16 children, but sadly, only 6 lived beyond childhood. This reminds us that life in medieval times could be very hard, even for kings and queens. Their son, Edward, later became King Edward II.





# Queen Eleanor at Leeds Castle

Eleanor became Queen of England in 1272, when Edward became king. She was very powerful in her own right. She owned lots of land and helped build and improve castles, gardens, and houses.

Leeds Castle was one of her favourites, and together she and Edward built a strong, well defended castle that was also incredibly beautiful. Eleanor introduced new styles of decoration at Leeds Castle, like tapestries and stained glass windows.

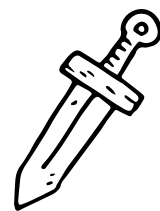
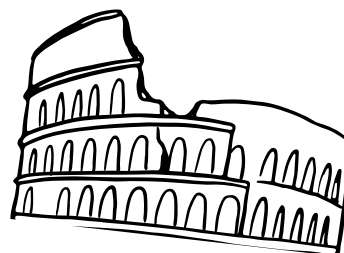
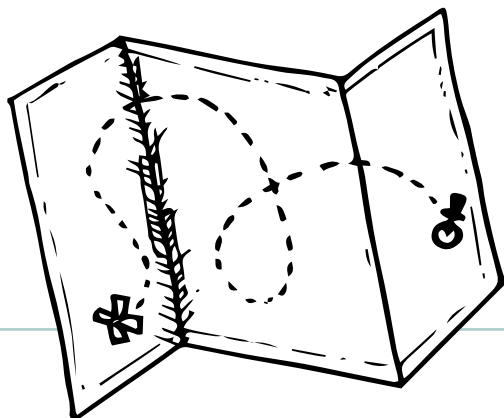
She asked for the moat to be made much bigger so that the castle appeared to be floating on a lake!



## Adventures and Travels

Eleanor didn't just stay in castles. She went on a long journey called a crusade with Edward which was very rare for a queen! Queens would usually stay at home in one of their castles where it is safer. But Eleanor couldn't bear to leave Edward, so together they travelled through France, Italy, and even the Holy Land.

People told a story that when Edward was wounded by a poisoned dagger, Eleanor sucked the poison out to save him. This story probably isn't true, but it shows how much people admired her.





# The Chapel and the Eleanor Crosses

In 1290, while travelling in England, Eleanor became very ill and died. Edward was heartbroken. To show his love and to remember her, he built tall stone monuments with a golden cross on the top, called the Eleanor Crosses. They were positioned at every place her body rested on its way back to London. Originally, there were 12 crosses. Today, only a few survive, but they are still famous reminders of Eleanor.

Edward also had a chapel (a small, private church) built inside Leeds Castle, one of Eleanor's favourite places, so that the people here could remember her and say prayers for her. We still have this chapel at the castle today.

Eleanor of Castile is remembered as a queen who travelled widely, was close to her husband, and left behind beautiful buildings and monuments. Her story mixes history and legend, making her one of the most interesting queens of medieval England.



*Geddington's Eleanor Cross, one of the best preserved crosses still standing today.*





