

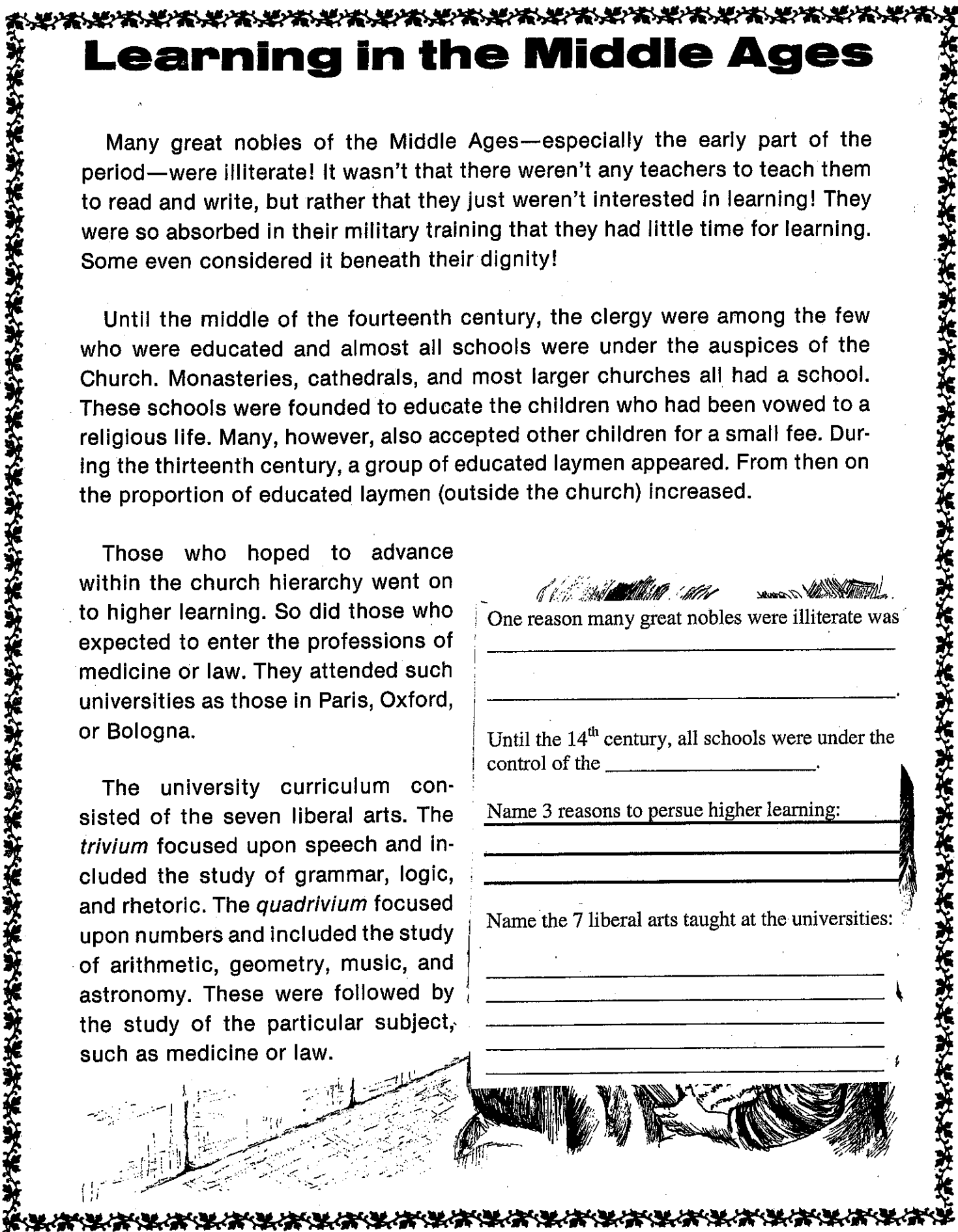
# Learning in the Middle Ages

Many great nobles of the Middle Ages—especially the early part of the period—were illiterate! It wasn't that there weren't any teachers to teach them to read and write, but rather that they just weren't interested in learning! They were so absorbed in their military training that they had little time for learning. Some even considered it beneath their dignity!

