

## **Study Guide for The Sorcerer's Letterbox**

### The Wars of the Roses

The time period depicted in *The Sorcerer's Letterbox* takes place towards the end of the Wars of the Roses, some of the most tumultuous decades in the history of medieval England. Student projects could include detailed research into this fascinating time period, such as the intricate political events of the time, the machinations of the various branches of the rival royal families, the deadly plots of kings and queens, and the ultimately doomed Edward V, who acceded to the throne at the tender age of fourteen. The historical background page ([http://www.simon-rose.com/history\\_sorcerer.htm](http://www.simon-rose.com/history_sorcerer.htm)) has links to a number of websites on this fascinating era.

### The Tower of London

This formidable fortress, one of the world's leading tourist attractions and a World Heritage site, plays a major role in *The Sorcerer's Letterbox*. Student projects could involve research into the fascinating history of the Tower itself, as well as into castles and other medieval fortifications, along with medieval warfare, weaponry and battle strategies.

### Medieval Detectives

The famous story of the Princes in the Tower has often been described as the world's greatest murder mystery. Many theories have been advanced in the intervening centuries as to the guilty parties, with most fingers pointed firmly at Richard III, but many other intriguing possibilities remain. Assignments could include research into the other suspects in the disappearance of the two princes, or even transposing the events of 1483 into the modern era, envisaging a murder investigation into these events set in the present day.

### The World of Words

The mysterious scroll Jack discovers is written in Middle English, one of the many versions of the English language that existed prior to the modern era. This could provide the framework for a study of the way that language has evolved, and how modern English differs from the language prevalent in the medieval era. This could also involve the study of medieval literature, from the Anglo Saxon classics, to the works of Geoffrey Chaucer and the plays of William Shakespeare.

### Life in the Middle Ages

*The Sorcerer's Letterbox* takes place in 1483, towards the end of the Middle Ages, and can provide the basis for countless projects regarding life in the later medieval period. These could include the early Renaissance, social and living conditions, medieval

architecture, literature and culture, the impact on Europe of the voyages of Columbus, the roots of the Reformation, and even the history of the famous London Bridge.

### Incredible Journeys

Jack's own incredible journey into the past within the pages of *The Sorcerer's Letterbox* begins following his discovery of a mysterious medieval wooden box. Students could be asked to imagine where such a magic box might take them in history, or they could use a similarly ancient object as the starting point for an exciting time travel story.