



Sir Cumference

Unit Study

General Lessons

General Lessons to be Used Sir Cumference Book Units

Social Studies

Middle Ages –

These stories take place during medieval times, also called the Middle Ages. This is the period of European history beginning at the downfall of Rome in 476AD to about 1500AD. They are called the Middle Ages because they are in between ancient and modern times. During this time kingdoms were set up in Europe. There was a return to Christianity and the beginning of Islam. The Middle ages were also the times of the Vikings. During the middle ages, the form of government and society that was set up was called the feudal system. It was based on the ownership of land. While the king of a region owned all the land, he could give possession of tracts to those who worked for and pledged allegiance to him. People were separated into different classes during the middle ages. There was the nobility, or vassals, which was composed of people having hereditary title, rank and privileges. The nobility included those that worked directly for the king, mainly having the job of protecting the kingdom. Then there was the clergy, who were in charge of the spiritual needs of society. And then were the peasantry, also called serfs, who worked for the nobles, cultivating the lands and performing the manual labor. Lastly, there were slaves. Many of the nobles owned slaves, who may have been prisoners captured in war, or people who actually sold themselves to the nobles in order to survive. The dream of the serf was to become a nobleman, and the dream of the nobleman was to become a knight. The Crusades happened during the Middle Ages and were an effort on the part of Christians to take control from the Muslims the area of Palestine. The Age of Exploration began during this time. If your child has any interests in any of the above topics pick a book from the library to further explore it. Also see some of the book suggestions above. Be sure to check out the many [Middle Ages](#) connections at Homeschool Share.

Knights-

Knights lived during the Middle Ages and were a part of the Feudal system. The feudal system was a type of society with different levels. Kings were in charge of kingdoms. Then there were the nobles under the kings. Knights worked under the nobles and defended a territory or kingdom. Peasant were poor and worked the fields. In order to become a knight a boy spent years in training. At the age of 7 or 8 he would become a page and serve the lord and lady of the castle and learn to

be a soldier. At 18, he became a squire and continued his education. He also looked after the lord's weapons, horses, and armor. At 21, a squire could become a knight. There was a dubbing ceremony in which he would kneel before a noble. The noble would tap him on the neck with his sword. This was the only blow a knight would take without fighting back. Look for the dubbing ceremony in the books. A knight was entitled to use *Sir* before his given name.

Before the invention of pistols, warriors used swords, lances, and steel clubs to fight and wore heavy armor made of metal to protect them. A knight's armor could weigh in excess of 55 pounds, and could take an experienced metal worker up to two years to make. The helmets sometimes had hinged shields, which the warrior could open and close. The only way people could tell who the knight was inside the armor was by the coat of arms that decorated his shield.

Radius becomes a knight in the Angleland book. Sir Vertex becomes a prince in the sword in the cone book.

Some of King Arthur's legendary knights were mentioned throughout these stories.

Sir Lancelot – He was the bravest and ablest of King Arthur's knights.

Sir Galahad – He was the son of Lancelot and the noblest knight of the Round Table. His name has become synonymous with any man of great purity or nobility.

Sir Gawain – He was the nephew of King Arthur.

There are lots of good books for children about knights, and also a fun [Knights Lapbook](#) to explore further if interest warrants.

Castles-

The word castle means a large building or group of buildings. The living quarters of the castle were surrounded by the moat with round towers. The purposes of the castle were to protect the people dwelling there and fight off the enemy. See if your child can find these different parts of a castle in the illustrations of the books: the keep (tower), workshops for the blacksmiths and armorers, stables, drawbridge, moat, dungeon, chapel, great hall, storerooms, living quarters,

portcullis (the iron gate at the front of the castle). There are many wonderful books to learn all about castles, including *Castle* by David Macaulay.

Parchment-

Parchment is a thin material that was used as paper in the Middle Ages. It was also used to make books. There are several references to parchment in the Sir Cumference books. Parchment is made from calfskin, sheepskin or goatskin.

Language Arts

Play on Words/ Choosing Names for Characters –

One decision an author of fiction stories needs to make is choosing names for the characters. The author of the Sir Cumference books creatively used plays on words in choosing names for the characters. A play on words is when a word or group of words has a double meaning. Many times a play on words can be funny. See the list below of examples from the book.

Sir Cumference- Sir Cumference is the father in the books. His name is definitely a knight's name with the "sir" in front of it, but it also refers to the circumference of a circle.

Lady Di of Ameter- Lady Di is a reference to Diana Spencer who married Prince Charles of England. The "di of ameter" refers to the diameter of a circle.

Geo of Metry and Sym of Metry- In the books these two characters are brothers. They come from the Land of Metry. You have "Geometry" and "Symmetry" in math.

Lady Fingers- Lady Fingers is Radius' cousin. She works with her fingers in the kitchen. Lady fingers are sweet sponge cakes shaped like fingers.

Edgecalibur- Edgecalibur is in the The Sword in the Cone. The real sword was Excalibur and was the legendary sword of King Arthur. In the real story of the Sword in the Stone, Arthur proves he is the real king by pulling the sword from the stone.

Vertex the Line-Hearted- The Line-hearted is a play on words for Richard the Lion-hearted. Richard was a king of England and received the name because of his military leadership.

Sir D-Grees-Refers to the degrees in angles.

Pair of Lells- A pair of dragons from the land of Lell. This sounds like “parallel” lines which the dragons were in the story.

Per of Immeter-refers to perimeter

Countess Areana-refers to area

Math

Geometry-

Geometry is the part of math concerned with size, shape and position of figures. The Sir Cumference books are filled with geometry. The actual word “Geometry” comes from two Greek roots...”geo” means “earth” and “metry” comes from the Greek word “meter” which means to measure. So geometry means the measure of the earth. This might be a good time to read the book *The Librarian Who Measured the Earth* by Kathryn Lasky.

Unit Supply List

Round toothpicks
Gumdrops
String
Graph paper
Protractor
Compass
Ruler, tape measure

Materials and information may be used for your own personal and school use.
Material may not be used for resale or shared electronically. © HSS 2006-2016