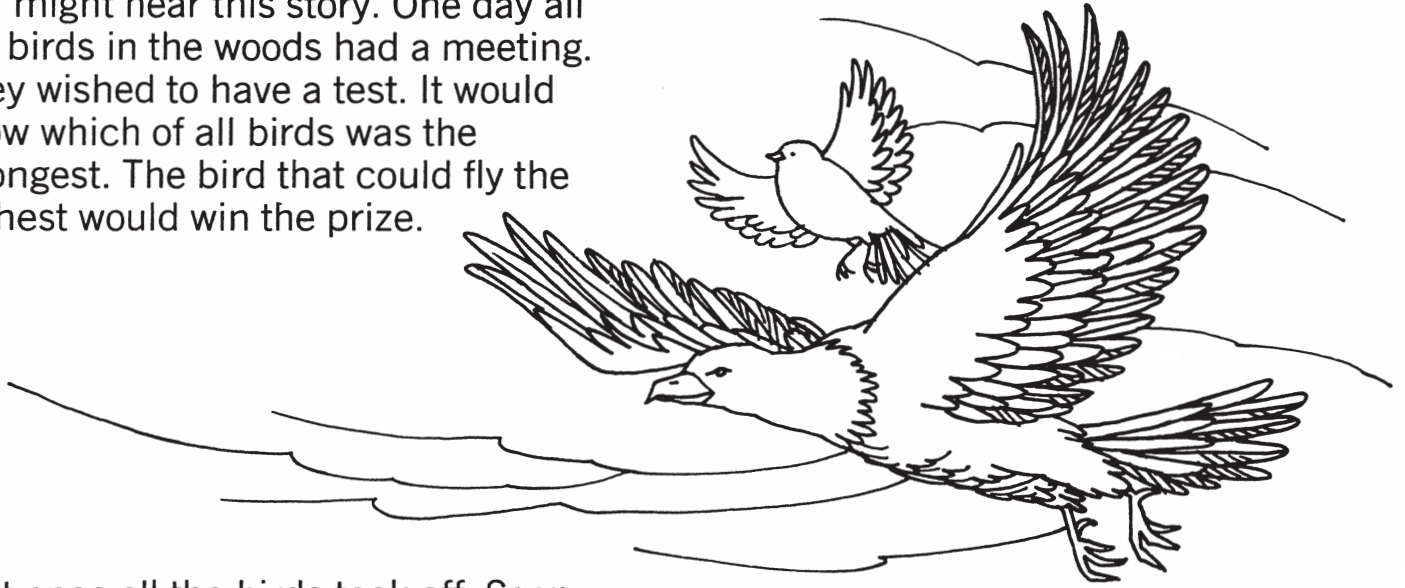


The Eagle and the Finch

(Adapted from a Native American legend)

Sitting around an Ottawa campfire, you might hear this story. One day all the birds in the woods had a meeting. They wished to have a test. It would show which of all birds was the strongest. The bird that could fly the highest would win the prize.



At once all the birds took off. Soon all could see that the eagle had passed the others. He seemed to be heading for the sun. The eagle was sure he was winning the prize. But look! Hidden on the eagle's back was the finch, a small bird. She had come this far on the eagle to save her strength. At last the finch left the eagle's back and flew higher and higher. She was not tired at all.

When all the birds were back on the ground, they had to pick a winner. They gave the prize to the eagle. Not only did he fly highest, but he did it while carrying another bird on his back. He was the strongest.

From then on, the eagle's feather was always given to the best warrior in the tribe. It was to show that he was strong and brave.

