

# THE FELLOWSHIP OF THE RING

# LIVING LITERATURE SERIES

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TEACHER'S GUIDE

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## SYNOPSIS

Opening on September 22, Bilbo Baggins's eleventy-first birthday, which he shares with Frodo, his favorite nephew, the story recaps briefly Bilbo's adventures, during which he gained possession of a magic ring. Acquiescing to pressure from his friend and mentor, Gandalf the wizard, Bilbo bequeaths the ring to Frodo and disappears from Hobbiton.

Frodo, who is sorry to part with Bilbo, lives out the next seventeen years at Bag End, enjoying the peaceful surroundings of Bilbo's abode. At the age of fifty, Frodo feels the unrest that led his uncle on adventures. The land around the shire shows signs of evil abroad—there are trolls and dwarves on the road as well as whisperings about the Enemy and the land of Mordor and the rebuilding of the Dark Tower.

Gandalf, looking weary and worn, returns to Hobbiton and tells Frodo about the ring, which Sauron has imbued with the power to make its wearer invisible. Gandalf has come to realize the possession of such power is dangerous, leading to permanent invisibility. He fears that if Sauron, Dark Lord of Mordor, regains the ring, he will seize control of Middle-earth. To illustrate the peculiar nature of the ring, Gandalf throws it into the fire. Upon its retrieval, Frodo is able to read elvish writings that describe the ring's great power—it is one of three rings, the master-ring which Bilbo stole from Gollum, who had discovered the lost ring in the Great River.

Frodo understands the great threat that hovers over his homeland, accepts the challenge, and sets out to destroy the evil power of the ring. Accompanied by Sam Gamgee, Frodo's gardener, as well as Merry and Pippin, Frodo departs toward Buckland, pretending that he is moving to a new residence. To make his story believable, he sells his beloved home to the contentious Sackville-Bagginses, who immediately move in.

From the beginning of their journey, Frodo and his companions feel the watchful eyes of dark hooded horsemen. With the assistance of Gildor, leader of the elves, and Farmer Maggot, Frodo, traveling under the alias of Mr. Underhill, arrives safely at Crickhollow, site of his new home. Attempting to evade the dark riders, Frodo and his party enter the Old Forest, where Old Man Willow swallows up Pippin and entraps Merry. They are rescued by Tom Bombadil, a jolly singer of songs who escorts the wanderers to his home near the River Withywindle.

The hospitality of Tom and Goldberry, the merry daughter of the River, restores the spirits of Frodo and his fellow hobbits. On their way again, the foursome runs afoul of the barrow-wights and are again rescued by Tom. Before

parting again, Tom supplies them with clothes and ponies and sends them on their way toward Bree, where they are to look for the Prancing Pony Inn.

Among pleasant company at the inn, Frodo accidentally allows his finger to slip into the magic ring. His sudden disappearance leads to much talk among the local folk. One customer of the inn, a mysterious ranger named Strider, offers his assistance. Frodo hesitates to accept Strider's aid until Barliman Butterbur, the innkeeper, delivers a belated letter to Frodo. The letter, which is from Gandalf, explains that Strider, whose real name is Aragorn, is a trusted friend and will help the hobbits find the way to Rivendell. Gandalf closes his letter with strict orders not to use the ring.

After evading the dark horsemen from Mordor, the group borrows a sickly pony and continues toward Weathertop. On the fifth day of their journey, they locate a stone marked with Gandalf's sign. At the depths of his courage, Frodo realizes the peril of facing the dark riders in the night because they can track him by sniffing his trail. Approached by dark figures as they rest about the campfire, Frodo slips on the ring and sees the shapes more clearly. The riders, who can now see Frodo as well, rush toward him and stab him in the left shoulder.

Strider applies a tea made from a healing plant and relieves some of Frodo's suffering, yet is unable to restore life to his wounded arm. For many days, Frodo rides the pony, his wound worsening. The party encounters the elf-lord, Glorfindel, who refreshes the weary travelers with his flask of clear liquid. Glorfindel leads the way to the ford of the river. There Frodo again meets the dark horsemen, but the river floods at their approach and sweeps them away. In the melee, Frodo swoons.

In the opening chapter of Book II, Frodo awakens beside Gandalf in a bed in Elrond's house. Gandalf, who was detained because he was held captive, explains that the black riders are Ringwraiths, the Nine Servants of the Lord of the Rings, and that Strider is one of the people of the old kings. During Frodo's unconsciousness, Elrond removed the fragment of blade that was working inwards, turning Frodo into a wraith under the control of the Dark Lord. At this point, Frodo is reunited with Bilbo, who has joined Sam in a bedside vigil until Frodo returned to consciousness.

Elrond organizes a council to discuss how the residents of Middle-earth can free themselves of the threat of the dark powers. Bilbo, a featured speaker, recounts how he stole the ring from Gollum. The members of the council discuss the problem of Gollum, whom Gandalf captured but allowed to escape. The only solution to the gathering doom is to return the ring to Mordor, to the fire from which it sprang.

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Fearful yet determined, Frodo volunteers to see the deed to its conclusion.

