



# Robin Hood

learn  
a  
language

## BEFORE YOU READ

Have you heard of Robin Hood? Maybe you have read a book or seen a film about him. If you have, write down three things you know about Robin Hood.

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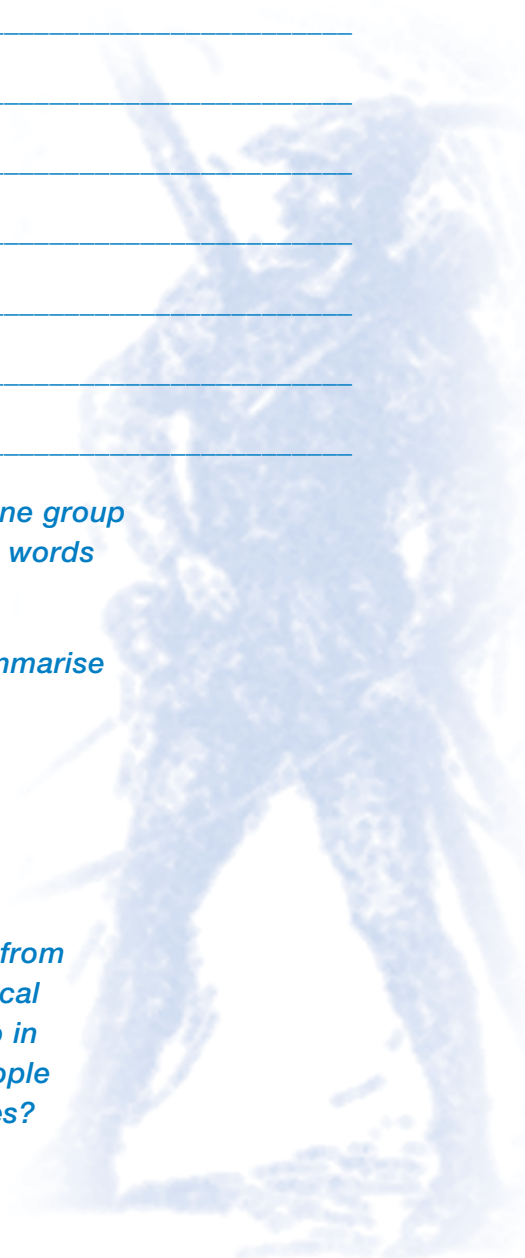
Read the introduction together and then divide into two groups. One group should read text A and one group should read text B. Some of the words are explained in the glossary that follows the texts.

Answer the questions about your text. Then think how you will summarise your text for a partner from the other group.

## ROBIN HOOD – FACT OR FICTION?

### INTRODUCTION

Everyone loves Robin Hood, the great English folk hero who stole from the rich and gave his treasure to the poor. But what are the historical facts behind the legend of Robin Hood? Did he really live long ago in Sherwood Forest, or was he a fictional figure created because people in twelfth century England were unhappy with unfair laws and taxes?



## GROUP A: THE FACTS

*In the Middle Ages, much of England was still covered with ancient forest, the great ‘wild wood’ that had covered the land since before the arrival of the first people. However, by the twelfth century, the forest included large areas of land that belonged to the king and his noblemen and were protected by very strict forest laws. The king and the noblemen used these areas for hunting and shooting but poor people were not permitted to hunt animals there. Not surprisingly, forest laws were very unpopular with poor people.*

*If people were caught killing animals from the king’s forest, they could be executed. But sometimes, people who had broken the law managed to escape. The wild forest made a wonderful hiding place for outlaws who needed to hide. There certainly were outlaws that lived in the forest in medieval times – but were any of them called Robin Hood?*

*Robin, or Robert, is one of the most common medieval names. ‘Hood’ is not an unusual last name, especially in the county of Yorkshire, where many Robin Hood stories are set. Historians have discovered quite a few real people in the documents of the time who could just be the original Robin Hood! One is a man called Robert of Wetherby, who was made an outlaw and later executed by a nobleman who later became the Sheriff of Nottingham, Robin Hood’s enemy in the legend. Could Robert of Wetherby be the real Robin Hood? We’ll never know for sure...*

## GROUP B: THE LEGEND

*According to legend, Robin Hood and his band of outlaws (the ‘merry men’) lived in the royal forest of Sherwood. Poor people had nothing to fear from Robin Hood – but when rich people passed through the forest, Robin Hood would stop them and demand their money. If they honestly told him how much money they had, and handed it over to him, he would let them pass without harming them. The money was not for himself; Robin Hood gave it all to the poor people. He defended the poor people against the unfair laws of the time, and particularly against Robin’s enemy, the corrupt Sheriff of Nottingham. The sheriff was a cruel nobleman who demanded more and more money from the poor people under his control.*

*Although Robin is a thief and an outlaw, in legends he is a strong supporter of the true king of England, Richard the Lionheart. Robin fought against King Richard’s brother, John, who had wrongly made himself ruler in King Richard’s absence. Traditionally, Robin Hood wears green clothes and is very skilful at shooting with a bow and arrow. The merry men shot deer in the forest and feasted on their meat, something that only the king was permitted to do.*

*Many stories say Robin Hood was born in AD 1160 in the village of Locksley or Loxley, which is sometimes in Yorkshire (as it is in the real world) and other times in Nottinghamshire. So, Robin Hood is sometimes called Robin of Locksley.*



## GLOSSARY

*The Middle Ages: the period in European History from around AD 1000 to AD 1450.*

*Medieval times: as above.*

*Nobleman: a person from a family with a high social position.*

*An outlaw: someone who has broken the law and is hiding from the authorities.*

*Executed: killed.*

*A corrupt person: someone who uses their power in a dishonest way to get money.*

*A bow: a weapon used for shooting arrows.*

*An arrow: a thin stick with a sharp point at one end which is shot from a bow.*

## GROUP A

*Answer these questions about your text.*

- 1. Why couldn't poor people hunt in parts of the English forest in the Middle Ages?*
- 2. What kind of people lived in the forest? Why did they live there?*
- 3. Was there a real Robin Hood?*

*Now think how you will summarise your text for a partner from the other group.*

## GROUP B

*Answer these questions about your text.*

- 1. Who were the 'merry men' and what did they do?*
- 2. Who was Robin's enemy? What was he like?*
- 3. Why is Robin Hood sometimes called Robin of Locksley?*

*Now think how you will summarise your text for a partner from the other group.*

*Now work with a partner from the other group. Take turns at telling your partner what you read. (The point of this activity is to practise summarising something in English and to practise your speaking and listening skills.)*

## WHAT DO YOU THINK?

*Discuss these questions with your classmates.*

- 1. Why do you think the story of Robin Hood is so popular and has lasted for so many years?*
- 2. Are there any legends in your country similar to the story of Robin Hood?*

## CREATIVE WRITING

*It's a beautiful morning in Sherwood forest. A small group of noblemen and women are riding through the forest on their way to a meeting with the Sheriff of Nottingham. Suddenly, a man armed with a bow and arrow appears in front of them...*

*Write a short story to explain what happens next!* \_\_\_\_\_

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