



**MUSEUM OF
RUSSIAN ICONS**

Interpreting Icons through Visual Language

Grade 12

by Purvi Patwari

About the Museum

The Museum of Russian Icons was founded in 2006 as a non-profit educational institution by Massachusetts industrialist Gordon B. Lankton. The collection includes more than 500 Russian icons, the largest collection of its kind in North America, and one of the largest private collections outside Russia. The collection spans six centuries, and includes important historical paintings dating from the earliest periods of icon painting to the present.

The Museum is a fascinating place for teachers and students to explore. It offers discussion-based tours that engage students of all ages. The study of icons and Russian culture yields rich connections to a wide variety of curriculum areas, including history and social studies, art and art history, and English Language Arts. We can customize your classroom visit to meet your instructional goals and curriculum needs.

About This Lesson

This lesson is one of a series developed by graduate students in Tufts University's Museum Studies program as assignments for the course Curriculum Development for K-12/Museum Collaborations. Special thanks to students who created them. These lessons are works in progress intended to show educators the scope of educational opportunities that the Museum can create for students.

Some lessons are designed to take place at the Museum, while others were created for teachers to use in the classroom. They can be printed out and used as is, or they can serve as a starting point for other lessons. The Museum looks forward to working with educators to tailor the experience for their students.

If you have written or developed a lesson plan about icons, the Byzantine Empire, Russian history or culture, or any other relevant subject and you'd like us to post it on this website as a community resource, please send it to the email address below and we will be in touch to follow up.

If you have questions or feedback about these lessons, or if you'd like to make arrangements for your students to visit the Museum, please contact Tara Young at tyoung@museumofrussianicons.org or call (978) 598-5000 x 13.

Content	Page
I. Pre-Visit Lesson Interpreting Text of a Historical Character	2
II. In-Gallery Lesson Interpreting Icons through Visual Language	6
III. Post-Visit Lesson Creative Fiction: Writing a Legend	11



I. Pre-Visit Lesson

Interpreting Text of a Historical Character

Age Group: Grade 12

Time Required: 50 minutes

Subject: English Language Arts

Lesson Overview

Students will practice strategies of using aural and visual clues to interpret text and develop underlying themes of the narrative. The themes developed should explore struggles or conflicts of the time period as well as those that continue throughout history. This exercise will relate directly to the future in-gallery Museum visit, which will ask students to interpret the historical context of saint icons, all of who struggled for one or more issues.

Learning Objectives

- Use aural and visual clues to interpret text and images
- Use historical knowledge to identify human struggles throughout history

Skills Used by Students

- Analysis and interpretation of text
- Determine themes within narrative

Materials and Preparation

- Projector to show image of Robin Hood
- Image of Robin Hood (from Wikipedia or other online search)
- Copy of Chapter 1 from the Merry Adventures of Robin Hood to show highlighted passages (download a free ebook copy at <http://www.gutenberg.org>)
- Robin Hood, Key Words and Themes Worksheet (Appendix 1, page 15)
- Homework assignment (Appendix 2, page 16)

Educational Instruction

For this lesson, students will analyze a story to find underlying themes and struggles that appear in the narrative as well as throughout history. The lesson opens with students trying to guess the main character by listening to a poem and then viewing a picture of the person. This exercise practices using aural and visual clues to interpret text – the methods that will be employed at the Museum of Russian Icons. After revealing the character, Robin Hood, the lesson continues with an analysis of excerpts from *The Merry Adventures of Robin Hood*, to uncover characteristics of Robin Hood and the social system of the time period.

Steps for the Educator

Introduction

Inform students they will be listening to and reading narratives for clues about the historical context of the culture that the story originated.

Today, we are first going to listen to a poem to find out if the words trigger clues as to whom it is referring. We will then look at a picture of this character. Once we determine who the character is, we will analyze a story about this person. Our goal is to determine what the underlying themes of the story are. This exercise will be a precursor to the in-gallery lesson at the Museum of Russian Icons on [DATE]. There we will think about historical context of Icons.

1. Read to students the excerpt from the poem, *Sherwood*, by Alfred Noyes (below) **(10 Minutes)**

Ask student to listen to the passage and think of whom this poem is about. Tell students not to reveal or call out the name of the character. (**NOTE: Instructor should not reveal Robin Hood's identity at the beginning of the lesson.)

Class I am going to read you a poem. I want you to think about who is the main character of the poem. Listen to the description. What historical character does the poem refer to? What clues are given? Can you picture this person?

