Legends of Slovak castles

worksheets

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BraDraShip

Legends of Slovak castles

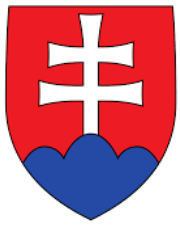
worksheets

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INTRODUCTION

Project BraDraShip is based on the institutional cooperation between Gymnázium Grosslingová 18, Bratislava, Slovakia and St. Hallvard videregående skole, Drammen, Norway. BraDraShip is an acronym for BRAtislava – DRAmmen – Ship and it describes cities on the same board which are eager to fight for better education through mutual sharing of tricks and practices in teaching and learning in the spirit of BROTHERSHIP (which sounds similar to BRADRASHIP).

The project BraDraShip was realized from March 2015 to March 2016 and its main goal was to improve not only teaching process but also after-school activities. In order to achieve the main goal we have set up several partial goals:

- create teaching aids for both scientific and social subjects, share proved and create new methods and activities to emphasize using knowledge in real life situations,
- cooperate on assignments and tasks related to different parts of life which are attractive for our students and raise their awareness about other cultures, history and traditions of both countries.

Teachers have written this material, as one of the project outputs. We recommend it to be used not only in English language classrooms in order to improve vocabulary and reading comprehension skills but also in other classes to extend students knowledge about culture of partner country.

Pre-reading task

1. Compare the pictures.
2. Do you know any information about the castles in the picture? Any legends?







While-reading task

1. Read the legend and underline the most important facts.
2. What are the main characters of the legend? Describe them.

Post-reading task

1. Retell the legend in your own words.
2. What would you do if you were:
   a. the mother of the child
   b. the child
3. Explain the words and phrases: Out of desperation, the harvest, crack, yell out of joy, a shiny gem, grab, impatiently, thrilled.
4. Create a comic about the legend, max. 2 pages.

BIELY KAMEŇ



location: West Slovakia (Svätý Jur)

origin/the first written reference: 1271-1663

owners: Illesházy, Pálffy

condition: ruins

THE LEGEND OF A POOR WOMAN FROM SVATÝ JUR

It was a very hot summer day and near the castle Biely Kameň the harvest had just begun. That year the crop was very plentiful. One young woman was cropping grass and her little son was with her. He was playing not far away from his mother, while she was working. After a while the woman looked around, but she could not see him. She immediately started looking for him and she found him in a castle. Meanwhile, her son ran into the little crack in the castle. She followed him but when she had entered the crack, she noticed something unexpected. There were tons of gold and jewellery around them. Of course, a very poor was crazy about it and she forgot about her little son. She started taking as much as she could. Then she carried the treasures out of the castle but when she wanted to come back the crack wasn´t there. The crack had disappeared and imprisoned her little son. The woman was very desperate, she was looking for her son the whole night and even all the gold changed into stones. Out of desperation, she visited a priest that lived in Svätý Jur as well. The priest listened to her story and gave her advice. He told her to wait one year and after that she could go back to that place. But this time she couldn´t look around and be interested in wealth again. And if she did, she would never see her son again. The woman thanked him for his advice and she went home. For the whole year she was waiting impatiently for that day to get her son back. The nights were never-ending for her. She couldn´t sleep, because all that she could think of, was her little son. And when the sun was shining bright again, she came back to the castle. After such a long time she couldn´t wait, she didn´t sleep and she forgot about the food as well. It was summer, just like a year ago. She was standing under the castle and she was waiting impatiently to see what was going to happen. There was silence surrounding her and all that she could hear were the birds flying in the air. Suddenly, the wall cracked again and a little crack appeared again. The woman was thrilled, she started jumping around and yelling out of joy. She ran into the castle just like a year ago. But this time, she didn´t care about the gold and jewellery. She looked around and then she noticed the place, where she had left her son. And he was there. He was sitting on a stone and he was playing with a shiny gem. The woman was very happy because her son was alive and healthy. He was wearing the same clothes. Actually, he was not even dirty. She felt like he didn´t change at all. She grabbed him into her arms and she pulled him close to her chest and without looking at the gold, she carried him out of the castle. Her son took a fist full of gems, but this time, they didn´t change into stones. Her son told her, that he slept in a golden bed in silk sheets and that a very pretty woman was taking care of him. His mother couldn´t believe his stories, because she did not see any bed there but she was very happy that her son was back home with her again. She put him in his bed and she was watching him sleeping. He was smiling the whole time, because he dreamt about the beautiful woman that was taking care of him, while he was in the castle.

