

HELBLING READERS

C L A S S I C S

CEFR A1/A2



MARK TWAIN

A CONNECTICUT
YANKEE IN
KING ARTHUR'S COURT

Sample Copy

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FREE ONLINE ACTIVITIES



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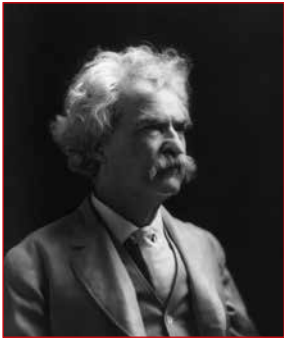
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ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Mark Twain, whose real name was Samuel Langhorne Clemens, was born on November 30th 1835. Not only was he a writer, he was also a publisher, teacher, and businessman. He was born just after the appearance of Halley's comet. When he was older, he said that he would die when the comet returned. Twain lived most of his young life in Hannibal, Missouri, a

town on the Mississippi river. It was when he was living there that he got the idea for two of his most famous novels, *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* and *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*. In 1870, he married Olivia Langdon, and they had three daughters: Susy, Clara and Jean. He wrote *A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court* in 1889. Twain made a lot of money from his writing but he also lost a lot of money in bad investments. He spent \$300,000 (the same as \$6 million today) on the Paige Typesetting Machine which never made a profit. When his daughter Susy died in 1896, Twain suffered from depression. The death of his wife Olivia, and his other daughter, Jean, added greatly to his suffering. He died of a heart attack on April 21st 1910, the day after Halley's comet reappeared. His prediction, made all those years ago, was correct.

GLOSSARY

- **comet:** star with a bright tail
- **depression:** illness which makes people very sad and tired
- **investments:** money used to try and make more money
- **prediction:** guess about the future
- **profit:** money made after selling something
- **publisher:** someone whose job is to print books



King Arthur's Camelot

Some people think that Camelot is a mythical place, the capital of King Arthur's kingdom in stories and movies but not real. Others believe that Camelot was a real place somewhere in Great Britain. The truth is that no one is very sure.



The first Camelot

In a poem by a Frenchman called Chrétien de Troyes from the 1170s, Camelot is written down for the first time and is also said to be near **Caerleon in Wales**.

Welsh folk stories

Born in Cornwall?

In 1136, **Geoffrey of Monmouth** wrote *The History of the Kings of Britain*. He said King Arthur was born at Tintagel Castle in **Cornwall**, but he named **Caerleon in Wales** as his court.

The *Mabinogion* are **folk stories** about King Arthur and his knights. They are taken from early medieval Welsh manuscripts. They don't mention Camelot but do say that King Arthur lived in **Cornwall**. Folk stories were passed on by word of mouth long before they were written down.

The Winchester theory

Thomas Malory wrote that Camelot was in **Winchester, England** in his famous 1485 book *Le Morte D'Arthur*.

The final battle

In 1542 **John Leland**, an early antiquarian, named Cadbury Castle in **Somerset, England** as Camelot. This hill fort is near a town called 'West Camel', which is believed to be the location of Arthur's final battle.



What's in a name?

Some experts believe that King Arthur's name comes from the Roman name Astorius, which means falcon. While others believe it is Celtic in origin - coming from the word Art-rig meaning Bear King. Do you know what your name means?

Over time as more stories were written about Camelot, the legend became increasingly important. Do you believe that Camelot was a real place?

GLOSSARY

- **antiquarian:** someone who collects or studies old and valuable objects
- **falcon:** large bird that hunts small animals
- **hill fort:** fort or castle built on hill, or the remains of one
- **manuscripts:** first handwritten copies of a book
- **theory:** (here) idea explaining historical events
- **word of mouth:** information passed on orally (by voice)

A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court



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Mark Twain



❖ 1 Hank Morgan ❖

1 It was 1889 and I was on a guided tour of Warwick Castle when I first met him. He was a strange man but he was friendly and he talked a lot. He was called Hank Morgan and he knew a lot about English history. He talked about Sir Bedivere, Sir Bors De Ganis, Sir Launcelot of the Lake, Sir Galahad, and all the other Knights of the Round Table as if they were old friends and neighbors. Then he turned to me and asked:

‘Do you know about time travel?’

I said I knew nothing about such things, but he was not listening to me. Just then, our group stopped in front of a suit of armor• and the guide started speaking.

‘This suit of armor is from the sixth century, the time of King Arthur and the Knights of the Round Table. Many people believe the armor belonged to Sir Sagramour le Desirous. Do you see anything strange about it?’ he asked. ‘Look carefully.’

