

Is there a job you were **BORN** to do?

COMMON CORE

RL 1 Cite textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly. **RL 3** Analyze how particular elements of a story interact.

Some people believe that we all have a destiny, a predetermined life that we can't change even if we want to. Others think that life is what we make of it. In the legend you're about to read, a kingdom waits to find out which boy is destined to be its king.

DISCUSS With a small group of classmates, discuss whether people are born to do some particular thing. Think of your feelings about your own future, and also consider individuals who have changed history through their dedication to a job or a goal. Be ready to share with the class whether you believe people choose their own destiny or are born to it.



Meet the Author

Robert D. San Souci

born 1946

Always a Fan

One of the first books Robert D. San Souci ever read was a book about King Arthur, and he remembers being fascinated by dragons and knights. In addition to *Young Arthur*, San Souci has written three other books about the Arthurian legend: *Young Guinevere*, *Young Lancelot*, and *Young Merlin*. San Souci has also retold the tales and legends of groups ranging from the Alaska Natives to the native Australians.

BACKGROUND TO THE LEGEND

Pretenders and Kings

The Arthur legends paint a vivid picture of the intrigues of medieval life. In the Middle Ages, a king's oldest son was considered the heir to his father's throne. When the enemies of a king wished to take over his kingdom, they might try to kill his son.

Arthurian Legends and Merlin

In the Arthur legends, a magician named Merlin plays an important role. Legends often include unreal or magical people and relate events that could never happen in real life. Some legends also contain magical objects that confer special powers or privileges on their bearers.

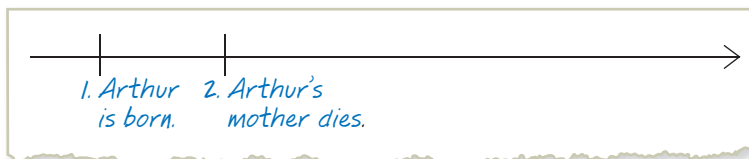
● TEXT ANALYSIS: CHARACTERISTICS OF LEGENDS

A **legend** is a story about heroes or heroines that is handed down from the past. Legends often are based on real people and events. However, as the stories pass through the generations, the characters, setting, and events become more imaginary and less factual. For example, Arthurian legends are probably based on a real-life chieftain who lived in Britain around A.D. 500. In the course of many retellings, the legends' setting changed to the time of knights, 900 years later.

Because of the courage, honor, and fairness King Arthur displayed, he became a model for others to follow. As you read, notice the conflict young Arthur faces and how he proves his goodness.

● READING SKILL: IDENTIFY CHRONOLOGICAL ORDER

In a legend, events are often presented in **chronological order**, or the order in which they take place. As you read, look for words and phrases that provide clues to this order, such as *when*, *eventually*, *this time*, and *in the days that followed*. Mark the sequence of events on a timeline.



▲ VOCABULARY IN CONTEXT

The words in Column A help re-create the world of medieval England. See how many you know by matching each word to the item in Column B that comes closest to its meaning.

Column A

1. grievous
2. homage
3. reclaim
4. dismount
5. flinching
6. upstart
7. melancholy
8. taskmaster

Column B

- a. respect
- b. cringing
- c. boss
- d. recover
- e. climb down
- f. unhappiness
- g. socially climbing
- h. severe



Complete the activities in your **Reader/Writer Notebook**.

Author
Online

THINK
central

Go to thinkcentral.com.
KEYWORD: HML7-681



Young Arthur



Retold by Robert D. San Souci

King Uther¹ heard the baby's wail and leaped to his feet. There was a sharp rap at the chamber door, and a servant entered grinning happily. "You have a son," he told the king. Uther's joy knew no bounds. When he was ushered into Queen Igera's² bedchamber, Uther looked lovingly at mother and son. "The boy's name shall be Arthur," he declared, "and he shall be a great king. For Merlin [the magician] has foretold that he will one day rule the greatest kingdom under heaven."

