

Student Name (s)

ENG 1DP

Mr. Del Monte

1 January 2013

King Arthur: A Epic Hero?

[Play 0-0:54 of movie trailer for “King Arthur] That is a question that I want to consider today: Is King Arthur real? Is he real? Is he a hero? An epic hero? You’ll need to decide for yourself. **(slide 2)**

The myth surrounding King Arthur is that he became King of Britain when he was able to remove the mysterious sword in the stone **(slide 3)**. The sword had been placed there by Merlin **(slide 4)**—a wizard who became Arthur’s mentor—with the inscription **(slide 5)**: “Whoso pulleth out this sword of this stone is the rightwise, born king of all England (Gill, 1998). Of course, all those who tried, failed. Epicly. Arthur, of course, succeed—and, according to the myth, did so with ease. Later, because this sword was damaged in a duel, Arthur was given a new sword—the mythical “Excalibur”—by the Lady by the Lake. It is with this sword that Arthur ruled (Gill, 1998).

(slide 6) Arthur was an honourable king who ruled wisely. As my closing video clip will show, Britain was constantly under attack—mostly by the Saxons—and Arthur nobly and courageously defended his kingdom. I bet it was epic.

He fell in love with the beautiful Guinevere **(slide 7)**, who became queen **(slide 8)**. He had many brave knights as his followers and they discussed matters while sitting around the famous Round Table in Camelot (Wilkinson 126) **(slide 9)**. The importance of the *round* table was that every knight had equal prominence. The round table was founded on the ideas of

patience, humility, and meekness. Arthur's knights were never to murder, or be cruel, and to always rescue a damsel in distress ("The Knights"). **(slide 10)**

Many of Arthur's knights set out on a quest to find the Holy Grail, the cup used by Jesus Christ before his death, and which was thought to give everlasting life to whoever drank from it **(slide 11)** (Wilkinson 126). It was also highly coveted because the knights believed that if it was found, Britain would become the most powerful country in the world. It was believed that only the purest and most virtuous knight would succeed. According to some stories, a knight found it; according to others, it is still hidden today (Coghlan, 125).

(slide 12) Arthur was ultimately undone when his best knight—Lancelot—fell in love with Queen Guinevere. As depicted in the movie *First Knight*, Lancelot and Guinevere had a hot, steamy, and secret affair after Lancelot rescued Guinevere from the enemy **(slide 13)**.

Awkwardly, Arthur walks in on the two, loses his cool completely, and banished Lancelot forever. In some versions of the story, Lancelot becomes a priest upon finding out that Guinevere has repented and become a nun (Coghlan, 104).

In the movie version, Arthur's castle is then invaded and Camelot **(slide 14)** is destroyed. Most other scholars say that Arthur ultimately died when his son, Mordred, challenged Arthur for control. After many years of fierce battle, Arthur finally killed his treacherous son but was gravely wounded. Knowing that he was going to die, Arthur sailed to a place called Avalon **(slide 15)** (which means "the island of apples") where he fell into a long, death-like sleep (Wilkinson 127). Here his wounds were treated by three mysterious maidens **(slide 16)**. His body was never found and many say that he rests under a hill with all his knights - ready to ride forth and save the country again (Carleon Net). **(slide 17)**

Most interestingly of all is that certain archaeological evidence has been found that actually seems to give evidence for Arthur's existence. Sites and places have been identified as "Arthurian" since the 12th century and traces of a castle resembling Camelot has been found ("King Arthur and the Knights"). The so-called "Arthur stone," was also discovered in 1998 among the ruins at Tintagel Castle in Cornwall and has been dated to the 6th century—when Arthur lived. Epic indeed.

(slide 18) And so we return to the question we began with. Is the myth of King Arthur and his knights real or imagined? Does it matter? What matters is the stories that have been told: stories of sacrifice, journey, love, passion, battle, and of course, just a little bit of epicness.

Play the remainder of the movie trailer.

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