Where the deer are gliding down the shadowy glen
All across the glades of fern he calls his merry men—
Doublets of the Lincoln green glancing through the May
In Sherwood, in Sherwood, about the break of day—
Calls them and they answer: from aisles of oak and ash
Rings the Follow! Follow! and the boughs begin to crash,
The ferns begin to flutter and the flowers begin to fly,
And through the crimson dawning the robber band goes by.

Without calling out the answer, raise your hands if you know who is described in this poem? Its okay if you do not

Show the class the image of Robin Hood. Now, here is a picture of the subject of the story. Raise your hands if you know who this is.

Select a student to reveal the identity of the character pictured. Ask the class:

What were the clues from the poem that revealed the character's identity?

Clues: merry men, Lincoln green, Sherwood, robber band

The exercise we just went through practices the use of aural (hearing a passage) and visual (seeing an image) clues to identify a historical character.

Typically if you hear about a person or see a person depicted the same way over and over, you associate a certain story with this person. The same words and images create the identity of a person. The text and imagery can also place this person in a historical context – when did the person live, what was happening at the time to make this person significant and remembered so many years later.

Hand out copies of Chapter 1: How Robin Hood Came to Be an Outlaw (available for free use at <http://www.literaturepage.com/read/robinhood-3.html>) and Robin Hood, Key words and Themes (Appendix 1, page 15.)

Instruct class to read Chapter 1 of Howard Pyle's, *The Merry Adventures of Robin Hood* (**10 minutes**)

Students should find key words and phrases describing WHEN, WHERE and HOW Robin Hood lived, WHO he was and the social system of the time (how people lived, values and beliefs). See page 4 for examples.

2. Instructor should read excerpts of the text aloud, directed by students' answers to the worksheet. (Do not read the entire text aloud.) (**15 minutes**)

Let's go through your thoughts and answers to each question. Write down other answers that you did not originally write on your worksheet.

Students should find key words and phrases describing WHEN, WHERE and HOW Robin Hood lived, WHO he was and the social system of the time (how people lived, values, and beliefs).

3. Based on the key words and phrases we have written down, lets analyze these to come up with some themes or values that are in conflict with each other. For example, Rich verse Poor. (**5 minutes**)

Instructor to solicit ideas from students. NOTE TO INSTRUCTOR: Be sure to write down other ideas contributed by students to add to the Themes worksheet Appendix 7, page 21 for the post-visit lesson.

Some themes to look for:

- Nobility vs. Layperson
- Friend vs. Enemy

- Old vs. Young
- Government vs. Constituents
- Power vs. Powerless
- Freedom vs. Oppression
- Private Lands vs. Public Lands

ROBIN HOOD		
WHEN he lived: England Time of Old During the rule of King Henry II	WHERE he lived: England In the forest, away from town Sherwood Forest Nottingham town	HOW he lived: Lived off the land Hunted for food Lived apart from other townspeople Drank ale
WHO he was: Outlaw Believed in justice Jolly /merry Competitive Religious/Christian	OTHER characteristics Gambling /"wager" Land important Differentiate between boyhood & manhood Clad in Lincoln Green/uniform Competitions/Games Emotional/Anger Rewards Law/Justice Woman & Children revered / subject of harm/powerless Oppression Money, Status/Title, Power Mix of religious and pagan values	

4. Ask students if these themes or struggles still exist in our world today. Solicit feedback from students. **(7 minutes)**

Do any of the themes or struggles we just spoke about still exist today? What are some examples?

Ask students to write down ideas discussed on the worksheet under the heading 'universal themes'.

Introduce the field trip to the Museum of Russian Icons and activity.

At the Museum, we will be looking at icons. An icon is defined as: a religious picture or image usually painted on wooden panels. A representation or picture of a sacred or sanctified Christian person. An important symbol. (definition from Museum of Russian Icons website). Icons are considered sacred objects in the Russian Orthodox Church and are used in prayer or veneration. Explain that while there are similarities to legends like Robin Hood and saints and their lives, the types of images and stories have significantly different functions.

We will be looking at icons of saints who represented or struggled for something. Our goal is to deduce from visual and aural clues what was happening historically to give meaning to the saint's representation.

5. Give out homework assignment. Appendix 2, page 16.

*For homework, completely read Chapter 1, How Robin Hood Became an Outlaw. Answer the questions on the homework sheet using well-developed paragraphs, a clear focus, and logical argumentation. **(3 minutes)***

Student Assessment

See Appendix 3 page 17.