But Uther's happiness did not last. His beloved queen died soon after Arthur's birth, and sadness sapped the king's spirit. He lost interest
10 in ruling, and Merlin was unable to rouse him from his **melancholy**.

Analyze Visuals ▶

Examine the main **character** in this illustration. What kind of personality do you think he might have?

melancholy

(mə'l'ən-kōl'ē) *n.*

sadness; depression

1. **Uther** (yōō'thər).

2. **Igera** (ē-gēr'nə).



“Unrest grows throughout the land,” Merlin warned. “Your old foes are rising in rebellion. Give the babe into my keeping, for you have enemies even at court.” **A**

Anxious for his son’s safety, Uther agreed. So Merlin, disguised as a beggar, took the infant Arthur to Sir Ector and his lady, who lived some distance from the court and all its dangers. He told them nothing about the child, save that his name was Arthur. The couple had recently lost their infant son and welcomed Arthur as their own. Soon rebellion divided the kingdom. Uther, **reclaiming** his old spirit, rallied his 30 knights and barons. With Merlin always beside him, he drove back his enemies.

But as Uther celebrated his victory in the town of Verulum,³ traitors poisoned the town’s wells. The king and his loyal followers were stricken. Merlin alone escaped. Though he tried his healing arts on Uther, he was forced to confess, “Sire, there is no remedy.”

“Then,” said the dying monarch, “I declare that my son shall be king of all this realm after me. God’s blessing and mine be upon him.” With these words, Uther died.

When the rebels entered Verulum, only Merlin was alive.

30 “Tell us where Uther’s son is hidden,” they demanded, “so that we can slay him and end Uther’s line.”

But Merlin vanished before their eyes.

Young Arthur was raised as a son in Sir Ector’s house. He learned to read and write alongside his foster brother, Kay, who was four years older. By the time he was fifteen, Arthur was a tall, handsome, quick-witted lad. Though he had great strength, he also had a gentle manner.

Kay, who had recently been knighted, decided to train Arthur in the knightly arts himself. But Kay was vain and jealous of the favor Arthur found with their father, so he was a harsh **taskmaster**. Arthur came 40 away from his lessons in swordsmanship with many bruises and cuts. When he complained, Kay replied, “A knight must be thick-skinned and ready to bear even **grievous** wounds without **flinching**.” Yet if Arthur so much as pricked his brother, Kay would bellow loudly for the physician. **B**

Eventually Kay appointed Arthur his apprentice. This was an honor the younger boy would happily have forgone. However, seeing that Sir Ector wished it so, Arthur sighed and agreed. But he felt in his heart that he already was a knight, though no lord had dubbed him such.

A CHRONOLOGICAL ORDER

What events have happened so far? Mark the events in order on your timeline.

reclaim (rĭ-klām') v.
to get back; recover

taskmaster
(tăsk'măs'tər) n.
a person who sets tasks for others to do

grievous (grē'vəs) adj.
painful; serious

flinching (flĭn'chĭng)
n. drawing back from difficulty or danger
flinch v.

B LEGENDS

Which of the characters you’ve met so far represent admirable characteristics and which represent undesirable ones?

3. **Verulum** (vĕr'ōō-ləm).

Both Arthur and Kay knew it was vital to learn the arts of war. The
50 kingdom was still at the mercy of **upstart** lords who ruled by fire and sword.

The story of Uther's lost son, the true heir to the throne, would have been forgotten but for Merlin. One Christmas Eve, the long-absent magician reappeared and summoned the bishops, lords, and common folk to London's square. There he drove a broadsword halfway into a huge stone. Written on the blade in blazing gold letters were the words: "Whoso pulleth out the sword from this stone is born the rightful King of England." **C**

In the days that followed, knights and barons, cowherds and bakers, an endless parade of would-be kings eagerly pulled at the sword. But
60 none could loosen it, let alone draw it forth.

