

# Identifying the main idea - 2

Read the report.

## Robin Hood - fact or fiction?

1. For many years, the tales of Robin Hood and his band of merry men have delighted children and adults all over the world. For most people, the stories are enough to bring pleasure and capture the imagination. But there are many who wish to bury themselves in research to determine the truth about the man in green. Did he really exist or is he just the principal character of a popular legend?
2. There are a number of documents, dating from the 12th to the 14th centuries, providing information which suggests that such a man did exist. A 16th century poem titled 'A gest of Robyn Hode' states that Edward II was on the throne at the time of Robin Hood's escapades in Sherwood Forest and that the king had a valet named Robyn Hood who left his service after one year. Could there be a connection? It is also recorded that supporters of the Earl of Lancaster, who was defeated by Edward II in a battle in Nottingham, fled to a forest and lived there as outlaws. Could Robin Hood have been one of these supporters?
3. It has been suggested that the name Robin Hood came from a group that believed in witchcraft and wore hoods, and the name Robin was that of one of the gods they worshipped. Another possibility is that forest bandits used the name Robin, as it was a general term for 'thief' and the name Hood was derived from 'of the wood'.
4. At the time of Robin Hood's supposed existence, most of the population were illiterate and there was very little communication between towns. The travelling bard was often the only source of information about the rest of the country. With his education and oral tradition, the bard passed on news and told stories and poems about people and things that were of interest from other areas of the country.
5. It is possible that if the antics of Robin Hood and his band of merry men were real, they may have been told by bards, but with each telling, parts would have been added or taken away. With such alterations, it would not take long for any facts to be distorted so that if Robin Hood really did exist, the truth about him would be so well buried it would take much research to unveil it. There is certainly no recorded evidence of an outlaw stealing from the rich and giving to the poor, yet for us, this is Robin's most famous act.
6. But does it really matter? Why is the legend of Robin Hood so popular? Is it because he may have been a true historical figure? Or is it just because it's a really good story?



# Identifying the main idea

Try it out



Use the strategies you learnt and practised in *Cane toads in Australia* to find the main idea.

- The main idea links all the other ideas together and tells what the text is about.
- Read the text and ask yourself 'What is the text mainly about?'
- Look at the title too.
- Read all the possible answers carefully before making a decision.

1. What is the main idea of paragraph 4?

- (a) People from different towns didn't talk to one another.
- (b) Newspapers had not yet been invented.
- (c) Most people were illiterate.
- (d) The bard was an important source of information.

The best answer is ☐.

**Think!**

What is the single idea that links each sentence?

2. Paragraphs 2 and 5 indicate that there may be truth in the suggestion that Robin Hood actually did exist. Describe the main idea of each paragraph.

- \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

3. What is the main idea of the report?

- (a) Robin Hood did not steal from the rich and give to the poor.
- (b) Robin Hood did exist but different bards told different versions of his adventures.
- (c) There is no solid evidence that the legendary Robin Hood existed or did not exist.
- (d) Robin Hood was involved in witchcraft.

The best answer is ☐.

4. (a) What is the title? \_\_\_\_\_

(b) A good title often tells the main idea. Do you think this is a good title? ☐ Yes ☐ No

(c) Explain why you think this.

(d) Suggest another suitable title.