Monday 5th July 2021

LO: To research King Arthur


What do you
know about
King Arthur?

King Arthur

The story of King Arthur has grown and changed over the years. One of the first books to mention Arthur was written in the year 830 by a monk named Nennius. Nennius wrote a book called the History of the Britons (Historia Brittonum), and in it, he mentions that a king named Arthur commanded a number of battles. Nennius even lists these battles that he claimed were led by Arthur.

Another author in the 11th century, Geoffrey of Monmouth, wrote a book called The History of the Kings of Britain. In this book, Monmouth described Arthur's whole life from his birth right up to his death.

One of the most famous books about King Arthur was published in 1485 and is called Le Morte D'Arthur (The Death of Arthur). It is a collection of Arthur stories that were translated and combined by Thomas Malory. Malory took a number of French stories from the thirteenth century (1201–1300) as well some English stories and reworked them into one big story which covers Arthur's birth, his life, and his death. Most of the stories you hear about Arthur are based on this book.



Was King Arthur Real?

Even though there is not a lot of evidence for the existence of King Arthur, a number of scholars believe that the legend of King Arthur is based on a real person or a number of people from the Anglo-Saxon age. It was common during this time for storytellers to give the heroes of their stories supernatural qualities. If Arthur did exist, he would have been more of a war leader than a king in a castle.

Regardless of whether Arthur was real or not, the story of King Arthur, Lancelot, Guinevere, and the Holy Grail continue to interest people today. Countless books, films, and television programmes have been made about him.

The New King

Arthur's parents, King Uther and Queen Igraine, were told they could not get married. They asked the wizard Merlin for help, and he said he would allow them to get married, if they gave him their first born child. Uther and Igraine agreed, and when their son Arthur was born, Merlin took him to Sir Ector's family to live with them.

Arthur was not treated well at Sir Ector's, particularly by Sir Ector's son, Sir Kay, who teased him constantly. When Arthur was older, Merlin began to visit Arthur and teach him. The main thing Merlin tried to teach Arthur was that knowledge was more important than force.

King Uther had died and many people across the land were fighting over who would be king next. To try and stop the fighting. Merlin placed a sword in an anvil and then placed them on a rock. Merlin told everyone that whoever could pull the sword out of the anvil would be the new king. Many people tried to pull the sword from the stone, but no one could do it. When Arthur was fifteen years old, Merlin took him to visit the sword in the stone. There was a large crowd gathered around the sword and after many people (including Sir Kay) had tried to remove the sword, Arthur took his turn. He easily removed the sword and was pronounced the new king.

Guinevere



After one of Arthur's battles as King, he wanted to rest at a local castle. While he was sleeping, he heard the sound of a harp being played. He followed the music and found a woman named Guinevere. Arthur thought she was the most beautiful woman he had ever seen and he was determined to marry her.

As a wedding present, Guinevere gave Arthur a round table. Arthur was pleased with the gift because it had enough space for all of his knights and it allowed them to discuss things as equals. Each seat had the name of one of Arthur's knights on it except for one seat which was nameless. This seat was for the greatest knight in the world and if anyone who was unworthy sat there, that knight would die.

Mordred and Lancelot

A number of years after Arthur's marriage to Guinevere, three women and a young boy arrived at the castle. The three woman were Arthur's half-sisters. Two of the women wanted to make peace with Arthur but the third, Morgan le Fay, wanted to bring Arthur down and she planned on using her son Mordred to do it. She sent Mordred to gain Arthur's trust and become a knight.

One of Arthur's knights Lancelot was in love with Guinevere, and even though Arthur knew that Lancelot loved his wife, Arthur didn't say anything because he trusted Lancelot. He believed that Lancelot would remain loyal to him.

One evening, Mordred, Morgan le Fay's son, visited Arthur and told him that he had seen Lancelot and Guinevere together. Arthur didn't want to do it but he agreed to set a trap for the two. Guinevere told Arthur that she was going to go riding and when she left, she was followed by Mordred and some of Arthur's knights. As soon as Guinevere met Lancelot in the forest, Mordred and the other knights came rushing out. Lancelot was able to get away but they captured Guinevere.



Guinevere found guilty and sentenced to be burned to death but Lancelot and his men were able to free Guinevere and escape. Arthur left to attack Lancelot, leaving Mordred in charge of the kingdom. While Arthur was away, Mordred made himself king and claimed Guinevere as his wife.

Arthur started a battle with Mordred. During the battle, he saw Mordred and rushed to attack. Mordred met the attack and hit Arthur in the head with his sword just as Arthur's stabbed Mordred's heart with the spear. They both died.

Using the text, complete the research!

Where does the legend of King Arthur come from?

Is King Arthur real?

How did Arthur Die?

Who was King Arthur?

What happened in Arthur's life?