

Joan of Arc: The Story of Jehanne Darc by Lili Wilkinson

The Drum series

Teacher Notes prepared by Joy Lawn, Children's Literature Consultant

Readership: Mid to Upper primary, junior to mid secondary, Class study, Independent reading

Genre: Factual, Including factional chapter introductions told as recounts

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Rationale

- These teacher notes have been written to send students back to the text and other sources, actively engage in learning and provide a creative learning experience, where possible.

How to use

- Learning activities suggested in one KLA (Key Learning Area) may also be applicable to another KLA.
- Many of the activities have suggested answers and page numbers as time-savers for teachers.

About Joan of Arc

Jehanne Darc (or Joan of Arc) was born in the tiny village of Domrémy, in Northern France, in 1412. When she was 13, she began to hear voices. She claimed that Saint Michael, Saint Catherine and Saint Margaret visited her and spoke to her often. When Joan was 15, her voices told her that she had been chosen to save France from the marauding English



Joan left home and travelled to Chinon, where she convinced Charles, the Dauphin of France, that she was sent from God. Charles gave Joan an army of soldiers, and they set off for Orléans.

Orléans was a large city on the Loire river. The English had laid siege to the city, trapping the French citizens inside. Joan and her army arrived, and fought back the English, raising the siege and providing a much-needed morale boost for the French soldiers.

After Orléans, Joan and her army had victories at Jargeau, Meung-sur-Loire, Beaugency and Patay, before arriving in Rheims.

At Rheims, Charles was officially crowned King of France. Joan was considered to be a great hero.

She was keen to keep fighting, so she took her army to Paris, which was under English control. The English army was too strong, and Joan was forced to retreat. After another defeat at La Charité, Charles had lost faith in Joan.

At her final battle at Compiègne, Joan was captured and imprisoned by the English.

She was imprisoned for more than six months before her trial began. Bishop Cauchon, the man who would be her judge, hated Joan and was determined to prove that she was a witch. He tried to trick her into admitting her guilt, but she stayed strong for another six months.

In the end, the only thing Cauchon could prove, was that Joan wore men's clothes. This was considered to be an abomination before God, so he pronounced her a heretic. Joan was burned at the stake on May 31, 1431.

SOSE/HSIE

- Mock Trial** Re-enact some of Joan's trial. Read Chapter Eight: The Trial. Include Joan's interrogations by Bishop Cauchon. Some of the dialogue from the interrogations are at the beginning of each chapter. (pages 5,22 ,45,59,79,98,113,121,134) Re-enact some or all of these. Bishop Cauchon rigged the trial so that Joan would be found guilty. See pages 126-128. Debrief and discuss.
- Role of Women** Joan broke the mould of women in her era. See page 58. How were women expected to behave? How was Joan different? How did wearing men's clothes contribute to her downfall? Read page 131. Also read pages 115-117 for an outline of one man's hatred of Joan - George Chastellain, a Burgundian soldier. Research other women who have broken the mould by being different.
- Medieval Feast**
 1. A feast could take up to four months to prepare. Represent the foods at the feast described on page 32, using icons or symbols. These



could be stylized small pictures, for example, 100 piglets, dolphins, 8 kg of gold leaf. Represent the amounts of the different foods using multiple icons and /or icons representing a bulk number such as 10. Display on a chart or on a horizontal table to represent a feast.

2. Hold a mini-medieval feast with appropriate foods, such as lamb, chicken, raisons, prunes, eggs, cheese and twelve different coloured jellies (if possible).

- The Siege of Orleans** Read Chapter Four: The Siege The Siege of Orleans is a vivid description of a medieval siege. After reading the chapter make the scene come to life by using a commercial kit; interactive, electronic or other game; or make your own construction using cardboard and modelling clay. Summarise the main events, including those that could be represented using your resources, such as the cannonball hitting the tower windowsill, page 64. Demonstrate these events using the constructions or games, where possible.
- The Day of the Herrings** Read pages 64-65. The English anticipated their 300 wagonloads of herrings. Make an animation of the spilling of the herrings and ensuing skirmish.
- France** There is a map of France and surrounding countries at the front of the book. On another map of France, plot places and events that are described in the book. These could include Joan's birthplace of Domremy, pages 10,33, the English-held area of Burgundy, page 27, and battles. Then research some aspects of the French monarchy, culture, famous people and/or language.

English

Reading and Writing

- The novel-sized format makes this appropriate for class libraries/ wide reading
- Character Profile**
Create a character profile of Joan. Include:
 1. Childhood - page 11.
 2. Personal traits Vanity, page 38; intelligence, pages 132-133; stubbornness, page 96; inspiring, pages 149-150; courageous and independent, page 150
 3. Godliness / Saintliness Godly woman, pages 11,12,82 (praying for dead enemy); miracles, page 41 (recognising the dauphin), pages 44, 85 (premonitions), page 67 (wind changing), page 76 (quick recovery from arrow injury), page 118 ('miraculous' works), page 124 (sun lighting her face); saint , page 149; visions, pages 16-19; prophesies and legends, pages 41-42 (Merlin)



4. Contrasts Prophet or puppet? Noble or nobody? Warrior or wench? Pretty woman or military leader? - page 56. War chief or mascot? – page 66. Angel or witch? Saint or heretic? Messenger from God or not? In this section of 'Contrasts', select one viewpoint (such as 'prophet') and give a one-three minute extempore speech explaining why Joan could be described in this way.

