

# The Sword in the Stone

A dramatic (and delightful) adaptation of the classic legend

## About the Story

For qualitative complexity factors, go to Scope Online.

## Learning Objective:

to explore the key ideas of a play based on the legend “The Sword in the Stone” and then reimagine a scene from the play as a graphic novel, short story, or video

## Key Skills:

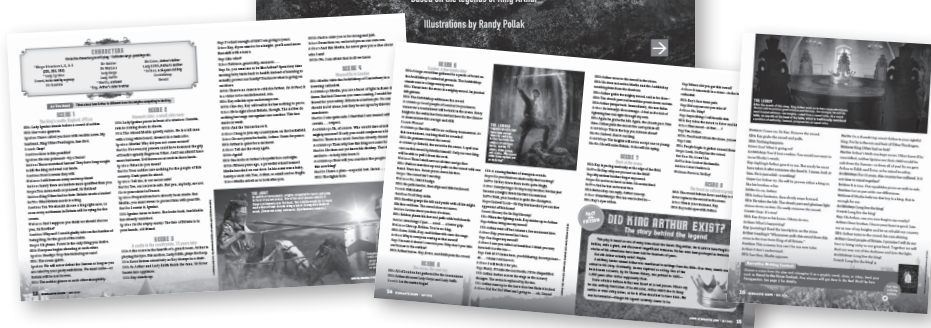
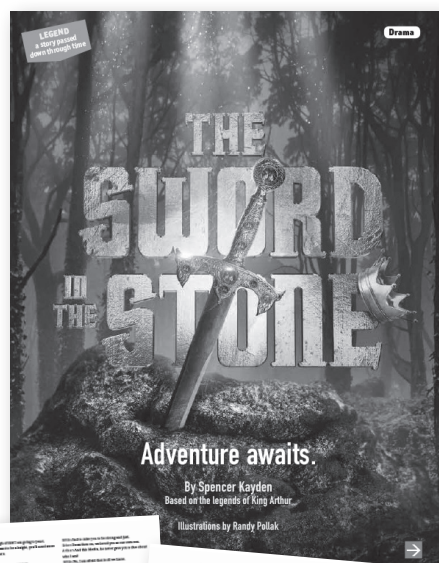
text structure, character, interpreting text, key ideas, narrative writing

## Essential Questions:

- What makes a story enduring?
- What are the qualities of a good leader?
- What do legends reveal about the cultures they come from?

## Standards:

The texts and lesson support these Common Core anchor standards: **R.1, R.2, R.3, R.5, R.9, R.10, W.2, W.9, SL.1, SL.2, L.4, L.6.** For more standards information—including TEKS—go to Scope Online.



## Your Teaching Support Package

Find your full suite of materials at [scope.scholastic.com](http://scope.scholastic.com).

### Audio:

- Vocabulary

**Literature Connections:** ideas for connecting to curricular texts

### Skill Builders to print or project:

- Vocabulary
  - Close Reading and Critical Thinking
  - Quiz\*
  - **Literary Elements:** Theme Anticipation Guide, Character Thinking Tool
  - Preparing to Write: Creating Your Scene
  - Contest Entry Form
- \* Available on two levels

# Step-by-Step Lesson Plan

## Close Reading, Critical Thinking, Skill Building

### 1 Preparing to Read

#### Do-Now: Anticipation Guide

(3 minutes, activity sheet online)

Project the **Theme Anticipation Guide**. As students enter the classroom, have them write down whether they agree or disagree with each statement. Take a quick poll for each statement and ask volunteers to explain their responses.

#### Preview vocabulary.

(7 minutes, activity sheet online)

Project or distribute the **Vocabulary Words and Definitions**. Words: *conjure, destiny, fanfare, hearth, heir, hilt, melee, petty, quavers, vying*

### 2 Reading and Discussing the Play

(45 minutes, activity sheet online)

- Read aloud the As You Read box on page 12.
- Assign parts and read the play as a class.
- Invite students to share anything they found surprising or interesting. Then discuss the following questions as a class.

