

Introduction

ENGLAND AT THE TIME OF ROBIN HOOD

Long, long ago, when Richard the Lionheart was King of England, there lived a famous outlaw, and his name was Robin Hood. In those days, the country was much wilder than it is today. There were few towns, and no great roads. Everywhere there were forests, full of deer belonging to the king.

King Richard had left England years before to fight in the Holy Land. The land was now ruled by his brother, Prince John, a cruel man who wanted to become king himself. John loved money, and had driven many rich men into the forest as outlaws, so that he could take their land.

Poor people suffered even more. Often a penniless father would kill a deer to feed his hungry children. If John's men caught him, they would hang him for this, and so such people had to live in the forests too. Prince John's men grew rich and fat, while King Richard's friends lived as outlaws, hoping that he would soon return to England.

One day, news came that King Richard had been made a prisoner on his way back from the Holy Land, but no one knew where he was. Prince John laughed when he heard this. "It's my country now," he said. "My brother will never come home ..."

CHAPTER 1

HOW ROBIN BECAME AN OUTLAW

In the city of Nottingham, near Sherwood Forest, two men were drinking wine in the hall of the castle. Soldiers stood at all the doors, for the two were great men – the Sheriff of Nottingham and Prince John himself, who ruled England while his brother, King Richard, was away.

5 Prince John laughed. “No, no!” he said. “My brother will never come home. England is mine now!” And the Sheriff of Nottingham laughed with him, happy that Prince John would soon be king.

Suddenly, a man came running into the great hall. The Sheriff jumped up as the man fell on his knees and cried, “My Lords, forgive me! But I have
10 news for you!”

“Tell us, then, fellow!” ordered the Sheriff, looking angrily at the guards who now stood around the man.

“My Lords, I am a servant of Robert Fitzooth, Earl of Huntingdon ...”

“Fitzooth?” broke in Prince John. “But I took away his lands last year!
15 One of *my* men is Earl of Huntingdon now.”

“Of course, Sire,” said the Sheriff. “But the people here still call him their lord. Go on, fellow!”

“Earl Robert still has a house at Locksley and, in two days’ time, he plans to marry Lady Marian Fitzwalter. Tomorrow evening he is going to hold a
20 great feast. If you were to come ...”

“Yes?” said Prince John slowly.

“Then, Sire, you would hear about – Robin Hood!”

“Robin Hood?” Prince John looked at the man in front of him. “I have heard that name. He steals from my friends, does he not, and helps my
25 enemies? And he even kills the deer in my forests!”

“That is true, Lord,” the servant said. “He *does* kill the king’s deer ...”

“My deer, fool!” shouted Prince John. “Tell Sir Guy of Gisborne that we need his help,” he said to the Sheriff, more quietly now. “I think we will send him to Fitzooth’s feast ...”

30 Two days later, in the little church by great Sherwood Forest, everything was ready for Robert Fitzooth’s wedding. The guests were in their places.

Along secret paths, Robin's men ran deep into the greenwood, till they reached a wide clearing. Here they stopped running. In the middle of the clearing stood the tallest of the forest oaks. Round about, there were caves both deep and dry. Taking his horn from his belt, Robin blew long and loud, and other men dressed in Lincoln green came out of the caves to meet them. 5

Here in this secret place, the outlaws roasted great pieces of venison over enormous fires. As it grew darker, Robin Hood stood up and spoke to his men.

"We are outlaws," he said. "But not robbers! We will take nothing from poor men, or from women. No one who is good should be afraid of us. But people who are cruel, and hurt others must fear us, for we will fight them till we die, or till King Richard comes home!" The outlaws cheered and cheered. 10

"Now," cried Robin. "Are you all with me? We will rob the rich and help the poor, till the true king returns!" And there in the forest clearing, the men knelt down together and gave him their promise. 15

CHAPTER 2

HOW LITTLE JOHN JOINED THE OUTLAW BAND

Robin Hood had fine fighting men. But one day he met the man who would become the strongest of all the outlaws. It happened like this.

Robin always wanted to hear what was happening around Sherwood Forest. A rich abbot travelling through the forest, a poor family with no money for food, or an old woman who had been thrown out of her little house – these were things he had to know about. Often he would wander through the forest alone, looking and listening. He knew that, if he blew the big horn at his belt, his men would come to help him as fast as they could. 20 25

One morning in summer, he was walking through the forest when he came to a small river. The water looked deep, and Robin did not want to get his feet wet. Then he saw that one of the trees had fallen so that it lay directly across the river, one end on each bank. A fine bridge! As he walked towards it, however, he noticed someone on the other bank moving the same way. It was the biggest man he had ever seen. "Well, I will get to the 30

bridge first,” thought Robin, walking more quickly. But the man on the other side moved faster too, and soon both men had reached the bridge. There they stood, one on each side of the river, each with his foot on the tree trunk.