- Class Participation
- Homework Assignment

Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks

GRADE 12

English Language Arts/Reading and Literature

8.33 Understanding a Text

For imaginative/literary texts: Analyze patterns of imagery or symbolism and connect them to themes and/or tone and mood.

9.7 Making Connections: Relate a literary work to the seminal ideas of its time.

11.6 Theme: Apply knowledge of the concept that a text can contain more than one theme.

11.7 Theme

Analyze and compare texts that express a universal theme, and locate support in the text for the identified theme.

English Language Arts/Composition

19.28 Writing

For imaginative/literary writing: Write well-organized stories or scripts with an explicit or implicit theme, using a variety of literary techniques.

19.30 Writing

For informational/expository writing: Write coherent compositions with a clear focus, objective presentation of alternate views, rich detail, well-developed paragraphs, and logical argumentation.

Vocabulary

Aural	Of, relating to, or perceived by the ear.
Icon	A religious picture or image usually painted on wooden panels. A representation or picture of a sacred or sanctified Christian person traditionally used and venerated in the Eastern Church. An important symbol.
Identity	The collective aspect of the characteristics by which a thing is distinctly recognizable or known; the set of behavioral or personal characteristics by which an individual is recognizable as a member of a group.
Saint	One who is declared worthy of special honor by the church.

Further Information for Teacher

1. Wikipedia entry for Robin Hood, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Robin_Hood
2. Wikipedia entry for King Henry II Rule (1154 – 1189), http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Henry_II_of_England

References and Resources

1. Project Gutenberg's *The Merry Adventures of Robin Hood*, by Howard Pyle
Title: *The Merry Adventures of Robin Hood*
Author: Howard Pyle
Release Date: February 5, 2006 [EBook #964]
Language: English
2. Feldges, Benedikt. *American Icons, The Genesis of a National Visual Language*. Routledge, New York, 2008.
3. Pyle, Howard. *The Merry Adventures of Robin Hood*. Charles Scribner's Sons, New York, 1964.
4. Yolen, Jane. *Sherwood, Original Stories from the World of Robin Hood*. Philomel Books, New York, 2000.



II. In-Gallery Lesson

Interpreting Icons through Visual Language

Age Group: Grade 12

Length of Lesson: 50 minutes

Subjects: English Language Arts, History and Social Science

Lesson Overview

Students will view icons from a historical perspective and speculate on the culture and customs of the time the icons were made. Students will then apply this exercise to notable contemporary figures in world history. Students will connect their historical knowledge of these people and the time they lived to their impact on our current culture.

Learning Objectives

By the end of the lesson, students will be able to:

- Understand the concept of Visual Language
- Use aural and visual clues to interpret the culture and customs of the time.
- Use historical knowledge and key words to identify and represent notable people in history.

Skills Used by Students

- Analysis and interpretation of text
- Connect aural text and visual imagery to historical contexts

Materials and Preparation

- Clipboard for each student
- Pencil for each student
- Key Words for Saints worksheet (Appendix 4, page 18)
- Notable Historical Figures worksheet (Appendix 5, page 19)

Educational Instruction

For this gallery lesson, students will view the icons with a historical lens. Although the icons are still revered by followers of the Orthodox faith, the purpose of the exercise is to interpret the meaning of the icons removing the religious context and think about how the meaning affected the daily lives and thoughts of the people in history. Students should understand that the icons are representations of “real” people. Orthodox believers are charged with emulating the actions and deeds of the people depicted in icons. The icons used for this lesson are people who were martyred and became Saints of the Orthodox Christian faith.

The icons have a visual language. Visual language is a system of communication using visual elements. The icon communicates specific information to followers of the Orthodox faith, using a system of images; however other information can be interpreted. By looking at and hearing about what the icon represents, one can gain an understanding of history, culture and beliefs of the time.

After looking at the images of the saints and listening to a brief story about each saint, students will interpret the passages and determine key words to describe the saints, as well as contextualize the socio-cultural aspects of the story. After this exercise, students will use their world history knowledge to apply key words and historical context to notable international figures that have influenced our culture, as we know it today. The educator should be familiar with the background of the notable figures selected for use with this lesson. In addition, the educator should know where the following Saint icons are located: Saint Paraskeva, Saint Nicholas, Saints Florus and Laurus, and Saint George.