Until the middle of the fourteenth century, the clergy were among the few who were educated and almost all schools were under the auspices of the Church. Monasteries, cathedrals, and most larger churches all had a school. These schools were founded to educate the children who had been vowed to a religious life. Many, however, also accepted other children for a small fee. During the thirteenth century, a group of educated laymen appeared. From then on the proportion of educated laymen (outside the church) increased.

Those who hoped to advance within the church hierarchy went on to higher learning. So did those who expected to enter the professions of medicine or law. They attended such universities as those in Paris, Oxford, or Bologna.

The university curriculum consisted of the seven liberal arts. The *trivium* focused upon speech and included the study of grammar, logic, and rhetoric. The *quadrivium* focused upon numbers and included the study of arithmetic, geometry, music, and astronomy. These were followed by the study of the particular subject, such as medicine or law.



One reason many great nobles were illiterate was

Until the 14<sup>th</sup> century, all schools were under the control of the \_\_\_\_\_.

Name 3 reasons to pursue higher learning:

Name the 7 liberal arts taught at the universities:

# The Four Humors

Medieval doctors accepted as truth the Greek principle that in the human body were four fluids, or humors, that determined a person's physical condition and character. These humors were blood, phlegm, melancholy (black bile), and choler (yellow bile). Phlegm, they believed, was cold and moist; blood was hot and moist; choler was hot and dry; and black bile was cold and dry. Good emotional and physical health depended on a balance of these four humors. An excess of any one of them would result in bodily illness and exaggerated physical traits.

Doctors enjoyed a high status, but there were very few of them. Midwives, monks, and barbers all practiced medicine in some form. A common practice in medieval times was the bleeding of patients. This was accomplished by opening a vein or attaching leeches to suck out the blood. Bloodletting was customarily done by the barber, who also served as the dentist! People also believed in the importance of astrology. Recovery depended, among other things, upon the phases of the moon and the position of the constellations!

## WHAT A PERSONALITY!

Explain the following terms from the medieval point of view. What personality traits would each have?

A person with a . . .

**Sanguine temperament**

**Phlegmatic temperament**

**Melancholic temperament**

**Choleric temperament**



# Renart and Crow

Crow was very hungry. To his delight, he came across a clearing where an old woman had spread out a thousand freshly made cheeses to dry in the sun. He snatched one and flew onto a high branch of a tree before the old woman could stop him. He then flew deep into the woods to enjoy his loot in peace.

Crow nibbled contentedly on his cheese, unaware that beneath the tree on which he was perched rested Renart. Renart, too, was very hungry. When a small crumb of cheese landed close to his nose, his interest was immediately aroused. He looked up and saw that it had come from the crow.

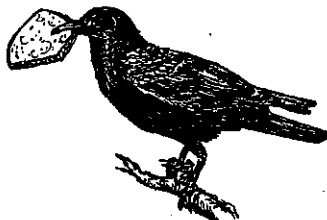
Renart, who was always scheming, quickly formulated a plan. He cheerfully greeted Crow. "How glad I am to see you. I remember your dear departed father. He was one of the very best singers in all of France!" Crow ignored him, but Renart continued his flattery. "You, too, sang beautifully as a child. Please sing me a small refrain so I may hear those sweet notes once again."

At first Crow ignored Renart and kept on munching, but he could not resist the chance to show off. He stopped eating to croak a few notes. Renart told Crow that his singing was even more wonderful than before. He was certain, he remarked, that Crow could reach even higher notes if he tried. Crow began to squawk loudly, and Renart continued to tell him how lovely it was.

Taken in by Renart's flattery of his hideous voice, Crow became so engrossed in his bellowing that he let the cheese drop from his grasp. Although the cheese landed right in front of Renart, however, Renart did not touch it, for his quarry was not just the cheese but also Crow himself!

Feigning illness and injury, Renart begged Crow to get the strong-smelling cheese away from him. Crow felt sorry for him and hopped down branch by branch, stopping just beyond Renart's reach. Instead of waiting for Crow to come closer, Renart leapt up and snapped at the bird.

