



HANDS
ON
HISTORY

MEDIEVAL CAREERS:

PAGES AND SQUIRES

By Sarah Peterson

Medieval Careers: Pages and Squires

Discussion #1: Pages and Squires

Training to be a knight started very young. Technically, any free boy could become a knight, but because it costs so much for training, usually only a boy born into a wealthy family could become a knight. For a boy lucky enough to be born the son of a nobleman, training to be a knight began at a young age. Around the age of six or seven, the young boy was sent to the estate of a wealthy lord or knight to be a **page** and to learn how to ride, fight, hunt and behave. Training included playing strategic games (such as backgammon); learning manners; and participating in physical challenges such as climbing, archery, and swordplay (usually with wooden swords and shields.)



For about seven years a boy was trained as a page. In addition to his training, he also served the lord and lady of the castle, taking care of various duties.

At the age of 14 or 15, a page would become a squire. A **squire** continued to serve a knight, but had more responsibilities. He may be required to carry the knight's armor or sword, or to help the knight dress in his armor. Frequently, the squire would care for the knight's horses and would be responsible for delivering messages. The training became more intense and focused on preparing for battle. Training would include learning to fight with a sword, mace and axe and also learning the rules of jousting.

At the age of 20 or 21, some, but not all, squires became knights.

Medieval Times Job Opening!

We are currently seeking a young person who is interested in serving as a page. Applicants must be serious about training and willing to dedicate their childhood to the instruction required to ultimately become a squire, and then a Knight. Applicant must be willing to attend to and serve his lordship. If you are willing to leave your family, home and everything you know, this job may be for you!

Activity #1: Complete a Job Application

Job application is on page 5. Students can share responses if they are in a classroom or co-op setting.

Activity #2: Train to be a Page

Strategic Games – Students learn the rules to a strategic game such as Checkers, Backgammon, or Page in a Palace. If you do not have enough checkers or backgammon games for all students to play, you may prefer to play Page in a Palace - played like Pig in a Pen- and it only requires pencil and paper. The rules and game are on page 6.

Activity #3: Train to be a Squire

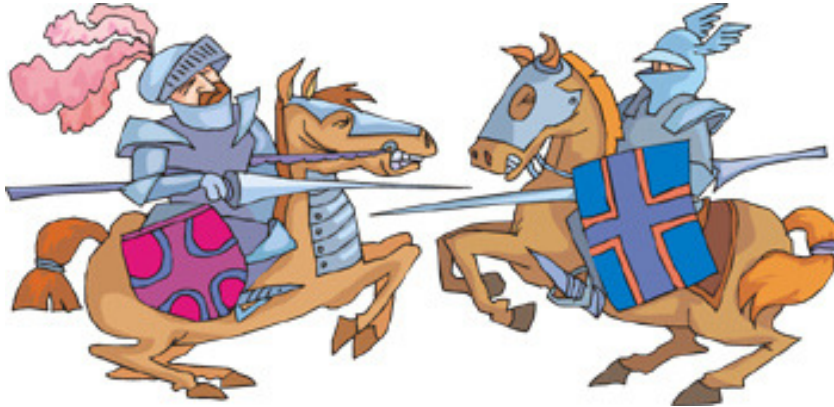


Part of being a good squire was developing memory skills. Students can work on their memory skills by playing a game of "messenger." The rules are the same as for "operator" or "telephone" except that the students spread out around the room, playground or yard so that there is a distance between them. Attached is a list of medieval messages for the squires to deliver (see page 7). This activity can be very fun with a lot of movement by the students.

- 1. Spread the students out around the room or yard (the outer parameter works best so that the squires can move in an orderly fashion).*
- 2. Every student will have a chance to deliver the message every round.*
- 3. The first squire will be the only one that will read the message (all others will receive the message verbally).*
- 4. The first squire delivers the message to another student by whispering it so the other students cannot hear.*
- 5. That student then delivers the message to the next student, and so on, until all students have received the message and delivered the message.*
- 6. The last student announces the message out loud for all the students to hear.*
- 7. Some of the messages are rather long and subject to some misinterpretations and can become rather silly. I always remind the students to be appropriate!*
- 8. Students usually like to hear what the original message was.*

Discussion #2: The Melee and the Joust

During a time of peace, knights would occasionally participate in a Melee. The purpose of the **Melee** was to prepare the knights for battle. A Melee was a type of tournament that was fought on a field with regular weapons and could be as perilous as a real battle. The Melee was usually a team sport but sometimes it was just a free-for-all, with knights charging at one



another in a bloody combat. Over time, the rules of a melee changed in an attempt to reduce the number of casualties.

