**King Arthur background**

* Uther, the High-King of [Britain](http://www.earlybritishkingdoms.com/kids/brit.html) fell in love with the Lady Igraine, but she was already married to Gorlois, the Duke of Tintagel.
* King Uther decided he must marry Igraine. So he took his army and fought with Gorlois. Gorlois was killed. King Uther married Igraine and they had a son named [Arthur](http://www.earlybritishkingdoms.com/kids/arthur.html). He was born at Tintagel Castle.
* This was a very dangerous time and attacks by [Saxons](http://www.earlybritishkingdoms.com/kids/sax.html) happened a lot. So King Uther gave his baby son to his wizard, Merlin, for safety.

Merlin sent Arthur away to be raised in the countryside by Sir Ector. He grew up with his foster brother, Kay. He never knew who his real parents were.

* When King Uther died, no-one knew he had a son. So there was lots of arguing about who should be High-King of Britain.
* Suddenly a mysterious stone magically appeared in the churchyard of St. Paul’s Cathedral in London. Sticking out of it was a huge sword. There was a message on it. It said that whoever pulled the sword from the stone was the rightful High-King of Britain.
* Lots of the [local kings](http://www.earlybritishkingdoms.com/kids/local_kings.html) (or 'tyrants') tried to pull the sword out. It was magically stuck fast though and the arguing carried on.
* Years later, [Arthur](http://www.earlybritishkingdoms.com/kids/arthur.html) had grown into a fifteen year old lad. It was time for his elder foster-brother, Kay, to go to his first tournament (where knights practiced fighting). So the family went to London.
* Arthur got into trouble because he had forgotten Kay’s sword. So he went off to look for one.
* He found the sword in the stone and pulled it out easily.
* Arthur gave the sword to Kay. Kay noticed the message and everyone wanted to know who had pulled the sword from the stone.
* At first, no-one believed that Arthur had done it. But he repeated what he had done. Everyone was amazed.
* [Arthur](http://www.earlybritishkingdoms.com/kids/arthur.html) was crowned King by St. Dubricius.
* However, 11 of the [local kings](http://www.earlybritishkingdoms.com/kids/local_kings.html) would not agree to him being High-King. They did not want to have to do what a fifteen-year-old told them to. They started a rebellion (a war against the proper ruler).
* Merlin the Wizard helped King Arthur to rule Britain. He took him to a magical lake. Merlin’s friend, the ‘Lady of the Lake’ lived there beneath the water. She gave Arthur a magic sword called ‘Excalibur’.
* Excalibur was kept in a magic scabbard. If you used Excalibur in a fight, you would always defeat your opponent. If you had the scabbard, you would always be protected from being hurt yourself.
* Arthur led a big army against the 11 rebel kings. There were many battles, but Arthur had Excalibur, so he won. The kings agreed that Arthur should be High-King.
* [Arthur](http://www.earlybritishkingdoms.com/kids/arthur.html) set up his Royal palace at Camelot.
* When Arthur was a bit older, he married a princess named Guinevere. She was the daughter of King Leodegrance of Cameliard. As a wedding present, her father gave them a huge round table.
* All the knights in the country wanted to be soldiers for King Arthur. The bravest of them were allowed to sit at the round table. They were known as the ‘Knights of the Round Table’. Because it was round, the positions of all the seats were equal. No-one could say they were more important because they sat at the end.
* The [Saxons](http://www.earlybritishkingdoms.com/kids/sax.html) were still attacking the British. Arthur and the Knights of the Round Table fought against the Saxons in many battles. They finally defeated them at the Battle of Mount Badon. Everyone was happy and felt very safe again.
* Arthur thought he was doing a better job than the Roman Emperor in Italy. He decided to take his army to Europe. After a lot of fighting, the Emperor agreed to give the western half of Europe to Arthur.
* Back in Britain, the Knights of the Round Table had lots of adventures. Some rescued princesses. Some fought dragons or bad knights. Many of them went to look for a religious cup called the ‘Holy Grail’.

The best and bravest of the Knights of the Round Table was called Sir Lancelot. He came from Brittany (in France) and was [King Arthur](http://www.earlybritishkingdoms.com/kids/arthur.html)'s friend.

* He was also very handsome and Queen Guinevere fell in love with him.
* The two would sneak away from the palace to spend time together. King Arthur had no idea what was going on.
* King Arthur’s nephew was called Mordred (or Medrod). He was an evil man. He found out what Guinevere and Lancelot were doing and he told King Arthur.
* Lancelot ran away, but Queen Guinevere was taken to court. The judges decided she should be burnt to death.
* Lancelot rescued her and they escaped to Brittany.

Arthur took a big army across the English Channel to Brittany. He wanted to punish Lancelot and Guinevere.

[King Arthur](http://www.earlybritishkingdoms.com/kids/arthur.html) left Mordred in charge while he was away in Brittany.

* As Arthur had no children, Mordred was going to inherit the kingdom when Arthur died; but he could not wait.
* Mordred told everyone that King Arthur had been killed fighting in Brittany. People believed him and Mordred made himself High-King of Britain. Luckily, Arthur heard about what was going on. He returned to Britain with his army. Mordred had given away lots of money and so some people liked him. They helped him put together his own army and start a rebellion (a war against the proper ruler).
* The armies of Arthur and Mordred fought at the Battle of Camlann. Unfortunately, Arthur did not have Excalibur’s scabbard with him. It had been stolen by his wicked sister, Morgan Le Fay.
* The battle was so bad that only a few people were left alive at the end. Two of these were King Arthur and Mordred.

They fought each other in single combat. Arthur killed Mordred, but was very badly hurt himself.

[Arthur](http://www.earlybritishkingdoms.com/kids/arthur.html) knew he was going to die. He gave Excalibur to Sir Bedivere. He told him to return it to the magical lake.

* Bedivere pretended to do what he was told; but he hid Excalibur under a bush instead.
* Arthur asked Bedivere what happened when he threw the sword into the lake. Bedivere said that it sank. Arthur knew he was lying and told him to go and do the job properly.
* Bedivere threw the sword into the lake. He saw the hand of the ‘Lady of the Lake’ come out of the water to catch it. Three Queens arrived in a boat and took Arthur away to the Isle of Avalon.

It is thought that he died there soon afterwards.