‘There’s a bullet• hole in it!’ someone in our group said. ‘How did it get there?’

The guide smiled. ‘No one knows because guns• are a modern invention•.’

When Morgan heard this, he laughed and whispered. ‘I know. I did it myself.’

Surprised, I turned to ask him what he meant.

But I was too late: he was gone.

GLOSSARY

- **bullet:** small metal object that comes out of a gun
- **guns:** weapons that fire metal bullets
- **invention:** something that is made for the first time
- **suit of armor:** protective clothing made of metal



That night, I went back to my hotel and sat by the fire in my room. Outside, it was raining and a strong wind was blowing. But inside, I was warm and comfortable. I forgot about Morgan and I began reading a book. Page after page I read and when I looked at the time, it was after midnight. I put down my book when there was a sudden knock• at the door and Morgan came in.

I gave him a pipe• and a chair and made him welcome. At first, he sat silently; then he told me his story...

‘I am American,’ he said. ‘I was born in Hartford in the state of Connecticut. I am what they call a “Yankee”. My father was a blacksmith and my uncle a horse doctor but I worked in a weapons factory•. I learned to make guns, revolvers•, cannons•, all kinds of machines. I am good at inventing things, so I quickly became the manager at my work.

‘I was an important man. I had a thousand men working for me. But I had to argue a lot. And I usually won. Then one day, I met my match•. I was arguing with a man at work. He was big and strong, and the other men called him “Hercules”. We started to fight, and he hit me on the head with a metal bar. I heard my head crack. The world went black and I didn’t know anything at all... at least for a while.

GLOSSARY

- **cannons:** very large guns on wheels
- **factory:** building where large amounts of things are made
- **knock:** sound made when one hits something
- **met my match:** met someone as good as, or better than me
- **pipe:** 
- **revolvers:** 

‘When I woke up, I was sitting under an old oak tree, on the grass. I was in the middle of the countryside and I was not alone. There was a man on a horse, looking down at me. He was wearing a suit of armor with a helmet and he had a sword and shield. He spoke to me through his helmet and I didn’t understand him. He looked so strange that I started laughing.


‘This made the man very angry and he ran at me with his sword. But I was too quick and I climbed the tree and got out of his way. But now there was nowhere to run, and we came to an agreement. He wanted to take me prisoner. I agreed to go with him, and he agreed not to harm me. So we set off together. He was riding and I was walking by his horse. We walked for about an hour. In the distance I saw a town beside a river and behind the town, up on a hill, sat a big, grey castle.

“Bridgeport. Connecticut?” I asked.

“No,” he replied, his face deadly serious. “Camelot”.’

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CAMELOT

What do you know about Camelot?
 Share ideas with a friend.

- **agreement:** promise or decision (between people)
- **deadly serious:** very serious
- **harm:** hurt
- **helmet:** hard covering worn to protect one’s head

- **oak:** large tree
- **shield:**
- **sword:**





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AFTER READING COMPREHENSION

1 Are the following sentences true (T) or false (F)? Tick (✓).

- | | T | F |
|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| a Hank Morgan's story begins with a tour of Leeds Castle. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| b Hank Morgan didn't know much about English history. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| c King Arthur lived in the 6th century. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| d Hank Morgan said he put the bullet hole in the suit of armor. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| e Hank Morgan's father was a horse doctor. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| f Hank Morgan hit a man called Hercules on the head. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| g Clarence told Hank Morgan it was the year 528. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| h The solar eclipse began at a little after noon on the 21st of June. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| i Sir Kay told King Arthur lies about how he fought Hank Morgan. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| j Hank Morgan met Clarence for the first time on the 19th of June. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| k Merlin decided to destroy Hank Morgan's stone tower. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| l Hank Morgan did not like Merlin. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| m Fifty-five girls and boys helped Sir Boss fight the Church's army. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| n Merlin made Sir Boss sleep for thirty centuries | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

2 Correct the false sentences in Exercise 1.



3 Match the following sentence halves to make sentences.

- a When Hank Morgan woke up
- b The knight became angry
- c Hank Morgan walked with the knight
- d The guards came to get Hank Morgan
- e The solar eclipse began
- f Hank Morgan climbed up

- 1 a tree to escape from the knight.
- 2 because Hank Morgan laughed at him.
- 3 he was sitting under an old oak tree.
- 4 from his cell in the dungeon.
- 5 after a guard tied Hank Morgan to a stake.
- 6 towards the city of Camelot.