Crow flew back up to the highest branch, furious that four of his feathers were gone. "I should never have been taken in by your flattery," he exclaimed. "You can have the cheese, but you'll never again convince me to come near you! Once bitten, twice shy!" he croaked, vowing never again to cross his path.

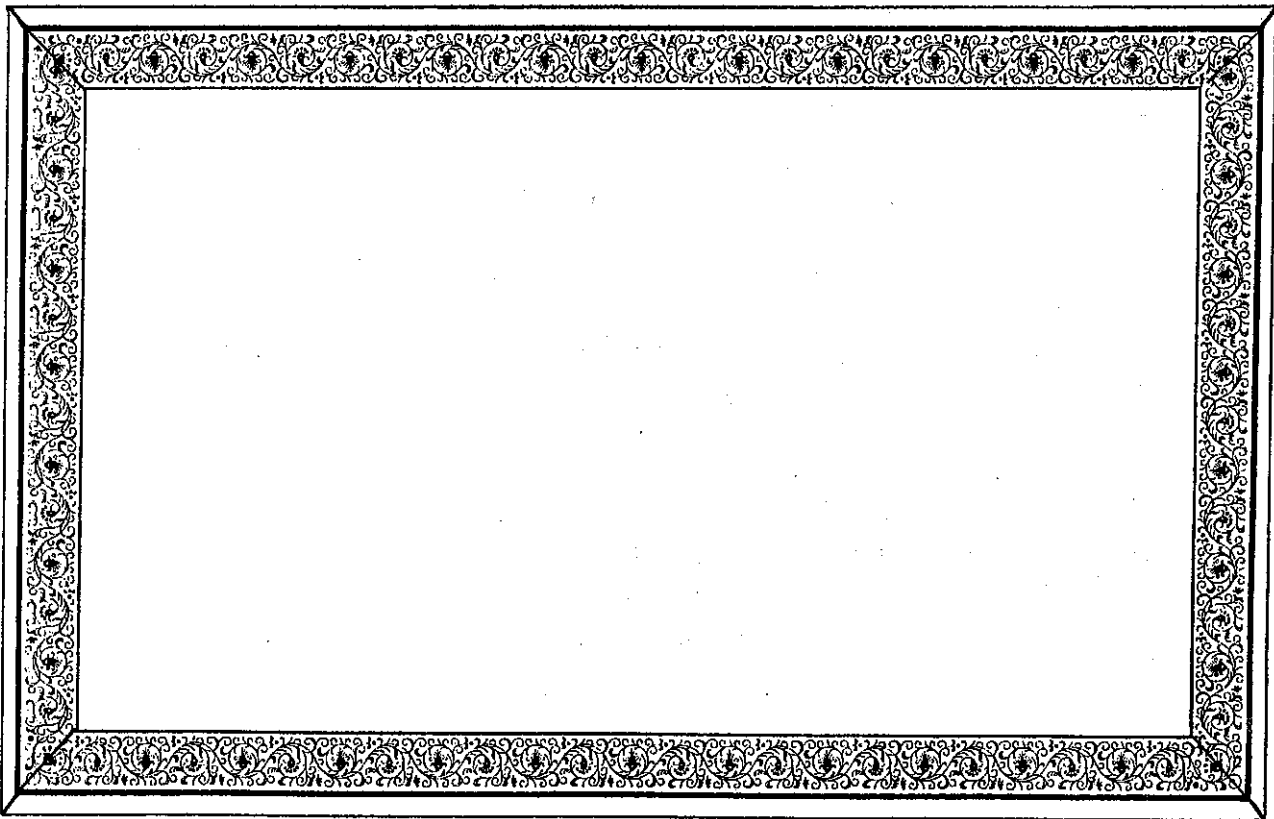


# Fables

In the Middle Ages, fables flourished. A **fable** is a tale designed to teach a particular lesson about conduct by giving an example of behavior. Especially popular were the animal tales. These tales developed into a format called the "beast epic," a lengthy narrative in which the main characters were animals with human feelings and emotions. The most famous of these beast epics is the twelfth-century collection of satirical tales called *Roman de Renart*. Renart the Fox symbolized cunning man. Originating in France, many of these tales spread throughout Western Europe. One of the episodes told the tale of Renart and Crow.

