

# King Arthur: History or Myth?

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*Lesson document for teacher*

## **Introduction: King Arthur**

1

*King Arthur is a character who appears in many stories from medieval times. Experts are not sure if he was real or made-up.*

Students respond to the above prompt.

2

Verbal discussion and introduction on the concepts of myth and history

Myth: seems unbelievable, not enough evidence, written evidence might be made-up

History: evidence to back it up: written documents, buildings, ruins, tombs

3

Take down partial mind-map on King Arthur:

*King Arthur – Britain – Knights – Guinevere – Magic – movies – books*

4

Complete the mind-map: *What else do we know about King Arthur and his world? Fill in any other facts, characters or stories you know about.*

5

Discuss answers, take down other people's ideas and answers

6

Read Mallory

7

Watch 3 clips. Recent interpretations of Arthur.

Camelot (2011) TV series. How do they imagine him? What characters do we see? How is Camelot itself imagined?

Merlin TV series. The Round Table – what does the Round Table symbolize?

Excalibur (1981) Film. How do they portray Arthur? How about Merlin?

King Arthur (2004) Film. Intro: based on the idea that Arthur was a Roman who helped the Britons fight off the Saxons.

8

*How do these films / books portray King Arthur and his times? Write down answers.*

9

Discuss.

## **Part 2: What was Britain really like at this time?**

1

Take down notes:

*In 410 AD, the Roman Empire was falling apart. Its armies left Britain after ruling the island for hundreds of years. They left behind towns, walls ruins, roads and temples.*

*From 410 until around 600, it is very hard to tell what was going on in Britain. For these 200 years, we have many myths and legends, but little we can be sure of.*

*Large groups of people called Anglo-Saxons were sailing across the sea. These people came from Germany. They took over parts of Britain in bloody wars. In the 800s they set up the kingdom we now call "England." The names "England" (Anglo) and "Saxona" (Saxon) come from these people.*

2

Read Gildas out loud together

3

Answer questions on Gildas

4

Discuss answers to Gildas questions

5

Discuss map, add to map

6

Worksheet on feudal society

## **Part 3: History or Myth?**

You have taken a trip back in time to discover whether King Arthur was history, myth, or a bit of both. You have returned to the modern day.

EITHER

- A) Write a description of what you saw. Was Arthur real, a myth or partly real, partly myth? Describe what Britain was like at this time, and if Arthur was real, what he was like and what his people and his castle were like. Use details you learned in this class.
- B) As above, but instead of writing, draw a comic strip showing what you saw. Use details you learned in this class.

