

The Story of King Arthur and His Knights

by Howard Pyle

Howard Pyle wrote The Story of King Arthur and His Knights in 1903. It tells the story of the legendary King Arthur of Britain. In the passage below, young Arthur is a squire for his relative Sir Kay. Along with Kay's father, Sir Ector, Kay and Arthur go to a great tournament in London. While there, the new high king is to be determined. To be the high king, someone must pull a sword that has been placed in a stone and anvil by Merlin the magician. All the greatest knights and nobles are allowed to try, but none can move the sword. Merlin insists that Arthur have a chance to pull the sword out.

The Winning of Knighthood, Chapter III

Thereupon Arthur went to the cube of marble stone and he laid his hands upon the haft of the sword that was thrust into the anvil. And he bent his body and drew very strongly and, to! the sword came forth with great ease and very smoothly. And when he had got the sword into his hands, he swung it about his head so that it flashed like lightning. And after he had swung it thus thrice about his head, he set the point thereof against the face of the anvil and bore upon it very strongly, and, behold! the sword slid very smoothly back again into that place where it had aforetime stood; and when it was there, midway deep, it stood fast where it was. And thus did Arthur successfully accomplish that marvellous miracle of the sword in the eyes of all the world.

Now when the people who were congregated at that place beheld this miracle performed before their faces, they lifted up their voices all together, and shouted so vehemently and with so huge a tumult of outcry that it was as though the whole earth rocked and trembled with the sound of their shouting.

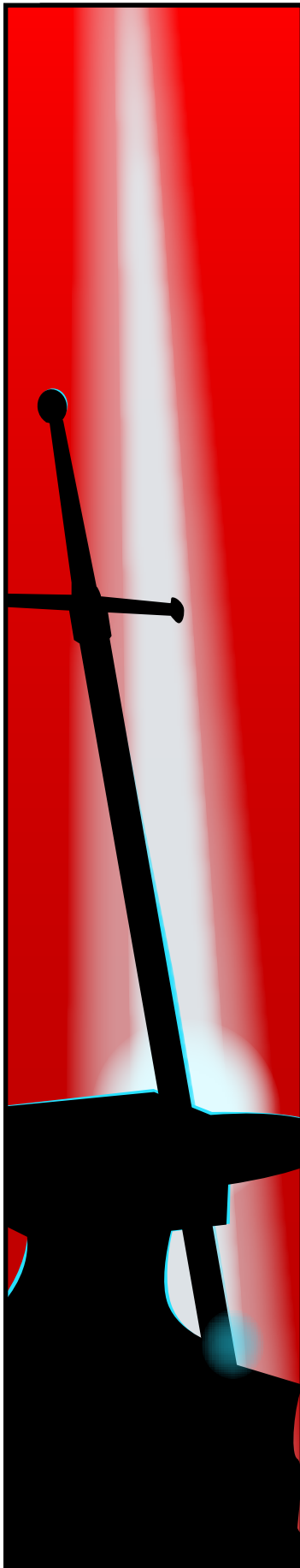
And whiles they so shouted Arthur took hold of the sword again and drew it forth and swung it again, and again drove it back into the anvil. And when he had done that he drew it forth a third time and did the same thing as before. Thus it was that all those who were there beheld that miracle performed three times over.

And all the kings and dukes who were there were filled with great amazement, and they wist not what to think or to say when they beheld one who was little more than a boy perform that undertaking in which the best of them had failed. And some of them, seeing that miracle, were willing to acknowledge Arthur because of it, but others would not acknowledge him. These withdrew themselves and stood aloof; and as they stood thus apart, they said among themselves: "What is this and who can accredit such a thing that a beardless boy should be set before us all and should be made King and overlord of this great realm for to govern us. Nay! Nay! we will have none of him for our King."

Now when the Archbishop perceived the discontent of these kings and dukes, he said to them, "How now, Messires! Are ye not satisfied?" And the Archbishop said, "What of that? Hath he not performed the miracle that ye yourselves assayed and failed to perform?"

But these high and mighty lords would not be satisfied, but with angry and averted faces they went away from that place, filled with wrath and indignation.

But others of these kings and dukes came and saluted Arthur and paid him court, giving him joy of that which he had achieved; and the chiefest of those who came thus unto him in friendliness was King Leodegrance of Cameliard. And all the multitude acknowledged him and crowded around that place shouting so that it sounded like to the noise of thunder.



