



Activity One



KING EDWARD THE THIRD (1312-1377 A.D.)

In Chapter 30, Bear mentions King Edward, England's *warrior king*, with whom he had the honor of fighting on the victorious fields of France. This King Edward was probably England's King Edward the Third, who was one of the most successful English kings of the Middle Ages. King Edward was called by some as "the perfect king." He was responsible for transforming England into the mightiest military power in Europe at that time.

Edward's reign of 50 years was one of the longest in history, and was one of many achievements, but also spanned the years of the infamous Black Death.

Your task is to write a one-page report on the life of this extraordinary monarch. You may wish to consider the following:

- his early life (where was he born and raised; what were his parents like, etc.)
- personality (what do historians say he was like?)
- personal life (i.e. interests)
- family life (wife, children)
- military accomplishments
- later life, death.

Be sure to include your own personal thoughts about this man along with the facts of his life.



Famous Quote:

A common quote associated with the monarch was "Let the boy win his spurs." Here the king is referring to the Black Prince at Crecy. "Win his spurs" is still a popular English expression.



Activity Two

THE BLACK DEATH

In Crispin's hometown and on his journey from Stromford Village to Great Wexly, he finds much evidence of the devastation caused by the Black Death. In the novel, it is referred to by a number of names including the "Great Pestilence" or the "Great Mortality." The Black Death was the deadliest pandemic in human history, taking the lives of at least one-third of Europe's population. In England, the plague reached its destructive peak between the years 1348 and 1350, about 25 years before Crispin's adventures.

Known as *the bubonic plague*, the Black Death must have been a most terrifying event, and took the countries of Europe almost a century and a half to recover.

Imagine for a moment that you are a health care professional back in the days of the Black Death. How might you have helped the people of your village to survive this devastation? Remember, you don't have any modern medicine or the technology of the present age.

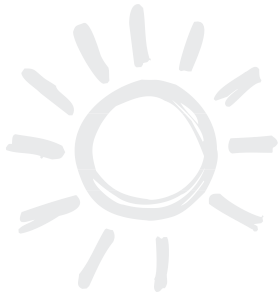
Research the causes of this plague and then consider how its effects might have been alleviated with what was available to the physicians of the mid-1300's.

- After you have researched the causes of this disease, your task is to write a short report on the steps you would have taken to protect your family and friends.

Your paper should be at least a half-page in length.

Consider this...

"Such terror was struck into the hearts of men and women by this calamity, that brother abandoned brother, and the uncle his nephew, and the sister her brother, and very often the wife her husband. What is even worse and nearly incredible is that fathers and mothers refused to see and tend their children, as if they had not been theirs." (Italian author Giovanni Boccaccio)



Activity Three

MEDIEVAL MEALS



Crispin is astounded by the variety of foods he finds in Widow Daventry's kitchen. Like most people of this era, Crispin's meals were very simple and usually didn't include meat of any kind. The meals prepared by Widow Daventry at the Green Man tavern, however, were another matter.

Using the Internet or in your school library, research what the meals of the 14th Century must have been like.

Your task

Your task is to prepare a seven course meal for three of your closest friends. You should include the following:

- 1 or 2 appetizers
- main course (a variety of four or five food items)
- a drink
- a dessert

Remember, the courses should be unique to this time period and represent a variety of items (i.e. don't have 4 meat dishes).

Along with the items you choose, include a brief description of the item (ingredients, etc.).



Activity Four



JOHN BALL

Although most of the characters in this novel are fictional, John Ball was an actual historical character who lived in medieval England from 1338–1381.

John Ball is said to have been a roving preacher – a “hedge priest.” A follower of the great reformer, John Wycliffe, Ball believed strongly in the social equality of all people.



This was not a popular

belief among the ruling class and members of the clergy. On at least three occasions he was thrown into prison.

Your task is to prepare a brief biography of this rather obscure person.

- What were some other beliefs held by John Ball which got him into so much trouble with the authorities?
- What are some interesting facts about his personal life and accomplishments?
- Did he have a family?
- Who were his friends?
- What were some of the major events of his life?

Your biography should be between a half-page and a page in length.

Good luck and good reporting!



Activity Five

ENTERTAINERS OF THE MIDDLE AGES

► This activity can be done individually or in small groups.

Although we learn that Bear's primary purpose in traveling the roads and lanes of England is to act as a spy for his own secret group, he uses the cover of entertainer to get himself into the towns and cities across England.

The entertainers of the 14th Century weren't all that different than those of more recent generations. We know that Bear sang and juggled to entertain his audience.

What else was involved in the entertainment world of the Middle Ages?

Using resources in your school library or on the Internet, prepare a one-page report of the topic of *Entertainers of the Middle Ages*. You might include their methods of entertainment (even including a popular song or poem); how they were paid; who were some famous entertainers of that time; and what an entertainer's life must have been like. Other than taking in the shows of professional performers like Bear, how else did the people of the middle ages entertain themselves?

Consider this...

Entertainers of the Middle Ages included jesters, mummers, minstrels, troubadours, conjurers, jugglers, and acrobats.

The people of that time enjoyed playing games such as Horseshoes, Skittles, Stoolball, Wrestling, Shinty, and Colf.

Entertainment for rich people centered around the spectacles of jousting and feasts or banquets.



Activity Six

RICHARD OF BORDEAUX VS. THE DUKE OF LANCASTER

► This activity can be done individually or in small groups.

Chapter 41 describes a conversation between Bear and John Ball in which they discuss possible heirs to the English throne. It is expected that soon King Edward will be dead and a successor will take his throne. Who will it be?

Bear and John Ball discuss two possibilities. Bear suggests that King Edward's son, **the Duke of Lancaster**, will take his place. To this John Ball responds, "The most hated man in England." Bear goes on to say that he considers the true heir to be **Richard of Bordeaux** – who is still a child.

Using resources in your school library or the Internet, your task is to choose one (or both) of these men to investigate.

Richard of Bordeaux, the son of Edward, the Black Prince, was eventually to become **King Richard II of England**.

Your research should include such information as:

- his early life (where was he born and raised; what were his parents like, etc.)
- personality (what do historians say he was like?)
- personal life (i.e. interests)
- family life (wife, children)
- military accomplishments
- later life, death

Your report should be about one page in length.