Jousting was another way for knights to engage in battle

during a time of peace. During the jousting tournament, each knight held a lance – a long, sharp weapon similar to a spear or bayonet. The knights, dressed in armor, would ride toward each other. Sometimes they were on opposite sides of a short wall but not always. The goal was to knock their opponent off of his horse or break their rival's lance. Occasionally, the joust would result in a death, but even that did not reduce the popularity of the event. In preparing for the joust, the knights would occasionally spear rings that were suspended in the trees. Even though jousting began as a way to prepare for battle, it eventually became a popular form of entertainment in its own right.

Squires did not actually participate in melees or jousting, but they did provide support for their knight by having horses and weapons ready. Participating in the tournaments in this capacity was a great learning experience for squires who eventually became knights.

Activity #4: Participate in a Melee

Instead of knocking the opponents off their horses with blunt swords, the student's "melee" will be more like "Capture the Flag." Many students will have played this game but for those who have not, the rules can be found on page 8.

Activity #5: Pages and Squires Worksheet

Complete worksheet entitled "Pages and Squires" found on page 9.



Pages and Squires

Applicant's Name:

Applicant's Age:

Are you a Free Child?

Are you related to any Wealthy Knights?

To whom do you owe your loyalty?

Your Best Friend

Your Teacher

Your Parents

Your King

What will you do if you are trapped in a castle siege?

Hide in the wine cellar

Fight the enemy for as long as I can

Take shelter in the chapel

Pretend to be blind

What do you like to do in your Spare Time?

