

Historical Roots of Folklore and Legends

Folklore & Legends · Answer Key · 15 Questions

1. The legendary King Arthur, often associated with Camelot and the Knights of the Round Table, is most credibly linked by historical scholarship to which period and context?

- A) The Norman Conquest of 1066, as a precursor to English chivalry.
- B) The late 5th and early 6th centuries, as a Romano-British warlord defending against Anglo-Saxon invasions.**
- C) The Viking Age (8th-11th centuries), as a Danish leader resisting invasion.
- D) The Elizabethan era (16th century), as a patriotic symbol during naval expansion.

2. The epic poem 'The Iliad', while rich in mythological elements, is understood by many historians to be inspired by verifiable historical events. Which Bronze Age conflict is most strongly theorized as the basis for the Trojan War?

- A) The Battle of Kadesh between the Egyptians and Hittites.
- B) The destruction of Mycenae by the Sea Peoples.
- C) The Greek Mycenaean siege and sack of Troy (Ilion).**
- D) The Persian invasion of Greece led by Xerxes.

3. The legend of the Pied Piper of Hamelin, a story of a rat-catcher who lured away children, has been theorized by historians to be a metaphorical representation or memory of what kind of event?

- A) A widespread plague that decimated the town's children.
- B) A large-scale emigration of young people seeking new opportunities.**
- C) A military conscription drive for a distant war.
- D) A severe famine that forced families to abandon their young.

4. The mythical figure of Joan of Arc, revered as a national heroine of France, is historically confirmed to have played a pivotal role in which major conflict and during which century?

- A) The French Wars of Religion (16th century).
- B) The Hundred Years' War (15th century).**
- C) The Napoleonic Wars (early 19th century).
- D) The Franco-Prussian War (19th century).

5. The ancient Greek myth of the Minotaur and the Labyrinth is strongly connected to archaeological findings on Crete. What Bronze Age civilization's palace complex at Knossos is believed to have inspired the legend?

A) The Minoan civilization.

B) The Mycenaean civilization.

C) The Cycladic civilization.

D) The Dorian civilization.

6. The legend of El Dorado, the city of gold sought by Spanish conquistadors, is believed to have originated from what specific historical practice?

A) The systematic gold mining operations of the Inca Empire.

B) The ritualistic gold offerings of the Muisca people.

C) The extensive trade routes of the Aztec civilization.

D) The mythical treasures buried by the Maya civilization.

7. The historical figure of William Tell, the Swiss archer who famously shot an apple off his son's head, is now largely considered by historians to be:

A) A documented historical figure with irrefutable evidence of his deeds.

B) A symbolic representation of Swiss resistance against Austrian rule, with questionable historical accuracy.

C) A fictional character created by early Swiss chroniclers to boost national pride.

D) A distorted account of a much later military leader in Swiss history.

8. The legend of Atlantis, the advanced civilization submerged by the sea, is primarily attributed to the writings of which ancient Greek philosopher?

A) Aristotle.

B) Socrates.

C) Plato.

D) Herodotus.

9. The historical accounts of Vlad the Impaler, the 15th-century Wallachian ruler, are widely believed to be the primary inspiration for which famous fictional vampire?

A) Renfield.

B) Dracula.

C) Nosferatu.

D) Carmilla.

10. The tales of Robin Hood, the outlaw archer who robbed from the rich to give to the poor, are generally thought by historians to be a composite or idealized representation of figures from what historical period in England?

- A) The Roman occupation (1st-4th centuries AD).
- B) The Tudor era (15th-17th centuries).
- C) The medieval period, particularly the 12th and 13th centuries.**
- D) The Victorian era (19th century).

11. The legend of the Seven Sleepers of Ephesus, a group of youths who fell into a deep sleep for centuries, has been linked by scholars to early Christian traditions and the historical context of which period?

- A) The Roman persecution of Christians under Nero.
- B) The Council of Nicaea.
- C) The reign of Emperor Diocletian and his persecutions.**
- D) The conversion of Emperor Constantine.

12. The historical basis for the legend of Romulus and Remus, founders of Rome, is most closely associated with which period of early Roman history?

- A) The Roman Republic (509-27 BC).
- B) The Roman Empire (27 BC-476 AD).
- C) The Regal Period (753-509 BC).**
- D) The Late Antiquity period (3rd-6th centuries AD).

13. The historical figure of Emperor Frederick I Barbarossa, Holy Roman Emperor, is associated with a legend of sleeping within a mountain until needed by Germany. This legend is often linked to which historical event or period of perceived crisis?

- A) The Black Death pandemic.
- B) The Protestant Reformation.
- C) The unification of Germany in the 19th century.**
- D) The Crusades and the Holy Roman Empire's ambitions.

14. The myth of Perseus and Medusa is understood by many classicists to be a symbolic representation of which historical development in ancient Greece?

- A) The unification of the Greek city-states against a common enemy.
- B) The gradual displacement of chthonic (earth-goddess) cults by Olympian deities.**
- C) The rise of Athenian democracy.
- D) The naval dominance of Sparta.

15. The historical accounts of the Battle of Thermopylae, though featuring heroic legends, are primarily documented by which ancient Greek historian?

A) Thucydides.

B) Herodotus.

C) Xenophon.

D) Polybius.