## A SAMPLER

Read the fable about Renart and Crow on the following page. Then design a sampler (A piece of cloth embroidered with various designs or mottoes). Inscribe your sampler with the moral of this fable.



**World Literature Reading 1**

*The Canterbury Tales*, one of English literature's first masterpieces, was written by the poet, Chaucer, in the 1390s. The tales are about an assorted group of pilgrims bound for the shrine of St. Thomas à Becket at Canterbury, England. They include a knight, a prioress (nun), a Franklin (countryman), a monk, and others.

**Directions** Read the selection below and answer the questions that follow. Use another sheet of paper if necessary.

*from The Canterbury Tales*

By Geoffrey Chaucer

**W**hen in April the sweet showers fall  
And pierce the drought of March to the root, and all  
The veins are bathed in liquor of such power  
As brings about the engendering of the flower.  
When also Zephyrus [west wind] with his sweet breath  
Exhales an air in every grove and heath  
Upon the tender shoots, and the young sun  
His half-course in the sign of the Ram [Aries] has run,  
And the small fowl are making melody  
That sleep away the night with open eye  
(So nature pricks them and their heart engages)  
Then people long to go on pilgrimages  
And palmers [pilgrims] long to seek the stranger strands  
Of far-off saints, hallowed in sundry lands,  
And specially, from every shire's end  
Of England, down to Canterbury they wend  
To seek the holy blissful martyr, quick  
To give his help to them when they were sick.

It happened in that season that one day  
In Southwark, at The Tabard [inn], as I lay  
Ready to go on pilgrimage and start  
For Canterbury, most devout at heart,  
At night there came into that hostelry  
Some nine and twenty in a company  
Of sundry folk happening then to fall

(continued)

## U N I T

## 8

## World Literature Reading 1 (continued)

In fellowship, and they were pilgrims all  
 That toward Canterbury meant to ride.  
 The rooms and stables of the inn were wide;  
 They made us easy, all was of the best.  
 And, briefly, when the sun had gone to rest,  
 I'd spoken to them all upon the trip  
 And was soon one with them in fellowship,  
 Pledged to rise early and to take the way  
 To Canterbury, as you heard me say.

But nonetheless, while I have time and space,  
 Before my story takes a further pace,  
 It seems a reasonable thing to say  
 What their condition was, the full array  
 Of each of them, as it appeared to me,  
 According to profession and degree,  
 And what apparel they were riding in;  
 And at a Knight I therefore will begin.  
 There was a *Knight*, a most distinguished man,  
 Who from the day on which he first began  
 To ride abroad had followed chivalry, . . .

45 lines from "The Prologue" in *THE CANTERBURY TALES*, by Geoffrey Chaucer, translated by Nevill Coghill (Penguin Classics, Revised Edition, 1977), copyright © Nevill Coghill, 1951, 1958, 1960, 1975, 1977. Reproduced by permission of Penguin Books Ltd.

## Understanding the Literature

1. What is the goal of the Canterbury pilgrims?

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2. During what time of the year is the pilgrim's trip taking place?

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3. **Critical Thinking** Do you think the poet wants the reader to admire the knight or not? Explain.

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## UNIT

## 8

## World Literature Reading 2



As the author of *Robin Hood and King Arthur and the Knights of the Round Table*, Antonia Fraser shares the drama of history and legends with us. This selection from the Robin Hood legend describes the political rivalries between Normans and Saxons. In this adventure Robin again meets his longtime enemies the Sheriff and Sir Guy of Gisborne.

**Directions** Read the selection below and answer the questions that follow. Use another sheet of paper if necessary.

*from Robin Hood: A Narrow Escape*

By Antonia Fraser

... **N**ow all attention was concentrated on the contest for the silver arrow, the last contest of the day.

Forty stout archers stepped forward in answer to the herald's command. Among them were Robin Hood, Will Scarlet and Walter of Weybridge, wearing the badge of the Sheriff's service, as well as a host of other young men eager to try their skill. . . .

"It would be a fine thing to win the silver arrow on the eve of my birthday," said Robin to Will. "But if you win it, Will, I vow I will not bear a grudge against you, for we learned archery together."