Eat Cake

Hunt Wild Boar

Juggle

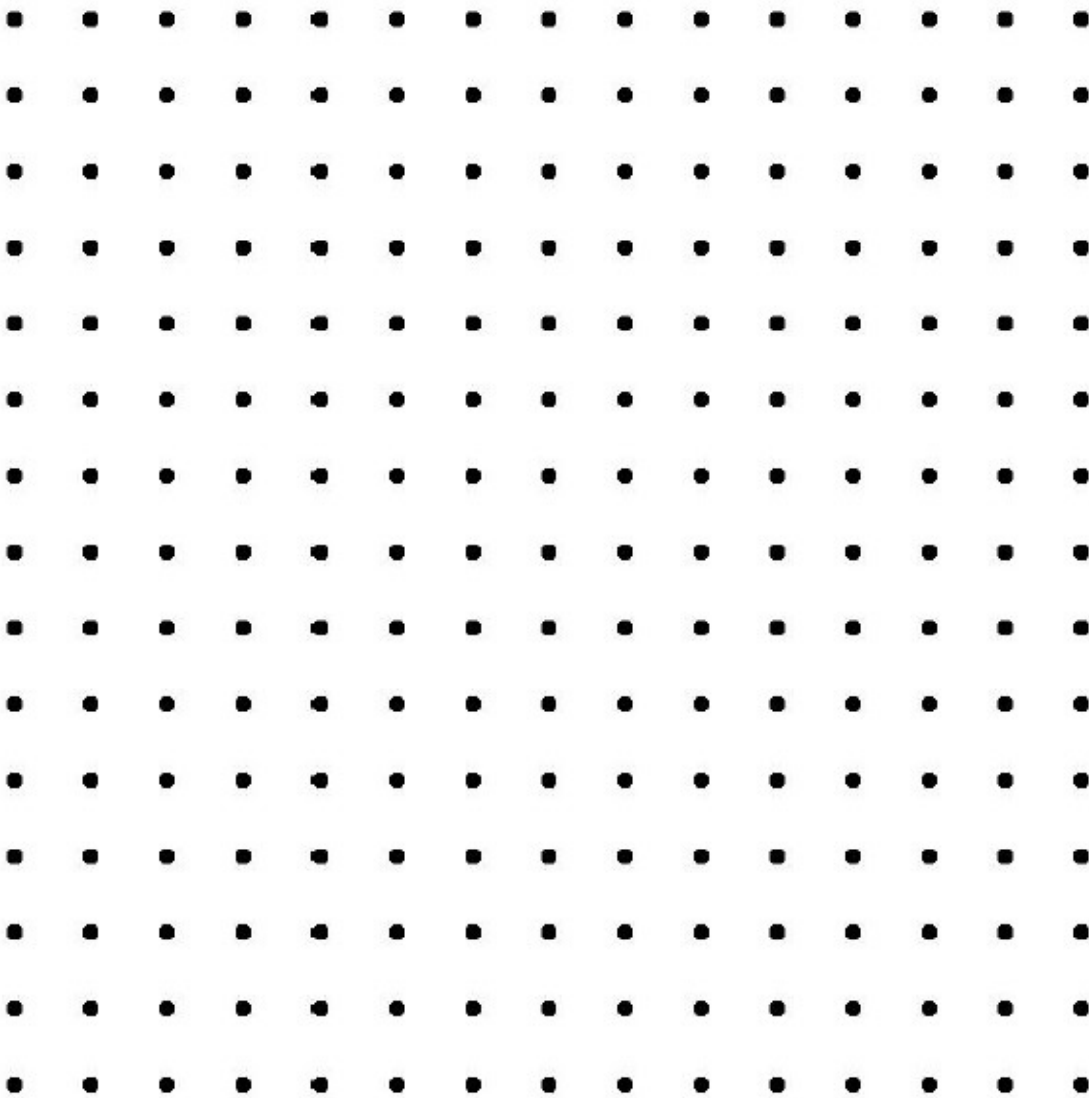
Travel

What are some other plans you currently have for your childhood?

Page in a Palace

Students play in teams of two. Each player takes a turn connecting one dot to an adjacent dot by drawing a line. Diagonal lines are not allowed. If a player's line completes a square, they have "captured the palace" and he or she marks the inside of the box with his/her initial. Then he/she takes another turn. The player can capture as many palaces as possible during his or her turn. If no palace is captured then it is the other player's turn.

When the game is over, each player counts his/her captured palaces. The player with the highest score wins.



Long Messages to Deliver

The King has asked that you bring his favorite horse, Lancaster, around to the moat to meet his trainer, Donahue.

The peasants in the North Valley are revolting against the taxes imposed by King Edward.

Taxes are usually collected by the end of each month, but due to the hail and freezing rain, the roads were turned to mud and the horses couldn't get through.

The Queen's sister, Mary, will be coming to the castle this summer for an extended stay. Please be sure to have her quarters ready by the first day of June!

There will be a jousting tournament in May. We expect that the knights will be trained by the end of April. Training will take place at Chivalry Field.

The Knight has asked all of his pages to assemble at the stable. He wants to announce that the enemy is approaching from the east.

Participate in a Melee

The objective of the game is for team members to sneak across the border and capture the enemy flag AND then get back to their side without being caught.

You will need two flags – one for each team. The game should be played in an area with plenty of running space. The area should have natural or artificial borders. Divide the playing space into two equal sides, with a clear border separating the two.

Divide into two teams of three or more people.

Each side places their flag on the far end of their side of the field. The flag must be visible and accessible. Players can either attack (where they try to capture the flag) or defend (where they try to prevent the other team from capturing their flag).

Countdown to zero and the players begin.

Attacking Players: cross the border to the other team's side and try to capture their flag.

Defending Players: tag opposing players as they cross over to capture your flag.

If a player is tagged, they are thrown in the dungeon (a small designated area on the far end of the playing field).

A player can only leave the dungeon if one of his free teammates tags him while he is in the dungeon. The former prisoner cannot be re-tagged during their escape to their own side.

A team wins by capturing the enemy's flag and crossing back to their side of the border.

Worksheet: Pages and Squires



- 1. How old must a boy be to become a page?**
- 2. Where did a page live while he was being trained?**
 - In the Royal Palace!
 - With the Royal Horses!
 - With a Wealthy Lord or Knight!
 - In the Dungeon!
- 3. What were three of the activities a page must do as part of his training?**
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- 4. At what age could a page become a squire?**
- 5. What was the purpose of a Melee?**
 - To Prepare for Battle
 - To Train a Horse
 - To Harm Their Opponent
 - To Test the Coat of Armor

True	False	All squires became knights.
True	False	Squires competed in jousts and melees.
True	False	Jousts were a great source of entertainment.

Worksheet: Pages and Squires **Teacher's Copy**



1. How old must a boy be to become a page?
A boy must be six or seven years old.
2. Where did a page live while he was being trained?
 - a. In the Royal Palace!
 - b. With the Royal Horses!
 - c. With a Wealthy Lord or Knight!**
 - d. In the Dungeon!
3. What were three of the activities a page must do as part of his training?
 - a. Ride a Horse**
 - b. Fight**
 - c. Hunt**

Strategic Games, Learning Good Manners, Climbing, and Archery are also acceptable (students only need three answers)
4. At what age could a page become a squire?
A page could become a squire at fourteen or fifteen years old.
5. What was the purpose of a Melee?
 - a. To prepare for battle**
 - b. To train a horse
 - c. To harm their opponent
 - d. To test the coat of armor

True **False** All Squires became Knights.

