

The Legend of King Arthur

Many hundreds of years ago, King Uther of the Britons had a son called Arthur. Because of the many wars with the Saxons, Uther gave his son to Merlin so that he could be raised in safety.

When King Uther died, nobody knew that he had a son. Therefore, there was much arguing about who should be the next High King of the Britons.

At this time, a mysterious stone appeared in London. A sword was sticking out of the stone with a message on it. The message said that whoever pulled the sword out of the stone was the rightful High King of the Britons. No one, however, could pull the sword from the stone.

Aged fifteen, Arthur came to visit London. When he saw the stone, he approached it and pulled the sword out easily! Soon after, Arthur was crowned High King of Britain. Merlin, his father's old wizard, helped him rule.

Merlin took Arthur to see the Lady of the Lake who gave Arthur a sword named 'Excalibur'. With the help of Excalibur, and his loyal knights, Arthur was able to defeat his enemies and Britain became a peaceful land.



Arthur married a beautiful princess called Guinevere. Arthur and Guinevere were given a large round table, which Arthur used to meet with his bravest and best knights. These knights were known as 'Knights of the Round Table' and were adventurous and brave. The bravest knight of all was Sir Lancelot.

Sir Lancelot and Guinevere fell in love and would meet secretly, away from the palace. When Arthur discovered this, Sir Lancelot and Guinevere escaped to Brittany. Arthur chased them, leaving Mordred (one of his knights) in charge of his kingdom while he was gone. Arthur found and killed Sir Lancelot and imprisoned Guinevere.

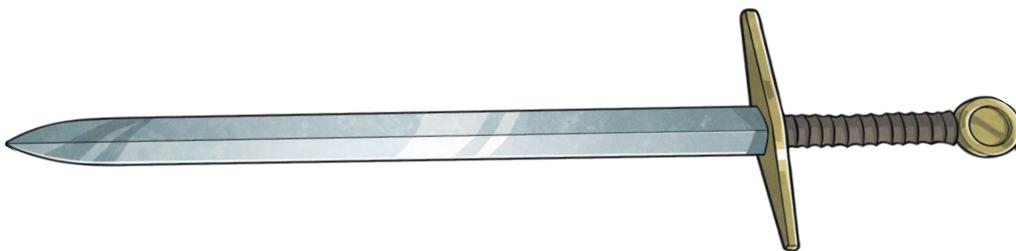
While Arthur was away, Mordred declared himself High King and built his own army. Arthur returned and his army battled with Mordred's. Arthur finally killed Mordred with his sword, Excalibur.

Unfortunately, Arthur himself was badly wounded. He knew he would die very soon, so he gave Excalibur to his knight, Sir Bedivere, and told him to return it to the Lady in the Lake.

Sir Bedivere did not throw Excalibur into the lake and hid it instead. When he returned to Arthur, he told him that he had thrown it into the lake. Arthur did not believe him and told him again to return Excalibur to the lake. As Sir Bedivere threw Excalibur, he was amazed to see a hand emerge from the water to catch the sword. It was the hand of the Lady of the Lake.

When he returned to Arthur, he told him what he had seen. Arthur knew then that Excalibur had been returned to the Lady of the Lake.

Arthur was laid in a boat and he drifted off on the lake and died. His body was never recovered. According to legend, he is awaiting the call of the Britons, ready to return in their time of greatest need.



Questions

1. Explain why King Uther gave Arthur away.

2. Who did King Uther give Arthur do? Tick **one**.

- Excalibur
- Merlin
- Mordred
- Sir Lancelot

3. How old was Arthur when he pulled the sword out of the stone? Tick **one**.

- 20
- 13
- 15
- 12

4. What was Merlin?

5. **Find** and **copy** a word which means **faithful**.

6. What name was given to Arthur's bravest and best knights?

7. Why do you think Arthur did not kill Guinevere once he captured her?

8. Explain how Arthur knew that Sir Bedivere had returned Excalibur to the lake.

Answers

1. Explain why King Uther gave Arthur away.

Pupil's own response, such as:

King Uther gave Arthur away because the Britons were fighting with the Saxons at this time and he wanted to keep Arthur safe.

2. Who did King Uther give Arthur do? Tick **one**.

- Excalibur
- Merlin**
- Mordred
- Sir Lancelot

3. How old was Arthur when he pulled the sword out of the stone? Tick **one**.

- 20
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4. What was Merlin?

a wizard

5. **Find** and **copy** a word which means **faithful**.

loyal

6. What name was given to Arthur's bravest and best knights?

Knights of the Round Table

7. Why do you think Arthur did not kill Guinevere once he captured her?

Pupil's own response, such as: I think that Arthur did not kill Guinevere because he still loved her and because she was beautiful. He knew he had to punish her so decided to imprison her instead.

8. Explain how Arthur knew that Sir Bedivere had returned Excalibur to the lake.

Pupil's own response, such as: Arthur knew that Sir Bedivere had returned Excalibur to the lake because Sir Bedivere told him about the hand that emerged from the water and caught the sword. Arthur knew about the Lady of the Lake and knew that Sir Bedivere could not have made this up.