Robin Hood and Little John

1 When Robin Hood was about twenty years old,
   With a hey down down and a down
He happend to meet Little John,
A jolly brisk blade, right fit for the trade,
   For he was a lusty young man.

2 Though he was called Little, his limbs they were large,
   And his stature was seven foot high;
Wherever he came, they quak'd at his name,
   For soon he would make them to fly.

3 How they came acquainted, I'll tell you in brief,
   If you will but listen a while;
For this very jest, amongst all the rest,
   I think it may cause you to smile.

4 Bold Robin Hood said to his jolly bowmen,
   Pray tarry you here in this grove;
And see that you all observe well my call,
   While thorough the forest I rove.

5 We have had no sport for these fourteen long days,
   Therefore now abroad will I go;
Now should I be beat, and cannot retreat,
   My horn I will presently blow.

6 Then did he shake hands with his merry men all,
   And bid them at present goodbye;
Then, as near a brook his journey he took,
   A stranger he chanced to espy.

7 They happend to meet on a long narrow bridge,
   And neither of them would give way;
Quoth bold Robin Hood, and sturdily stood,
   “I'll show you right Nottingham play.”

8 With that from his quiver an arrow he drew,
   A broad arrow with a goose-wing;
The stranger replied, I'll liquor thy hide,
   If thou offerest to touch the string.

9 Quoth bold Robin Hood, Thou dost prate like an ass,
   For were I to bend but my bow,
I could send a dart quite thro thy proud heart,
   Before thou couldst strike me one blow.
"Thou talkst like a coward," the stranger replied;
'Well armd with a long bow, you stand,
To shoot at my breast, while I, I protest,
Have nought but a staff in my hand.'

'The name of a coward,' quoth Robin, 'I scorn,
Wherefore my long bow I'll lay by;
And now, for thy sake, a staff I will take,
The truth of thy manhood to try.'

Then Robin Hood stept to a thicket of trees,
And chose him a staff of ground-oak;
Now this being done, away he did run
To the stranger, and merrily spoke:

Lo! see my staff, it is lusty and tough,
Now here on the bridge we will play;
Whoever falls in, the other shall win
The battle, and so we'll away.

'With all my whole heart,' the stranger replied;
'I scorn in the least to give out,'
This said, they fell to't without more dispute,
And their staffs they did flourish about.

And first Robin he gave the stranger a bang,
So hard that it made his bones ring:
The stranger he said, "This must be repaid,
I'll give you as good as you bring.

So long as I'm able to handle my staff,
To die in your debt, friend, I scorn."
Then to it each goes, and followd their blows,
As if they had been threshing of corn.

The stranger gave Robin a crack on the crown,
Which caused the blood to appear;
Then Robin, enraged, more fiercely engaged,
And followed his blows more severe.

So thick and fast did he lay it on him,
With a passionate fury and ire,
At every stroke, he made him to smoke,
As if he had been all on fire.

O then into fury the stranger he grew,
And gave him a damnable look,
And with it a blow that laid him full low,
And tumbled him into the brook.
"I prithee, good fellow, O where art thou now?"
  The stranger, in laughter, he cried;
Quoth bold Robin Hood, "Good faith, in the flood,
   And floating along with the tide."

"I needs must acknowledge thou art a brave soul;
   With thee I'll no longer contend;
For needs must I say, thou hast got the day,
   Our battle shall be at an end."

Then unto the bank he did presently wade,
   And pulled himself out by a thorn;
Which done, at the last, he blew a loud blast
   Straitway on his fine bugle-horn.

The echo of which through the valleys did fly,
   At which his stout bowmen appeared,
All clothed in green, most gay to be seen;
   So up to their master they steered.

'O what's the matter?' quoth William Stutely;
   'Good master, you are wet to the skin:'
'No matter,' quoth he; 'the lad which you see,
   In fighting, hath tumbled me in.'