"If I win, Robin," cried Will gaily, "I will bestow it on you for a birthday gift."

So saying, he stepped forward and loosed his arrow: amid the applause of the crowd it landed a bare inch from the bull's-eye. Then it was Walter of Weybridge's turn, and the man-at-arms, with the practice born of long years in the Sheriff's service, landed his arrow a fraction of an inch inside Will's.

A great sigh of regret went up from the common people, who hated the Sheriff's retainers. Finally, Robin Hood stepped forward, and with careless grace, loosed his green-feathered arrow at the target. A moment's silence, then a great shout went up.

"A Hood! A Hood! Robin of Locksley wins the day!"

### The Mysterious Arrow

Even as the shout died away, a series of things occurred all at once so quickly that afterwards no man could rightly remember which happened first. One moment Robin was standing with his bow loose in his hands, gazing joyfully at the target, with its center transfixed by his green-tipped arrow. The next moment a great crowd had surged round him. . . . The moment after that, all in the twinkling of an eye, an arrow was speeding truly and surely towards the royal box itself!

(continued)

## U N I T

## 8

## World Literature Reading 2 (continued)

Had Oswald Montdragon not flung the Prince aside, the arrow would surely have embedded itself in his heart!

Not one person present failed to notice that the arrow had green feathers! "Treachery!" cried Guy of Gisborne. "To arms! Seize the traitor! 'Tis Robin of Locksley who has attacked our Prince in this dastardly fashion. Behold, the green feather of Locksley!"

... Now half a dozen Norman soldiers flung themselves at Robin Hood, as he stood, half-dazed by the quickness of events, in the center of the square.

"Guard yourself, Robin," yelled the faithful Will. "Look behind you!"

Robin Hood sprang back, just in time to avoid the onrush of the soldiery, and with only his woodsman's dagger to protect himself, he began to hack his way violently through the menacing Norman crowd which surrounded him. Twice it seemed that his body would fall beneath the weight of their onslaught: for how could one youth prevail against a dozen soldiers? But still Robin kept himself free, although his left arm was bleeding from a nasty wound, ... Robin managed to free himself temporarily from the clutches of the soldiers, and despite the blood pouring from his wound, he sprinted valiantly across the square, to where he saw Will holding his horse. ...

From *Discovering Literature, Macmillan Literature Series*. Copyright © 1991 by the Glencoe Division of Macmillan/McGraw-Hill Publishing Company.

## Understanding the Literature

1. What personal event is Robin about to celebrate?

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2. What unexpected event causes Robin to flee from the match?

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3. **Critical Thinking** Why do you think people enjoy reading adventure stories about characters such as Robin Hood?

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# Medieval Math

The following problem solving activities are based on general information from the unit.

- In medieval times a cook might make a pie full of little live birds as a surprise for his lord. When the pie was opened the birds would fly out. In the Mother Goose rhyme "Sing a Song of Sixpence," four and twenty blackbirds were baked in a pie. How many *dozen* birds were there in three pies?
  - In *The Door in the Wall* (page 64), Robin enjoyed a Punch and Judy show. If the Punch and Judy show was performed for 1 score and 8 days and an average of 285 people viewed it each day, how many visitors came to see the show altogether?
  - Daisy chains often served as head ornaments during the Middle Ages. If you made a chain 12 feet 6 inches long and needed to cut 20 inch lengths for each head decoration, about how many could you make?
  - A young noble served as a page at the castle. If he had breakfast at 6:00 a.m. to 6:30 a.m. and then performed daily chores until 7:00 p.m. taking a break for lunch from 1:00 to 1:30 p.m., how many hours did he work at the castle?
  - Adam of the Road* begins in the year 1294 A.D. How many years ago was this?
  - If during Robin Hood's forty day journey through England he journeyed 300 miles, how many miles of travel did he average each day?
  - A rich nobleman had a feast which consisted of a 12 course meal for each guest. How many courses were served altogether at the feast. (Find the missing fact in this problem, supply one of your own and solve it.)
  - An archery target has 5 rings, each worth different points: gold=9; red=7; blue=5; black=3; white= 1. If an archer shoots two arrows in the blue ring, one in red, two in gold, and two in black, how many more points will he/she need to score 50 points?
- 9-12. Use the grid and clues below to fill in the word blanks for exercises 9-12. Then find the coordinates for each letter of the word and write them in the parentheses below. For example, a feline—  $\frac{C}{(2,3)}$   $\frac{A}{(1,5)}$   $\frac{T}{(1,4)}$