#### Close-Reading Questions

**What is the main purpose of the dialogue among the nobles in Scene 1?** (text structure) *In Scene 1, the nobles are bickering about who should take over as king. Their conversation reveals that they are not united and that they are motivated by pride and ambition rather than by concern for their country. Their dialogue also helps readers understand events that come later in the play, such as when, in Scene 3, Ector says that the nobles are constantly waging war on each other, and why Igraine felt it necessary to keep Arthur's identity secret.*

**What kind of person is Kay? Explain.**

(character) *Kay is aggressive, prideful, and ambitious. He also has a bad temper. He angrily stomps out of the room when his family tries to give him advice in Scene 3. In Scene 6, he is quick to yell at Arthur for leaving the sword behind, even though Kay is actually the one who forgot it. Students may also say that Kay is dishonest and power-hungry, based on the fact that he lies about having removed the sword from the stone. At the end of the play, Arthur says that Kay has a good heart, so perhaps this is also true.*

**In Scene 3, Edith says to Arthur, "It is a virtue to be tenderhearted, son." What does she mean?** (interpreting text)

*A virtue is a admirable quality or trait. Edith means that being tenderhearted is a good thing and something to be proud of. She is disagreeing with Kay, who seems to believe that the compassion that Arthur shows is a weakness rather than a strength.*

**In Scene 3, Ector says that the nobles do nothing but wage war on each other, and that this has made Britain weak. Edith says, "And the Saxons know it." Why would fighting among the nobles make Britain vulnerable to the invading Saxons?** (key ideas)

*A united, coordinated effort is required to defend the country; if the nobles are fighting each other, such an effort is not possible. The nobles might become distracted by their efforts to defeat one another and not pay enough attention to the Saxons, or the nobles might prioritize victory over one another above the country as a whole. The Saxons might also be able to manipulate the warring nobles, pitting one group against the other.*

At the end of the play, Arthur says, “Dear brother, I know your heart is good. Join me as one of my knights, and let us rebuild our country.” What does this tell you about Arthur? (character) *The fact that Arthur asks Kay to be one of his knights shows that Arthur is forgiving and values unity over revenge. After all, as king, Arthur could punish Kay easily.*

- Have students work in groups to read the sidebar on page 15 and the captions.
- Reconvene as a class to discuss the following critical-thinking questions.

### Critical-Thinking Questions

“The Sword in the Stone” was first told many centuries ago, yet it is still widely enjoyed today. Why might the story appeal to modern readers? *Answers will vary. Students may say that it helps us understand a society from the past. Or they might say that the qualities the story celebrates—patience, generosity, and compassion—are qualities that people still admire and aspire to today. The story’s lasting appeal is surely also due to the fact that it is a lot of fun, packed with mystery, drama, and magic.*

Do you think Lady Igraine was wrong to keep Arthur’s identity a secret from him?

**Explain.** *Answers will vary. Some students may say that it was wrong of Lady Igraine to keep Arthur’s identity a secret because it is never right to lie and it is cruel to leave a child wondering where he or she came from. Other students may say that Lady Igraine did what she had to do to keep Arthur safe and that she knew that when the time was right, he would learn the truth.*

What do you think makes a good leader?

*Answers will vary.*

Do you think Arthur would do a good job as a leader of a country in today’s world? Why or why not? *Answers will vary.*

## 3 Skill Building: Narrative Writing

(15 minutes, activity sheet online)

Have students complete **Preparing to Write: Creating Your Scene**. This activity will prepare them for the prompt on page 16. *For alternate culminating tasks, see the box below.*

## Differentiate and Customize

### For Struggling Readers

Choose one character from this list: Merlin, Arthur, or Sir Kay. Then make a list of three traits to describe that character. Support each trait with text evidence from the play.

### For Advanced Readers

Rewrite “The Sword in the Stone” as a short story. Write in the first person, from the point of view of Merlin, Arthur, or Sir Kay.

### For Harry Potter Fans

Compare Arthur to Harry Potter. How are they similar? How are they different?

### For Future Politicians

Write a speech for Arthur to give on his coronation day. You can write out your speech or present it in a video. Be sure Arthur talks about what kind of leader he intends to be and why he believes he will do a good job.