Steps for the Educator

Begin with an introduction to the Museum of Russian Icons. Inform students they will be interpreting the visual language of four icons in the Museum. During this time ask if anyone can define visual language.

The images to be viewed are icons. Define what an icon is and how icons permeate daily life. Inform students that icons are not only found in churches but were also found in people's homes, whether one was rich or poor, a clergyman or layperson. Each icon has a meaning; a specific icon was present during rites of passage (baby's birth, adult son or daughter leaving home, marriage, death) as well as used for protection on journeys or when going into battle. (Tradigo, p.33)

Icons typically did not bear the image's name or title. Each icon communicated a meaning or a story through pictures. Each had a visual language, or a system of symbols with specific meanings, which was interpreted by the viewer of the icon.

Steps 1 through 6 will take **25 minutes**

Inform students they will be looking at four specific icons, all representing different themes of the first and second century. Discuss the idea of visual language and the communication of an idea through art. A passage will be read to them about the icon. Instruct students to listen for key words describing the theme or role of the icon. Look for the way that specific information is systematically conveyed through the use of particular objects, symbols, colors, or other recognizable attributes within the icon. Students should reflect on the following questions:

- What idea does the icon communicate to you?
- What issue did this person represent or struggle for?
- What was happening historically at the time of this person's martyrdom/Sainthood?

Students will complete the Key word Worksheet as the passages are read aloud. Distribute Key words for Saints Worksheet (Appendix 4, page 18).

1. Lead group to the icon of Saint Paraskeva at the base of the stairs. Remind students to look for the visual language and reflect on the above questions. This image will be the first of four images that we will be looked at for clues. Instruct students to write key words on the worksheet. Read the following text to students:

Saint Paraskeva, female, is known as the Patron of the Marketplace and Commerce. Her name comes from the Greek word, Friday, traditionally the day that people would visit the market. (MoRI audio tour)

2. Lead group to Saint Nicholas on the upper level. Read the following text to students: (Instruct students to write key words on the worksheet.)

Saint Nicholas, male, is known as the Protector of the Weak and Poor. Tradition and legend say that St. Nicholas saved people who were unjustly condemned to death, rescued sailors in distress, brought children back to life and healed the sick. (Baggley, p118) He is depicted holding either a sword or a bible in one hand and a building in the other; always has a short gray beard, and a high forehead which represents wisdom.

3. Lead group to Saints Florus and Laurus. Read the following text to students: (Instruct students to write key words on the worksheet.)

Saints Florus and Laurus were brothers and made their living as stonemasons. One day their horses were lost. The two brothers appealed to the Archangel Michael to help them recover the runaway horses. Michael helped them recover the horses and the two decided to dedicate their lives to horses. In turn they become the patron saints of horses in Russia. (Shilov, web)

4. Lead group to Saint George. Read the following text to students: (Instruct students to write key words on the worksheet.)

Saint George is the Patron Saint of Moscow the capital of Russia and known as the Victory Bearer. He is a heroic knight in the Golden Legend, which tells the story of him killing the dragon that terrorized villagers, thus freeing the city and saving the king's daughter. The story depicts grace and beauty triumphing over evil. (Tradigo, p.276)

5. Gather students in a group to review the key words written for each image. *What key words did you write down for each Saint? Using these key words, what can we interpret about the people's beliefs and daily lives?*

6. Instruct students to complete the second column on the worksheet, Interpretation of Historical Context. **(10 minutes)** Remind students to reflect on the following questions when listening to the text read aloud:

- What idea does the icon communicate to you?
- What issue did this person represent or struggle for?
- What was happening historically at the time of this person's martyrdom/Sainthood?

Ask students for some examples of their interpretations and ideas, specifically historical context. *What did you think was happening at this time in history? What was daily life like? How did people think?*

Look for the following associations and connections: (if students are having difficulty getting started, use one of the Saint examples below to help generate ideas)

Saint	Key Words	Interpretation of Historical Context
Saint Paraskeva	Shopping, marketplace, commerce Friday	Markets not open every day of the week. Food and supplies not easily accessible; scarce.
Saint Nicholas	Protector of the weak and poor; children; sailors; healer; just.	Poor were not taken care of; "medicine" not available; lives of men going to sea overlooked; people were accused of wrongdoing without finding truth to guilt.
Saints Florus and Laurus	Horses	Importance of horses for livelihood, transportation; importance of livestock in agrarian time.
Saint George	Heroism; good triumphing over evil.	Fear of wildlife; fear of the unknown; helplessness.