# Castile Crossword

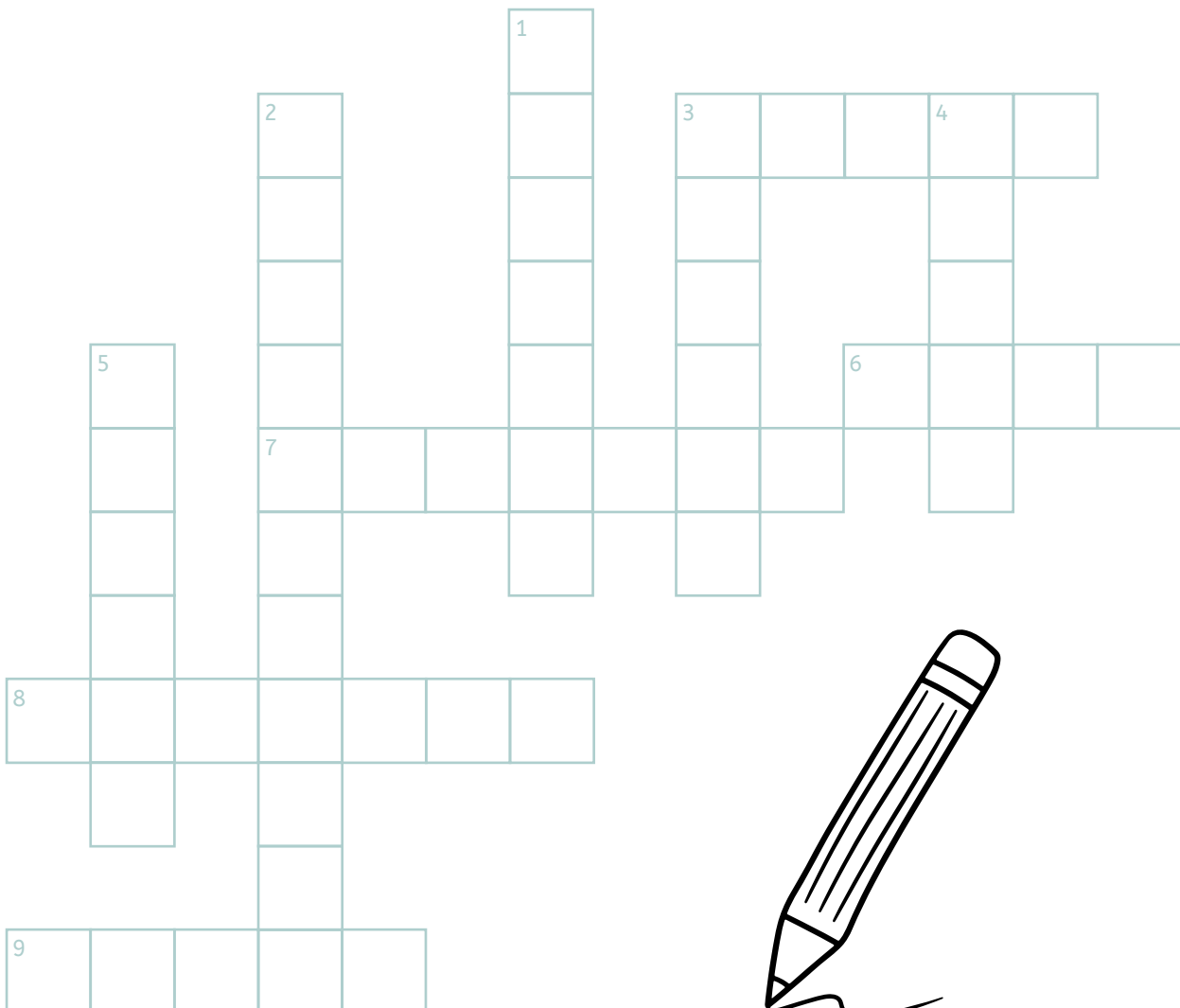
Use the clues to complete the crossword below.

## Down

1. A word to describe a king or queen.
2. Eleanor's favourite home.
3. A small church, often found inside a castle.
4. Eleanor was born in this country.
5. Husband of Eleanor.

## Across

3. A monument built in Eleanor's memory.
6. Edward was the \_\_\_ of England.
7. The number of children Edward and Eleanor had.
8. A journey to the Holy Land.
9. Eleanor was a \_\_\_ of England.





# Eleanor's I Spy

How many:

Queens: ..... Crowns: .....

