



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

The Hampstead Stage Company
Proudly Presents
Robin Hood
A Study Guide

For use with the Theatrical Production by The Hampstead Stage Company
Created by Amanda Pawlik, Education Director
©The Hampstead Stage Company 2017



Robin Hood

Table of Contents

Introduction

Education Director’s Welcome.....3
 About Us: HSC and Pantomime Theatre.....3-5
 About Robin Hood’s Story and History5-6
 About the Play: Plot Summary.....7-10

Characters/Settings

Places.....11
 People.....11-12

For the Classroom

Vocabulary.....12-13
 Preshow Discussion Questions.....13-14
 Post Show Discussion Questions.....14
 Activities and Lesson Plans.....15
 Works Cited and Further Resources.....16



Education Director's Welcome

Thank you so much for bringing Hampstead Stage Company to your students!

The following study guide and workshop lesson plans are meant to supplement and enhance our performance. Please note, no formal preparation is required for seeing our shows, but we hope that these educational materials will inspire your students to continue learning about classic literature. We hope you enjoy them just as much as we enjoyed creating them for you!

Sincerely,

Amanda Pawlik

Education Director

Hampstead Stage Company

About Hampstead Stage Company

We are a nationally touring educational theatre that brings high quality, professional theatre to schools, libraries, and communities all over the 48 contiguous states (everywhere but Hawaii and Alaska!). The Hampstead Stage Company's goal is to bring great books to life through live theatre; sparking an interest in reading, and creating a new way to use your imagination.

The Hampstead Stage Company got its name from our founders, who came to America from the Hampstead area of London, England to pursue their dreams. Since its inception, our company has grown into one of the largest educational touring companies in the nation. We have performed for over twenty million audience members!

Our interactive educational tours run year-round and are performed by two professional actors, each playing multiple roles. Our scripts are original adaptations, based directly on literary classics, and include children and adults from the audience. The plays last one hour, with a



question and answer session following the performance. We travel to your space, and bring our own realistic sets and costumes; designed using extensive historical research. Our productions are flexible enough to fit into any assembly/performance space.

Theatre performance helps us learn about ourselves and the world around us. But more than that, by using our imagination we can be proud of who we are, create goals for ourselves, and even help the way we think at home and in our communities!

The Hampstead Stage Company is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization. All HSC study guides and supporting lesson plans are available to download for free from our website!

Contact: Anna Robbins, Company Manager: info@hampsteadstage.org
Website: www.hampsteadstage.org

All About Pantomime

The Hampstead Stage Company specializes in a special form of theatre called pantomime. Don't be fooled, we are not silent mimes with painted faces!

Pantomime, also known as "panto", goes back much farther than that. Panto is a form of theatre traditionally found in the United Kingdom, Australia, Zimbabwe, India, and Ireland; and has been performed since the time of Ancient Greece! The word "pantomime" comes from the Greek words pantos, "every, all"; and mimos, "imitator, actor". Pantomime in Ancient Greece used to mean a group of actors and musicians imitating a story. Many famous poets used to write scripts for these actors, and were paid very well!

Pantomime was first performed in England as a show between the acts of an opera, so they could change the set backstage. It became such a popular performance, that it soon became a show of its own. It is said



that pantomime had its first full performance in the early 19th century. Actors travelled from town to town performing well-known stories that taught a lesson, or encouraged the audience to think about the characters, and how they solved the problems they were presented.

Now pantomime is a very well-known form of theatre in England. Shows are based on traditional children's stories, and call for a LOT of audience participation! In England, the audience often "boos" the villain character, "awws" for the damsel in distress, and yells comments to the characters such as: "he's right behind you!", "Oh, yes, he is!", or "Oh, no he isn't!". Volunteers are often called on stage by the Hampstead Stage Company to act as the Chorus. They become extras, playing many characters in multiple scenes, and are often on stage as much as the two other actors!