Steps 8 through 10 will take **15 minutes**

Conduct an Internet search to locate images of the following notable figures in World History, and compile a reference sheet with the images:

- Albert Einstein
- Amelia Earhart
- Mahatma Gandhi
- Nelson Mandela
- Rosa Parks
- Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.
- Winston Churchill
- Bill Gates

7. Instruct students to select four figures whom they know about or who appeal to them. Using the worksheet titled *Notable Historical Figures* (Appendix 5, page 19), students are to write key words they would use to describe the person based on their own historical knowledge. Inform students to use historical facts they can recall or impressions of the person's deeds.
8. Instruct students to complete the column marked *Historical Context* by reflecting on the following questions:
 - What information about this person should be carried forward in history?
 - How should future generations identify this person in a historical context?
 - What objects symbolize each person?

During the last few minutes, have students share the person they selected, the key words associated with the people and their interpretation of each person's historical context. Finally, review with some examples of visual interpretation of historical context. Have students provide other examples of this to solidify their knowledge of the term.

Student Assessment

See Appendix 6, page 20

- Class participation
- Student completion of 2 worksheets

Extensions

- Select one of the four people from the Notable Historical Figures worksheet. Write a legend about this person using historical facts.
- Illustrate your legend referring to key words and historical context so this person can be identified in the future.

Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks

English Language Arts/Reading and Literature

8.33 Understanding a Text:

For imaginative/literary texts: Analyze patterns of imagery or symbolism and connect them to themes and/or tone and mood.

Arts/Arts Disciplines: Visual Arts

5.11 Critical Response

Analyze a body of work, or the work of one artist, explaining its meaning and impact on society, symbolism, and visual metaphor.

History and Social Science/Concepts and Skills

8-12.CS.7 Concepts and Skills, Grades 8-12

Show connections, casual and otherwise, between particular historical events and ideas and larger social, economic, and political trends and developments.

History and Social Science/World History

WHII.12 World History II Learning Standards: Asian, African, and Latin American History in the 19th and Early 20th Centuries

*Identify major developments in Indian history in the 19th and early 20th century. (H,E)
C. the rise of Indian nationalism and the influence and ideas of Gandhi*

WHII.25 Identify the goals, leadership, and post-war plans of the allied leaders. (H)

A. Winston Churchill

WHII.37 Describe how the work of scientists in the 20th century influenced historical events, changed the lives of the general populace, and led to further scientific research. (H)

A. Albert Einstein and the Theory of Relativity

WHII.44 Explain the reasons for the fall of apartheid in South Africa, including the influence and ideas of Nelson Mandela. (H)

WHII.46 Explain how the computer revolution contributed to economic growth and advances in science, medicine, and communication. (H, E)

History and Social Science/American Government

USG.2.10 Foundations of Government in the United States

Analyze and explain ideas about liberty, equality, and justice in American society using documents such as in Reverend Martin Luther King's "I Have A Dream" speech and Letter from Birmingham City Jail (1963), and compare King's ideas to those in such founding-era documents as the Virginia Declaration of Rights (1776), the Declaration of Independence (1776), Massachusetts Declaration of Rights (1780), and the Federalist Papers (1788)

Vocabulary

Icon	An image; a representation; A representation or picture of a sacred or sanctified Christian personage, traditionally used and venerated in the Eastern Church. (http://www.thefreedictionary.com/icon)
Saint	A person who after death is formally recognized by a Christian Church, as having attained, through holy deeds or behavior, a specially exalted place in heaven and the right to veneration; A person officially recognized, especially by canonization, as being entitled to public veneration and capable of interceding for people on earth. (http://www.thefreedictionary.com/saint)

Martyrdom	Death that is imposed because of the person's adherence of a religious faith or cause (http://www.thefreedictionary.com/martyrdom)
Visual Language	<p>An image which communicates an idea presupposes the use of a visual language. Just as people can 'verbalize' their thinking, they can 'visualize' it. A diagram, a map, and a painting are all examples of uses of visual language. Its structural units include line, shape, color, form, motion, texture, pattern, direction, orientation, scale, angle, space and proportion.</p> <p>The elements in an image represent concepts in a spatial context, rather than the linear form used for words. Speech and visual communication are parallel and often interdependent means by which humans exchange information. (http://encyclopedia.thefreedictionary.com/Visual+language)</p>

