

Robin Hood



Robin Hood was probably a real person who lived in Sherwood Forest, near Nottingham, sometime between 1100 and 1300. People have written stories about him ever since. Many of these celebrate the victory of good over evil. Today, Sherwood Forest Country Park and Visitor Centre attracts several million visitors every year.

Autumn burnished the forest to red gold. Early frosts rimed the grasses and rusted the bracken. The air was sharp and the sky silver blue. In a clearing, some three dozen of Robin's men were practising their skills with the broad-sword. The wine of the bright morning sharpened their senses, sent their blood racing as they thrust and parried, fighting over the carpet of crisp leaves, the crash of their weapons booming through the trees.

Gradually each pair of opponents called a truce and fell back to the edge of the clearing to watch the remaining men, until only one pair was left. One man of the pair was tall and lithe, the other an oak tree in motion – Robin Hood and Little John. Since their first meeting on the plank, the two had crossed swords and staves many times and each knew all the tricks of the other.

They moved, now fast, now slow, giving and receiving blows of such power that they would have dropped any other man to the ground. Little John's blade struck down upon his master's left shoulder, crashing against the chain-mail he was wearing for protection. Robin side-stepped, letting the sword blade slide down his back while, with both hands on the hilt of his sword, he hit Little John a punishing blow beneath his right arm, crashing into the giant's armour.

A cheer rose from the watching men, and the bright-eyed lads, sitting like squirrels in the branches of the trees, could not speak for excitement.

Little John swung his blade in a great circle about himself, whistling the air, but Robin had ducked, twisted round, and come at Little John again, quick-footed as a boy, with a powerful blow to his head with the back of his blade. The blow sent Little John stumbling forward, his foot caught on a root and he crashed to the ground like felled timber.

From *The Adventures of Robin Hood*
Patricia Leitch

1 About how many men were practising their fighting skills? (ring **one**)

12 24 36 48

1 mark

2 Read these statements and check the text to help you decide whether they are correct. Write either 'True' or 'False' next to each one.

a) It is autumn when these events happen. _____

b) 'Opponents' means 'friends'. _____

c) They have laid a carpet in the forest. _____

d) Some squirrels were watching the men fight. _____

e) Little John is really not little at all. _____

f) The men are fighting with broad-swords. _____

3 marks

3 What does the phrase 'call a truce' mean?

1 mark

4  Choose from the box below the words which are synonyms for the following:

a) 'burnished': _____

b) 'rimed': _____

c) 'parried': _____

d) 'felled': _____

1 mark

1 mark

1 mark

1 mark

frosted chopped down made to shine dodged and evaded

5 At the end of the last fight Robin Hood hits Little John on his (ring **one**):

left shoulder back head right arm.

1 mark

6 After receiving the blow, what makes Little John fall over?

1 mark

7 What do you think will happen next, after the end of the extract? Explain your answer.

1 mark

page 15
total out of 12