



Mary Arden's Farm

Teacher's Booklet

Answers



Be a detective!

Find out what life would have been like for the people who lived in this house.

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Let your pupils be detectives

Mary Arden's Farm

Palmer's Farmhouse

The questions in the booklet vary in difficulty and are designed to involve the children in thinking more deeply about what they are seeing as well as realising what life would have been like for the people living in the house. Ideally children should be in small groups to allow them to move around the houses more easily. Obviously some children can start in Palmer's Farm while the rest go to Mary Arden's house and then they can swap over.



Palmer's Farmhouse

can see mixed with the daub. If you have not seen an exposed wattle and daub panel before, try to see what materials are mixed in the daub. Make a list of the materials.

Paste of clay, animal dung, horse hair and straw. If the children divide into groups to work in the different houses and then swap over, they can compare the panel in Mary Arden's house.

Landing

Find, and look through the spy hole to the chimney. Why are the roof beams so black?

Over the years the smoke from the fire has blackened them.

Upper Room off the Landing

Study the model of Mary Arden's house in 1514. This will help you understand how it originally looked. Can you work out exactly where you are standing?

Here is another low door like the one in Palmer's Farm. Can you think why it is so low? Check your answer by reading the information provided.

The use of a low doorway, in this case, is because it was simple and cheap to build. The expense of extra beams to keep the roof stable was unnecessary.

Could you live in Tudor times? Slide the doors and decide for yourself.

Upper Room next to the Granary

Amazing Fact – rush lights were used to light houses. They were made by dipping a dried, peeled strip of rush plant in animal fat. They burnt quickly and did not give off much light.

Candles were often used for lighting. They could be made from tallow (melted animal fat). Can you think of any problems this may cause?

They dripped and smelt dreadful.

What do you think the best candles were made from?

Beeswax was more expensive but it was a better quality wax which did not drip as much and it did not smell like animal fat.

How would you light your candle?

You could light it from the fire. However, you had to light the fire. Tudors used a tinderbox contained a flint and steel and dry materials (tinder). Striking the flint made sparks which were allowed to fall on the tinder. Gradually the flames built up and could be placed on wood in the fireplace to start a fire – then you have a light for your candles.

Mary Arden's House

The Hall

Amazing Fact! – By using the growth pattern on tree trunks (tree rings) we have been able to date the original house to 1514.

On the wall is Robert Arden's Family tree. How many children grew up with Mary?

She had 7 sisters.

Draw a plan of the house to show how it probably looked in 1556.

When Mary lived in the house there was not a chimney for the fire. Instead it had an open hearth (Fireplace) and the smoke escaped through a hole in the roof. Can you think of any problems this may have caused?

The smoke would have lingered in the room. Not good for breathing etc.

The Chamber/ Parlour (Probably where Robert and his wife slept)

Amazing Fact! – Babies were swaddled which meant they were wrapped tightly in cloths like bandages supposedly to help their arms and legs grow straight because it kept their legs together and their arms close to the body.

Where did Tudor babies usually sleep?

In a wooden cradle in the same room as their parents.

First Floor Upper Chamber

Today we put paint or paste wallpaper on the walls in our homes. Can you find any evidence to suggest what Mary's house had on its walls?

Wall hangings called 'painted cloths'. Sheets of linen were stiffened with size, fitted to the walls and then painted.

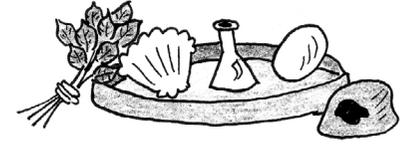
There are two circa 1500 oak coffer or chests in the room. What do you think they were used for?

For storing clothes, sheets, bedding etc.

Look at the exposed Wattle and Daub. If you have already seen an exposed panel of wattle and daub in Palmer's Farm, you can check your answers about the materials you

The Kitchen

Amazing Fact! – People in Tudor times were very superstitious. The fairy plate in the kitchen would have had food and drink on it as well as flowers. The family would have put the plate in front of the fire when they went to bed!



On the table just inside the door is a spice chest. This was an important possession and would have been kept locked when not being used. Why do you think that was so?

