

The Middle Ages The Knighthood

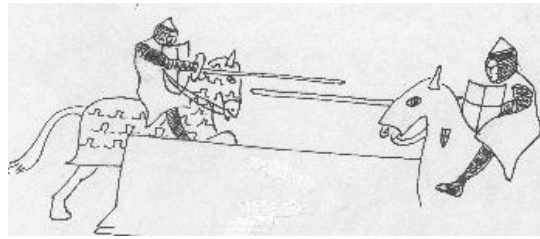


Illustration by Lynn M. Hanousek

Knighthood is an important part of medieval culture that has been depicted in many children’s books and movies. Knights were hardworking warriors who received land from a noble in return for protection. Knights went through **rigorous**¹ training that included three main **phases**.²

First, a boy in training became a **page**.³ He would leave home at about the age of seven. As a page, he moved into the home of a knight where he would learn to use small weapons. He would also begin his education in *chivalry*. This was the code of **courtesy**⁴ and behavior expected of a knight, especially towards women. Have you ever heard anyone say, “It’s nice to know chivalry is not dead?” If you do, you’ll know that the speaker has been impressed by someone’s good manners.

Next, a boy began his training as a squire at 15 or 16. Squires did all the dirty work. He acted as a personal servant to his knight. He set the table and served meals. He cleaned and cared for the horses. If he could stick with it though, a squire was rewarded with serious training as a mounted soldier. He received his own horse and learned how to ride it. He also accompanied his knight into battle. Finally, after five years of service, the squire was now ready to become a knight. At a ceremony, the squire’s knight would buckle on the armor of the squire. Then he would **dub**⁵ the squire a knight. His life of service as a warrior would now begin.

¹ **rigorous** – strict, very severe

² **phases** – parts

³ **page** – a youth who was preparing to be a knight, and who was attached to the household of a knight for training

⁴ **courtesy** – polite behavior, thoughtfulness for others

⁵ **dub** – to make a knight, usually by striking his shoulder lightly with a sword

Name: _____ Date: _____

1. Which answer reflects the correct order in which a boy who wants to become a knight must train?

- a. Squire-Knight-Page
- b. Knight-Squire-Page
- c. Page-Squire-Knight
- d. Page-Knight-Squire

2. Which of the three did the dirtiest work?

- a. Page
- b. Squire
- c. Knight
- d. They were all equally dirty

3. All of the following have to do with knighthood *except*

- a. rigorous training
- b. mounted battle
- c. working for a vassal
- d. a code of courtesy

4. A squire could be compared to a modern day

- a. crook
- b. policeman
- c. marine
- d. butler

5. Which word best describes a knight?

- a. Dedicated
- b. Lazy
- c. Violent
- d. Boring

6. The saying, “it’s nice to know chivalry isn’t dead,” is usually used when someone shows good manners. Can you think of some examples of things people could do that would cause someone to use this saying?

7. What are the main differences between the page phase and the squire phase?

8. The question below is an incomplete sentence. Choose the word that best completes the sentence.

Training for the knighthood is very difficult, _____, the reward of becoming a knight is worth the effort.

- a. because
- b. when
- c. however
- d. if

9. Answer the following questions based on the sentence below.

To be a squire, a boy began his training at age 15 or 16.

Who? a boy

(did) what? _____

Why? _____

When? _____

10. **Vocabulary Word:** mount: ride an animal, typically a horse.

Use the vocabulary word in a sentence: _____

Teacher Guide and Answers

Passage Reading Level: Lexile 780

Featured Text Structure: Descriptive – the writer explains, defines or illustrates a concept or topic

Passage Summary: This passage provides an overview of knighthood during the Middle Ages. Knights began training as a page, moved on to become a squire, and eventually became full knights.

1. Which answer reflects the correct order in which a boy who wants to become a knight must train?
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 - b. Knight-Squire-Page
 - c. Page-Squire-Knight**
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6. The saying, “it’s nice to know chivalry isn’t dead,” is usually used when someone shows good manners. Can you think of some examples of things people could do that would cause someone to use this saying?

Suggested answer: Helping an old lady cross the street, holding the door open so someone else can pass through it, helping someone disabled or elderly carry groceries.

7. What are the main differences between the page phase and the squire phase?

Suggested answer: During the page phase, the knight learns more about behavior and trains with only small weapons, but during the squire phase, the knight is learning more about battle. Also, during the page phase, education is very important, but during the squire phase, the knight is focusing more on serving his trainer.

8. The question below is an incomplete sentence. Choose the word that best completes the sentence.

Training for the knighthood is very difficult, _____, the reward of becoming a knight is worth the effort.

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- b. when
- c. however**
- d. if

9. Answer the following questions based on the sentence below.

To be a squire, a boy began his training at age 15 or 16.

Who? a boy

(did) what? **began his training**

Why? **to be a squire**

When? **at age 15 or 16**

10. **Vocabulary Word:** mount: an animal one rides, typically a horse.

Use the vocabulary word in a sentence: answers may vary.