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Andrew Biggs and Noah Bolitho — dressed as soldiers from eras past — are part of Carbon Valley Academy’s sixth-grade history class, which tested catapults and trebuchets by launching potatoes, softballs, bouncy balls, fruit and vegetables. Kimberly Pursel/Carbon Valley Edition  |

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Attacking historyCarbon Valley Academy students build ancient war weapons *By Kimberly Pursel The Carbon Valley Edition* Inspired by the field of experimental archaeology, Carbon Valley Academy history students had the opportunity to re-create history by building ancient war weapons.On Friday, sixth-grade history class students tested their weapons by launching potatoes, softballs, bouncy balls, fruit and vegetables from catapults they had designed and built.“We studied Roman history for a month, including the different designs for catapults and trebuchets created by the ancient Romans that were used as early weapons of war,” said Owen Cegielski, history teacher at Carbon Valley Secondary Academy.Working in groups of four, students designed and built either a catapult or trebuchet.“The Romans used catapults to attack at their opponents during war,” said student Noah Bolitho. “It was a lot of fun building our catapult and doing all the different wood work.”The project required students to make a cross-curricular connection by fostering their use of historical, mathematical and scientific skills when designing and building the catapults and trebuchets, according to Cegielski.“I collaborated with Dave Floodeen, CVSA’s science teacher, who introduced the students to early physics lessons, including an understanding of how counterweights, tension, elasticity and the angles at which objects are thrown determine the distance which they will travel,” Cegielski said.“In theory, the medieval trebuchets, which function using counterweights and slings, should throw the objects farther than our Roman catapults.”Students dressed in medieval and Roman garb on launch day to test the theory.The all-girl team said their trebuchet threw a small bouncy ball the farthest during the morning catapult launch.“It is the tiniest and it went the farthest,” said Samantha Garcia. “Mr. Floodeen helped us get our angle right so it could really fly far.”Kimberly Pursel can be reached at 303-684-5326 or by e-mail at kpursel@times-call.com.  |

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