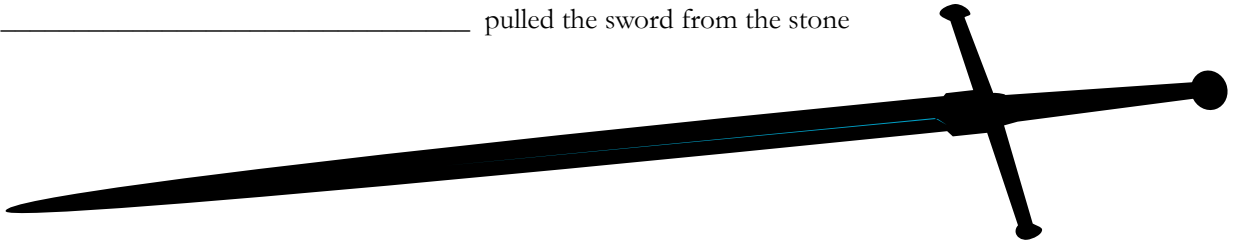
Name: _____

The Story of King Arthur and His Knights: Understanding the Passage

I. Who Was It?

Below are actions performed by Arthur, the angry kings and dukes, the Archbishop, and King Leodegrance. Write the the correct character for each event below.

1. _____ saw that some of the nobles were angry
2. _____ didn't want Arthur to be King
3. _____ thought Arthur was too young
4. _____ came to Arthur with "friendliness"
5. _____ pulled the sword from the stone



Part II. Short Answer

Answer each question below.

1. Who was older: Arthur or the Archbishop? _____
2. How many times did Arthur pull the sword from the stone? _____
3. What was the cube of stone made of? _____
4. How did the crowd of people act when Arthur pulled the sword out? _____
5. Who failed to pull the sword from the stone and anvil? _____

Name: _____

Language in The Story of King Arthur and His Knights

Part I: Old Language

While Howard Pyle wrote his story about King Arthur in the 20th century, he used old-fashioned, or archaic, language to take the reader back in time. Below are some of the phrases from the passage that use outdated language or uncommon words. Using the context, circle the best meaning of the phrase.

1. "the sword slid very smoothly back again into that place where it had aforetime stood"
A. the sword slid smoothly into Arthur's hand
B. the sword went smoothly back into the anvil
C. the sword smoothly left Arthur's hand and stood by itself on its tip
2. "the people who were congregated at that place beheld this miracle"
A. Arthur's enemies didn't believe what they saw
B. the kings and dukes who had failed to pull the sword out
C. the crowd saw this amazing event
3. "swung it again, and again drove it back into the anvil"
A. swung the sword and then put it back into the anvil
B. swung the sword and sharpened it on the anvil
C. swung the sword and hit the anvil
4. "they wist not what to think or to say"
A. they were afraid to think or speak
B. they didn't know what to think or say
C. they didn't wait to think or say anything
5. "who can accredit such a thing that a beardless boy should be set before us all"
A. who can stop a boy from being king
B. who allowed a boy to try to be king
C. who can believe that a young boy can be king



Part II. Vocabulary Match

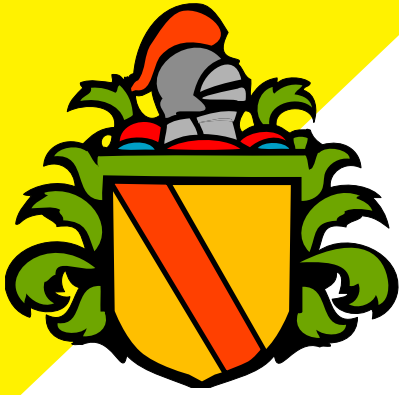
Match each word in Column A with its meaning in Column B.