True **False** Squires competed in jousts and Melees.

True False Jousts were a source of entertainment.

Additional Activities: Individual or Classroom

*These activities work individually **OR** in a group/classroom setting

Coloring Page – Page-in-Training

Students complete coloring page found on page 12.

Life As a Knight: An Interactive History Adventure by Rachael Hanel
Ages: 8+ *Yes, this is a book, but it is great to use individually or in a group. Individually, a student can read the chapters independently, choosing the paths to take. In a classroom setting, the instructor reads the text until it is time to make a choice about what direction to take. The class then votes (by show of hands) which path to take. In the event of a tie, the teacher chooses. Allow for extra time for this activity – students frequently want to go back to find out the outcomes of paths not originally taken.*

Try a Musical Instrument

Training for a page frequently included learning to play a musical instrument. In a classroom setting, students can use percussion instruments or even make their own drums. If the students play an instrument, they can perform for the other students. In one class, a student brought her guitar and showed the other students chords, which she was kind enough to let them try!

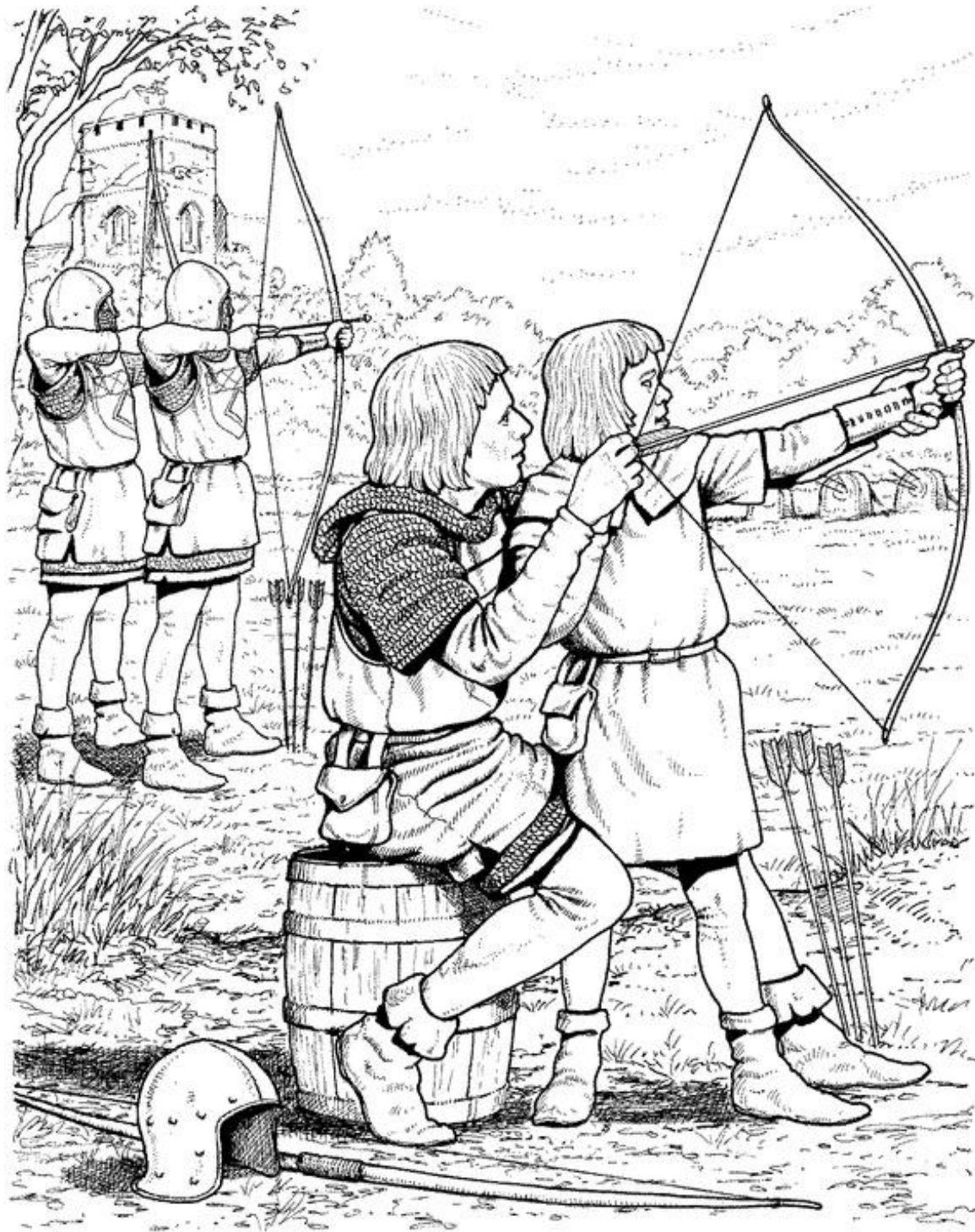
Play Darts

Surprisingly, you can find darts and dartboards for a relatively cheap price. Students can be divided into two or more teams for a competition (scoring can be as simple or complex as you like). Many of the students will have a difficult time even hitting the dartboard – but it is very fun! This doesn't have to be a competition between students, it could also be students improving and trying to get their best score.

Writing Prompt

Students complete the following writing prompt. This is a work of fiction so the students can be creative! If in a classroom situation, the students can share responses.

You are a squire who has served the same knight since you were a seven-year-old page. It is time for your lord to decide whether you should be promoted to knight or stay a squire. How do you convince him?



Page-in-Training: Learning to Shoot Arrows

Additional Classroom Activities

*These activities work best in a group or classroom setting

Play Castle Keep

This game involves a lot of strategy, which is part of a page's and a squire's training. In this clever game of medieval maneuvers, build a castle with walls, towers, and a keep by matching color, shape, or both. Will you use your game tiles to strengthen your fortress or to attack vulnerable opponents? Choose wisely, or you may find yourself in royal ruins! The first player to build a complete castle rules the land. This board game can be found at educational stores or online. 2 to 4 Players. Playing Time: 20 Minutes

