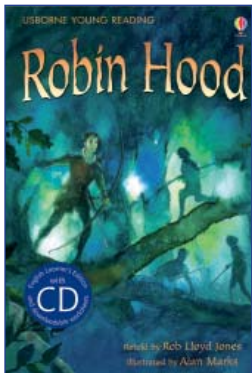


Robin Hood • Teacher's notes



Author: Rob Lloyd Jones

Reader level: Advanced

Word count: 2177

Lexile level: 510L

Text type: English legend

About the story

Robin Hood is one of the most famous figures in English folklore, and the tales about him are many and varied. This book takes 10-year-old Much Middleton, a miller's son, as a starting point. His father is struggling to pay the unfair taxes demanded by the Sheriff of Nottingham, but Robin Hood comes to their aid, leaving coins at the villagers' doors. The Sheriff is furious, claiming the money had been stolen from him. Defiant, Much throws horse dung at the Sheriff. Soldiers try to arrest him but capture his father instead. Desperate to rescue him, Much goes in search of Robin.

Lady Marian, the King's cousin, is out riding and takes pity on Much. They ride deeper into the forest and are led by a trail of arrows to Robin Hood's hideout. Much stays with Robin and his men, learning how they steal from the rich to give to the poor. But he longs for the day when they can free his father. Meanwhile, the Sheriff is becoming more ruthless. He sends the Six Swordsman – the most feared fighters in Europe – to collect taxes. They burn down Much's village and capture some of Robin's men. Robin decides it's time to fight back. With the villagers' help, he and Much attack the Sheriff's castle at night, fighting off the Six Swordsman and freeing the prisoners. Only the Sheriff refuses to surrender. He shouts that the King is dead, a claim instantly refuted by the King himself, making a visit unannounced.

With the Sheriff safely behind bars, the King has the village rebuilt, and Much returns to the mill with his father. Robin and his men go back to their forest home, and Robin gives Much his sword as a keepsake.

About the author

Rob Lloyd Jones never wanted to be a writer when he grew up. He wanted to be a fireman, or a polar explorer, and sometimes an outlaw too. But when it came down to it, he didn't much like fire or ice, or even swords, so he decided to write about them instead. Since then, he's written over 30 books for children. He loves it. But he still dreams about being a fireman.

Words and phrases of interest, and unfamiliar words

Help your students to develop strategies for unfamiliar words, so that you don't have to interrupt the flow of the story often to explain vocabulary. You might suggest they make a quick note of words as they read, or mark their place on the page with removable sticky notes or index tabs. Encourage them to deduce meanings: are they familiar with any part of the word (e.g. "mystery" in "mysterious")? Can they guess from the context (e.g. staircases in castles often curve round in a "spiral")? You could look at different strategies for learning new vocabulary, such as making word clouds or thematic lists.

p4 Sheriff	p10 dung	p24 loot	p39 crook	p51 spiral
p7 raise taxes	p12 arrested	p26 dungeons	sneered	p52 lunged
lashed	p13 lone	p30 vines	p43 plume	p53 chandelier
charged	p20 clearing	p35 archery	p45 captured	p54 scoffed
p6 outlaw	p21 hideout	bulls-eye	p47 dead of night	p56 released
p7 defeated	p23 frustration	p37 disguises	uncoiled	p57 surrender
p8 pouch	longbow	mocking	p49 emerged	p60 debt



Robin Hood • Teacher's notes

Before reading

Write the following line on the board: ROBYN HOD IN SHEREWOD STOD

Tell your class that this is Old English and that the spellings are different to today's English. Can anyone work out the first two words? Try saying them out loud. You could tell them it's someone's name. Write "Robin Hood" underneath, then put "oo" in place of the the other two "o"s to get "wood" and "stood".

Has anyone heard of Robin Hood? Students may be familiar with some of the many TV or movie adaptations of the legend. What do they know about him? Where did he live? Fill in "Sherwood" so that you've now got the line "Robin Hood in Sherwood stood". Explain that this is the first line from one of the earliest known poems about Robin Hood, written in around 1400. No one knows whether Robin Hood really existed, but there were lots of ballads (stories in verse) written about him, and they take place in a real place (Sherwood Forest).

Robin Hood had a band of followers often called his Merry Men (in the Middle Ages, "merry man" meant a companion or follower). Can you name any of them? [Friar Tuck, Little John, Will Scarlet...] This book tells the story of one of them, a young boy called Much Middleton.

.....

Reading or listening

You can listen to the story on CD or read it aloud to the students, take turns to read or read together silently. Each double page spread in the book is one track on the CD, so that you can pause between tracks or repeat tracks if your students need it. The first reading is in a British English accent, and it is followed by an American English reading. The words are exactly the same.

.....

During reading: you might like to ask some of these questions.

- pp4-5 Do you notice anything odd about the village in the picture? Where are the roads? How do people get around? [On horseback, for those who can afford it – most people couldn't.]
- p7 Where do you think the stories of Robin Hood come from? [Word of mouth, rumours]
- p13 How will Much find Robin? Does he really know where to look?
- p16 Who do you think the figures are?
- p21 Would they have found the hideout without the arrows? Why is it so well hidden?
- p25 Why does Marian let Robin keep the necklace? What does that tell us about her?
- p27 Are you surprised that a daring outlaw like Robin Hood is put off by danger? Perhaps it's not his own safety he's worried about...
- p31 How do you think Much is feeling here? Frightened? Excited?
- p33 Why has Much changed his mind about rescuing his father straight away?
- p39 What has made the Sheriff so rich?
- p41 Where do you think Marian is going?
- p45 Why do you think the Six Swordsmen burned the houses as well as taking the money?
- p53 What do you think of this fight – is it meant to be realistic, or to add to the legend?
- p57 Who is this? Was anyone expecting him?
- p62 Is the King a good king? What can you tell from the story? [He acts fairly and looks after ordinary people.]
- p63 Can you see how the stories of Robin Hood may have been passed on?

.....

After reading

Ask the class why they think Robin and his men went back to the forest rather than become knights in a castle. Which would you choose and why?

Surely it's wrong to steal? If so, why is Robin Hood the good guy in this story and the Sheriff the bad guy? Are taxes a bad thing? Why do we have them and what should they be spent on? [Schools, roads, hospitals, etc. – things that benefit everyone.] Is that what the Sheriff did?

Why do you think Robin Hood makes such a good story for TV or in movies?

Do we still tell stories like this? Do you think any modern-day comic-book heroes are like Robin Hood?