Column A

1. _____ haft
2. _____ thrice
3. _____ vehemently
4. _____ realm
5. _____ tumult
6. _____ perceived
7. _____ wrath
8. _____ multitude

Column B

- A. very strongly
- B. became aware
- C. sword handle
- D. loud crowd noise
- E. large number
- F. kingdom
- G. anger
- H. three times



Name: _____

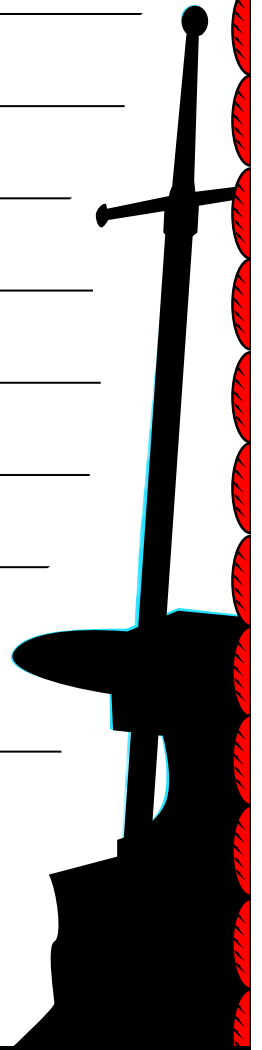
The Story of King Arthur: Supporting Evidence

Below is one of the main ideas of the passage. Write three quotations from the passage that support this main idea.

Some were not happy that
Arthur drew the sword out of
the stone and anvil.



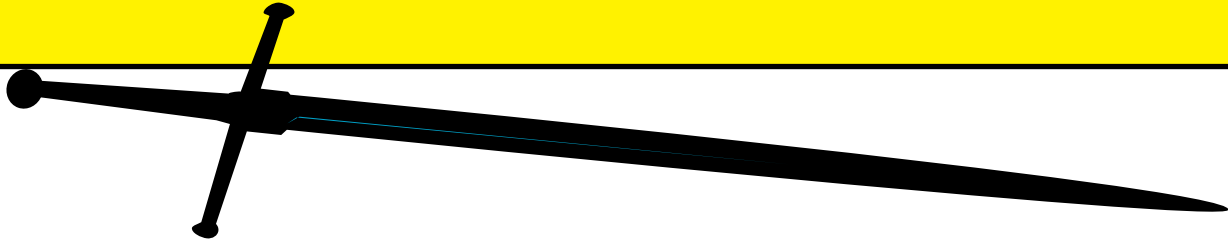
In the passage some of the kings and dukes who saw Arthur pull the sword out of the marble cube and anvil still did not want him to be king. They thought he was too young and had too little experience. What do you think about young Arthur becoming king? Do you think he was too young to be king? Do you think a boy would make a good king in the time that Arthur lived? Why or why not?

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Name: _____

King Arthur and His Knights: Word Search

Circle each word from the list in the puzzle. The words can go in any direction.



Q	O	T	A	L	U	B	M	A	S	W	O	R	D	C	
I	L	Z	E	T	I	O	R	D	S	R	A	B	W	D	
P	U	V	Z	D	U	K	E	S	O	Q	S	A	B	O	
T	H	R	I	C	E	C	T	K	H	E	D	A	R	K	
F	I	O	R	J	K	F	H	E	B	M	P	N	I	N	
A	R	T	H	U	R	T	T	H	D	G	U	T	V	T	S
O	D	U	G	U	O	R	O	Q	K	E	G	E	A	O	
K	G	L	E	F	E	A	N	V	I	L	D	O	I	E	
C	N	R	F	I	A	J	E	T	N	R	T	D	N	U	
D	R	Z	O	N	L	R	R	F	G	R	T	L	N	I	
S	T	O	N	E	O	F	O	W	P	L	E	O	B	K	
P	M	G	W	D	P	Q	W	H	C	L	S	C	K	K	
L	E	F	H	D	G	I	M	T	P	E	N	A	R	M	
Z	S	A	R	C	H	B	I	S	H	O	P	J	U	G	