Main Idea

1. This story is about a
 - a. feather.
 - b. race.
 - c. campfire.

Significant Details

2. T F The finch was the winner.
3. T F The finch could not fly.
4. T F The finch was small.

Context Clues

5. A *warrior* is one who
 - a. catches eagles.
 - b. is a brave fighter.
 - c. wins races.

6. The *winner* gets the _____ .
7. A *test* shows who is
 - a. sitting.
 - b. flying.
 - c. best.

Following Through

8. The American bald eagle is the national symbol of the United States. Find out why. What else in this story suggests why the eagle was chosen? _____

Medusa

(Adapted from Greek Mythology)

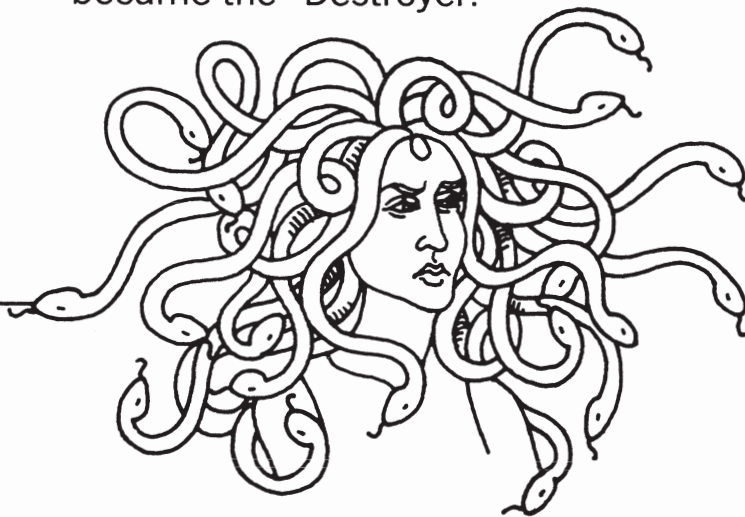
Perseus and his mother lived on a beautiful Greek island. The evil king of the island wanted to marry Perseus' mother. And at the same time, he wanted to get rid of Perseus. So he asked Perseus for a present. Perseus did not know it was a trick and said yes. The king then asked for the head of the monster Medusa. Too late did Perseus find out his mistake. But he would not back down. He would find Medusa and bring her head to the king.

Friends helped Perseus to get ready. They gave him useful things. One gave him a magic sword. Another gave him a bag to carry Medusa's head. Best of all was a shield, which was as polished and shiny as a mirror. Perseus was ready. He put on magic sandals. In no time, he landed in Africa where Medusa lived.

Medusa had once been beautiful. Now her hands were claws and her

hair was a nest of hissing snakes. Her face was so terrible that anyone who looked at it would turn to stone. So Perseus was careful to look into the shiny shield as he moved close to her. He was very quiet. Then quick! He swung the sword and cut off her head. With the snakes still hissing, he dropped Medusa's head into the bag.

When he got back to the island, the king could not believe that he had killed Medusa. So Perseus opened the bag. The king looked at her head and at once turned to stone. Perseus had killed a terrible monster. He had ended the life of an evil king. And he had saved his mother. His new name became the "Destroyer."



Main Idea

1. Choose the most important fact in the story.
 - a. Perseus was a Greek.
 - b. Medusa had once been beautiful.
 - c. Perseus killed Medusa.

Significant Details

2. Perseus used the shield as a _____ .
3. Perseus lived on an _____ .

Context Clues

4. *Sandals* are a kind of
 - a. sword.
 - b. shoe.
 - c. hat.

Drawing Conclusions

5. Perseus did not wish the king to
 - a. marry his mother.
 - b. get a present.
 - c. turn to stone.

Following Through

6. Perseus is one of the heroes in Greek mythology. Find out about other monsters he killed. Was "Destroyer" a good name for him? Explain.

The Legend of King Arthur

According to legends told in England, Uther Pendragon was the King of England. His son, Arthur, was born about 500 A.D. The king's magician, Merlin, predicted the king would soon become ill and die. The king's enemies would try to kill the baby to keep him from becoming king.

King Uther believed Merlin and asked him to protect Arthur until he was old enough to take his place on the throne. Merlin secretly gave the baby prince to Sir Ector to raise as his own son.