5 “Move back, Giant!” cried Robin. “I’m going to cross the bridge first!”

“Oh, no, little man!” the giant shouted. “You wait till I’ve crossed!”

In a flash, Robin had an arrow ready. “Just get off the bridge ...” he said quietly.

10 “You coward!” shouted the big man. “You stand there with your bow and arrow, while I’ve only got a quarterstaff!” And he shook the long, heavy stick in his hand at Robin.

“No one calls me a coward!” said Robin, putting his bow on the ground. “Wait – I’ll cut myself a staff! Then we’ll see who can fight better ...”

The big man smiled. “I’ll meet you in the middle of the bridge,” he said.

15 “And I hope you like swimming ...”

20 Quickly, Robin cut a young tree from the forest and took off the leaves. It was about as tall as he was. Soon the two men were standing in the middle of the bridge, with the dark water under them. Suddenly, the giant swung his staff. Robin blocked it, and tried to hit the big man’s head. It was a hard blow, but the giant pushed it aside with his staff. Now the heavy sticks swished through the air. After a while, both men were breathing hard, so they rested for a moment. But soon they began again, swinging their heavy sticks till at last Robin lost his balance and fell head-first into the river.

25 The water was cold, but Robin came up, laughing. Then he saw the giant on the bridge above him. Quickly, his hand moved to the big man’s foot and pulled him into the water. *Splash!*

30 That was the end of the fight. The two men climbed out of the river and sat there together on the tree trunk, both of them wet from head to foot. After a while, Robin took his horn from his belt and, shaking the water from it, blew loud and long. The big man looked at him.

“You fight well,” he said.

“You’re the best fighter I’ve ever seen,” Robin replied. “Where were you going before we met?”

35 “I was looking for someone in the forest,” said the giant. “People say he’s a good fighter too ...”

Sir Guy fell backwards out of the saddle and landed in the mud.



As Robin left the archery field, six of his men joined him. Together, they moved quickly and quietly.

"The contest was a plan to catch me," Robin told the others. "So Sir Guy's soldiers will be waiting for us."

"Be careful, then," said Little John. "They will be right *there!*" In front of them, they saw a group of trees and tall bushes.

"Into the fields!" whispered Robin. "We'll go round them!" The outlaws moved silently through the fields around the trees. They were almost past

when they heard a shout. Arrows hissed through the air, and they saw soldiers coming towards them. Robin and his men began to run.

The forest was not far away now, but as they ran, they saw more soldiers in front of them – twenty at least. In the middle stood a fine black horse with a hard-faced man on its back – Guy of Gisborne!

Swish! Robin heard a low groan at his side. He turned and saw Little John with an arrow in his leg. Robin began to think very quickly. How could they escape?

Suddenly, out of the trees near the soldiers sprang a strange figure in brown robes. It seemed as wide as it was tall, and was swinging a long, heavy stick. Soldiers fell to left and right, and Sir Guy shouted angrily, “Kill him, men! There’s only one ...” But as he shouted, a second figure could be seen in the trees. *Swish!* The horse jumped as an arrow hissed past. Sir Guy fell backwards out of the saddle and landed in the mud by the river.

Robin almost shouted with surprise. The archer in the trees, who had frightened Sir Guy’s horse, was Lady Marian Fitzwalter!

Guy’s soldiers were running now. Quickly, Robin’s men picked up Little John and carried him over the bridge. The last of Sir Guy’s men threw their master over his horse’s back and fled with him.

As the outlaws ran, they were joined by a slim figure in green, with a bow over her shoulder. Lady Marian Fitzwalter had left her home to join Robin in the greenwood – no longer Lady Marian, but Maid Marian of Sherwood! They could not see the man in brown now, and even Marian had no idea who he was. The outlaws scratched their heads and wondered who on earth their helper could be.

CHAPTER 4

THE COMING OF FRIAR TUCK

It was autumn now, and life was good in Sherwood Forest. The outlaws held contests in running, jumping, sword-fighting and, of course, archery.

“Who can hit a deer from two hundred and fifty yards?” cried Robin. Little John, whose leg was better now, was the only one who could do it.