Review Game of Bingo

Type the Bingo words into the Bingo Maker (free bingo cards!) <http://print-bingo.com/g.php?gp> Words are on page 14. To make "Bingo" a review game, instead of saying the bingo word, give students the clue that appears on the table. There are only 24 words – with the middle space being free.

PAGE and SQUIRE BINGO

Word on Bingo Card	Clue or Hint to Give to Students
Page	A Young Boy Training to be a Squire
Squire	A Teen Boy Who is Training to be a Knight
Knight	A Soldier of the King
Joust	A Tournament in Which Individuals Fight
Melee	A Tournament in Which Teams Fight
Armor	Protective Covering Worn by Knights
6 or 7 Years Old	The Age a Boy Becomes a Page
14 or 15 Years Old	The Age a Boy Becomes a Squire
Opponent	Another Word for Enemy
Tournament	A Competition Held With an Audience
Strategic Games	These are Used to Teach Strategy
Messenger	A Person Who Delivers Messages
Manners	Behaving Appropriately
Physical Challenges	Part of the Training Requiring Movement and Effort
Lance	A Long Spear-Like Weapon
Archery	Training Involving a Bow and Arrow
Climbing	Training Involving Scaling a Wall or Tree
Swordplay	Training to Learn How to Use a Sword
A Field	The Location of Jousts and Melees
Estate of Wealthy Lord	The Location of Page and Squire Training
Dress the Knight	One of the Duties of a Squire involving Armor
Learning How to Battle	The Most Important Part of a Squire's Training
Hunting	Training Involving Killing Animals for Food or Sport
Caring for Horses	One of the Duties of a Squire

Book Suggestions

Fiction:

The Making of a Knight: How Sir James Earned His Armor by Patrick O'Brien

Ages 6+ James begins his journey at age seven as a page, working his way up to squire and, after proving himself brave in battle, a knight. Through James the reader learns about chivalry, weapons and suiting up for battle. This book is a great Classroom read! 32 pages

The Squire's Tale by Gerald Morris

Ages 10+ Terence is an orphan who becomes a squire for Gawain, one of King Arthur's most famous Knights. This story follows his adventures with Kings, Wars and Damsels in Distress. 224 Pages

The Squire, His Knight, and His Lady by Gerald Morris

Ages 10+ This is a sequel to the book "*The Squire's Tale.*" 240 Pages

Castle Diary: The Journal of Tobias Burgess by Richard Platt

Ages 9+ Eleven-year-old Tobias Burgess is an English Page in the 13th Century. His journal gives us a view of castle life as he waits on patrons, learns to joust and fight with a sword, and even fights an illness. 128 pages

Non-Fiction:

Knight: A Noble Guide for Young Squires by Dugald A Steer

Ages 6-9. This book could be used as a classroom activity; the book contains colorful illustrations, diagrams, pop-ups, pull tabs, and foldouts all with information guiding the young squire. 32 Pages