Pre-reading task

1. Compare the pictures.
2. Do you know any information about the castles in the picture? Any legends?







While-reading task

1. Read the legend and underline the most important facts.
2. What are the main characters of the legend? Describe them.

Post-reading task

1. Create a comic about the legend, max. 2 pages.
2. What would you do at the end of the legend if you were:
    a. Mr. Dóci
    b. Mrs. Dóci
    c. Ignác and his friends
3. Explain the words and phrases: redeem, take for granted, get rid of, dissemble, starve, dismiss, rumour, gallop.

THE REVIŠTE CASTLE



location: Žarnovica, Banskobystrický kraj

origin: 13th century

owners: the Dóci family

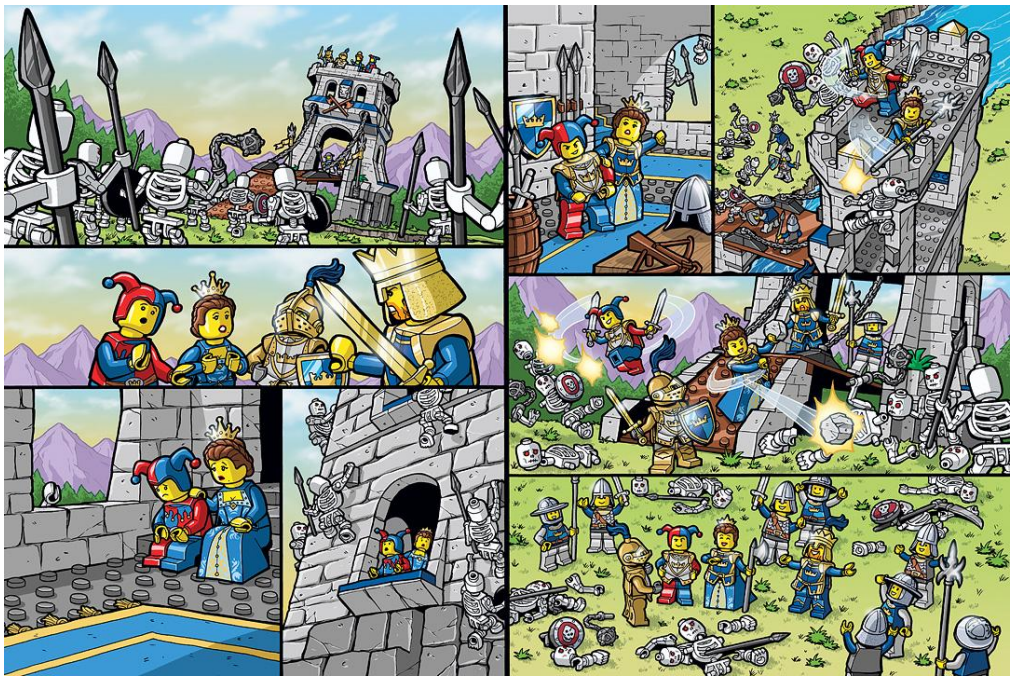
conditions: ruins

GOOD ONES DON'T GET LOST IN THE WORLD

The Dóci family, originally from Banát, was a noble family in the Kingdom of Hungary. Urban Dóci became the owner of the Revište dominion and the castle. Later on, other castles were added to their property, making them one of the richest families in Slovakia. When the Turks journeyed from Esztergom to Pohronie, Ondrej Dóci was captured and dragged into the Ottoman Empire. Aristocrats captured in Turkey weren't treated the same way as the other unfortunates. The Turks knew that they could demand loads of money for them. They expected the Doci's family to show the interest and redeem him immediately. However, no one was coming. One would expect the whole castle to be covered in black colours and that Mrs. Dóci was crying her eyes out. It was taken for granted that the mistress would not live in peace until she redeemed her husband. However, the opposite was true. Tears streamed down her face but from pure joy. Finally, she was lucky and her secret desires were fulfilled. Recently, she had been thinking about doing away with him. The idea of poisoning his wine with a toadstool infusion or hiring forest robbers had come to her mind many times. Miraculously, she got rid of him without an effort. Although her husband was gone, the most important thing, possessions, remained. She gained her desired freedom and could focus on her love life. Feasts and dances in the castle were never-ending. The clatter of horses galloping on the castle road was not silenced even for a moment. The silent castle revived and Mrs. Dóci blossomed. One day, a missionary from a far country of Turkey knocked on the castle door. He brought the mistress an urgent letter from the Turks. They demanded twenty thousand thalers for the redemption of Dóci. "They'll be waiting for a long time", thought the Mistress. However, she had to dissemble in front of the missionary. She was wailing about her sadness and that she could never get so much money even if she sold everything and got into debts. In fact, she didn't want her husband to come back from Turkey at all. She could choose any young man she wanted by pointing her finger. The mistress dismissed her husband and kept on living a happy life. However, she could expect that it would scandalize the liege people. Ignác Petruška, a serf and a notorious poacher, was also displeased with her actions. The good man Dócí had helped him several times. Every time Mr. Dóci caught Ignác hunting in the hills, he helped him and loaded