“You’re the best fighter in England, Little John!” said Robin Hood.

“Except for you, Robin!” replied Little John, smiling.

“Now he’s paid for his dinner, let him sing for us too!” cried a voice.
 “Yes! Yes! Let him sing!” shouted the others.
 “Sing?” The bishop could not believe his ears.
 “Oh, yes, Lord Bishop. A Sherwood tradition! We know each other’s voices so well, you see. But *your* voice is new!” 5
 “Give us a love song!” called a very small outlaw. And everybody laughed.
 The bishop was so shocked that he began to sing. His voice was not very good, but the outlaws clapped loudly when he finished. They were thinking of how the bishop’s gold would help the poor.
 The next morning, they took the bishop back to the edge of the forest. 10
 There they set him on his horse – *backwards!* – and off the animal trotted towards Nottingham. The bishop held his horse’s tail tightly and stared miserably, as the outlaws went off into the greenwood, singing.

CHAPTER 6

HOW ROBIN HOOD MET THE SHERIFF

Walking alone in the forest one day, Robin Hood was surprised to hear someone whistling. Then out of the trees came a horse and a heavy cart, full of fresh meat. Next to the cart walked a short, red-faced man in a blue apron. He was whistling loudly, but stopped suddenly when he saw Robin. 15
 “Well, well – a butcher, here in Sherwood!” murmured Robin, as the short man looked at him nervously. “Good morning, Friend,” said Robin politely.
 “It’s nice to hear music in the forest!” 20
 The butcher’s voice trembled. “I was just ... ” He stared at Robin. “I was hoping to sell this meat at Nottingham market.”
 Robin had a sudden idea. “Would you like to sell *me* your meat?” he asked.
 “I’ll give you ten pounds, if you lend me the cart and your clothes as well.” 25
Ten pounds? The butcher thought this was a wonderful idea, and lay down under a tree to sleep. Robin put on the little man’s clothes, which were rather too small for him. Soon, the old horse was walking slowly off towards Nottingham, with a new voice singing loudly through the trees.
 “Fresh meat! Threepence a pound! Fresh meat!” called the butchers from their stands. Nottingham market was full of people looking at all the things 30



The Sheriff's wife asked Robin to have dinner with her and the Sheriff.

Sherwood

Sherwood in the twilight, is Robin Hood awake?

Grey and ghostly shadows are gliding through the brake,

Shadows of the dappled deer, dreaming of the morn,

4 Dreaming of a shadowy man that winds a shadowy horn.

Robin Hood is here again: all his merry thieves

Hear a ghostly bugle note shivering through the leaves,

Calling as he used to call, faint and far away,

8 In Sherwood, in Sherwood, about the break of day.

Softly over Sherwood the south wind blows.

All the heart of England, hid in every rose,

Hears across the greenwood the sunny whisper leap:

12 *Sherwood in the red dawn, is Robin Hood asleep?*

Hark, the voice of England wakes him as of old

And shattering the silence with a cry of brighter gold,

Bugles in the greenwood echo from the steep:

16 *Sherwood in the red dawn, is Robin Hood asleep?*

Where the deer are gliding down the shadowy glen,

All across the glades of fern he calls his merry men—

Doublets of the Lincoln green glancing through the May

20 In Sherwood, in Sherwood, about the break of day.

Calls them and they answer: from aisles of oak and ash

Rings the *Follow! Follow!* and the boughs begin to crash;

Friar Tuck and Little John are riding down together

24 With quarterstaff and drinking-can and grey goose feather.

Robin! Robin! Robin! All his merry thieves

Answer as the bugle-note shivers through the leaves,

Calling as he used to call, faint and far away,

28 In Sherwood, in Sherwood, about the break of day.

(Abridged and adapted)

Alfred Noyes (1880–1958)

The Robin Hood Song

Chorus

D
 Ro-bin Hood, Ro-bin Hood, ri-ding through the glen,
 A A7
 Ro-bin Hood, Ro-bin Hood, with his band of men,
 D G A
 Feared by the bad, loved by the good, Ro-bin Hood,
 G D
 Ro-bin Hood, Ro-bin Hood. 1. He
 called the great-est ar-chers to a ta-vern on the
 A - A7
 green, They vowed to help the peo-ple of the King.
 D G
 They han-dled all the trou-ble on the En - glish
 A A7 D
 coun-try scene, And still found plen-ty of time to sing.