Further Information for Teacher

1. Museum of Russian Icons Audio Guide
2. Wikipedia (<http://www.wikipedia.org/>)

References and Resources

1. Baggley, John. *Doors of Perception – icons and their spiritual significance*. Oxford, England: A.R. Mowbray & Co, Oxford. 1987.
2. Google Images, <<http://www.google.com/imghp?hl=en&tab=wi>>
3. Museum of Russian Icons website, <<http://www.museumofrussianicons.org>>.
4. Tradigo, Alfredo. *Icons and Saints of the Eastern Orthodox Church*. Los Angeles, CA: Getty Publications. 2006.
5. Shilov, Valery, Ph.D., St Martyrs Florus and Laurus (The Miracle of the Archangel Michael), M&M Purveyors of Fine Art. January 25, 2003. March 25, 2011. <<http://www.mmartltd.com/galleryimage.php?iid=303>>
6. Wikipedia, <<http://www.wikipedia.org/>>.



III. Post-Visit Lesson

Creative Fiction: Writing a Legend

Age Group: Grade 12

Length of Lesson: 50 minutes

Subjects: English Language Arts, History and Social Science

Lesson Overview

Students will use the skills developed in the pre-lesson exercise analyzing the Legend of Robin Hood to interpret themes found within the Legend of Saint George. The lesson will give students the tools to write their own legend about a historical figure selected during the In-Gallery lesson at the Museum of Russian Icons.

Learning Objectives

By the end of the lesson, students will be able to:

- Analyze a narrative to determine themes of struggle within the story
- Understand the basic components that make a legend
- Write a fictionalized legend about a historical figure

Skills Used by Students

- Analysis and interpretation of text
- Develop themes of human struggle in historical context

Materials and Preparation

- The list of Robin Hood themes developed during the pre-visit lesson (Appendix 1, page 15)
- Student-completed Notable Figures worksheets (Appendix 5, page 19) from the In-Gallery Lesson to return for the homework assignment.
- Image of the icon Saint George and the Dragon (available at <http://www.museumofrussianicons.org/forteachers.html>)
- Projector/computer to show image of Saint George and the Dragon
- Copies of The Legend of Saint George, for all students
- Themes worksheet (Appendix 7, page 21)

Educational Instruction

For this lesson, students will analyze the Legend of Saint George and interpret the story to determine the place (Where), time (When), characteristics of the central figure (Who), what did the main character do (What) and why was this relevant in the historical context of the story (Why).

Students will develop representative themes about the story to review and compare with the themes discussed in the pre-visit lesson about Robin Hood. This exercise will show students some of the social beliefs, values, issues and struggles prevalent in Medieval England.

After analyzing the Legend of Saint George, students will review the components of a legend and how to write one. Students will use the activity on Notable Figures from the In-Gallery Lesson at the Museum of Russian Icons to write their own version of the person's legend from a futuristic perspective – what would this person's legend be 100 years from now?

Steps for Educator

Inform students that the focus of the class is to relate what they learned about saints at the Museum of Russian Icons and the pre-visit lesson exercise in which students analyzed one story of Robin Hood. Similar to the pre-lesson, the class will be reading a version of the story of Saint George; his icon was at the museum. Steps 1 through 4 will take **10 minutes**

1. For reference, show the image of Saint George and the Dragon icon on the projector. (available at <http://www.museumofrussianicons.org/forteachers.html>) as students are reading and discussing the text.

- Hand out a copy of the story, the Legend of Saint George to all students. One can be found at <http://www.pitt.edu/~dash/stgeorge1.html>, or locate another version you may prefer.
- Convey to students that the story of Saint George is considered a legend. Ask students: Can anyone define a legend? Solicit answers from students.
- Read the following definitions of legend to the student:

Here's a short definition of **legend** from About.com: *A traditional historical tale (or collection of related tales) popularly regarded as true but usually containing a mixture of fact and fiction.*

Here's a longer definition from Wikipedia: *A legend (Latin, *legenda*, "things to be read") is a narrative of human actions that are perceived both by teller and listeners to take place within human history and to possess certain qualities that give the tale verisimilitude (of being true or real). Legend, for its active and passive participants includes no happenings that are outside the realm of "possibility", defined by a highly flexible set of parameters, which may include miracles that are perceived as actually having happened, within the specific tradition of indoctrination where the legend arises, and within which it may be transformed over time, in order to keep it fresh and vital, and realistic.*

Legends are tales that, because of the tie to a historical event or location, are believable, although not necessarily believed. For the purpose of the study of legends, in the academic discipline of folkloristics, the truth value of legends is irrelevant because, whether the story told is true or not, the fact that the story is being told at all allows scholars to use it as commentary upon the cultures that produce or circulate the legends.