a deer on his back, so his children wouldn't starve. Other lords would have sent him to gallows for such an action. Petruška knew what the mistress was up to. He wanted to repay Mr. Dóci, so he went to his brother-in-law, Ján Mravec. Ján had good memories of Dóci because he had given him wood for a new cottage. Men put their heads together and decided to save Mr. Dóci. They went from house to house and raised thalers for his rescue. Even the poorest ones contributed for a good thing. The mistress started laughing when she found out about it. Later on, she heard that they needed only one last thousand thalers. She got scared but to make herself look innocent she gave them the last thousand thalers out of her own pocket. However, Ignác and Ján weren't stupid and knew that Mrs. Dóci would try to ruin their plans. Three days before the departure, they spread a rumour that Ján had a back pain and wouldn't travel to Turkey. However, he was galloping beyond the country borders to hide the thalers there. They chose well, relying on wit rather than luck. Mrs. Dóci had prepared several traps on their road in a form of thugs. Ignác, who travelled with a procession, was really pleased to meet Ján beyond the borders. After that, they travelled across Turkey to Constantinople where they paid twenty thousand thalers for Dóci's redemption. When they returned the mistress was welcoming her husband with open arms. However, Mr. Dóci decided to treat her fairly. He told her to take her things and get out of his sight forever.

Pre-reading task

1. According to the pictures create the legend.



While-reading task

1. Read the legend and underline the most important facts.
2. What are the main characters of the legend? Describe them.

Post-reading task

1. What would you do if you had seven children at once?
2. According to the definitions find the words in the legend.

   a. to receive money, a house, etc. from someone after they have died
   b. in a way that makes you think that something is wrong
   c. the quality of not being proud because you are aware of your bad qualities
   d. to use a word or an expression that is not polite and shows that you are very angry
   e. untidy and looking a little dirty
   f. clothing, food, or money that is given to poor people



PAJŠTÚN

location: Little Carpathians near a village Borinka

the first written reference (extinction): 1273 (1810)

owners: Pálffy family

condition: ruins

A LEGEND OF THE HEARTLESS MOTHER

There was an old man who was the baron of the Pajštún Castle. He was one of the greatest warriors of his time. He had a great fortune but he couldn't be happy about it because he had no son who could inherit it. Day after day he begged for a child. Years passed by and you could see it on his hair which started to turn grey. However, he still didn't have any child. He was a good man and a good warrior. On the other hand, his wife was high-headed, cruel and ruthless. In spite of that, they lived happily. Opposites really do attract.

The baroness once went to the woods for a walk. It was spring and everything was full of life. But she was just wandering around with a hole in her soul. "Why can't I have children?" she was thinking. This hole couldn't be replaced by any fortune.

