



# JOAN OF ARC

## Stimulus

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Hundreds of years ago, there was a thing called the Hundred Years War. It was a struggle between two countries: England and France. The English had land in France that they wanted to keep, and they wanted to take more land, maybe even the whole of France. The French fought to win back the land that the English.

Over the hundred years there were lots and lots of battles. Some cities were won by the English, then lost, then won again. A few times there was peace for a few years, but never for long. There were also fights between the French about who should be their king.

One day, in the middle of all this, a French teenager arrived to see the king. She was poor and could not read or write. She said that angels from God had told her to lead an army against the English and drive them out of France completely.

Her appearance was very shocking. She had cut her hair short and was wearing men's clothes, ready to ride a horse and lead the men into battle. In those days, what she was doing was very shocking. All girls had long hair and wore dresses. Only a man could wear trousers and sit on a horse. The girl's name was Joan.

The King didn't know what to do. If God had really spoken to this girl it was important that he let her do what he had told her to do - otherwise God would be angry with him. But what if the girl had made a mistake? What if it had been The Devil talking to her, pretending to be an angel to trick the King. If he followed the Devil's orders by accident, God would be angry too.

So what the king needed to do was find out if the voices Joan had heard were from God or from The Devil. He called for his wisest advisors and religious experts.

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## Task Questions

- ✓ Was the King doing the right thing?
- ✓ What questions do you think they should have asked Joan?

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Eventually, they decided to believe Joan. They gave her a horse, which she learned to ride, and a suit of armour. She did not carry any weapon. Instead, she rode into battle carrying a flag. The soldiers were amazed by her. They were inspired to win a huge battle and free the city of Orleans, where the English had had a siege for over a year.

After that her soldiers loved her. But lots of people didn't want her to fight again. They didn't want her to become too powerful or popular. In the end, Joan persuaded the King to allow her to lead an attack on another city. The King thought that if she won it would prove that she was following God's orders, but that if she lost it would prove that she was not being guided by God after all. This time Joan was worried that she hadn't been given enough soldiers to win, but she believed that God was on her side and would help them. The attack was a disaster. Joan was captured by the English and put in prison.

The English wanted to prove that the voices Joan heard could not have come from God. Because if they did, that would mean that God was against the English. So they called their wisest advisors and religious experts and interviewed her in prison. They needed to show that the voices actually came from The Devil. Many of these men felt sorry for Joan and they wanted her to admit that she had been tricked by The Devil because then she would not have to be killed. But if she didn't change her mind, it would lead to her death.



## Task Questions

- ✓ Because Joan lost the battle did that prove God was not on her side?
- ✓ What questions do you think the advisors and experts should have asked Joan? The same questions as the French asked her?
- ✓ Do you think God would have been on the French or English side? How could we know?