

Richard III Quiz Jesters and Lutes!

This Jesters and Lutes quiz tests you on medieval entertainment.

Entertainment was a major part of medieval life for nobles and peasants alike. Great feasts were often held by lords and entertainment was provided for all the guests. For the peasantry, forms of entertainment were simpler and less extravagant but still present. Medieval life was far from dull!



1. A major spectacle in the Middle Ages was the tournament. They are probably most famous for the knights who jousting on horseback, but in truth this was only a prelude to the main event. What was the highlight of the tournament?

- The Singing
- The Melee
- The Dancing
- The Archery

2. 'Mystery Plays', were a popular form of entertainment. They were performed by amateur actors in the streets of towns and cities on holidays. What theme did the mystery plays all share?

- They were all ghost stories
- They were all fairy stories
- They were all murder mysteries
- They were all religious stories

3. Whilst the nobility partook in tournaments, the more common folk played simple games. A game similar to football was played, along with 'stoolball', an ancestor of which modern game?

- Ten Pin Bowling
- Basketball
- Cricket
- Tennis

4. Cruelty to animals was a source of entertainment in the Middle Ages. Cock fighting, dog fighting and bear baiting were all popular. Which was the other type of animal, apart from bears, which was most often baited?

- The bull
- The wolf
- The stag
- The lion

5. At festivals and fairs masked dancers could often be seen making merry. What was the name given to such people?

- Pippers
- Dadders
- Poppers
- Mummers

6. During the Middle Ages minstrels were employed to entertain the nobility in their castles. They sang long songs of myths and legends. Eventually minstrels were replaced in the halls of lords by a new type of singer who sang songs of courtly love. What were these new singers known as?

- Tenors
- Sopranos
- Troubadours
- Choristers

7. Another favourite pastime amongst nobles was hawking, in which small game, such as pigeons, were hunted by tamed birds of prey. 'Seeling' was part of the process used to tame the bird. What exactly was 'seeling'?

- Cutting off the bird's talons
- Stitching shut the bird's eyes
- Filing down the bird's beak
- Clipping short the bird's wings

8. All-round entertainers, who sang, played music, did tricks and much more, were given what name?

Jongleurs

Variuns

Congeurors

Jack-of-all-trades

9. A form of martial art, quarterstaff fighting, was a medieval sport in which people practised for sword fighting using long wooden sticks. Richard Peeke, in 1625, referred to the quarterstaff as what?

God's own sword

The bane of the French

The poor man's blade

The national weapon of England

10. Perhaps the most iconic of all the Medieval entertainers was the jester, though that name was not used until Tudor times. What were they known as during the Middle Ages?

Wags

Jokers

Fools

Bumpkins

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The Melee

The Dancing

The Archery

The Melee, from the French "to mix", was a mass fight where knights charged at one another, either on foot or on horseback. The fight was a free-for-all and every man on the field fought for themselves against all the other competitors. The aim of the melee was to capture a knight, forcing him to pay a ransom for his release. It was fought with the usual weapons and was just as dangerous as a 'real' fight on the battlefield

2. 'Mystery Plays', were a popular form of entertainment. They were performed by amateur actors in the streets of towns and cities on holidays. What theme did the mystery plays all share?

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They were all murder mysteries

They were all religious stories

The mystery plays, or miracle plays as they were sometimes called, were usually enactments of stories from the Bible, though some of them were about the lives of saints. They reached the height of their popularity in the time of Richard III before being replaced by professional theatres

3. Whilst the nobility partook in tournaments, the more common folk played simple games. A game similar to football was played, along with 'stoolball', an ancestor of which modern game?

Ten Pin Bowling

Basketball

Cricket

Tennis

Milking stools were turned upside down and used as wickets. Rounders and baseball are both games also thought to have derived from stoolball

4. Cruelty to animals was a source of entertainment in the Middle Ages. Cock fighting, dog fighting and bear baiting were all popular. Which was the other type of animal, apart from bears, which was most often baited?

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The wolf

The stag

The lion

In bear and bull baiting the unfortunate animal was chained to a post and dogs were set on it. The spectators bet money on the outcome of the fight, usually on how many dogs would be killed. Occasionally the animal would escape from its chains and rampage through the streets, mauling anyone who got in its way. The bulldog got its name because it was bred to be used in bull baiting

5. At festivals and fairs masked dancers could often be seen making merry. What was the name given to such people?

Pippers

Dadders

Poppers

Mummers

It is not known for sure what exactly mummers did. There are records of them visiting houses or inns to perform, and a 'mummers play' was performed for King Edward III in the 14th century. It is thought that morris dancers have come down to us as a relic of the mummers

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Life for minstrels changed with the arrival of troubadours and they began to perform for a different audience. They travelled from town to town singing to the common folk at their fairs and festivals. They then became known as 'wandering minstrels'. Perhaps the most famous tale sung by minstrels has come down to us as Robin Hood

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The eyes of birds were sewn together so that it could not see. After a few days, when the bird was used to human company, the stitches were gradually removed. Placing a hood over the bird's head might have been a more humane way to achieve the same result, but our medieval ancestors are not renowned for their compassion to animals

8. All-round entertainers, who sang, played music, did tricks and much more, were given what name?

- Jongleurs
- Variuns
- Congeurors
- Jack-of-all-trades

They were very versatile, as this quote from Chaucer shows: "I can play the lute, vielle, pipe, bagpipe, panpipes, harp, fiddle, gittern, symphoy, psaltery, orginistrum, organ, tabor and the rote. I can sing a song well, and make tales to please young ladies, and can play the gallant for them if necessary. I can throw knives into the air and catch them without cutting my fingers. I can jump rope most extraordinary and amusing. I can balance chairs, and make tables dance. I can somersault, and walk doing a handstand"

9. A form of martial art, quarterstaff fighting, was a medieval sport in which people practised for sword fighting using long wooden sticks. Richard Peeke, in 1625, referred to the quarterstaff as what?

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- The national weapon of England

A written guide to staff combat survives from the 15th century, although quarterstaves are mentioned in folk tales of Robin Hood which date back to the 12th century. Quarterstaff fighting was still popular in England up until the 20th century

10. Perhaps the most iconic of all the Medieval entertainers was the jester, though that name was not used until Tudor times. What were they known as during the Middle Ages?

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- Fools
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Medieval fools wore clothes of bright colours and entertained their audiences with their ridiculous behaviour. They could sometimes go too far though, and it was not unknown for a king to have his fool whipped. The word originated from the Latin 'follis' which meant 'bellows'; literally a bag of air