(2,3) (1,5) (1,4)

9. the practice, sport, or art of shooting with a bow and arrow

( ) ( ) ( ) ( ) ( ) ( ) ( )

10. wandering performer of poetry and music in the Middle Ages

( ) ( ) ( ) ( ) ( ) ( ) ( ) ( )

11. the main character in *The Door in the Wall*

( ) ( ) ( ) ( ) ( )

12. The red spaniel in *Adam of the Road*

( ) ( ) ( ) ( )

Grid for problems 9-12.

5	A	M	L
4	T	N	R
3	S	C	B
2	I	O	H
1	K	Y	E
	1	2	3

# Mathematics in Sherwood Forest

Adventure literature is the perfect vehicle to capture the attention of students and introduce the idea of math as a daily living skill and necessity.

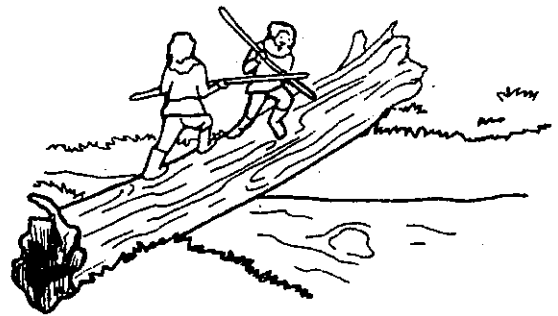
Students can create their own word problems and mathematical calculations to assist Robin Hood in his escapes and adventures.

Using quotes from the text *Robin Hood of Sherwood Forest* (~~page numbers from the novel are found in parentheses~~), students can use math to determine depth, length, height, distance, area, and quantity.

1. "After a while, finding no adventure on the road, Robin directed his steps toward a by-path. It led across a brook spanned by a bridge that was no more than a log."

"No sooner had he started across than he spied a tall stranger coming from the other side. Thinking to cross first, since the log was only wide enough for one and not the other, Robin quickened his steps." (~~page number~~)

- a. Robin had walked 12 feet along the log bridge, and the stranger had walked 12 feet. If Robin and the stranger were facing each other and were exactly 21 feet apart, how long was the bridge?
- b. If the log that the bridge was made of was exactly one-fifth as wide as it was long, how wide was it?

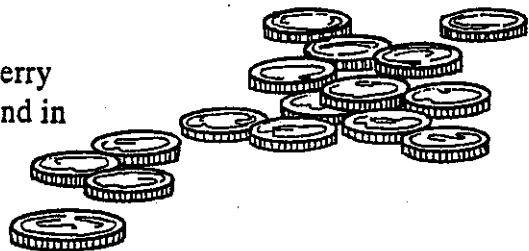


2. "'Go back, ye giant fellow,' Robin called cheerfully, 'or I'll dampen thy great body in this stream.' The tall stranger took not a backward nor a forward step, but said, 'Nay. Only to a better man than myself will I give way.'

'Then give way, I say,' said Robin, drawing an arrow from his quiver, 'for I will soon show thee the better man. I have only to bend my bow, and this arrow will hit its mark at thy heart.' "  
(~~page number~~)