She turned around to go back to the castle. Suddenly she noticed a poor scruffy woman with three beautiful children in her arms. The woman threw herself into her feet and started begging for alms. This poor woman told her that her husband, who was the baron's servant, had died and she and her children did not have anything to eat for three days. But the baroness just kicked her contemptuously. She was upset that a beggar had three children and she couldn't get a single one. The beggar jumped in front of her and she cursed her. "Be cursed forever and give birth to seven children at once!" the beggar said. The shocked baroness went back home and told the servants to find that woman. But they never did.

The baroness, anxious for revenge, kept going to the woods looking for the beggar. However, there wasn't a clue where she could be. One day the baroness found out that her husband was called to the war. A day before he left, the wife told him that she was pregnant. The baron was very excited to have a son and it gave him the strength he needed in battles. Whilst he was winning everything he could, his wife was getting ready for the happy event. When the day came, the only person on the baroness' side was her faithful servant. The labor was painful; the baroness gave birth to seven children. All of them were boys and they were all beautiful. The terrified mother remembered the beggar's curse. She quickly called her servant Dora to come and they agreed that Dora would take six of the boys to the woods and bury them alive. She immediately agreed because she was promised a big reward.

Next morning Dora went to the woods with a basket on her back. Everything went just great until she spotted the baron coming home. He started talking to her and noticed she was acting suspiciously. Baron looked into the basket and saw his children. Dora told him everything and he decided that his close friend will raise them. He said nothing to the baroness and they lived in secret. After fifteen years he could not live like that anymore, so he called his friend to come for a visit. He told his wife he knew what she had done. Baroness begged on her knees for forgiveness. Baron saw humility in her eyes and decided to forgive her.

Pre-reading task

1. What are/were they famous for?











While-reading task

1. Read the first part of the legend and underline the most important facts.

Post-reading task

1. Finish the legend. Write or draw the end of the legend.
2. Use the Internet and find the synonyms and the opposites of the words below.

    a. beloved
    b. kind-hearted
    c. hard-working
    d. blushing
    e. gentle
    f. Read the end of the legend and compare with your ideas.



SOKOL CASTLE

location: Košice

origin/the first written reference: 1423 – 1440

owners: Žigmund, Sokoľ Matúš, Imrich z Pavloviec

conditions: ruins

A GLOOMY LEGEND TURNED TO STONE

Once upon a time there was a girl called Katka. She was hard-working, kind-hearted and very beautiful. She was proposed by not a small amount of men in the heat of the moment, but she refused every one without evoking anger.

Katka was living in a small cottage with her widowed mother. One day her mother called Katka to her bed and said with a tired voice: "My beloved daughter, my days are numbered but yours are only beginning. When I die, go to the castle and serve as a maid. That will be the best for you..." For the last time she caressed her cheek and then she passed away. In a few days Katka left to serve in the castle, with her face still marked by the tears.

She was warmly welcomed because she wasn't afraid of getting her hands dirty and was kind to everyone. In her free time she was thinking, eyes looking into the distance, blushing and smiling.

It was a lovely evening. The moon was shining and a gentle breeze was blowing. Out of the blue a young prince appeared in front of her. During last months she noticed him couple of times how handsome he was. If only she could... And he was astonished as well. How could he overlook such a beauty for so long? He sat down, they started to talk and both fell in love. In the morning they were lovers.

They lived their days in happiness, expressing love to each other. But no love song lasts forever. The prince was recruited to the war. But before he left, he had promised that as soon as he returned, they would get married and live together forever. Katka looked into the distance for a long time, her heart aching in anguish. She wanted to run after him, one last kiss, but he was already too far away.

Three months passed and Katka was still alone. The only thing bringing happiness to her life was that she was going to be a mother of his child. Her life seemed to be colourful again and she felt reborn.

But not everything was as it seemed. Katka was shortly summoned by the queen. And the queen wasn't thrilled by the idea of her royal son bothering with a dirty maid, not talking about the marriage. But when she learnt about the baby, she lost her temper. She started to kick and punch Katka. She suffered the punishment in silence because of the image of life she had imagined. But queen's rage was far too great. And when Katka breathed out for the last time, the queen kicked her few more times and called her servants to bury the body somewhere near the graveyard.

