



On Target

WITH NEWSPAPERS IN EDUCATION:
AN INTRODUCTION TO ARCHERY

In partnership with the Missouri Department of Conservation, Newspapers in Education is exploring archery. Archery is a sport that does not discriminate based on athletic skill, gender, size or academic ability. It's open to everyone!

Through archery, students learn focus, discipline, patience and the life lessons required to be successful in the classroom and in life.

Read about the history of archery and explore the timeline below.

A Detailed Archery History

The bow and arrow are two of the oldest tools known to mankind, dating back to the Stone Age. As the bow and arrow became dominate, history began to change. Creating lore and legends of Attila, King of the Huns, Genghis Khan, Robin Hood and William Tell, the bow and arrow literally changed the world.

Modern American archery history began in 1828 with the first organized recreational archery club formed in Philadelphia, growing to over six million archers today.

Archery adapts easily to individual physical needs and archers face only the challenge of improving their own score, competing against others or testing their skills in pursuit of wild game.

Excellent physical condition is not required for beginning archery classes. Upper body, shoulder and arm strength can be developed, as can hand-eye coordination, and fine motor skills.

For a student, competitive shooting matches provide an opportunity to both compete against one's self and to share in personal achievements, team spirit and team pride in competition with others. Participating with a team can create feelings of unity between students and their peers and allows students to develop disciplined self-control. Students' knowledge of shooting can enhance their enjoyment of the outdoors thanks to the many options that shooting presents.

Experts believe the bow and arrow are one of the three most important inventions in human history – right alongside the discovery of fire and the development of speech. Once, sticks and stones were man's only weapons against bigger, stronger and faster predators. But armed with the bow and arrow, man suddenly became the most efficient hunter on Earth, able to shoot his prey accurately from a safe distance. The bow and arrow gave humans greater protection, a diet richer in protein and a more abundant supply of raw materials like bone, sinew and hide, upon which early man depended for survival.

The bow and arrow were critically important to man's survival at one time. Even though guns replaced bows as a weapon almost 400 years ago, archery has evolved as a sport because it is now a unique and rewarding challenge. There are now at least five million archers in the English-speaking world.

Today, the "twang" of the bowstring can be heard at schools, municipal parks, club ranges and in the programs of various youth groups. The reasons for this popularity are simple. It is a sport that can be practiced at any time of the year, indoors or out, in any part of the world, with friends or alone and it is relatively inexpensive. Unlike athletes in many other sports, an archer can improve with age, since endurance and skill are far more important than brute strength. Archers in their 80s have won competitions!



To learn more about the National Archery in Schools Program, please visit STLtoday.com/NIE.



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A Detailed Archery Timeline

3500 BC	The ancient Egyptians used two kinds of wooden longbows, the simple one-piece or self: bow and the double recurve type. They also used the shorter composite bows, made of horn and wood. The Egyptians' leaf-shaped and diamond-shaped arrowheads were made of flint and later bronze.
1700 BC	The Assyrians were the first to use mounted archers. Their powerful composite bows were uniquely triangular in shape and short enough to be easily handled by archers on horseback.
1200 BC	The Hittites' skillful use of archery from chariots was an effective form of mobile warfare. Their light, fast chariots enabled them to out-maneuver and out-shoot their opponents in many Middle Eastern battles.
100 BC	Although the Romans were great soldiers they were ineffective archers. To compensate for this, they hired professional bowmen from nations within their frontiers, who fought under the Latin name: Cohortes Sagittariorum.
AD 100	The Parthians were Asiatic horse-archers who invented the art of twisting around in the saddle and shooting backward while at full gallop. Known as the "Parthian Shot," this acrobatic maneuver enable the lightly armored Parthians to ride swiftly through enemy ranks, shooting arrows in any direction.
AD 1066	The Vikings introduced the longbow to the French when they settled in Normandy in the 8th century. The Normans became expert bowmen and used the longbow to defeat King Harold's Saxon army at the Battle of Hastings in 1066. The superiority of the longbow persuaded later generations of Englishmen to adopt it as their main weapon.
AD 1200	The Mongols, armed with powerful composite bows and iron-tipped arrows, conquered most of the world known to them. All of Asia and Europe trembled before these fierce, disciplined, nomadic horse-archers, who, led by the military genius, Genghis Khan, perfected the art of mobile warfare.
AD 1400	English archers, shooting the mighty longbow and "cloth yard" shafts, gained everlasting fame and respect in the 13th and 14th centuries by defeating the French in such historical battles as Crecy, Potiers and Agincourt.
AD 1600	The bow and arrow began as a weapon in ancient Japan, but by the 17 th century, had evolved into a ceremonial archery or kyudo. Still very much a tradition today, archers shoot arrows that are one meter long, and bows that are often seven feet or more in length and asymmetrical in shape.

WRITING CONNECTION: Choose a topic to research the impact of archery on society at a particular time in history. Some ideas are:

- History of Olympic archery
- Archery in contemporary bow hunting
- Compound bow vs. recurve bow
- Compare one historical period of archery to another

EXTENSION: Collaborate with the art teacher to create a mural depicting a timeline of the history of archery. Incorporate the English teacher and their selection of literature or reading materials to include these time periods.



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