Spices had to be imported from countries a long way away and so they were very expensive to buy.

Can you find a semi-circular metal cover in the fireplace? This is called a curfew and it was used to cover the embers of the fire at night. Families had to cover the embers at night by law. Why was doing this so important?

As it was metal and covered up the embers, it stopped any sparks from jumping out of the fire and causing things in the room to catch fire whilst the family slept.

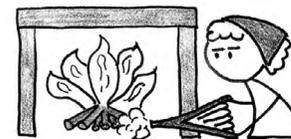
On the left hand wall of the fireplace is a hanging wooden salt box. Why do you think the Tudors would have placed the salt box here?

Salt can absorb moisture from the air so hanging it on the wall in the fireplace would have kept it away from the cold and the damp. It would also have been within easy reach for cooking.

Several of the pans in the kitchen have long handles. What do you think might be the reasons for this?

The long handles meant that the cook did not have to get too close to the fire (which could be very hot). It also meant that they didn't have to bend down so far when they were cooking.

Find two places in the kitchen where firewood is stored. Why do you think the Palmers might have kept some firewood inside?



It was within easy reach when it was needed and being inside meant that the family always had some dry firewood at hand (wet wood doesn't burn very well and gives off a lot of smoke).

The Hall

Amazing Fact! – Forks used for eating were very rare in Tudor times. The most common utensil was a spoon (made of wood, horn, pewter, silver or gold – depending on how wealthy you were) and people would carry their spoon and knife around with them!

Some of the window frames in here are original and some were added later. Which frames are the original windows and what is the evidence to support this?

The window frames are on the left hand side as you look at the fireplace. Evidence: the edges of the frames are not straight and the corners are not right angles (as they are on the windows at the other side).

Crouch down in front of the fireplace and look up just above the height of the beam. Why are the walls of the chimney black inside?

Please take care not to bump your head. It is covered in soot, which is a black powder made from the incomplete burning of wood, coal or other organic matter.

Look at the wattle and daub panel (on the side of the wall near the Parlour). What materials can you see mixed up in the daub?

Mud, hair and straw.

There are a number of candlesticks in the room. Why do you think that candles were so commonly used in Tudor times?

To give additional light in the dark mornings and evenings so that people could do jobs around the house.

Find the 'gossip stool'. Why would the two people sit facing in opposite directions?

So they were facing in opposite directions and could see if anybody was coming (so they could stop gossiping). It also gave them plenty of space if they were doing work.

Amazing Fact! – Beds were very expensive pieces of furniture (a teacher's salary was about £20 per year and a bed would cost £8-10). If you could afford one, you put your 'best bed' (that would be used for guests) in the Parlour of your home. This would show all of your friends and neighbours that you were wealthy enough to afford a bed for your guests as well as for your family. Beds were often passed down in families in the will.



The Dairy / Buttery

Find some containers with poles sticking out of the top. What do you think they might have been used for? (Remember – this is the dairy.)

They are butter churns. Making butter was a long process and part of it was separating the yellow fat from the buttermilk. This was done by moving the pole or plunger up and down through the milk that was in the churn.

The Parlour

Why do you think that this 'best bed' had a canopy and curtains?

The canopy stopped animal droppings and insects falling on the people in the bed during the night. The curtains provided privacy (Tudors rarely had a bedroom to themselves and usually shared the room with other family members and servants).

The Parents' Bedroom

Can you see some holes drilled into the top of the bed frame? What do you think these were used for?

These were used to put bed staves in. Staves were short wooden sticks that you put into the holes after you got into bed and they stopped the bed linen sliding off you at night.

Hmmm... the doorway into the steward's bedroom isn't very high. What reasons can you think of why this would be?

The room next door did not exist when the house was built as that floor was put in later. The beam that forms the top of the door is supporting the roof. It is also thought that there may, at one point, have been an opening that allowed the people in this room to look down into the hall.

The Stewards' Bedroom

Look on the table for a small pot with some sand in it near the quills and paper. What do you think Tudors might have used the sand for?

Tudors wrote using quill and ink. After they had completed some writing, they would pour a small amount of sand down the page and it would dry up the wet ink.