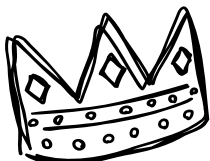
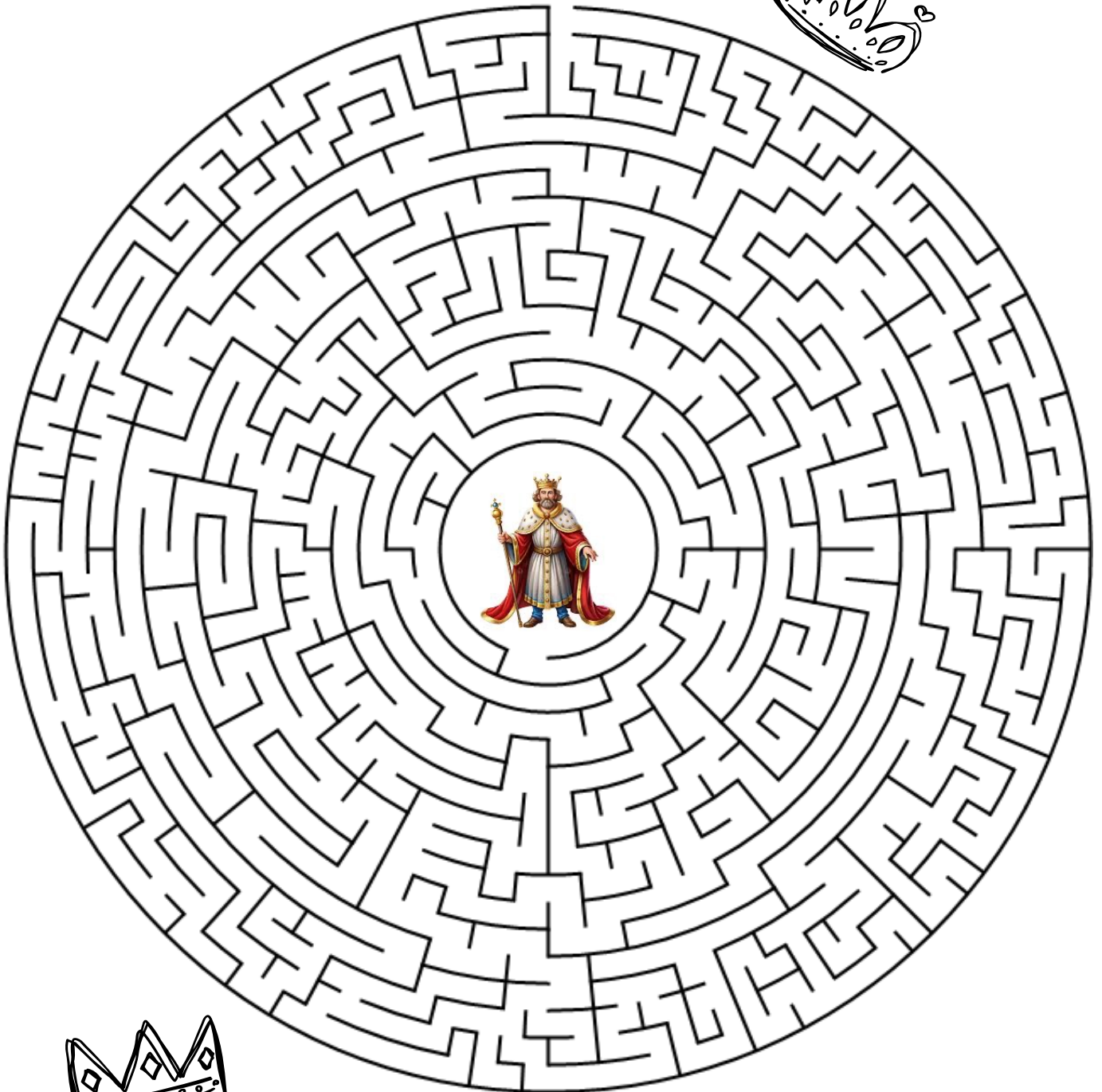
Castles: ..... Crosses: .....





# Eleanor's Maze

Help Eleanor find her way to Edward.





# Design a Castle

Eleanor loved Leeds Castle because it was well defended, but also a lovely place to live. Can you design a castle for Eleanor that is strong but beautiful?