Scholarly Resources and Texts

- ✧ The best academic resource is “The Robin Hood Project” at the University of Rochester. It offers a database of texts, images, bibliographies, and basic information about the Robin Hood stories and other outlaw tales. In all, there is an enormous wealth of material:
<http://www.lib.rochester.edu/camelot/rb/rbhome.htm>
- ✧ At the following two websites, you can download texts of two classic retellings of the Robin Hood story, those of *Howard Pyle* and *Henry Gilbert* (for details of the normal printed versions, see the list of “Books Suggested for Further Reading”):
<http://www.digital.library.upenn.edu/webbin/gutbook/lookup?num=964>
for the Pyle text and
<http://www.kellscraft.com/robinhoodcontent.html> for Gilbert’s.

Other Websites

- ✧ “Icons: A portrait of England” offers a fascinatingly diverse collection of articles, from The Phone Box to The Stiff Upper Lip to English Weather, Chicken Tikka Masala and, of course, Robin Hood:
<http://www.icons.org.uk/theicons/collection/robin-hood>
- ✧ *International Socialism*, the journal of the Socialist Workers’ Party, offers a detailed Marxist view of our hero in an online article, “Robin Hood: Earl, Outlaw or Rebel?” You can find it at:
<http://pubs.socialistreviewindex.org.uk/isj78/cox.htm>
- ✧ Lastly, “Swords and Armour” is an American firm which sells replica swords, daggers, shields, armour & chainmail from Medieval, Renaissance, Celtic and Roman times. A full suit of armour can cost two to three thousand dollars, but it costs nothing to look! There is no printed catalogue – only the web pages, richly illustrated:
<http://www.swordsandarmor.com/index.html>

A Tip For Using GOOGLE

If you have any problems in finding these sites, then go to www.google.co.uk and enter *Robin Hood* in the SEARCH-field. At the bottom of the results pages you will see a field called “*Searches related to: Robin Hood*” – if you click on, say, “*Robin Hood facts*” you’ll get a new set of results, and the “*Searches related to: Robin Hood facts*” at the bottom now offers, for example, “*Robin Hood Sheriff of Nottingham*” or “*Robin Hood outlaw*” or “*Robin Hood fact or fiction.*” Using this “*Searches related to:*” field can help to find things which interest you much faster than you might otherwise.

Thematic Vocabulary (300 WORDS IN 15 GROUPS)

Short forms used in the list:

| | | | |
|-------------------|-------------|------------------|-----------------|
| s.o. - someone | - jemand | etc. - and so on | - und so weiter |
| s.th. - something | - etwas | h. - here | - hier |
| opp. - opposite | - Gegensatz | s. - | - sich |

The following lists comprise those words most helpful for text work and retellings. Teachers will notice that not all the words form a useful addition to long-term vocabulary at this level.

THE OUTLAWS (16)

| | | |
|--------------|--|----------------------------------|
| outlaw | An <i>outlaw</i> lives where people can't catch him. | Vogelfreier; Bandit |
| forest | where lots of trees grow together | (großer) Wald |
| hiding-place | where you go so that no one can find you | Versteck |
| secret | No one knows this - it is <i>secret</i> . | geheim; verborgen |
| ▷ bow | thing for shooting arrows | Bogen |
| arrow | This is what you shoot from a bow. | Pfeil |
| to aim | to point a bow, gun <i>etc.</i> at s.th. or s.o. | zielen |
| to shoot | The outlaws <i>shoot</i> arrows in the forest. | schießen |
| to fire | to shoot | schießen |
| to hit | Robin always <i>hits</i> what he shoots at. | treffen (= nicht verfehlen) |
| to miss | <i>opp.</i> to hit | nicht treffen; verfehlen |
| ▷ target | Robin's arrows always hit the <i>target</i> . | Ziel(-scheibe) |
| archer | person who shoots a bow | Bogenschütze |
| archery | shooting a bow | Bogenschießen |
| contest | game that people try to win | Wettkampf; Wettbewerb |
| prize | what you give to s.o. who has won a contest | Preis (<i>den man gewinnt</i>) |

