

Tabletop Tournament

Jousting Armour, made around 1500-1520



It might seem strange but this armour wasn't made for fighting in battle, it was made as a sort of heavy duty sports equipment, worn in the medieval sport of jousting. Jousting usually involved two knights riding horses towards each other from opposite ends of a short, straight track called a tilt yard. The yard had a special fence called a tilt barrier running down the middle. The aim of the game was for each knight to try to hit each other across the barrier using a long spear called a jousting lance.

When this armour was made in the early 1500s, the game had already become quite complicated, with points awarded for hitting different parts of the body or for knocking your opponent off their horse. Knights could even take part in different types of joust. Some jousts used the latest clockwork technology to make parts of a knight's armour fly off when it was hit with the lance.

Although jousting was a sport, it was also a form of training for fighting in war. It could be quite dangerous! In a lot of tournaments the tip of a jousting lance usually had three points, which was better for gripping armour than piercing it. Sometimes, a single pointed tip was used instead. Those were just like the tips used in a real battle so they could easily hurt your opponent.

500 years ago this June, King Henry VIII of England and King Francis I of France held a huge tournament to celebrate a peace agreement between their two countries. People called it the Field of Cloth of Gold because there was so much fabric made of real gold threads on show. It must have been spectacular! King Henry was probably showing off to his neighbour. Even though this tournament was in celebration of peace between the two countries, we know that lots of the knights used lances with a single, pointed tip during their jousts. Do you think they were trying to show off how brave they were? Or perhaps they were looking to settle a few old scores?

Are you a knight at heart? Have you ever dreamed of competing in a joust? Follow the instructions below to create your own jousting game and play a miniature Field of Cloth of Gold tournament at home.



If you look closely at this armour you will see that it's covered in little dents and scratches from being hit with a lance.

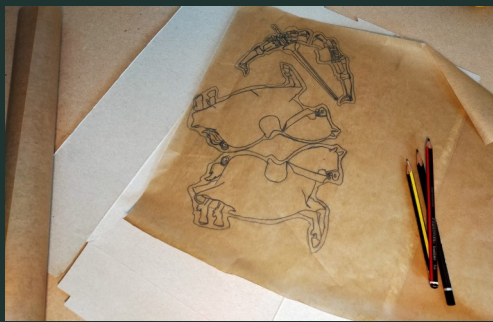
Activity

You will need:

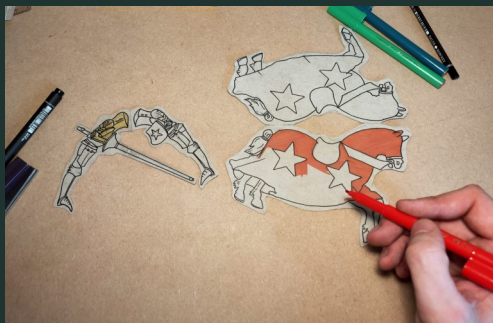
- Jousting templates
- Card or a cereal box
- A pen or pencil
- Glue or tape
- Scissors
- Colouring pencils or pens
- Tracing paper
- 2 x dice

Step 1. Begin by drawing out the jousting templates onto your card or cereal box using tracing paper or baking parchment. If you have card and a printer, you can print the templates directly onto the card. You need two knights, two horses and two tilt barriers to play.

Step 2. Cut out each piece along the solid grey lines but be careful not to cut the dotted fold lines.



Step 3. Now decorate your knights and their horses using coloured pens or pencils. Knights would decorate their shields with their own personal symbols and colours so that people could recognise them. They also decorated the fabric armour worn by their horse, called a caparison. Even their armour was often richly decorated. Take time to colour in your knights with symbols and patterns that are special to you. Why not decorate the tilt barrier too?



Step 4. Fold each template along the dotted line. Fasten each template together in the centre with a dot of glue or piece of rolled tape. Gently pull the legs slightly apart so each horse is able to stand and each knight can sit on his horse. The barrier should also stand up. You're now ready to play!



Activity

Rules of the game:

1. Place your two tilt barriers end to end, creating a tilt yard that is twelve panels in length.
2. Position each knight at opposite ends of the barrier, one on either side, facing towards each other.
3. Both players roll their dice at the same time and the player who rolls the highest number moves forward one panel of the tilt yard.
4. When both knights eventually meet along the yard, the player who just rolled the lowest number moves back to the beginning of the tilt yard. The player who rolled the highest number continues to move forward.
5. The winner is the first knight to reach their opponent's end of the tilt yard.



Use the game to practice your times tables!

1. Place your two tilt barriers end to end, creating a tilt yard that is twelve panels in length.
2. Position each knight at opposite ends of the barrier, one on either side, facing towards each other.
3. Both players roll their dice at the same time and the first player to times the two numbers together and shout out the correct answer, moves forward one panel of the yard.
4. When both knights eventually meet along the yard, the player who just shouted the correct answer continues to move forward. The other player returns to their end of the tilt yard.
5. The winner is the first knight to reach their opponent's end of the tilt yard.

Templates

