LEGENDS
LEGENDARY TO 1400
BEOWULF TO WILLIAM TELL

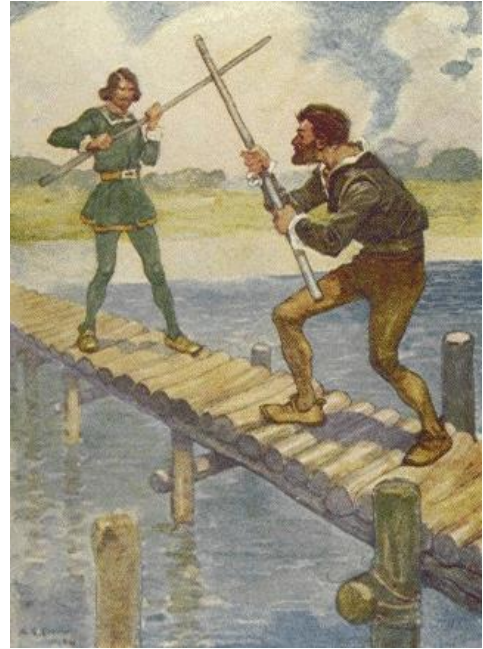## ERA SUMMARY — LEGENDS

European history is rich with legendary heroes,—many of whom are based on real people. William Tell, Roland, St. George, and El Cid, for example, are all based on genuine historical characters, although there is much debate about the extent to which their stories are fictionalized. Others, heroes, such as Beowulf, Siegfried, King Arthur, and Guy of Warwick are based on literary works. Most legendary characters of Europe have long-standing oral as well as written traditions, and the names of the great heroes are immortalized in battle cries and minstrel's songs, as well as children's stories.

ROBIN AND LITTLE JOHN MEET FOR THE FIRST TIME

Legends are universally popular with young children, and the Young Readers collection includes over a dozen books based primarily on folk heroes, mostly from the **Told to the Children** series. In addition to fictional legendary heroes, many mythical stories having to do with authentic historical figures such as Richard the Lion-hearted, Barbarossa, or Charlemagne are also part of European folklore. There are also dozens of stories about quirky town-folk, enchanted objects, and despicable villains.

These tales allow a closer look at some of the more turbulent times in Europe's history viewed through the entertaining lens of popular folklore. The Young Readers section on Legends, is therefore, an important part of a Children's introduction to European history, and is just as important as "real" history in terms of developing students' **cultural literacy**.

The Young Readers Study Questions having to do with legends are based on selected chapters from several books including Scudder's *Book of Legends*, Evan's *Old Time Tales*, Lansing's *Page - Esquire - Knight* and volumes from the **Told to the Children** series.

CHARACTERS – LEGENDS

EUROPEAN

Siegfried	~ 1200 BC	Primary character of the Norse Epic, *The Nibelung.*
Cuchulain	~ 1000 BC	Legendary hero of the Irish folklore.
Saint George	275–303	Patron saint of England. Soldier who killed a dragon and died a martyr's death.
King Arthur	460–510	Legendary king of the Britons.
Sir Galahad	~ 500	Knight of the Round Table. Considered the noblest and worthiest of knights.
Sir Gawain	~ 500	Knight of the Round Table. Famous for his encounter with the Green Giant.
Beowulf	~700 A.D.	Legendary Swedish hero, Beowulf defeated the monster Grendel for King Hrothgar who ruled the Danes.
Roland	d. 778	Nephew of Charlemagne and legendary hero of his wars. Died at Roncesvalles.
Guy of Warwick	~ 1000	Popular hero of Chivalry, who supposedly lived in Saxon England. Fought ogres and dragons as well as marauding Danes.
El Cid	1040–1099	Legendary Spanish Hero of Chivalry. Conquered Valencia, a great Moorish City.
Robin Hood	~ 1200	Leader of a legendary band of benevolent bandits who stole from rich and gave to the poor.
William Tell	1275–1325	Swiss Folk Hero who shot an apple off his son's head and murdered a tyrannical Governor.

MIDDLE EASTERN

Sindbad	~700 A.D.	Legendary Persian Sailor, who experienced many fantastic adventures on seven different voyages.
Aladdin	~700 A.D.	The legendary character who found a magic lamp, married a princess, and defeated an evil sorcerer.

TIMELINE – LEGENDS

300	St. George fights a dragon, then becomes a martyr.
425	Beowulf fights Grendel and returns home to become king.
501	Siegfried fights the Dragon Fafnir and begins his adventures.
520	Rise of King Arthur and the Knights of the Round Table.
780	Roland is killed at the Battle of Roncevalles Pass.
1000	Guy of Warwick, after many adventures, marries his lady-love Felice.
1000	El Cid conquers Valencia.
1190	Robin Hood resides in Sherwood Forest during the reign of Richard the Lion-heart.
1330	William Tell shoots an apple off his son's head.

RECOMMENDED READING – LEGENDS

Scudder - *Book of Legends*   *entire book*

Macgregor - *Stories from King Arthur*   *entire book*

Marshall - *Stories of Guy of Warwick*   *entire book*

Marshall - *Stories of Robin Hood*   *entire book*

Marshall - *Stories of William Tell*   *entire book*

Lansing - *Page - Esquire - Knight*   *entire book*

Marshall - *Stories of Roland*   *entire book*

Marshall - *Stories of Beowulf*   *entire book*

Baldwin - *Stories of Don Quixote*   *entire book*

Macgregor - *Stories from Pilgrim's Progress*   *entire book*

Macgregor - *Stories of Siegfried*   *entire book*

Babbitt - *Jataka Tales*   *entire book*

Babbitt - *More Jataka Tales*   *entire book*

Steedman - *Stories from the Arabian Nights*   *entire book*