



Robin Hood: Fact or Fiction?

Fill in this sheet using the sources on the information sheet.

Tick each column if the source agrees with the statement. Leave it blank if there is no evidence.

Robin Hood:

- was an outlaw
- lived in Sherwood Forest
- lived in Yorkshire
- stole from the rich
- gave to the poor
- was a nobleman

**Source
A**

**Source
B**

**Source
C**

**Source
D**

**Source
E**

When do the sources say that Robin Hood lived?

Why do you think the sources contradict each other?

What reasons does Patrick Middleton (Source E) give to explain why Robin Hood became so popular after 1381?

Robin Hood: Fact or Fiction?

What we know about Robin Hood comes from films, television programmes, books and cartoons. Most say that he lived in Sherwood Forest, during the reign of King Richard (1189–99). He fought with the Sheriff of Nottingham, accompanied by Maid Marian and a band of followers known as his 'merry men'. Most films say that he was a Saxon nobleman, who stole from the rich and gave to the poor.

Records of Robin Hood exist, but it is hard to separate the truth from the legends. He may have been a real person, if so his adventures have probably been exaggerated. He appears in many popular ballads from the 13th century, but his first datable appearance is in William Langland's *Piers Plowman* in the late 14th century. Until then few songs or ballads were written down so it is hard to be certain of the truth.

'About the time when Richard I was in Germany, the notorious robbers, Robert Hood and Little John, lived in the woods in Sherwood. They only stole the goods of rich men. He would not allow women to be mistreated and never robbed the poor.'

Source A: Written by a Scottish Monk in 1521

'I saw the woody and famous forest of Barnsdale where they say that Robin Hood lived like an outlaw.'

Source B: From a chronicle written in the sixteenth century. Barnsdale Forest is in Yorkshire.



1225: Robert Hoode, peasant tenant of the archbishopric of York, reported as fleeing from the King's justice.

1228: Robert Hod, known as 'Robin', described as an outlaw in West Yorkshire.

1230: 'The Sheriff of Yorkshire owes 32s 6d. for goods stolen by Robin Hood, fugitive.' Report in West Yorkshire.

Source C: Court records that mention Robin Hood.

'A True Tale of Robin Hood'

'A brief touch on life and death of that renowned outlaw, Robert Earl of Huntingdon, commonly known as Robin Hood. He died in Sherwood Forest, AD.1198, being in the reign of King Richard the First.

Being carefully collected out of the truest writers of our English Chronicles: and published for those who want truth not lies.'

Source D: The introduction of *A true tale of Robin Hood*, written by Martin Parker in 1687.

Only one of the five earliest ballads puts Robin in Sherwood Forest. Until the Peasants Revolt in 1381, there is no mention of Robin Hood stealing from the rich to give to the poor. After this revolt over high taxes, the number of songs about Robin Hood increased, and most say that he was a peasant who fought wicked sheriffs to give money back to the poor.

Source E: *In Search of Robin Hood*, written by Patrick Middleton in 1989.