When they accused Merlin of trickery, he said, "The rightful king has not yet come. God will make him known at the proper time."

Now it happened that a great tournament⁴ was held in London. Among those who came were Sir Ector, Sir Kay, and young Arthur, who served Kay. So eager was the boy to see the jousts⁵ that he forgot to pack Kay's sword. There was great upset when the mistake was discovered.

"Woe to you, boy," snarled Kay, "if your error costs me the victory I would otherwise win today!"

Even Sir Ector scolded Arthur and ordered, "Go back directly and
70 fetch the missing sword."

Angry at his carelessness and impatient to see the contests, Arthur started homeward. Then he suddenly reined in his horse.

In the deserted city square was a massive stone with a sword plunged into its center. "Surely that sword is as good as the one left at home," he said. "I will borrow it. When Kay is finished, I will return it to this curious monument."

So saying, he **dismounted**, scrambled up the stone, took the sword handle, and tugged. The sword did not move. Impatient to return to the tournament, he pulled again. This time, the sword slid easily out of the
80 stone. In his haste, he did not notice the words upon the blade. Shoving the weapon into his belt, he remounted and raced to where Sir Kay waited his turn upon the field.

The moment he saw the golden words upon the blade, Kay began to tremble with excitement. When Arthur asked what was amiss, Kay shouted, "Go! Get away! You have caused enough trouble." **D**

But Arthur was curious. So he followed as Kay ran to Sir Ector. "Look, Father!" cried Kay. "Here is the sword of the stone. Therefore, it is I who must be king of all this land!"

upstart (ŭp'stärt') *adj.*
suddenly risen to wealth
or power

C CHRONOLOGICAL ORDER

What phrase tells you when Merlin put the sword in the stone? Mark the event on your timeline.

Language Coach

Oral Fluency Notice the words *broadsword* in line 54 and *sword* in line 56. The letter *w* in each word is silent. In both words, *sw* is pronounced like *s*, as in *sore*.

dismount (dīs-mount')
v. to get down or off

D LEGENDS

Why does Kay tell Arthur to get away?

4. **tournament**: a medieval sporting event in which groups of armored men fought against each other.

5. **jousts**: competitions or combats between two knights on horseback, using lances.

When Sir Ector and the others saw the sword and read the golden
90 inscription, they began to shout, “The sword from the stone! The
king’s sword!”

Hearing only this much, Arthur thought that he had stolen a king’s
weapon. As people hurried excitedly toward Kay, Arthur spurred his horse
away, certain he had committed a great crime.

Looking back, he saw Kay and Sir Ector ride off, surrounded by the
greatest lords of the realm. Were they taking Kay to trial? he wondered.
Had he brought ruin upon Sir Ector’s household?

“A true knight would not run away,” he said to himself, “and I am a
true knight in my heart.” Fearful, but determined to do what was right,
100 the boy wheeled his horse around.

The great square was now filled with people. Just how terrible a crime
had he committed?

Upon the stone stood Kay, holding the sword. The crowd shouted each
time he held the blade aloft. Then silence fell over the throng: Merlin had
appeared at the edge of the square. People stood aside to let the magician
approach the stone.

“Are you the one who pulled the sword from the stone?” Merlin asked.

“I am holding it, am I not?” Kay replied.

“The rightful king could pull it free a hundred times,” said Merlin.

110 “Slip the sword into the groove and pull it out again.”

With a shrug, Kay reinserted the sword. But when he tried to jerk it
free, it would not budge.

Suddenly all eyes turned toward Arthur, who was pushing his way
through the crowd, bellowing at the top of his lungs. “It wasn’t Kay’s
fault! I brought him the sword!” Merlin peered closely at Arthur. Then
he smiled and said, “Climb up and draw the sword from the stone.”

Uncertainly Arthur clambered up beside Kay. Grasping the pommel,
he easily pulled the sword out. **E**

Then Merlin cried, “This is Arthur, son of Uther Pendragon,⁶ Britain’s
120 destined king.”

