




# NÖ-leseBAUSTEIN



# Englisch

Richard the Lionheart

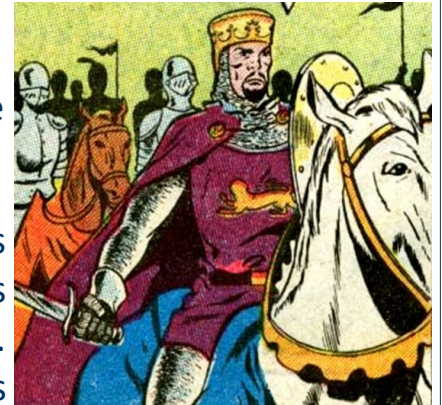


**NÖ-leseBAUSTEIN**  
 English
 

 ARGE NÖ

**Info: Richard the Lionheart and his brother John**

**Task 1:** Read the text and highlight which words describe the two brothers best:



King John and King Richard were brothers, but history sees them very differently. King Richard was also known as Lionheart; having the heart of a lion. He was a brave soldier. At the age of 16 he was leading an army in France against his father’s enemies. At that time much of France also belonged to the King of England. In fact, Richard and his family didn’t speak English, but French.

Richard was a popular leader. However, we also know that he was a ruthless and even cruel man. Although the English people loved him, he did not seem to love England. He once said ‘I would have sold London if I could find a buyer.’ He spent most of his time abroad, in France and fighting in the Middle East. He was King of England for 10 years, but only lived there for a total of ten months.

Fighting abroad was expensive and Richard made England pay a lot of money in taxes for these foreign wars. However, he was lucky and usually won, so no-one complained too much.

When his brother John became king, however, this all changed. John was ambitious, and also wanted to fight foreign wars, but he was unlucky and lost most of the lands in France. People felt that John was a coward and a poor leader.

He is still well known for his hobby of collecting precious jewellery, and he was seen as greedy and selfish. Although he had done so badly in the wars abroad, he continued to tax the people very heavily. He was also very bad-tempered, and would punish people severely if they dared to refuse him.

**Task 2:** Write J for John or R for Richard next to the adjectives that describe them best (use a dictionary to look up words you don’t know)!

ambitious	cruel	cruel	lucky	brave
poor	unlucky	selfish	bad-tempered	greedy



### Task 3: Reading for specific detail (10 min)

1. Why was Richard called 'Lionheart'?
2. What language did Richard and John speak?
3. How did Richard feel about England?
4. What did he say about London?
5. How long did King Richard actually live in England?
6. Who was more successful in fighting foreign wars? John or Richard?
7. Who enjoyed collecting gold and jewels?
8. Who made the people pay taxes to pay for the foreign wars?

### Extension activity:

You might like to look at a clip from the Disney film Robin Hood, where two of the key characters are King Richard and Prince John (who looked after the country while Richard was away fighting). They are shown as hero and villain. A particularly good link is <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sGzaqEtJCok> which shows extracts from the film for students to evaluate how Prince John is portrayed. I'd suggest students might shout out appropriate adjectives while watching the clip (e.g. greedy when he's gloating over his jewels.)

### Further reading:

#### 1. Richard The Lionheart and Blondel

Blondel, a minstrel nicknamed for his long blond hair, took part in the Third Crusade. During this time he and Richard the Lionheart composed a song together, a song known only to the two of them.

On his way back to England, Richard was captured near Vienna and imprisoned in Dürnstein castle. Even though Richard had been travelling in disguise, he was identified either because he was wearing an expensive ring, or because of his insistence on eating roast chicken!

There is a legend about how the troubadour Blondel found the castle where Richard was imprisoned. It is said that Blondel travelled from castle to castle singing the song they had composed together. When he got near the right castle, Richard replied with the refrain and so Blondel discovered where the king was confined.

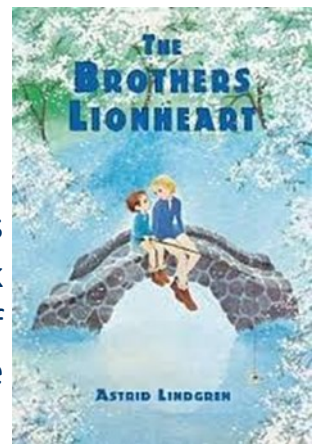
A vast amount of gold was paid to the Duke of Austria, Leopold V., for the life of Richard, which caused quite a bit of an economic crisis in England. For Austria, however, it turned out to be really beneficial: The Babenbergs were keen developers and used the money wisely for all sorts of useful things. They also founded the city of Wiener Neustadt with the ransom money, still one of Lower Austria's most important towns.

**Further reading:**

<http://www.richardloewenherz.at/en/hotel/history-of-duernstein/>

**2. The Brothers Lionheart**

is a children's fantasy novel written by Astrid Lindgren. Many of its themes are unusually dark and serious for the children's book genre. Disease, death, tyranny, betrayal and rebellion are some of the dark themes that permeate the story. The lighter themes of the book involve platonic love, loyalty, hope, courage and pacifism.



Idee: Marianne Schneidhofer

1. because he was brave
2. French
3. He wasn't interested in it.
4. that he would like to sell it
5. ten months (Extra question: How long was he king for?)
6. Richard
7. John
8. Richard and John (Extra question: Why did the people get angry with John, but not Richard?)

**Answers:**