

JOAN OF ARC, THE THE MAID OF ORLEANS

Joan of Arc is considered a heroine of France and a Roman Catholic saint. She was born to a peasant family in north-east France in 1412. Joan said she received visions of the Archangel Michael, Saint Margaret and Saint Catherine instructing her to support France's Charles VII and recover France from English domination late in the Hundred Years' War.

The uncrowned King Charles VII sent Joan to the English siege of Orléans as part of a relief mission. She became well-known after the siege was stopped in just 9 days. Several additional victories led to Charles VII's coronation as King of France. This long-awaited event boosted French morale and paved the way for the final French victory in 1429.

After the truce with England came to an end in 1430, Joan of Arc was captured by a group that was allied with the English. She was imprisoned and, despite trying to escape by jumping from her 70 foot tower, she was handed over to the English who put her on trial. She was declared guilty and burned at the stake on May 30, 1431, dying at just 19-years-old.

Twenty-five years after her execution, Pope Callixtus III had a court examine Joan of Arc's trial. The court discredited the charges against her and pronounced her innocent. The Catholic Church then declared her a martyr. She is now a patron saint of France and still an immensely popular figure around the world.



ANALYSIS QUESTIONS

1. What makes the best synonym for “siege” as it is used in paragraph 2?
 - a. Attack
 - b. Protect
 - c. Guard
 - d. Support
2. What is an adjective that you feel describes Joan of Arc? Explain why you picked it.
3. One of the offenses the British charged her with was “cross-dressing”. Why do you think she wore men’s clothing?
4. Why do you think Joan of Arc is still popular today?

Extension: Write an obituary for Joan of Arc from the perspective of a French newspaper. Include any information that you feel is important about her family and what she did for France.

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Open to many possible student answers based on their opinions provided they support their answers.

3. One of the offenses the British charged her with was “cross-dressing”. Why do you think she wore men's clothing?

Joan of Arc wore a male military uniform because there were not women's uniforms at the time. It would have been difficult to fight in a dress. She also disguised herself as a pageboy while in enemy territory.

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