'He shall not go scot-free,' the others replied;
   So strait they were seizing him there,
To duck him likewise; but Robin Hood cries,
   "He is a stout fellow, forbear.

There's no one shall wrong thee, friend, be not afraid;
   These bowmen upon me do wait;
There's threescore and nine; if thou wilt be mine,
   Thou shalt have my livery straight.

And other accoutrements fit for a man;
   Speak up, jolly blade, never fear;
I'll teach you also the use of the bow,
   To shoot at the fat fallow-deer."

'O here is my hand,' the stranger replied,
   'I'll serve you with all my whole heart;
My name is John Little, a man of good mettle;
   Nere doubt me, for I'll play my part.'

His name shall be altered,' quoth William Stutely,
   'And I will his godfather be;
Prepare then a feast, and none of the least,
   For we will be merry,' quoth he.
Legends of Robin Hood

30 They presently fetched in a brace of fat does,
    With humming strong liquor likewise;
They loved what was good; so, in the green wood,
    This pretty sweet babe they baptize.

31 He was, I must tell you, but seven foot high,
    And, may be, an ell in the waist;
A pretty sweet lad; much feasting they had;
    Bold Robin the christening graced.

32 With all his bowmen, which stood in a ring,
    And were of the Nottingham breed;
Brave Stutely comes then, with seven yeomen,
    And did in this manner proceed.

33 'This infant was called John Little,' quoth he,
    'Which name shall be changed anon;
The words we'll transpose, so wherever he goes,
    His name shall be called Little John.'

34 They all with a shout made the elements ring,
    So soon as the office was ore;
To feasting they went, with true merriment,
    And tippled strong liquor galore.

35 Then Robin he took the pretty sweet babe,
    And clothed him from top to the toe
In garments of green, most gay to be seen,
    And gave him a curious long bow.

36 'Thou shalt be an archer as well as the best,
    And range in the greenwood with us;
Where we'll not want gold nor silver, behold,
    While bishops have ought in their purse.

37 'We live here like squires, or lords of renown,
    Without ere a foot of free land;
We feast on good cheer, with wine, ale, and beer,
    And every thing at our command.'

38 Then music and dancing did finish the day;
    At length, when the sun waxed low,
Then all the whole train the grove did refrain,
    And unto their caves they did go.

39 And so ever after, as long as he livd,
    Altho he was proper and tall,
Yet nevertheless, the truth to express,
    Still Little John they did him call.
**Legends of Robin Hood**

Cut up these jigsaw pieces to provide an activity for less able children working in pairs to reconstruct the story of Robin Hood and Little John.  
**Correct order: A, D, E, H, B, C, F, G, I, K, L, J**

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A.</td>
<td>Robin Hood was only twenty years old when this adventure happened.</td>
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<tr>
<td>B.</td>
<td>They agreed to fight each other on the bridge over the river.</td>
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<tr>
<td>C.</td>
<td>Robin had a bow and arrow, John had only a staff, so Robin agreed to use a staff also.</td>
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<tr>
<td>D.</td>
<td>He was bored and decided to go off looking for adventure into the forest.</td>
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<td>E.</td>
<td>He told his merry men that if he needed help, he would blow his horn.</td>
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<td>F.</td>
<td>They fought, and John pushed Robin Hood into the river.</td>
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<td>G.</td>
<td>Robin admitted defeat and blew his horn.</td>
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<tr>
<td>H.</td>
<td>As he reached a bridge, he met a man called John Little, who was seven foot tall.</td>
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<tr>
<td>I.</td>
<td>His merry men arrived. There were 69 of them and they wanted to attack John, but Robin prevented them.</td>
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<tr>
<td>J.</td>
<td>The whole group ate, drank and were very merry as they continued their life in Sherwood Forest.</td>
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<tr>
<td>K.</td>
<td>Robin said he should join their band, wear his livery and learn to use a long bow.</td>
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<tr>
<td>L.</td>
<td>It was decided to rename the giant, so they called him Little John instead.</td>
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