



Hampstead Stage Company  
*Robin Hood* -Educational Materials  
Created by Amanda Pawlik, Education Director

## Robin Hood Debate

### Summary:

- This interactive workshop guides students in debating and discussing some of the major questions in *Robin Hood*, including the question, “**Was it right for Robin Hood to break the law?**”
- There is an optional extension activity included for students to take their ideas from this workshop and further develop them into an essay.

**Grades:** 6-8

**Time:** 45-60 minutes, if using optional extension activity, plan for an additional 15-30 minutes (at least)

### Materials:

- Two “signs”, one that reads, “Strongly Agree” and one that reads “Strongly Disagree”
- Tape to hang each sign on either end of the room
- If possible, desks and chairs should be moved to accommodate space for students to move around, however, modifications are provided if this is not possible.

### Introduction (5-15 minutes):

**Note** -this workshop is best done after students have seen Hampstead Stage Company’s production of *Robin Hood*. Because students will be asked to debate/discuss events that happen in the play, it may be helpful to prepare them to focus on some key points prior to seeing the show. For instance, you may ask students to pay attention to Robin Hood’s actions and when he technically breaks the law, and if students agree with what he has done or if they would do anything differently. Our *Robin Hood Study Guide* offers some great preshow information and discussion questions that may be used to further prepare students.

*This workshop can also be modified for students who are reading a version of Robin Hood, however, please note that events may be slightly different depending on the version used.*

### **Students Review Major Plot Points in *Robin Hood*:**

- Gather students in a circle or preferred seating.
- Use the following questions to help students review the major plot points from *Robin Hood*.
  - **What did Robin Hood do in the play/story?**
    - ➔ He robbed from the rich to give to the poor.



- **Why did he do this?**
  - ➔ King John was making laws that were unfair/Robin Hood wanted to help people/He wanted to stand up for people who could not stand up for themselves.
- **What was the Sheriff of Nottingham's job?**
  - ➔ To enforce King John's laws.
- Fill in any gaps in knowledge as needed for students. Our *Robin Hood* Study Guide provides a summary of the play and can be a great resource if you are conducting this workshop on a different day than the performance itself.

**Students Consider Both Sides in *Robin Hood* (15-20 minutes):**

**Activity: Back to Back, Face to Face\*:**

- This activity provides students the opportunity to consider some of the major questions in *Robin Hood* and practice sharing their ideas with a partner prior to participating in a larger group discussion.
- To start, students move about the room in any open space provided (if there is little room in the classroom, students may also just go straight to a partner).
- When teacher calls, "Go", students go to a partner. Partners sit (or stand as space allows) back to back, being respectful of personal space.
- Teacher then gives students a prompt. With each question, students should be given 30-60 seconds to collect their thoughts on the topic.
- After time is up, teacher calls "Go" and partners should then turn to face each other. Each partner will then take a turn sharing their opinions, while the other partners listen respectfully.
- After both pairs have shared their responses, teacher calls "Go" and students find a new partner.
- Students then repeat the process for a different prompt.
- Prompts (feel free to add to this list if desired!)
  - Would you break the law to help someone you cared about?
  - Is it ever okay to break the law?
  - The Sheriff of Nottingham's job is to enforce King John's laws. Does this make him an evil character? Why or why not?
  - How do you think the Sheriff of Nottingham feels when he cannot do his job?
  - How would you feel if you were in his position?

**Students Practice Reasoning and Debating Skills (15-20 minutes):**

**Activity: Take a Stand\*:**

- The following activity allows students to practice their reasoning and debating skills, while also learning to understand "gray areas"
- Teacher establishes an imaginary line, or using masking tape creates an actual line down the center of the room.



- Two ends of the line should be established and marked either with paper signs or poster board/white board. One sign should read: “Strongly Agree” the other should read: “Strongly Disagree”
- Students should begin standing in the middle of the line.
- Teacher will call out questions. After each question, students should arrange themselves on the line depending on their answers. Noting that the middle of the line would be “no opinion”, a place midway between the middle and strongly agree might be “mostly’ agree” while someone standing on the very end of the line on the “strongly agree” side feels most strongly about this answer.
- With each question, teacher should ask students in each “zone” to share their reasoning. During this time, if something that one of their peers says changes their mind, students are welcome to adjust where they are standing on the spectrum.
- Note: if space is limited, possible modifications for this activity include bringing students out into the hallway if possible or designating specific rows of seats as “strongly agree”, “strongly disagree”, “no opinion” and so on, instead of students standing at a place, they could take a new seat in a row that best described their view.
- **Prompts.** For each of the following, after teacher reads the prompt, students should place themselves on the spectrum of “Strongly Agree” to “Strongly Disagree”
  - Robin Hood broke the law.
  - Robin Hood was right to break the law.
  - Robin Hood is a villain because he broke the law.
  - The Sheriff of Nottingham was right to arrest Robin Hood for breaking the law.
  - The Sheriff of Nottingham is a villain.
  - The only way Robin Hood could solve his problems was to break the law.
  - It is okay to break the law if you are helping someone.
  - It is okay to break the law if you believe the law is unfair.

**Optional Extension (15-30 minutes):**

If desired, students could take the ideas generated from this workshop to develop an essay where they share their argument for one of the prompts above. If time is available, students could take 15-30 minutes following this activity to begin writing a first draft of this essay. When writing, remind students to give examples from the play to support their reasoning.



**Hampstead Stage Company**  
a not for profit organization

1053 North Barnstead Road  
Center Barnstead, NH 03225  
info@hampsteadstage.org  
Office: 800.619.5302  
Fax: 1.773.482.1764

**Reflection (5 minutes):**

- Robin Hood intentionally broke the law because he disagreed with it and wanted to help the people who the law was hurting. What are some other things you can do if you feel that a law or rule is not right?
  - As time allows, you may wish to share information about the **Magna Carta**, which ultimately became a solution for King John's oppressive reign. More information about this may be found in the King John section of our Study Guide.
- Today, we saw a lot of situations that were "gray areas" -where there was no clear right or wrong answer. When trying to solve a problem that has "gray areas" what are some things we can do so that we can make the best decisions?

**Resources Cited**

\*"Back to Back, Face to Face" and "Take a Stand" have both been modified from Expeditionary Learning Protocol. For more information, please visit: <https://eleducation.org/>