ANVIL
ARCHBISHOP

ARTHUR
BRITAIN

CROWD
DUKES

KING
STONE

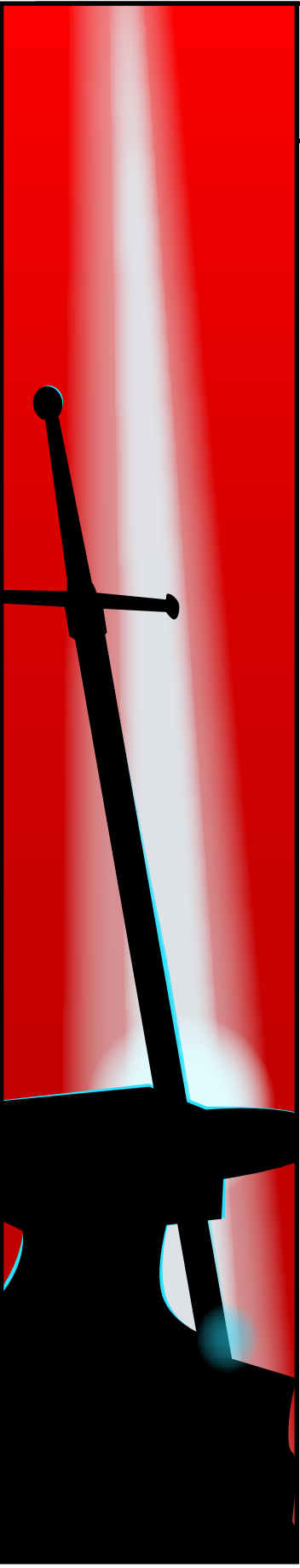
SWORD
THRICE

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The Winning of Knighthood, Chapter III



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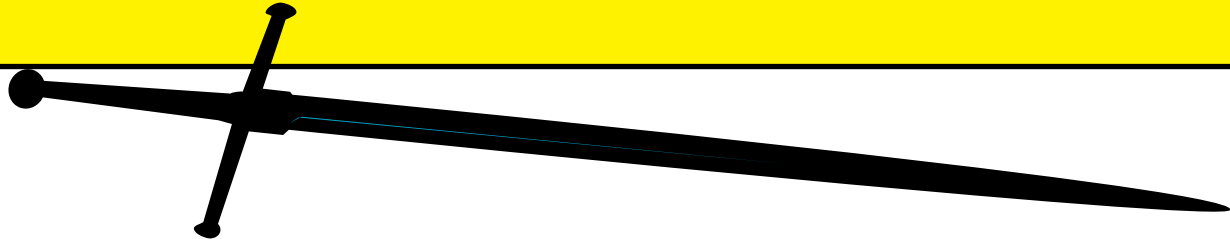
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Name: _____ KEY

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ARCHBISHOP	BRITAIN	DUKES	STONE	THRICE

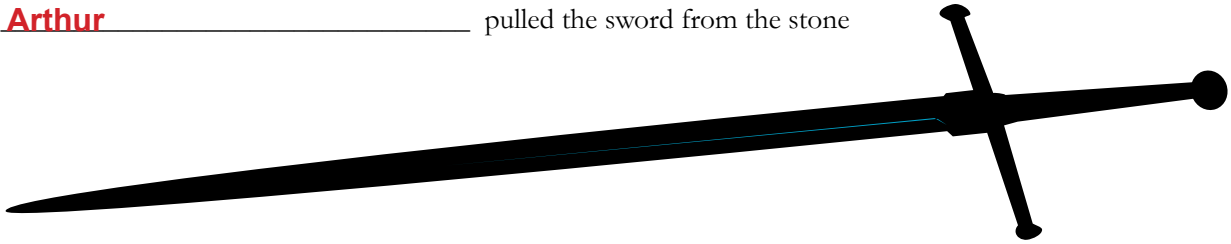
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3. the angry kings and dukes thought Arthur was too young
4. King Leodegrance came to Arthur with "friendliness"
5. Arthur pulled the sword from the stone



Part II. Short Answer

Answer each question below.

**Actual student's answers may vary.
Example of correct answers:**

1. Who was older: Arthur or the Archbishop? Arthur
2. How many times did Arthur pull the sword from the stone? three times
3. What was the cube of stone made of? marble
4. How did the crowd of people act when Arthur pulled the sword out? They cheered.
5. Who failed to pull the sword from the stone and anvil? the kings and dukes

Name: _____ **KEY**

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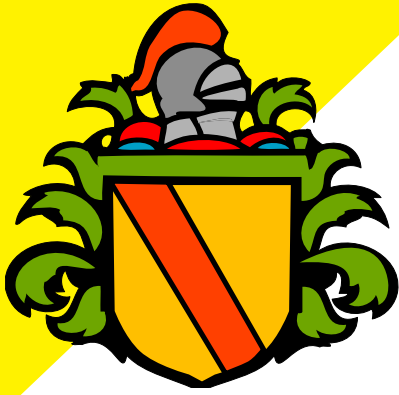
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**"...but others would
not acknowledge him"**

**"...'Nay! we will have
none of him for
our King.'"**

**"...with angry and
averted faces they went
away from that place,
filled with wrath and
indignation."**



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