An astonished Sir Ector knelt to pay the boy **homage**, followed by
Kay and many others. But all around, there was growing confusion and
dispute. Some cried, “It is the will of heaven! Long live the king!” while
others cried, “It is Merlin’s plot to put a beardless boy, a puppet, on the
throne, and so rule the land.”

[But] The cries of “Long Live King Arthur!” soon carried the day. **F**

COMMON CORE RL.3

E LEGENDS

A **legend** is a story handed down from the past about a specific person, usually someone of heroic stature. Like an **epic**, a legend may also feature a **hero’s task**, a trial in which the hero is tested against another warrior or monster. What hero’s task does Arthur perform?

VISUAL VOCABULARY



pommel (pŭm’əl) *n.*
a knob on the handle
of a sword

homage (hŏm’ij) *n.*
a display of loyalty
and respect

F CHRONOLOGICAL ORDER

After Sir Ector pays Arthur homage, who else does? Mark the final events of the story on your timeline.

6. **Pendragon** (pĕn-drăg’ən).

Comprehension

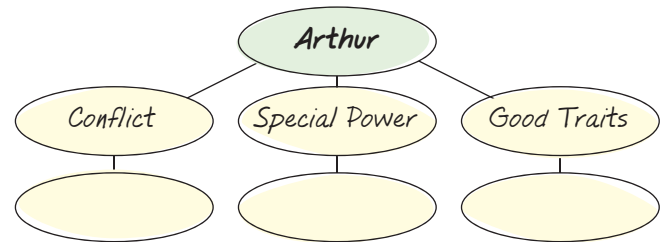
1. **Recall** Why do Uther's enemies want to slay Arthur?
2. **Clarify** Why does Arthur remove the sword from the stone the first time?
3. **Paraphrase** What is written on the sword?



RL 1 Cite textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly. **RL 2** Provide an objective summary of the text. **RL 3** Analyze how particular elements of a story interact.


Text Analysis

4. **Identify Chronological Order** Review the story to make sure you included all its major events on your timeline. Then use your timeline to write a summary of the story.
5. **Examine Characteristics of Legends** Most legends feature a hero or heroine who faces a struggle or conflict. This character often has unusual powers and admirable traits. Note Arthur's conflict, special power, and good traits in a graphic like the one shown.



6. **Interpret Theme** Legends communicate their themes not only through the actions of heroes and the consequences the heroes face, but also through the actions of minor characters. Identify the qualities that Kay represents. Then tell whether Kay's behavior pays off in the end. What message about life are readers supposed to learn from Kay's example?
7. **Evaluate a Legend** The story of Arthur has captivated people for generations. What explanation do you have for this? Tell whether you think the legend deserves such wide popularity, and defend your opinion with concrete details from the story.

Extension and Challenge

8.  **SOCIAL STUDIES CONNECTION** What was life like in Britain during the early Middle Ages? Read "Who Was King Arthur?" on page 689, and then do research on the Internet. Display your answers to the following questions on a poster:
 - How was society organized?
 - Who were the Britons fighting?
 - What religion was practiced?

Is there a job you were BORN to do?

What ideas about destiny, or fate, are reflected in this legend? Are they different from or similar to the ideas your group discussed as part of the activity on page 680?

Vocabulary in Context

▲ VOCABULARY PRACTICE

Show that you understand the vocabulary words by telling whether each statement is true or false.

1. I am **flinching** when I reach out to hug someone.
2. A sad look or a sigh is often a sign of **melancholy**.
3. It is hard to pay **homage** to someone you don't respect.
4. A **grievous** wound is generally easy to recover from.
5. An **upstart** politician is probably serving a second or third term in office.
6. A foreman in a factory is an example of a **taskmaster**.
7. A good time to **dismount** from a horse is when you are galloping on it.
8. A landowner trying to **reclaim** his property wants to get it back.