4 Match a sentence from Exercise 3 with each of these pictures.



5  **Discuss these questions with a partner.**

- a Why did Hank Morgan go to Warwick Castle?
- b Was Hank Morgan clever? Give reasons.
- c Why did Sir Boss dislike Merlin?
- d Was King Arthur clever? Give reasons.
- e Why were the people of King Arthur's Britain scared of the solar eclipse?

K A2 Key English Test Reading and Writing Part 6

1 Imagine you are Sir Boss waiting in Merlin's Cave for the battle to start. Write a letter to Sandy.

Say:

- Where you are
- What you are doing
- What you are thinking or feeling

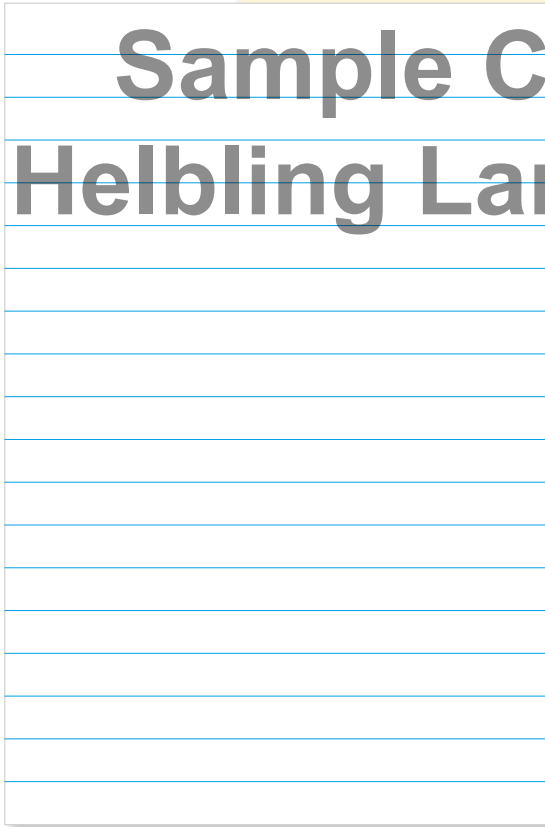
Write 25 words or more.

Sample Copy

sandy

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K A2 Key English Test Reading and Writing Part 4

2 Read the text about King Arthur's place in literature and choose the best word (A, B, or C) for each space.

King Arthur (1) became famous in the early part of the 12th century when a writer called Geoffrey of Monmouth wrote about (2) The book's name was *The History of the Kings of Britain*. Some people in the 12th century thought that a lot of *The History of the Kings of Britain* was false and (3) it. But others loved it, and it became famous across Europe. In Geoffrey's story about King Arthur, you can find Merlin, Excalibur (Arthur's sword), Queen Guinevere, and the death of Arthur by Mordred. Later writers, such as Chrétien de Troyes, added Launcelot and the Holy Grail.

(4) book about Arthur was *Le Mort de Arthur* by Sir Thomas Malory. It first appeared in 1634. When it was reprinted in 1816, it made King Arthur popular again. Sir Thomas Malory's story (5) a lot of writers, musicians, and painters. One of them was Mark Twain. He wrote *A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court* at the end of the 19th century.

In the 20th century, interest in Arthur (6) Howard Pyle, an American writer, wrote *The Story of King Arthur and His Knights*, in 1903. His book helped to make King Arthur popular with children.

- | | | | |
|---|-------------|----------------|-------------|
| 1 | A first | B when | C next |
| 2 | A her | B him | C them |
| 3 | A liked | B did not like | C did like |
| 4 | A The last | B Another | C The first |
| 5 | A upset | B encouraged | C invited |
| 6 | A continued | B disappeared | C stopped |

A CONNECTICUT YANKEE
IN KING ARTHUR'S COURT
ISBN 978-3-99045-936-2

MARK TWAIN

A CONNECTICUT YANKEE IN KING ARTHUR'S COURT

Adapted by Scott Lauder & Walter McGregor

**“Bridgeport. Connecticut?” I asked.
‘No,’ he replied, his face deadly serious. ‘Camelot.’”**

Hank Morgan is hit on the head in America, in the late nineteenth century. When he wakes up, he is in sixth century England, during the time of King Arthur and the Knights of the Round Table. Hank Morgan uses his knowledge of the future to escape from a series of misadventures. But can he help the people of Britain to improve their lives? And does he return to his own time?



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	5	B1	B1 Preliminary	5, 6

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