HSC actors follow traditional pantomime casting: girls play boys, boys play girls, and there are many, many costume changes. Actors rely on their voices and physicality (the way they move their bodies) to portray different characters. Just like all pantomime shows before; Hampstead actors travel all over the country, performing in many different types of spaces!

About Robin Hood's Story and History

The character of Robin Hood has been famous for centuries and is truly a legend: many are familiar with his story and believe it to be true, though there is no substantial proof that a real Robin Hood existed. The history of this story and its perseverance are as complex as the legend itself.

As early as the 13th century terms like "Robehod", "Rabunhod", and "Robynhod" were used as nicknames for criminals, which has led scholars to believe that these names were inspired by a real-life outlaw, a fictitious one, or some combination of both, and furthermore, that if these names were being used in the 13th century, whoever or whatever



their inspiration was must have existed before this time. In addition to this, in the 13th and 14th centuries, outlaws would use the names “Robin Hood” and “Little John” as pseudonyms when committing crimes, again suggesting that whoever or whatever inspired this usage must have existed prior to this time.

In 1521, the Scottish historian **John Major** wrote in his “**History of Great Britain**” that Robin Hood was active in 1193-4, during the time when Prince John attempted to take the throne from King Richard the Lion Heart and scholars believe it is possible to pinpoint Robin Hood’s existence (either the actual man or the legendary one) to this time, though not all versions of the *Robin Hood* story will do so.

The tale of Robin Hood has been shared through ballads and poems, passed down orally, and recorded in short story and book form throughout the ages. The earliest written compilation of *Robin Hood* stories was **Joseph Ritson’s** *Robin Hood: A Collection of All the Ancient Poems, Songs, and Ballads, Now Extant, Relative to that Celebrated English Outlaw*. Published in 1795, this work was revolutionary in that it compiled every *Robin Hood* text Ritson could find from the Middle Ages to the end of the 18th century. His work influenced his contemporaries’ versions of the *Robin Hood* stories such as Sir Walter’s Scott’s Robin Hood who appears in *Ivanhoe* (1820) as well as Thomas Love Peacock’s Robin Hood in his *Maid Marian* (1822). **Alexandre Dumas** adapted Robin Hood’s story into two volumes, *Robin Hood: Prince of Thieves* and *Robin Hood the Outlaw*, which were published in 1872 after his death. In 1883, author and illustrator **Howard Pyle** adapted the stories into *The Merry Adventures of Robin Hood* for young readers. Film makers, playwrights, and writers still create and tell stories about Robin Hood today, ensuring that Robin Hood’s legend will live on for generations to come.



Plot Summary

Our play begins when a minstrel, or a wandering musician and storyteller, named Allana Dale enters singing. She acts as a narrator of sorts and introduces the audience to the tale of Robin Hood – There once was a noble king, King Richard the Lion Heart, who was much loved by the people. However, one day, King Richard left to lead an army in a far-off land. He left his younger brother, Prince John, in charge, and Prince John promised to carry on King Richard’s good work. However, as soon as King Richard left, John appointed himself King and began to rule out of jealousy. Years passed, and the people became more and more miserable. Famine grew and the people continued to be taxed more and more. Those who could not pay their taxes were jailed or made outlaws. The law was very unfair. This is where the story of Robin Hood begins.

The scene changes. The Sheriff of Nottingham enters and reads a proclamation from Prince John. Because the citizens have been complaining about all the taxes, new taxes have been created for them, including taxes on “merriment” and “laughing.” Prince John is creating laws that are extremely unfair. Robert Fitzooth of Locksley Hall, Earl of Huntingdon enters. He speaks to the Sheriff on behalf of his tenants, who cannot afford to pay the King’s many high taxes. The Sheriff, however, will not listen to Robin. The Sherriff intends to send anyone who cannot pay their taxes to jail. Robin will have none of it. From this, a fight breaks out between Robin and the Sheriff. The Sheriff declares Robin an outlaw and proclaims he is banished. Robin declares we will fight for justice until King Richard returns. Robin Exits.