At that time the prince was returning home, looking forward to his beloved Katka more than celebrating the victory. When he finally passed through the castle gates, he was shouting her name. But his voice was soon thickening because of anxiety as the only answer was the echo of his own voice.

Later he didn't even show up on the feast celebrating the victory. They said he had disappeared. The queen turned pale and she ran to Katka's grave without a single word. She had a terrible suspicion. The body of her son laid at the bottom of the grave.

"God!" she cried out, "Mercy! What have I done?!" She seized her aching heart, staggered and fell down dead into the grave. The sounds of celebration were softly played from the castle.

Pre-reading task

1. Compare the pictures.
2. Do you know any information about the castles in the picture? Any legends?







While-reading task

1. Read the legend and underline the most important facts.
2. Describe the relationship between the stepmother and Margita, the stepmother and a servant.

Post-reading task

1. Why is the legend called Margita and the Mad?
2. According to the definitions find the words in the legend.

    a. careful and using a lot of effort
    b. the area of a town that surrounds someone's home
    c. by any method possible
    d. not even or smooth, often because of being in bad condition
    e. to come or bring something back to life, health, existence, or use
    f. crying tears

STREČNO CASTLE



location: Strečno near Žilina

origin: 1316

owners: John Sigismund Zápolya, Matthew Csák, Leopold I

condition: reconstructed

MARGITA AND THE MAD

Once upon a time in a county under the Strečno castle there lived a rich man who had a gorgeous daughter. Her name was Margita. She was certainly the most beautiful girl in the neighborhood. Only a few girls could be compared to her. She was known as a very hard-working and diligent young woman. Her mother died when she was a little girl and her father brought her up alone. When she was sixteen, he decided to marry again. He wanted to find a good wife who would be a good stepmother for Margita, too. Unfortunately, he failed.

His new wife was really charming with long hair as black as a raven wing, always dressed to kill with lots of different expensive jewelers, but her soul was as black as a coal. She hated Margita from the first sight. She let her sleep in the stable with the horses instead of her own room in the house. Margita had to do the hardest housework which was supposed to be done by men because her stepmother believed that it would destroy her beauty.
Moreover, the stepmother liked one servant at their estate and she was trying to get his attention. However, he was in love with Margita. After some time Margita noticed that the servant liked her and because they were together a lot of time, she fell in love with him too. As the time was passing by, they decided to marry. The boy asked Margita's father for the blessing. When her stepmother heard about it she wanted to destroy their wedding. She tried in many different ways, but she was not successful. Her last plan was to kill Margita. She wanted to kill her by hook or crook and to have the servant only for her.

One day the stepmother told Margita to deliver the letter to her relative in the neighbourhood. Margita was not used to answer her stepmother back so she took the letter and left. The villainous stepmother chased her. When Margita was dangerously close to the Váh, the stepmother came and pushed her into the river. The river was really rough that day; Margita could not swim so she started to drown. The whirlpool pulled her off to the middle of the Váh. Her only hope was her boyfriend who had noticed the peculiar task the stepmother gave to Margita and that she started to chase her. He knew the stepmother hated Margita so he chased them secretly. Suddenly, he saw the stepmother pushing Margita into the river so he jumped in and brought her on the river bank. Unfortunately, it was too late. Margita had already been dead. He was trying to revive her all night and in the morning his friends found him weeping over his fiancé´s dead body. He told them the whole story about Margita's death. That made them furious and they went away to find the stepmother. When they found her at home neither prays, crying or curses could help her. The boys threw her into the river exactly to that place where Margita was lying. For a while it seemed that the stepmother was walking on the top of the river towards them but then she changed into the rock. Margita was not buried because after a moment she was changed to the rock too. People say that in the Váh there are still two big rocks, which are called Margita and the Mad (the stepmothers' nickname).

Partner schools of project BraDraShip

- Gymnázium Grosslingová 18, Bratislava, Slovakia

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