THE KNIGHTS OF THE OLDEN DAYS

In the Middle Ages, starting out to train to be a knight was a lot of fun. A young boy lived with his mother and other female members of his family. At this stage he had to learn to ride a pony and care for horses. At the age of 7, he became a *page* and had to leave home to live with a knight. At that young age he was taught to clean and handle weapons. It was at this time that he also had to learn the etiquette and behaviour that was expected of a knight.

At the age of 15 or 16 the young boy had to serve his master as a servant so that he could become a *squire*. He would, among other things, serve food and drink to his master. The squire's training also required him to ride into battle with his master and take part in the fight. This would usually take about five years and make the squire eligible for knighthood.



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Any knight could grant knighthood to a young man. Sometimes the ceremony took place on the battlefield and it was a simple one. All it required the knight to do was to tap the back of the man to be knighted with a sword and say, "I dub you knight."

A knight had to follow a code of behaviour. He had to have a love for his religion, love the land of his birth and fight for it, protect women and the weak and never surrender to the enemy.

A: Choose the best answer and write its number in the brackets provided.

1. It was important for a young boy training to be a knight to learn to ride so that _____ .

   a) he could grow up to clean the stables.

   b) he could teach the horse tricks.

   c) he could ride into battle.

   d) he never surrendered to the enemy.

( )

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2. At the age of 7, the boy was taught _____ .

a) to clean weapons.

b) to care for horses.

c) to handle weapons.

d) both (a) and (c)

( )

3. A squire had to train _____ to be eligible for knighthood.

a) for about five years.

b) for about six or eight years.

c) for about 15 years.

d) for about 16 years.

( )

4. _____ could grant knighthood to a young man.

a) A king.

b) Any knight.

c) Two knights.

d) A squire.

( )

5. A code of behaviour means _____ .

a) a secret kind of behaviour.

b) a secret code.

c) rules of expected behaviour.

d) the words of a knighting ceremony.

( )

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B: Answer the following in complete sentences.

1. Why was it fun for a young boy who was training to be a knight?

2. What were the duties of a *page*?

3. What did a *squire* have to do?

4. What did the knighting ceremony involve?

5. What was the code of behaviour for a knight?

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