In the next scene, Robin enters and revisits everything that has happened. Now that he disobeyed the law, he is stripped of his title and must hide and disguise himself. He chooses a new name, Robin Hood, and goes to hide in Sherwood Forest where he will continue to do what he knows is right and fight for King Richard.

The scene shifts to Sherwood Forest. Little John enters with a quarterstaff and falls asleep. Robin Hood accidentally runs into Little



John who is startled and becomes defensive. Little John states it isn't fair that Robin has a bow while he only possesses a staff. Robin goes to find a staff in the woods to make things equal and a fight ensues. Little John wins and states he is looking for a man called Robin Hood and wants to join his band of Merry Men. Robin reveals that he is in fact Robin Hood. Little John pledges his allegiance. Robin gathers a few more Merry Men from the audience – Will Scarlet, Maid Marian, and Friar Tuck. Little John trains the new recruits and they exit.

The scene shifts to the castle where Prince John is in an outrage about the people's protests. He claims that King Richard is as good as dead. He laments about Robin Hood stealing from the rich and giving to the poor. The Sheriff enters and informs Prince John that Robin Hood is gathering more followers and he is hiding in Sherwood Forest. The Sheriff wants John to come up with a scheme to lure Robin out of Sherwood. Prince John decides they will hold an archery contest as a man of Robin Hood's arrogance wouldn't be able to resist. The prize is to be a silver arrow.

In the next scene, Robin enters Sherwood Forest with his Merry Men. He is excited about Prince John's archery contest. He knows it will be a great danger so he has asked Little John to hide in the woods for back up. As for Robin, he'll attend in disguise in hopes that the Sheriff and Prince John will not recognize him.

Robin and the outlaws enter the archery contest in disguise. They watch others make attempts and then it is Robin's turn. He shoots, he scores! Robin wins the silver arrow. He kneels to accept his prize. The Sheriff asks his name. Robin can't hide who he is, takes off his disguise, and announces himself. The Sheriff declares that Robin Hood will be taken to prison. Robin and the other outlaws quickly run away with the Sheriff close behind. The Sheriff captures Little John and the other outlaws.

Robin is left alone and feels guilty for endangering his companions. Will Scarlet, Maid Marian, and Friar Tuck are in the dungeons but he doesn't



know where they're holding Little John. He decides he will sneak into the dungeons and set his men free and then search for Little John.

Robin enters the castle and successfully sets his Merry Men free. The Sheriff finds the dungeon empty and pulls a sword on Robin Hood. Robin cannot escape now! The Sheriff puts Robin Hood in a prison cell. Robin worries as he knows that Prince John's army plans to invade Sherwood Forest and capture the remaining Merry Men. However, clever Robin Hood has a plan to deter Prince John's scheme.

Little John is brought into Robin's cell. Little John confesses that he feels guilty that Robin is in prison. He was supposed to be prepared to protect Robin at the archery contest if needed but he accidentally fell asleep in a lovely patch of grass. He feels awful that he has failed Robin and the Merry Men. Robin assures him that it was he who put them all in danger by even attending the contest. He then reveals a lock pick and unlocks both his own and Little John's shackles. Robin tells Little John of his plan to stop Prince John's scheme. Little John is to go to the Prince's room to keep him in the castle. Robin will deal with the pesky Sheriff.

The Sheriff enters in a tizzy as he discovers Robin and Little John have escaped. Robin Hood catches the Sheriff by surprise. The Sheriff is outraged and threatens to take Robin out by himself this very moment. The Sheriff angrily tries to defeat Robin but Robin is too quick and easily knocks the Sheriff out and puts him in shackles. Robin tells the Sheriff he will allow him to live but he will lock him up in the deepest cell of the dungeon to punish him for the evil has bestowed upon the people.