THE FOREST (16)

| | | |
|--------------|---|----------------------|
| forest | where lots of trees grow together | (großer) Wald |
| tree | Apples grow on a <i>tree</i> . | Baum |
| leaf, leaves | <i>Leaves</i> are green things on flowers and trees. | Blatt, Blätter |
| oak | kind of tree | Eiche |
| clearing | place in the forest with no trees | Lichtung |
| deer | wild animal with horns and long, thin legs | Hirsch; Reh; Rotwild |
| ▷ cave | Thousands of years ago people lived in <i>caves</i> . | Höhle |
| path | This <i>path</i> goes from the road to our house. | Pfad; Weg |
| track | small path or road | Weg |
| bend | curve | Kurve |
| fork | At the <i>fork</i> , you must take the road to the left. | Gabelung |
| ▷ river | The Amazon and the Nile are both big <i>rivers</i> . | Fluss |
| bank | We got out of the boat onto the <i>bank</i> . | Ufer |
| bridge | s.th. built over a river <i>etc.</i> to let us go over it | Brücke |
| (tree) trunk | the thick part of a tree | (Baum-)Stamm |
| ground | We sat on the <i>ground</i> to eat our picnic. | Boden; Erde |

9. What do we call *the front of our head, where our eyes, nose and mouth are*?
10. What is the opposite of *alone*?
11. What is one word meaning *Yes, of course, naturally*?
12. What do we call *a drop of water in someone's eye, from crying or laughing*?

Exercise 26 – Making Sentences (pages 7–10)

Make up at least one sentence for each of the following words or expressions. You can stay close to the text or invent your own: not too long, but also not too short. The sentences can be as serious or amusing as you like, but not embarrassing!

1. One day ...
2. ... always wanted to ...
3. Wait – I'll ...
4. I hope you ...
5. Suddenly, he took ...
6. ... looked at ...
7. Perhaps ...
8. ... a good idea ...

Exercise 27 – Did You Understand the Chapter? (pages 7–10)

1. Why did Robin often wander through the forest alone?
2. Why did he have the big horn at his belt?
3. Why didn't Robin just walk through the river?
4. Why did Robin start walking more quickly?
5. Who reached the bridge first?
6. Why did Robin put his bow on the ground?
7. What was Robin's staff like?
8. Why did Robin fall into the water?
9. How did the two men feel after the fight?
10. Why did the outlaws all laugh at John Little's name?

Exercise 28 – Retelling the Story (pages 7–10)

See the instructions for Exercise 16. Do at least one topic as written work!

The starred () topic is more ambitious, and covers the material of the whole chapter.*

1. How the Meeting Happened (7,26–8,4)
2. The Fight (8,5–8,26)
3. After the Fight (8,27–10,13)
- * 4. How Little John Joined the Outlaws (7,18–10,13)

Exercise 29 – Who (page 10)

1. Who was going to hold an archery contest?
2. Who spoke to his men that evening?
3. Who must go to the contest in Nottingham?
4. Who is the best archer in the country?

CHAPTER 3

5. Who would love to catch Robin?
6. Who will go to Nottingham with Robin?
7. Who sat in the royal stand?
8. Who stood on the other side of the piece of land?

Exercise 30 – Short Answers (page 10)

1. Were Prince John and the Sheriff going to hold an archery contest?
2. Would the prize be magnificent?
3. Did Robin speak to his men after dinner that evening?
4. Is Will Scarlett the best archer in the country?
5. Will Robin go to Nottingham in disguise?
6. Will his men let him go to Nottingham alone?
7. Did the people of Nottingham sit with Prince John and his friends?
8. Was the shooting excellent?

Exercise 31 – Who, What and Where (pages 11–12)

1. Who was left in the contest, by mid-afternoon?
2. Where will the targets be set now?
3. Who was the first of the three men to shoot?
4. Where would the heralds paint the ‘eye’ – the small white spot?
5. What did the Sherwood man wear on his head?
6. What did the hard-faced man whisper to Prince John?
7. Where did the Sherwood man’s arrow hit the target?
8. What did the people of Nottingham do then?

Exercise 32 – Either/Or (pages 11–12)

1. How many archers were left by mid-afternoon – two, three or four?
2. Who wore a brown hood – the man from Delamere, or the Sherwood man?
3. Will each man have two shots, or only one?
4. Who hit the gold now – all three men, or only the Sherwood man?
5. Were the people very quiet while the archers were shooting, or did they shout and clap?
6. Who was the hard-faced man in the royal stand – Prince John or Sir Guy?
7. Was the crowd happy or sad that the Sherwood man had won?
8. Did they stand there silently, or did they cheer and dance?

Exercise 33 – Describing a Picture (page 11)

1. Make at least five sentences about the picture on page 11.

Exercise 34 – Put into the Future Tense (pages 11–12)

1. The heralds *set* the targets at two hundred yards.
2. The man from Delamere *shoots* first.
3. Now the Wirral man *takes* a deep breath and *fires*.
4. The Sherwood man’s arrow *hits* the gold too.