



## NEW MEXICO YOUNG ACTORS ROBIN HOOD STUDY GUIDE

### ***ROBIN HOOD***

by Tim Kelly

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Costumes by Jenifer Andrews  
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Dear Teachers,

Welcome to New Mexico Young Actors' production of ***Robin Hood***. We are offering this study guide as a way to help you prepare your classes for our upcoming production. Included in this guide are a history and synopsis of our story, a list of characters, a vocabulary list and lesson ideas, as well as some audience protocol reminders. We always enjoy hearing from you and your students and look forward to receiving any pictures, stories, or comments about the production. Thank you for your interest in and support of New Mexico Young Actors. We look forward to seeing you soon!

### **History and Synopsis**

Robin Hood is an English folk hero from the late middle ages. The character is depicted as a working class hero, roaming Sherwood Forest with his merry band of outlaws, at odds with his antagonist, the Sheriff of Nottingham, robbing from the rich and giving to the poor while rescuing his lover, Maid Marian. Robin Hood, an expert archer, is usually depicted in green attire with a red feather in his cap and a bow and arrow at his side. It has never been proven that Robin Hood was a real historical figure and thus the character exists only as a legend. The story of Robin Hood has permeated popular culture through ballads, songs, literature, plays, and films.

As our play opens we meet Robin and several of his followers in Sherwood Forest. They agree to help a distraught widow who is over-taxed by Prince John, the evil viceroy for King Richard the Lion-Hearted, who is abroad fighting in the crusades. Friar Tuck enters and decides to join the band of outlaws. A caravan crosses the forest, led by the Sheriff of Nottingham and Lady Merle, who are loyal to Prince John. Robin's band halts the caravan and pilfers the few treasures carried by the Sheriff and Lady Merle. In the caravan is Maid Marian, ward to King Richard and under the protection of Lady Merle. Marian recognizes Robin from her childhood and a spark ignites between them. The loyalists exit while plotting their revenge against Robin and the outlaws.

At the county fair we find the Sheriff's silly wife with their goofy daughter, Salome. Lady Merle arrives and conducts an archery contest in order to trap Robin Hood, who is at the fair in disguise. When Maid Marian is introduced as the soon-to-be-bride of Prince John, Robin cannot resist. He steps forward to compete in the archery match, which he wins, and then escapes from the crowd.

In Nottingham Castle, Maid Marian, her servant, Annabel, and Salome, await news of Robin and the outlaws. The Sheriff's wife enters followed by Lady Merle. They share that Robin and King Richard have been killed and Maid Marian will be taken to London the following morning to marry Prince John. Lady Merle exits and Friar Tuck enters disguised as the cook. He reassures Marian that help is on the way and proceeds to assist Robin and his band into the castle for the daring rescue. The Sheriff and Lady Merle enter, a battle ensues, and Robin escapes, accidentally taking Annabel instead of Marian.

Robin's band is back in Sherwood Forest. Lady Merle and the Sheriff arrive with Maid Marian, who they will use as bait for Robin Hood. The villains hide and Robin enters to rescue Marian. The loyalists rush on as a soldier trains his arrow on Robin. It is again declared that King Richard is dead and Robin is a traitor to Prince John, the new monarch. As the Sheriff arrests Robin, a stranger enters in disguise and reveals himself to be King Richard, still alive! All bow to the king as he banishes Lady Merle to Normandy, admonishes the Sheriff, and declares that Marian and Robin are to be married. All joyfully hail Sherwood Forest as the curtain closes.

### **Cast of Characters**

**Beth**, member of Robin Hood's band  
**Mother Meg**, another member of the band  
**Little John**, another member of the band  
**Old Widow**, victim of the Sheriff  
**Will Scarlet**, another member of the band  
**Robin Hood**, outlaw of Sherwood Forest  
**Friar Tuck**, another follower, a monk

**Sheriff**, of Nottingham  
**Lady Merle**, in league with evil Prince John  
**Annabel**, servant to Maid Marian  
**Maid Marian**, ward of King Richard  
**Sheriff's Wife**, a clumsy social climber  
**Salome**, her silly daughter  
**King**, journeying through Nottingham

### **CLASSROOM DISCUSSION (PRE-PERFORMANCE)**

1. *How many of you have experienced a live dramatic performance? What did you see?*
2. *What are some of the differences between seeing a live performance and watching television or going to a movie?*
  - Theater features live actors on stage. They have spent many weeks rehearsing for the performance.
  - The audience is a very important part of the performance. Appreciation and enthusiasm for the performers is shown by close attention and participation and applause at the appropriate times. The success of the play often depends on the audience.
  - The atmosphere of a live performance is entirely different from your home, where the television is always available.
  - It is easy to identify with live actors. You can see how they use their bodies and voices to convey different emotions.
  - Actors wear costumes and make-up to help create the impression of the characters they portray.

- There is much more to most live performances than actors. Special sets, effects, lighting, music, costumes, and of course, the audience add to the total experience.