The scene shifts to Prince John's room. He hears the alarm that alerts that Robin Hood and Little John have escaped. Just as Robin suspected, Prince John cowardly locks himself into his room to protect himself. Little does he know, Little John has snuck into his room (and has fallen asleep, of course!). Prince John searches for his swords and frantically runs around trying to figure out what to do. His excitement tires him and he falls asleep. Both Little John and Prince John wake up



simultaneously and frighten one another. Prince John scrambles to grab his swords. Little John informs Prince John of who he is and tells him that his job is to keep the prince in the castle. Prince John has other ideas and a sword fight ensues. Little John disarms Prince John and locks him in a closet. Prince John's eyes are closed out of fear and Little John slyly opens the door and exits. Prince John opens his eyes and tries to escape but he's stopped by a booming voice.

A mysterious, hooded man enters. It's King Richard! Prince John is obviously surprised to see him and makes poor excuses for why he never sent the ransom to free Richard from his captors. King Richard proclaims Prince John a disgrace to the royal family and banishes him.

Robin Hood enters. King Richard recognizes him and thanks him for his loyalty. He promises to restore Robin's lands and titles and knights him. Robin declares his allegiance to the King and promises to always serve him. Robin invites King Richard to a grand forest feast in his honor. Robin exits to prepare the feast.

Allana Dale enters. She introduces herself as a loyal friend of Robin Hood. King Richard invites her to the feast. Allana Dale bids farewell to the audience and exits singing.



Places

Time Period: Our play is set in England during the Middle Ages, or Medieval times, specifically during King Richard the Lion Heart's absence in 1193-4.

Nottingham: City in the county of Nottinghamshire, England where our story is set.

Sherwood Forest: Where Robin and his Merry Men reside, and do most of their good deeds. The forest is in Nottinghamshire, England. During the Middle Ages, there was a main road that went from London to York that crossed right through this forest. Sherwood Forest still exists today!

The Palace: Where King John rules in King Richard the Lion Heart's absence.

Main Characters

Allana Dale: A minstrel – a wandering musician and storyteller. She is a good friend of Robin Hood and acts as a narrator.

Sheriff of Nottingham: Employed by Prince John to collect the many taxes the King has placed on the people of England.

Robin Hood: Begins the play as Sir Robert Fitzooth of Loxley, but loses his title and becomes Robin Hood when he stands up to the Sheriff in defense of his tenants who cannot pay the cruel taxes enacted by King John. He is the leader of the group of outlaws in Sherwood Forest.

King Richard the Lion Heart: Well-loved, rightful ruler of England. At the start of the play, he has left England to fight battles in other lands. King Richard was a real person, and ruled from 1189-1199. He was the son of King Henry II and Eleanor of Aquitaine.

Prince John: King Richard's younger brother. As soon as Richard leaves England, he takes over the throne and rules in a cowardly, cruel way, enacting many unpayable taxes on his citizens. Prince John was a real



king, famous for being as tyrannical as he is in our play. His unpopularity led to one positive change, however: he was pressured to sign the Magna Carta, which was drafted by his citizens, a document that states, “No freeman shall be taken, imprisoned...outlawed, banished, or in any way destroyed... except by the lawful judgment of his peers and by the law of the land.” It prevented a king from acting unlawfully against his citizens simply because it was his will. This document has become a mainstay in guiding common law today and was a primary source for the American colonists in the drafting of the Bill of Rights.

Little John: Another “outlaw” banished to Sherwood Forrest, becomes a great ally to Robin.

Robin’s Merry Men: Played by members of our audience! Supporters of both Robin Hood and King John respectively. As Robin’s Merry Men, they play Will Scarlet, Maid Marian, and Friar Tuck.

Vocabulary

Minstrel: A travelling musician/singer and storyteller

Treason: The crime of betraying one’s country

Insolent: Showing a lack of respect

Tenant: Someone who rents land/property from another

Friar: A member of certain religious orders of men

Forest: A large area covered primarily with trees and undergrowth

Gustation: The act of tasting



Merry Men: In Mediaeval times, this term referred to any followers or assistants of outlaws or knights. Thus, Robin Hood's Merry Men are his followers.

