

## Knighthood was a family business

Knights had to own the best horses, armor, and weapons. That was expensive! This is why the sons of lords had the best chance of becoming knights. Lords were the richest people in the land—after the king, of course!

Knights often became lords. They could afford to help their sons become knights.



**Girls could not become knights.**

But fierce females took part in battles. Joan of Arc is one famous example. She led French troops against the English in 1429. Joan inspired the French to win. And she was just a teenager!



# Becoming a knight took **three steps**

A page (1) worked his way up to squire (2), then knight (3).

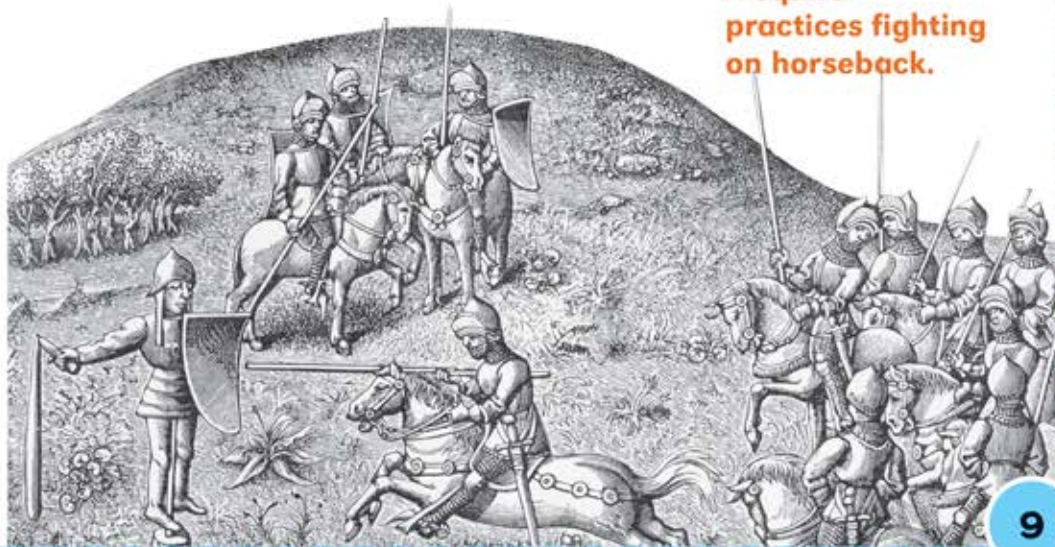


Training for knighthood usually began at age seven. A boy was sent to live at a lord's castle to become a page. He received schooling and fighting lessons.

At 14 or 15 he could progress to being a squire. His lessons became more dangerous! If he proved himself worthy, the young man could become a knight at the age of 21.

**A squire had to earn his keep** during training. He took care of horses, armor, and weapons for a knight at the castle. He also helped train the pages.

**A squire practices fighting on horseback.**





## “Piggyback” was part of the training

A page was taught to act like a fighter. He learned to swing a wooden sword. He also needed to learn how to ride a horse and fight at the same time. He played piggyback to improve his balance.

Kids today still play games like these. They ride piggyback and try to knock each other down!



It was really helpful! When he became a squire, the boy learned to ride horses using no hands.

**Warhorses were taught to fight when young, too.** The best horses could kick, trample, and even bite enemy soldiers on command.

