

King of the School

You have been appointed king of your school! What will you change, and what will you keep the same? Brainstorm about these ideas, and write brief answers in the T-chart below.

What I Will Change	What I Will Keep the Same

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The Sword in the Stone

The following story is an adapted excerpt from the book *The Story of King Arthur* by James S. Knowles. Published in 1860, the book tells the popular tale of King Arthur. This story reveals how young Arthur became the King of Britain.

- 1 Young Arthur had served Sir Ector's house for a long time, so he was treated as one of Sir Ector's sons. Fair and tall, Arthur had great strength for being just 15 years old. He had even completed all the proper exercises for the training of a knight. Yet Arthur's life was not complete. He was unhappy because he did not know his true father.
- 2 Merlin watched over Arthur from afar and knew this secret, but Merlin kept it between himself and his lord, King Uther. Before his death, King Uther had spoken of his missing son, a young boy who would rule when the ailing king left his throne. Many of the powerful knights and barons *scoffed* at such an idea. In their hearts, they asked, "Who are we to let a beardless boy rule over us?" Determined to gain the crown for themselves, they set forth to their own lands and raised armies of followers.
- 3 When the kingdom fell into great peril, Merlin declared that all the barons and knights of the realm would come to London. There they would learn the true identity of their future king. Upon arriving in London, the greatest princes, lords, and barons discovered a massive stone square standing in the doorway of a church. A sword extended from the middle of the stone. The following words appeared in gold letters on the sword: *Whoever pulls this sword from this stone is born the rightful King of Britain.* Seeing this, the nobles, knights, and princes spoke eagerly about the stone and sword and agreed that whoever removed the sword from the stone would be acknowledged as the King of Britain.
- 4 Again and again, many knights and barons pulled at the sword with all their might, but none could move it. After all had tried in vain, Merlin announced that the man chosen to dislodge the sword had not yet arrived. Merlin assigned ten knights to stand and watch over the sword and keep it safe. Then he issued a *proclamation* declaring that anyone could attempt to pull the sword from the stone. Although multitudes of people from throughout the land came to pull on the sword, no man or woman could move it.
- 5 Later Merlin devised a great tournament to amuse all of the frustrated lords and knights. Merlin hoped to calm their many arguments about the sword. When the day of the tournament finally came, Sir Ector and his son Sir Key arrived to take part in the jousting. They brought along young Arthur to witness the sport. As they rode toward the jousting area, Sir Key realized he had lost his sword. Turning to young Arthur, Sir Key asked the young man to fetch one for him.

6 Arthur ran to the armory, but he found it locked and empty. Disheartened, Arthur roamed the streets of London, wondering where he might find a sword for Sir Key. Finally, Arthur passed the churchyard and saw the great stone with the sword. No knights were standing guard since they had all left to see the jousting. Arthur took the sword by its handle and gently pulled it from the stone. Then he ran to Sir Key and delivered the sword. At the moment he saw the sword handed to him, Sir Key knew it was the sword from the stone and turned to his father.

7 “Look, Father! Here is the sword of the stone! It is I who must be king of all the land!” cried Sir Key.

8 Sir Ector saw the sword and frowned.

9 “How did you come to possess this great sword?” Sir Ector demanded.

10 “Arthur brought it to me,” confessed Sir Key.

11 Sir Ector turned to young Arthur and asked him, “And how did you come upon the sword?”

12 “Sir,” said Arthur, “when I went to fetch a sword for my brother, I found the armory empty. I came upon a stone and sword in a churchyard. I pulled it from the stone and brought it here.”

13 “You must return the sword to the stone,” Sir Ector insisted. The other barons and knights heartily agreed, thinking no young boy could have pulled the sword from the stone. After Arthur returned the sword to the stone, Sir Ector pulled at the sword himself. Nothing happened. Then Sir Key pulled on the sword with all his might, but it remained in the stone. Arthur reached out and grasped the sword’s handle and then gently pulled the sword from the stone. In an instant, Sir Ector fell to his knees, along with all the other barons and knights, and paid homage to Arthur, the new King of Britain.



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Headlines

If this passage were a news story, it might have this headline:

Lad Pulls Sword from Stone

On the line below, write a headline of your own about the passage.

Extension

Illustrate the story you wrote in the Post-reading Activity and add a caption.

A large rectangular box for drawing, with a smaller rectangular box at the bottom for a caption. A large 'SAMPLE' watermark is overlaid diagonally across the drawing area.

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Connections

Name another story that this story reminds you of, and explain why.

Why is Arthur able to pull the sword from the stone when no one else can?

How would it feel to be appointed king of a country at such a young age?

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2.6.10

1. How is Arthur related to Sir Ector?
 - A Arthur is his son.
 - B Arthur is his friend.
 - C Arthur is one of his knights.
 - D Arthur is his beloved servant.

2.6.12

2. In the story, what does King Uther's statement about the future king foreshadow?
 - A Sir Key's claim to the throne
 - B Merlin's contest to identify the new king
 - C Young Arthur becoming the new King of Britain
 - D Sir Ector discovering how the sword was attained

1.6.03

3. In the story, the word *scoffed* means—
 - A disliked
 - B examined
 - C ignored
 - D sneered

1.6.13

4. Why did the kingdom fall into great peril?
 - A No one could pull the sword from the stone.
 - B Sir Key has no sword to use in the jousting event.
 - C King Uther fought a great war against his own barons and lost.
 - D Many knights and barons raised great armies to take the crown for themselves.

1.6.18

5. Why does Merlin hold a jousting tournament?
 - A To identify a new King of Britain
 - B To attract Sir Ector and Sir Key to London
 - C To entertain the bickering lords and knights
 - D To provide sport to the knights serving as guards

2.6.09

6. In this story, how does Arthur differ from Sir Key?
 - A Arthur is vain, and Sir Key is timid.
 - B Arthur is lordly, and Sir Key is humble.
 - C Arthur is stocky, and Sir Key is slender.
 - D Arthur is truthful, and Sir Key is dishonest.

2.6.02

7. At the end of the story, how does Arthur earn fame for himself?
 - A He replaces a lost sword for Sir Key.
 - B He removes the sword from the stone.
 - C He obeys Sir Ector and returns the sword.
 - D He learns all the skills needed to be a knight.

2.6.14

8. Based on this story, the legend of King Arthur must be—
- A a true story
 - B told by Merlin
 - C a modern story
 - D full of adventure

1.6.01

9. A root word of *proclamation* is “claim,” meaning to—
- A desire
 - B hold
 - C satisfy
 - D state

2.6.06

10. Whose thoughts does the narrator reveal in the sentence below?
- He was unhappy because he did not know his true father.
- A Arthur
 - B Merlin
 - C Sir Ector
 - D Sir Key

2.6.08

11. Why does Sir Key ask to be named as king?
- A He pulls the sword from the stone and wants to rule the land.
 - B He wants to challenge others who believe the honor should be theirs.
 - C He believes the honor is his because he is the son of a nobleman.
 - D He is given the sword from the stone and so claims the reward for himself.

2.6.12

12. Why does the narrator refer to the time of King Uther’s death?
- A The scene foreshadows a battle for Uther’s throne.
 - B The details support that Sir Ector will become king.
 - C The description tells how the new king will be chosen.
 - D The flashback reveals a missing son who will rule poorly.

2.6.15

13. “The Sword in the Stone” is a narrative story that is—
- A believable
 - B humorous
 - C legendary
 - D tragic