Helpful Literary Term

Legend: A story handed down through generations, often focusing on the heroic acts of one person. It is often considered to be history; however, it cannot be verified as true. A person who inspires such a story can also be called a "legend". Both Robin Hood and his story are legends.

Preshow Discussion Questions

The following questions provide a guide for getting students excited about seeing the performance and to guide them in watching the show.

Today we are going to see a performance by Hampstead Stage Company called Robin Hood.

- Has anyone read the book or seen a movie version of this story? If so, what do you remember most about it?
- Was Robin Hood a real person?
- What was he famous for?

If possible, write up student ideas on the board or chart paper so the whole class can see all the answers. Here are some key points for students to consider:

- **Was Robin Hood a Real Person?** The story of *Robin Hood* is a **legend**, which means that it has been handed down over the ages (for more than 800 years!). A legend focuses on the heroic acts of one person. A legend is often considered to be history, though there is not enough evidence to prove that it is true. Therefore, many people believe that Robin Hood was a real person, however, we may never know for sure as his stories could also have been inspired by the acts of several people or simply a story that was told for entertainment.
- **What was Robin Hood Famous for?** He robbed from the rich to give to the poor.



- **Look for:** An interesting post-show activity is to have students debate if it was right for Robin Hood to break the law. We have included a more formal process for this for students in grades 6-8 in the following Activities and Lesson Plans section, however, this question could also be approached more informally as a post-show debrief with students. Therefore, it may be helpful to encourage students to notice when Robin Hood breaks the law in the play and to note if they agree with him or if they might have done anything differently. **You may even have students discuss before the show if they believe it is right for Robin Hood to rob from the rich and break the law and have them notice if their answers change while watching the performance.**

Post Show Discussion Questions

- Have students share general reactions to the performance
- Who was your favorite character? Why?
- **Robbing from the rich to give to the poor:** Ask students to share their responses to Robin Hood robbing from the rich to give to the poor. Do they agree with what Robin Hood did? If they had discussed this question prior to the show, ask them if their opinions have changed and to share why.
- Are there any other questions you have about the play or theatre that the actors did not get to answer?
 - Hampstead Stage loves to receive letters and emails! If students have questions or more comments they would like to share, they are encouraged to write to us! Our contact information may be found on our website.



Activities and Lesson Plans

We have prepared the following workshop lesson plans for those who wish to expand upon seeing our performance in the classroom. These activities may be done either before or after seeing the performance. Teachers are encouraged to modify as needed for the needs of their students. A summary of the workshops is provided below. The full lesson plans may be downloaded for free from our website.

Grades K-2

Sherwood Forest Craft & Community Service: This interactive workshop guides students in creating artwork inspired by *Robin Hood's* Sherwood Forest. Two options are included, one that incorporates students going outside to find natural materials to use in their artwork and another can be done in any classroom setting. Keeping with the spirit of *Robin Hood*, which emphasizes being of service to those who are in need, several ideas are included for how to use this activity as part of a larger community service project.

Grades 3-5

Robin Hood: Legends and Storytelling: This interactive workshop teaches students the definition of a “legend” and shares Robin Hood’s legendary history. Students are then guided in writing their own legends and acting them out with the help of their peers.

Grades 6-8

Robin Hood Debate: 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.



Works Cited and Further Resources

For further reading on the topics discussed in this study guide, please visit:

<http://www.history.com/topics/british-history/robin-hood>

http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/british/middle_ages/robin_01.shtml

<http://www.thehistoryvault.co.uk/inventing-an-outlaw-joseph-ritsons-robin-hood-1795/>

http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/historic_figures/richard_i_king.shtml

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/culture/11671441/King-John-the-most-evil-monarch-in-Britains-history.html>

Many of the activities used in the workshops are inspired by the **Arts Literacy Project** and **Expeditionary Learning**. For more information, please visit their websites:

<http://www.artslit.org/handbook.php>

<https://eleducation.org/>