

# Challenge: St George

St George is the patron saint of England, and St George's day is 23<sup>rd</sup> April. But, think of St George and you're probably picturing a heroic knight slaying a ferocious, fire-breathing dragon! Today, St George's story is as famous as his white and red flag. But like many early saints, the exact details of his life remain a mystery. Here's a challenge to get you really listening in – have a go at guessing the true or false facts from English Heritage, then have a go at making your own flag, sword and even a helmet!

**Step 1:** Ask an adult to be the quiz master! They'll need to read the St George's facts out loud to you (they're on the next page). You might want to invite your other family members to join in the quiz, or maybe some friends (remember to observe social distancing rules whenever you do this challenge!).

#### You will need:

- Paper, pencil
- Card, scissors, sticky tape, paint or colouring pens (optional)

**Step 2:** Get your pencils and papers ready. List the numbers 1 to 7 on your paper – tell your friends or family members to do the same on their paper. Are you listening carefully? Ask your adult quizmaster to read the first statement about St George. Think about what you've just heard. You each need to decide whether you think the statement is FACT (true) or FICTION (false). Hint: there will be some of each! Write whether you think it is true or false. Try and do this without showing the other players.

**Step 3:** At the end of the quiz, ask the adult to reveal the answers one at a time. Mark your answers – who got the most right? Were you surprised by some of them?

**Step 4:** Now you know lots about St George, you could create your own shield, and even dress up like St George in the traditional colours of red and white! Have a look at the video on the link below which shows you how to make a shield. You'll need to decide on the design (they traditionally used pictures of animals and emblems which represented the house or family that you were from – maybe you could design your own logo or 'coat of arms'?)

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NmTJUjSG\\_PY](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NmTJUjSG_PY)



**Step 5:** If you want to make a sword, follow the instructions on this link:

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sjnlhp\\_TBpc](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sjnlhp_TBpc)

**Step 6:** You could even make a knight's helmet if you're feeling really creative! Find the instructions here:

<https://www.english-heritage.org.uk/members-area/kids/guide-to-castles/medieval-helmet/>

## Which skills will I be developing?

### Main



### Additional



Skills Builder  
PARTNERSHIP



# True or False?

1. St George was English
2. St George wasn't a knight
3. St George never visited England
4. The emblem of St George is a red cross on a white background
5. St George once killed a dragon
6. England is the only country to celebrate St George
7. St George is mentioned in William's Shakespeare's play, Henry the Fifth

## ANSWERS

1. False

St George might be hailed as a national English hero, but he was actually born – in the 3rd century AD – more than 2,000 miles away in Cappadocia (modern day Turkey).

2. True

Although George is often shown as being a knight in shining armour, the truth is less interesting! Whilst St George was shown from the 11th century as a chivalric knight or a warrior on horseback, it is more likely that he was an officer in the Roman army.

3. True

Although St George never visited England, his reputation spread across Europe and his feast day – the 23rd April – was celebrated in England from the 9th century onwards. He became popular with English kings. Edward I (1272-1307) had banners bearing the emblem of St George and Edward III (1327-77) had a strong interest in the saint.

4. True

But the red St George cross on a white background was not used to represent England until much later, in the reign of Henry VIII.

5. False

The story goes that St George rode into Silene (modern day Libya) to free the city from a dragon who had a taste for humans, but it's a story which came long after the real George by several centuries so historians doubt it is true. Originally the pictures of George and the dragon might simply have been to show the battle between Good and Evil. But the story was developed and made popular in the Middle Ages in a collection of stories about different saints' lives, called The Golden Legend.

6. False

St George is truly an international saint and England is not the only country or region to celebrate him as its patron. England shares St George with Venice, Genoa, Portugal, Ethiopia and Catalonia among others as their patron saint and many of these places have their own celebrations and ceremonies in his honour.

7. True

In William Shakespeare's Henry V, the King calls on the saint during his battle cry at the Battle of Harfleur in the famous "Once more unto the breach, dear friends" speech, crying "God for Harry! England, and St. George!" Five hundred years later – during the First World War – a ghost of St George is said to have helped British troops!