

Literary Element (page 197)

Legend

from Le Morte d'Arthur SIR THOMAS MALORY

A legend is a tale that is based on history and handed down from one generation to the next. Over time, legends accumulate values held dear by the culture that developed them. In most cases, legends glorify the virtues of a cultural leader. Abe Lincoln's studious fireside reading and George Washington's inability to lie about chopping down a cherry tree serve as examples of American legends. In *Le Morte d'Arthur*, Sir Thomas Malory honors King Arthur, presumably a real Celtic warrior in Anglo-Saxon times who had the traits of a legendary leader.

ACTIVITY

Directions: Read the first row. Then, select four more passages, and use the chart to analyze the legend of King Arthur in *Le Morte d'Arthur*.

Analyzing Legend Through <i>Le Morte d'Arthur</i>		
King Arthur's Words and Actions	Possible Fact or Likely Fictional; Traits Implied by Words/Actions	How Traits Reflect Cultural Values of 15th-Century Britain
He dreams of Sir Gawain: "now that I see thee alive, much am I beholden to almighty Jesus."	Likely fiction; Arthur's words in his dream imply that he is full of love for Sir Gawain.	The trait reflects the honor and love that binds kings and knights.
Because of the dire dream, Arthur has a treaty offered to Mordred to avoid battle.	1.	2.
"Arthur rode steadily throughout the army of Sir Mordred many times and did full nobly."	3.	4.
"Now that I see him yonder alone, he shall never escape my hands!"	5.	6.
The dying Arthur orders Bedivere to throw Excalibur into the lake, where an arm takes it in.	7.	8.

Reading Strategy (page 197)

Activating Prior Knowledge

from Le Morte d'Arthur SIR THOMAS MALORY

When you connect information or personal experiences to a text as you read, you are activating prior knowledge. Active reading requires that you draw on your personal background. You may bring prior knowledge of King Arthur to Malory's *Le Morte d'Arthur*. Perhaps the characters Merlin and Lancelot are familiar to you. You may recall that when Arthur was just a boy, he pulled the sword Excalibur from a stone and was crowned king. This is how can you can connect and track your prior knowledge:

Prior Knowledge	Events in the Story
Sir Lancelot was Arthur's most formidable knight.	Arthur's troops are killed in battle. "Sir Lancelot, this day I have sorely missed thee!"

ACTIVITY

Directions In the chart below, write prior knowledge in the left column and story events that relate to your knowledge in the right column.

Activating Prior Knowledge	
Prior Knowledge (Information or Personal Experience)	Events and Characters in the Selection
1.	2.
3.	4.

Active Reading Graphic Organizer

Ask your teacher for a copy of the Two-Column Table Graphic Organizer. Use it to connect your prior knowledge to specific events in Malory's legend as you continue reading *Le Morte d'Arthur*.

Selection Vocabulary Development (page 197)

from *Le Morte d'Arthur* SIR THOMAS MALORY

Vocabulary

doleful *adj.* sad

peril *n.* risk of injury, loss, or destruction

jeopardy *n.* danger

brandish *v.* to shake or swing threateningly, as a weapon

EXERCISE A Practice with Analogies

Complete the analogy by writing the correct vocabulary word.

1. cleanliness : filth :: safety : _____
2. _____ : weapon :: flip : coin
3. risk : _____ :: peace : serenity
4. difficult : easy :: _____ : joyful

EXERCISE B Applying Meanings

Choose from the four vocabulary words to fill in each blank.

1. The loss of a beloved pet might be a _____ occurrence.
2. Armed robbers often _____ their weapons.
3. Deep-sea divers face many _____ in pursuit of their goals.
4. Their reckless target practice put innocent citizens in _____.

EXERCISE C Responding to the Selection

On a separate piece of paper, write a summary of the death of Arthur. Use all FOUR vocabulary words.