

Girl with a Worksheet in a Castle

There's a castle we visit where Mr Barret
talks battlements, baileys and barbicans.

But when I've done my worksheet and my sketches,
down unsafe stairs I find this lonely place,

this earth-floored larder. I breathe deeply in
the stink of centuries. An ancient chef

sweats. Humps sacks of onions, spuds,
turnips and garlic. Thinks of wine and oil

he'll baste over mutton, pork or fish. I hear
salt Saxon shouts. Alone, I'm history

and history is me. But still ... be still ...

Then

Mr Barret's calling *Eleanor Smith!*

He asks me about battlements and baileys,
and, not this lonely place, this worksheet.



Name: Class: Date:

1 What is the name of the girl in the poem?
.....

2 What do you think Mr Barret's job is?
.....

3 What is the reason for the visit to the castle?
.....

4 What is the girl expected to do while she is there?
.....

5 Once the girl has finished, she goes off on her own. What does she find?
.....

6 What seems to happen to her there?
.....

7 Which word in the second stanza of the poem indicates that she has taken a risk?
.....

8 We are told she "*breathes deeply in the stink of centuries*". Explain why you think the poet uses the word *stink* here.
.....

9 Give the poem a new title and explain why you have chosen it.
.....
.....

10 Which of the following sentences best sums up the point of the poem? Tick **one**.

Learning about castles can be interesting.

Worksheets are a good way of teaching young people about history.

Castles can be dangerous places, if children are allowed to go off on their own.

Education visits should help develop the imagination.