Questions: Why do you think Joan lost her position of favour and her winning streak? (Consider Charles' fear of Joan's popularity, page 84; Joan's growing arrogance by following her opinion rather than God's, page 11; her over-confidence, page 102; ordering an attack on a holy day, page 104; acting without the voices, page 113)

Where did Joan's voices and abilities come from?

Do you think she was schizophrenic, epileptic, hallucinating or hearing voices from God or saints? Why? See pages 19-20.

Discussion Text Type (give a balanced view which includes contrasting opinions)

Write your own assessment of Joan, incorporating the attributes from her character profile and the questions discussed (see above). Conclude with your own opinion of who she was.

Discussion Text Type

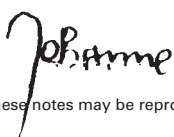
(Give a balanced view which includes contrasting opinions)

Write your own assessment of Joan, incorporating the attributes from her character profile and the questions discussed (see above). Conclude with your own opinion of who she was.

- Skim read** The Black Dress by Pamela Freeman. Identify similarities and differences between Joan of Arc and Mary MacKillop.

Book Features and Format

- Joan of Arc has many features that are important in factual texts:
 1. Table of Contents
 2. Index
 3. Glossary
- Additional features that improve the usability of this book are the:
 1. Timeline
 2. Cast of Characters
 3. Acknowledgements (including primary sources)
 4. Font choices and sizes, including some heading in Old English font
 5. Information panels
 6. Factional chapter introductions told as recounts in italics
- Select one or more of these features and write an analysis of their effectiveness. Show pros and cons.





Reading and Writing, Listening and Speaking

Caricatures

Draw or make 3-dimensional caricatures of:

1. Charles VI (Charles the Mad) Represent his belief that he was made entirely of glass and was being stabbed by a thousand needles. Include pieces of iron in his pocket, see page 29
 2. Charles' wife, Isabeau Isabeau was obese. Represent her terror of disease, the outdoors, crossing bridges and thunder. Include her machine that protected her from storms, see page 29.
 3. Joan Joan preferred to wear men's clothes, see pages 37,38,131. She wore armour, see pages 70 and 127. Joan could also be vain and loved to wear a gold cloak and furs, see page 38.
 4. High society women They wore high, pointy hats; silk trains; no underpants; their sleeves were so long they dragged on the floor; and they wore templars – head decorations like earphones, see pages 31, 37.
 5. High Society men They wore pointy shoes. Some shoes were 60cm longer than their feet. Chains were attached to the shoes to hold on to, see page 31.
 6. Etienne de Vignotes alias La Hire His cloak was covered in tinkling silver bells, see pages 31-32.
 7. Duke of Orleans His robe was embroidered with 960 pearls, 'which spelled out the words and notation to a song he had written', see page 32.
 8. Georges de la Tremoille He was so obese a would-be assassin couldn't get his sword through the layers of fat.
 9. English soldiers dressed temporarily in priests' robes, see page 70.
- Write, and then speak, a dialogue between two of these characters or groups.
- Optional: Some of the clothes could be made, such as chains on the shoes.

Personal Development/Health

Leadership

Brainstorm the qualities of a good leader.

List good leaders.

Read the account of poor leadership on pages 30-31.

List examples and outcomes of Joan's positive and negative leadership, as a table:



Joan's Leadership

Positive	Negative
Soldiers followed Joan, even when unpaid and hungry, page 89	

Select one or more ways that you could improve your leadership skills. Write as an explanation.

Creative Arts

Arts

Motifs The fleur-de-lis is the symbol of France, page 51. Joan's sword was imprinted with the fleur-de-lis and her standard also included the lily. 'This was a white banner, which pictured God sitting on a rainbow above a field of lilies, with the angels Gabriel and Michael on either side of him.' – page 52.

Legend also says that hundreds of white butterflies flew around Joan's standard. Butterflies could either be taken as a sign of purity or witchcraft, page 52.

After viewing a picture of the fleur-de-lis symbol (see back cover and further research), design your impression of Joan's sword or standard, using the motifs of fleur-de-lis and/or butterflies.



About the Author



Lili Wilkinson remembers the day in Beijing when she learnt to read 'in her head'. She was six and has been immersed in the world of books since. It's an obsession she shares with her mother, Carole Wilkinson (the China trip was the germ that sprouted the award-winning *Dragonkeeper*).

Lili was first published when she was only eleven, in *Voiceworks*, a creative writing magazine for young people. Following an honours degree in Creative Arts and six months of teaching English in Japan, Lili began working at the Centre for Youth Literature, State Library of Victoria.

Lili lives in inner Melbourne, and loves reading, quality TV, the work of Jim Henson and Japanese food.