3. *Introduce your students to the following theatrical terms:*

Box Office • Acts & Scenes • Producer • Program • Costumes • Props • Director • Stage • Curtain Call • Stagehand • Lobby • Usher • Musical Theater • Orchestra Pit • Playwright • Scenery • Makeup • Actor • Balcony • Cue • Play

4. *Introduce your students to the following terms found in our story:*

Caravan • Taxes • Monastery • Meditation • Mires • Concession • Dallying • Rogue • Treason • Crusades • Yonder • Audacity • Contemptible • Vow • Obligation • Bumpkin • Droll • Catatonic • Jester • Treacherous • Animosity • Default • Dodging • Vittles • Insolent •

### **THEATER ETIQUETTE**

*Discuss the role of the audience and proper theater etiquette.*

- Arrive on time so that you do not miss anything and so that you will not disturb the rest of the audience while trying to get comfortable. Lights may go out before the performance begins and seating is very difficult after that time.
- It is easier for you (and the rest of the audience) to see and hear the performance if you stay in your seat and listen very carefully.
- Try your best to remain seated once the performance begins. There is no intermission during the performance of *Robin Hood*, which is 50 minutes in duration.
- Although you may wish to say something to the actors, you need to hold your thoughts, as you will disturb their concentration.
- Sing or participate *if and only if* you are invited to do so. Your participation is often very important.
- Show the cast and crew your appreciation for their hard work with applause. Do this when you like a song, dance, or joke.

### **CLASSROOM DISCUSSION AND ACTIVITIES (POST- PERFORMANCE)**

1. *Write an Epilogue:* Predict what happens next in the story. Write an article in which you tell the readers what happens after Robin and Maid Marian marry and live in the forest. What happened to the other characters in the story? What is the next mission for Robin's merry band? Be as specific as possible and keep with the spirit of the original story.
2. *Discuss real life situations that reflect the moral in Robin Hood.*
  - a) Ask the children in what ways are they able to help the poor and less fortunate in their communities. Share ideas such as volunteering at the food bank, donating to a thrift store or a food pantry, or giving money to a local charity.

- b) Discuss strategies to handle a school bully. How can the students be positive role models when they are bullied? Identify the important people to tell when bullying occurs.
- c) Describe the characteristics of a good leader (principal, teacher, coach, mayor, president). How can the students cultivate such traits in their own lives. Create leadership role-playing activities and skits—mock towns or communities designed with a leadership structure.
- d) Reflect on the characters in the play. Ask your students which character they identify with the most. Why? List positive and negative traits of each character. What might each character do to improve his or her flaws?

3. *Music*: Was music used in the performance? Was it live or recorded? How could you tell? When was the music used? Why? Did it help develop the plot? What types of music were used? Identify musical instruments that were played. Can you describe how different kinds of music would make you have different kinds of feelings? When a theater production is a musical, an actor must have additional skills. Can you name some? A musical costs more to produce than a play. Can you name some additional expenses? (e.g., orchestra, a practice piano, a score, a choreographer, etc.)

4. *Sets*: Describe the sets used in the play you just saw. What props or details were used to suggest specific times or settings? How could lighting be changed to create a mood, season, time of day, etc.? What materials might have been used in building the sets? How were the sets and props moved on and off the stage? Suggest a scene (a farm, a school yard, a classroom, a shopping center, a neighborhood, a city street, a castle, an amusement park, a forest) and ask students to describe a basic stage set for the scene.

5. *Costumes*: What would you need to know to create costumes for a play (historical accuracy, sewing, theatrical effects, knowledge of fabric, etc.)? Why is the right costume important to the character in the play?

6. *Art activities*:

- Draw a picture of a favorite scene or character.
- Draw a picture of what the audience might look like from on-stage.
- Re-create a scene from the play using clay forms in a box.
- Design a program cover for the play using the title, date, and an illustration inspired by the play.
- Draw an advertisement for the play.
- Create Sherwood Forest, including trees, shrubs, boulders, and even a fort or campsite where Robin and his band may live.

7. *Language arts*:

- Choose a character that you liked and write a one-day's diary for that character. Write a letter to a cast member telling what you liked about her or his character.
- Discuss the play. Was there a hero or heroine? A villain? The setting? Was there a moral to the story?
- In 25 words or fewer, describe the plot of the play.
- Discuss the work of a movie or theater critic. Write a newspaper-type review of the play.

## **8. Theater**

- Discuss live theater. Are the actors aware of the audience? Why might an actor change his presentation because of audience reaction? Would it be easy to be an actor? Conduct an interview with a classmate pretending to be one of the actors and discover the actor's feelings about being on stage, memorization, rehearsals, costumes, audience, etc.
- Make a list of all the personnel needed for a play (director, actors, musicians, author, designers—set, costumes, lights, sound—stagehands, choreographer, producer, etc). What do these different jobs contribute to the theatrical production?

## **9. History**

- Use *Robin Hood* as an opportunity to explore the Middle Ages. Research the culture, language, cuisine, and lifestyle of the time. Why would the tale of Robin Hood be so popular during the Medieval era?
- Robin Hood is known as an expert archer. Discuss the history of archery. What skills and tools are necessary to become a good archer? Encourage the students to discovery archery as an activity today.

## **Resources**

### **Books**

Creswick, Paul. *The Adventures of Robin Hood*. The Reader's Digest Association, Inc. Pleasantville, NY, 1991.

### **Internet**

The Real Robin Hood: <https://www.history.com/topics/british-history/robin-hood>

### Middle Ages

Basic Overview: <https://www.britannica.com/event/Middle-Ages>

In-Depth: <https://sourcebooks.fordham.edu/sbook.asp>

### Archery

[www.usarchery.org](http://www.usarchery.org)

[www.archery360.com](http://www.archery360.com)

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