As Merlin had predicted, King Uther soon died. For the next 18 years, Britain had no king. Lords and barons raised private armies and fought each other.

Finally the Archbishop of Canterbury asked Merlin for advice about how Britain could find a king who could unite the people and bring peace. Merlin devised a plan. He promised that soon a descendant of King Uther would take his rightful place on the throne.

Knowing that a large tournament would soon be held in London, Merlin used his magic to place a sword up to its hilt in an anvil on a stone. The golden hilt was encrusted with gems.



Knights from all over England arrived to test their abilities with sword and spear. Among them were Sir Ector and his two sons, Sir Kay and Arthur. Merlin announced that whoever could pull the sword from the anvil would become the rightful King of Britain.

1. Why did King Uther allow Merlin to take his baby son?

2. Underline what happened first.

a. King Uther died

b. Merlin gave the baby to Sir Ector.

3. Underline what happened last.

a. Sir Ector and his sons arrived at the tournament.

b. Merlin placed a sword in an anvil.

4. What does "encrusted" mean? _____

5. What does "devised" mean? _____

The Legend of King Arthur (cont'd)

Sir Kay had a reputation as a brave knight. Arthur served as his page. A page kept his knight's armor polished and the points on his swords and spears sharpened.

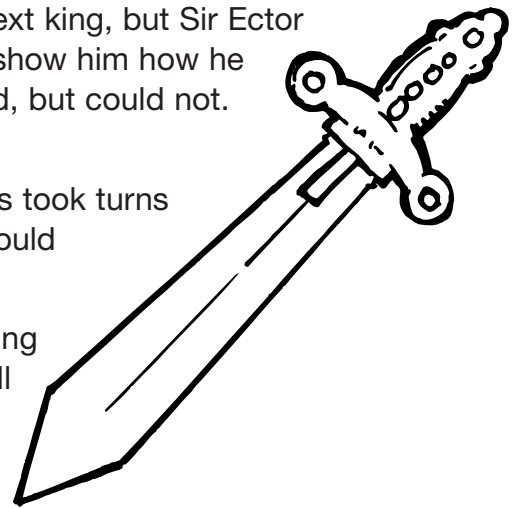
In the first contest of the tournament, two groups of knights fought on horseback with spears. Sir Kay fought brilliantly. Those who won the first contest prepared for the second. Again Sir Kay fought heroically with his short sword until the sword broke. Wishing to continue the contest, Sir Kay sent Arthur to fetch another sword from their tent.

On his way, Arthur saw the sword in the anvil. Since he wanted to help Sir Kay quickly, he decided to take that sword and return it later. Arthur grasped the shining hilt and easily pulled the sword from the anvil. He hurried back to the tournament. Sir Kay was astonished, for he knew the meaning of the feat Arthur had performed, but asked Arthur to say nothing.

At the end of the day's contests, Sir Kay proclaimed to his father that he had taken the sword from the anvil. Sir Kay meant to be the next king, but Sir Ector knew that could not happen. Wisely, he asked Sir Kay to show him how he had obtained the sword. Sir Kay tried to replace the sword, but could not. Arthur asked permission to try and was successful.

When Merlin and the Archbishop arrived, all the knights took turns trying to remove the sword from the anvil. Since no one could perform the task, Merlin asked Arthur to try.

Confusion broke out as Arthur easily pulled the glistening sword from the anvil and held it high above his head for all to see. Then Sir Ector and Merlin explained what had happened 18 years earlier. Arthur became the rightful King of Britain.



6. What do “task” and “feat” refer to in this story? _____

7. What was the author's purpose in retelling the legend?

_____ to entertain _____ to persuade _____ to inform

8. Underline the cause and circle the effect in this sentence.

Arthur pulled the sword from the anvil because he was in a hurry to help Sir Kay.

9. What do you think Sir Kay did next? _____