Steps 5 through 6 will take **10 minutes**

- Instruct students to read the Legend of Saint George on their own. While reading they should look for key words and phrases that describe the When, Where, How and Who of the main character (similar exercise used when analyzing the Robin Hood story).
- While students are reading the Legend of Saint George, hand out Appendix 7, page 21, Themes Represented in the legends.

NOTE TO INSTRUCTOR: The themes discussed in the Pre-Visit should be compiled and recorded under the column Robin Hood.

Steps 7 through 8 will take **5 minutes**

- Collectively, ask students to analyze Saint George's legend for themes or struggles that are representative of that time period. Students should add to the worksheet as individual students offer ideas. Examples of themes in chart below.
- Conclude that there are similar themes from the two stories, the Legend of Robin Hood and the Legend of Saint George. The commonalities speak to the culture from which the legend comes from – Medieval England.
- Another aspect of a legend per its definition is that the story contains historical facts and fiction. Ask students the following questions for open discussion. Write students' answers in two columns on the board. **(10 minutes)**

Robin Hood	Saint George
Nobility vs. Layperson	King vs. Subjects
Friend vs. Enemy	Defender vs. Attacker
Old vs. Young	Brave vs. Cowardly
Just vs. Unjust	Just vs. Unjust
Religious vs. Pagan	Religious vs. Pagan
Government vs. Constituents	Good vs. Evil
Power vs. Powerless	
Freedom vs. Oppression	
Private lands vs. Public lands	
<i>Add new themes contributed by students</i>	

What are the FACTS of the Legend of Saint George? What human actions possess the qualities that give the tale verisimilitude (the quality of being true or real)

- Location
- Knights
- King
- Princess
- Sacrifice
- Selection by Lottery
- Establishment of a church
- Torture

What could be FICTITIOUS in legend?

What events are outside the realm of "possibility"?

- Dragon
- Tying belt to tame dragon
- Various types of torture did not kill

Steps 10 through 11 will take **5 minutes**

10. Remind students of the exercise at the Museum of Russian Icons where they applied historical context to notable contemporary figures. Each student selected 4 people and associated key words and historical context based on their own memory of historical facts.

11. Return each student's worksheet of the Notable Historical Figures.

Steps 12 through 13 will take **10 minutes**

12. Introduce the homework assignment of writing a legend about one of the four historical figures previously selected.

13. Review the key characteristics of writing a legend:

- Story is set in a historical time and place but has an element of fantasy
- Humans are the main characters, for whom there exists recorded history
- The beginning of a legend should set the scene
- Select key words and phrases to describe the extraordinary character
- Describe the problem or struggle that could be encountered, and how, in an exciting or fictitious way these can be resolved.

The homework assignment will be to develop a legend about one of four people you originally selected. Use the perspective of 100 years from now. Think about what this person has represented in historical context or what this person struggled for. The legend must include at least 4 historical facts about the person. Research your facts. Remember, a legend includes occurrences outside the realm of possibility. Be creative. Minimum length of the assignment is two pages double-spaced.

Student Assessment

See Appendix 8, page 22.

- Class participation
- Homework assignment

Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks

English Language Arts/Composition

19.28 Writing

For imaginative/literary writing: Write well-organized stories or scripts with an explicit or implicit theme, using a variety of literary techniques.

English Language Arts/Reading and Literature

8.33 Understanding a Text

For imaginative/literary texts: Analyze patterns of imagery or symbolism and connect them to themes and/or tone and mood.

9.7 Making Connections

Relate a literary work to the seminal ideas of its time.

11.6 Theme

Apply knowledge of the concept that a text can contain more than one theme.

11.7 Theme

Analyze and compare texts that express a universal theme, and locate support in the text for the identified theme.

History and Social Science/Concepts and Skills

8-12.CS.7 Concepts and Skills, Grades 8-12

Show connections, casual and otherwise, between particular historical events and ideas and larger social, economic, and political trends and developments.