ACADEMIC VOCABULARY IN WRITING

- attribute
- conduct
- physical
- status
- task

Write a paragraph in which you describe at least one **attribute**, or characteristic, of a hero. Draw upon what you learned about Arthur from the selection. Use at least two Academic Vocabulary words in your response.

VOCABULARY STRATEGY: ANALOGIES

An **analogy** compares similar aspects of two or more different things. Sometimes an analogy is expressed as a problem, using two pairs of words. The relationship between the first pair of words is the same as that between the second pair of words. One relationship that is often expressed as an analogy is whole to part. In the following example, the first word represents the whole of something, and the second word represents a part of that whole.

team : athlete :: cast : actor

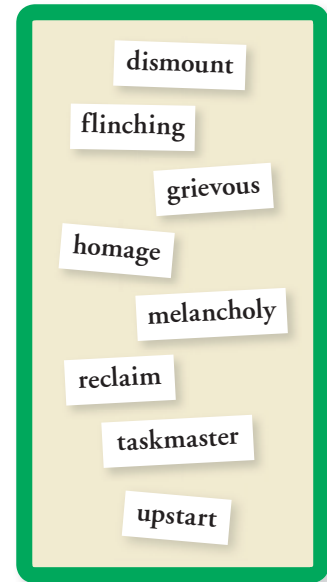
means "is to"

means "as"

The relationship is expressed as *Team is to athlete as cast is to actor*.

PRACTICE Read each of the following analogy problems. Choose the word in parentheses that best completes each whole-to-part relationship.

1. hand : finger :: wheel : (bolt, spoke, metal)
2. clock : dial :: faculty : (teacher, parent, school)
3. encyclopedia : volume :: flower : (tree, stem, vase)
4. family : child :: state : (country, city, continent)
5. house : kitchen :: Africa : (Europe, France, Nigeria)



COMMON CORE

L5b Use the relationship of particular words (e.g., analogy) to better understand each of the words. **L6** Acquire and use accurately grade-appropriate general academic words.

Interactive Vocabulary **THINK central**
Go to thinkcentral.com.
KEYWORD: HML7-688

MAGAZINE ARTICLE Historians disagree on the facts behind King Arthur legends. This magazine article presents some of the theories about Arthur's true home. Decide whether the information in this article matches your own image of Arthur.

Who Was King Arthur? by Jerry Dunn

King Arthur and his queen, Guinevere, ruled their kingdom in peace from their castle, Camelot. . . . Camelot represents a lost time of innocence and high adventure during the Dark Ages—the period from A.D. 476 to about A.D. 1000. . . .

But did Arthur and his peaceful Camelot ever really exist? Historians say that around A.D. 410, after the Romans left Britain, fierce invaders called Saxons came from Europe, conquering much of England. In the western part of the country, a local chieftain fought the Saxons. He won a great victory at Badon Hill around A.D. 500. According to some scholars, this real-life brave warrior was Arthur.

His triumph brought 12 years of peace. Could this golden age have been



Camelot? Some experts say the real Camelot may have been Cadbury Castle in southern England. Here archaeologists found ruins of a fortified tower and what may have been a great hall of timber, all dating from Arthur's time. Other places around England also lay claim to the noble king. For instance Arthur may have fought his last

battle in southwestern England at a place called Camlan.

We may never know all the facts about Arthur. Perhaps it doesn't matter. The legend of King Arthur holds its own timeless truths. This is why people have been reciting stories of King Arthur and his Round Table for at least a thousand years.

THE DARK AGES

- Disorder reigned in most of Europe between A.D. 476 and A.D. 1000, the period called the Dark Ages.
- King Arthur and his knights never wore full suits of armor. They lived in the sixth century; full plate armor didn't show up for another 900 years.
- People who lived in what is now England did not speak English. They probably spoke Latin or British, a language from which Welsh developed.
- Disease, poor diet, and frequent wars meant that most people could not expect to live beyond age 30.
- Only monks and some noblemen learned how to read.