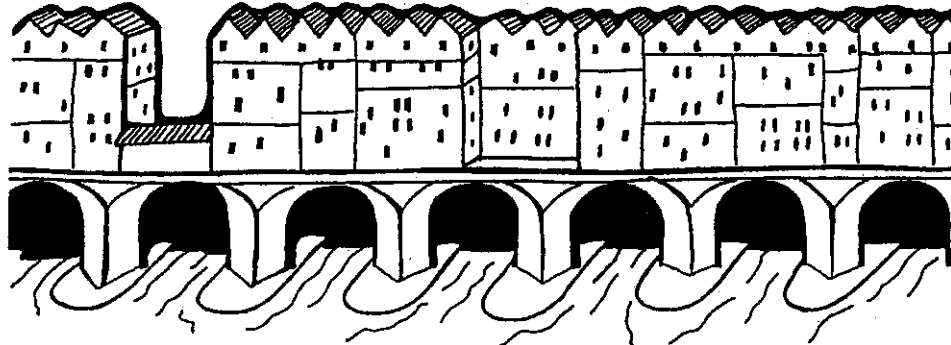
- a. Robin's bow was a full 54 inches in height. If the bow, with one point resting on the ground, reached Robin's chest and if from Robin's chest to the crown of his head measured 18 inches long, how tall was he?
3. "'The goose will soon be browning on the fire,' said Midge, 'and as everyone knows, a fine goose dinner is worth much - ten gold pieces, I'd say.' "  
(~~page number~~)

- a. If a gold piece is worth \$5.00 how much does a goose dinner cost?
- b. It takes 6 goose dinners to feed all of the merry men. How many gold pieces must Midge find in order to feed them?



# Mathematics in Sherwood Forest (cont.)

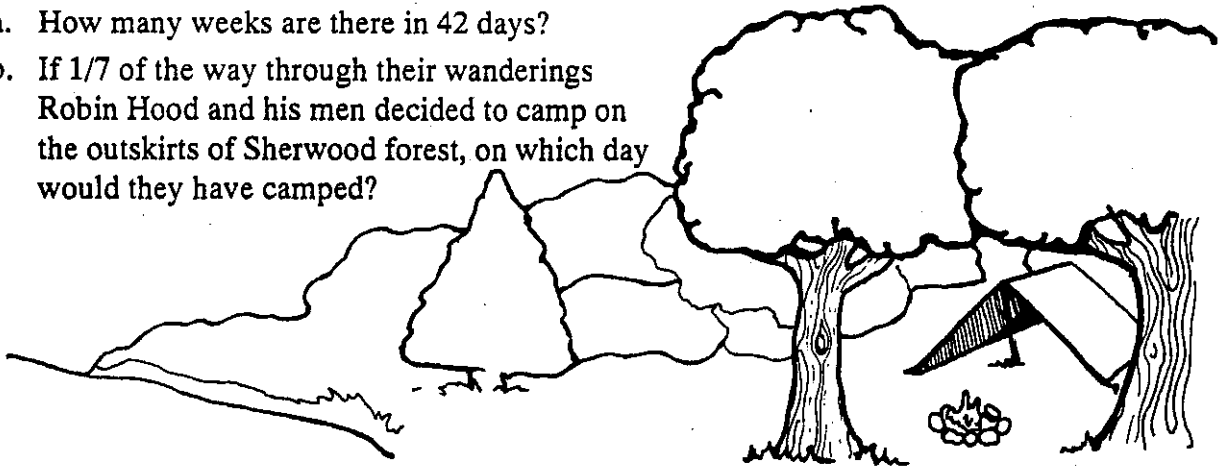
4. "Allan looked at the five score of brawny men about him." (~~page 88~~)
- A score is a set of 20. How many men are there in five score?
  - London Bridge was built between 1176 and 1209. How many score is this? (Round off to the nearest score.)



5. "Robin took a step back in surprise, for the stranger was at least seven feet tall - a good foot taller than Robin Hood - and his leg was in truth as thick as Robin's waist." (~~page 14~~)

How tall is Robin Hood?

6. "For forty days, Robin Hood and his men were free to roam the length and breadth of England as King Henry had promised. Then came the forty-first day and the forty-second, and in all the days that followed they were free." (~~page 13~~)
- How many weeks are there in 42 days?
  - If  $\frac{1}{7}$  of the way through their wanderings Robin Hood and his men decided to camp on the outskirts of Sherwood forest, on which day would they have camped?



7. "In an instant there came running twoscore bold men, dressed in Lincoln green, their bows drawn tight." (~~page 15~~)
- How many men are in twoscore?
  - If these men were joined by 3 score and 7 more, how many men came running altogether?

As an extension, ask students to create math problems from their own reading and distribute to classmates to solve.