Vocabulary

Legend

A traditional historical tale (or collection of related tales) popularly regarded as true but usually containing a mixture of fact and fiction. (<http://urbanlegends.about.com/od/glossary/g/legend.htm>)

A legend (Latin, *legenda*, “things to be read”) is a narrative of human actions that are perceived both by teller and listeners to take place within human history and to possess certain qualities that give the tale verisimilitude (of being true or real). Legend, for its active and passive participants includes no happenings that are outside the realm of “possibility”, defined by a highly flexible set of parameters, which may include miracles that are perceived as actually having happened, within the specific tradition of indoctrination where the legend arises, and within which it may be transformed over time, in order to keep it fresh and vital, and realistic. Legends are tales that, because of the tie to a historical event or location, are believable, although not necessarily believed. For the purpose of the study of legends, in the academic discipline of folkloristics, the truth value of legends is irrelevant because, whether the story told is true or not, the fact that the story is being told at all allows scholars to use it as commentary upon the cultures that produce or circulate the legends. (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Legend>)

Further Information for the Teacher

1. Wikipedia entry for Robin Hood, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Robin_Hood
2. Wikipedia entry for the Legend of Saint George and the Dragon, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Saint_George_and_the_Dragon

References

1. The Legend of Saint George, abstracted from *The Golden Legend; or, Lives of the Saints* by D.L. Ashliman, <http://www.pitt.edu/~dash/stgeorge1.html>
2. How to Write a Legend, <<http://www.creative-writing-ideas-and-activities.com/how-to-write-a-legend.html>>
3. Definition of Legend, Wikipedia, <<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Legend>>
4. Definition of Legend, About.com, <<http://urbanlegends.about.com/od/glossary/g/legend.htm>>

Appendix 1. Pre-Visit Lesson: Interpreting Text of a Historical Character: Robin Hood, Key Words and Themes. Print one for each student.

After reading the passages from Chapter 1 of Howard Pyle's, *The Merry Adventures of Robin Hood*, select key words or phrases that describe Robin Hood and the time in which he lived.

Key words or phrases describing WHEN Robin Hood lived:

Key words or phrases describing WHERE Robin Hood lived:

Key words or phrases describing HOW Robin Hood lived:

Key words or phrases describing Robin Hood's CHARACTER:



Other key words or phrases describing the SOCIAL SYSTEM of the time (how people lived, values and beliefs)

Universal Themes

Appendix 2. Pre-Visit Lesson: Interpreting Text of a Historical Character: Homework Sheet. Print one for each student.

Read all of Chapter 1 of Howard Pyle's, *The Merry Adventures of Robin Hood* and answer the following questions using well-developed paragraphs, a clear focus, and logical argumentation.

1. What did Robin Hood represent? How did you come to this conclusion?

2. What did Robin Hood struggle for? Why?



Using additional research answer the following question (two to three paragraphs minimum).

3. What was happening historically to cause this struggle?

Appendix 4. In-Gallery Lesson: Interpreting Icons through Visual Language: Key Words for Saints. Print one for each student.

While looking at the icons and listening to the passages being read, reflect on the following questions:

- What idea does the icon communicate to you?
- What issue did this person represent or struggle for?
- What was happening historically at the time of this person’s martyrdom/Sainthood?

Step 1: Under the column heading Keywords, write down the words that describe the Saint while listening to the descriptive passage.

Step 2: Reflect on the passage and think about the socio-cultural issues occurring at the time the story was constructed. Write down your interpretation of the historical context in the second column.

Saint	Key Words	Interpretation of Historical Context
Saint Paraskeva		
Saint Nicholas		
Saints Florus and Laurus		
Saint George		

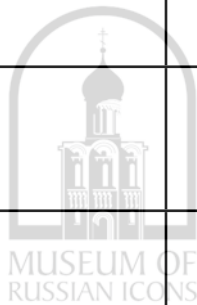
Appendix 5. In-Gallery Lesson: Interpreting Icons through Visual Language: Notable Historical Figures.
 Print one for each student.

Write down words that you associate with the historical figure by answering the following questions:

- What information about this person should be carried forward in history?
- How should future generations identify this person in a historical context?

What characteristics should be included this person’s visual language?

Person	Key Words	Interpretation of Historical Context
Albert Einstein		
Amelia Earhart		
Mahatma Gandhi		
Nelson Mandela		
Rosa Parks		
Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.		
Winston Churchill		
Bill Gates		



Appendix 7. Post-Visit Lesson: Creative Fiction: Writing a Legend: Themes Worksheet. Print one for each student.

Themes represented in the Legend of Robin Hood and the Legend of Saint George

Robin Hood	Saint George