Accompanied by his original three companions plus Gandalf, Legolas, Gimli (a dwarf), Strider, and Boromir, Frodo remains in Elrond's house through November and December. Armed with three gifts from Bilbo—a sword named Sting, a suit of mail, and a belt—Frodo and company travel into the wintry landscape toward Caradhras. Defeated by winter storms, the group enters the tunnels of Moria, where Balin is now entombed. Attacked by wargs, orcs, and a balrog, they escape, but at the cost of Gandalf, who slides into an abyss.

Led by Strider, the remaining eight arrive at Lothlórien, the elves' kingdom. Frodo's companions discover that he has received protection from his covering of mail. Greeted hospitably by Celeborn and Galadriel, the Lord and Lady of Galadrim, the wanderers find rest from their weary journey. Lady Galadriel gives Frodo a glimpse of the past, present, and future in a watery mirror. He sees a piercing eye rimmed with fire which searches for him. Frodo offers the ring to Lady Galadriel. Realizing the importance of Frodo's quest, she rejects the gift.

Furnished with boats by Celeborn as well as fine gifts from Lady Galadriel, the troop sets out by water. At the Anduin River, Sam reports seeing a log with eyes. Frodo guesses that the apparition was really Gollum. The group fights off an orc attack.

At the Pillars of the Kings, they face the last stage of their quest. Frodo goes on alone. He is surprised by Boromir, who wheedles a glimpse of the ring. As Boromir becomes more insistent, Frodo slips on the ring and escapes. Sam, Frodo's faithful companion, realizes what Frodo has in mind and hurries to catch up with his master. Together they search for the Cracks of Doom. Within the sound of the great falls, the two shoulder their packs and seek the path to the Land of Shadow.

### BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Writer, philologist, and teacher, John Ronald Reuel Tolkien (affectionately called "Tollers" by his colleagues) was born in Bloemfontein, Orange Free State, South Africa, in 1892. After a brain hemorrhage caused the death of his father, Arthur, a manager of the Bank of Africa, four-year-old Ronald and his younger brother, Hilary, moved to Hall Green in Birmingham, England, the prototype for Hobbiton. The boys lived with their mother, Mabel Suffield Tolkien, until her death from diabetes in 1904. Their care passed first to their widowed Aunt Beatrice Suffield and then to Father Francis Xavier Morgan, a longtime friend of the family.

Tolkien was schooled at St. Philip's Grammar School and King Edward VI's School, Birmingham; and later Exeter College, Oxford. He interrupted his studies to serve as a lieutenant in the signal corps in the Lancashire Fusiliers during World War I, at which time he married Edith Mary Bratt, his childhood sweetheart. He returned home from the war in 1916 as a result of trench fever, and convalesced at

Great Haywood. Shortly after Tolkien began writing *The Book of Lost Tales*, his son John was born in 1917. The following year, Tolkien joined the Oxford staff as assistant lexicographer of the New English Dictionary.

Tolkien taught at the University of Leeds during the twenties, where his son Michael was born in 1920, Christopher in 1924, and Priscilla five years later. Tolkien accepted a professorship of Anglo-Saxon at Pembroke College, Oxford, until 1945, and the professorship of English language and literature at Merton College, Oxford, where he remained until his retirement in 1959. During his career, Tolkien distinguished himself with learned publications, translations, language studies, lectures, readings, and scholarly editions of Old and Middle English literature.

He achieved popular fame, however, through his fictional novels based on Germanic and Scandinavian folklore, *The Hobbit* (1937), *The Fellowship of the Ring* (1954), *The Two Towers* (1954), *The Return of the King* (1955), *The Adventures of Tom Bombadil* (1962), *Tree and Leaf* (1964), and *The Silmarillion* (published posthumously in 1977). In 1972, a year after his wife's death, Tolkien returned to Oxford and was awarded an honorary Doctorate of Letters. He died the following year in a nursing home and is buried in Wolvercote Cemetery in Oxford.

### CRITIC'S CORNER

At the beginning of his twelve years' work on *The Lord of the Rings*, Tolkien realized that the work was "forgetting children and becoming more terrifying than *The Hobbit*." But he forged ahead with his trilogy, mindful that fairy tales are not necessarily for the young. A perfectionist in his craftsmanship, Tolkien insisted that every detail of topography, chronology, and character be correct. He enlisted the help of his son Christopher with a preliminary map to serve as a working guide to the series.

Tolkien's friend, novelist C. S. Lewis, encouraged him during his dry spells and rewarded him with high praise of the work's attention to minor details and of its seriousness. In his letter to Tolkien in autumn, 1949, Lewis exults, "I congratulate you. All the long years you have spent on it are justified." Tolkien, less certain of the success of his work, groused, "It is written in my life-blood, such as that is, thick or thin; and I can no other."

The immediate reviews were mixed, but the public's response was unmistakable. Within six weeks, a reprint was ordered. In America, critical opinion was at first cautious. But W. H. Auden, writing for the *New York Times*, exuded great praise: "No fiction I have read in the last five years has given me more joy." When the second and third volumes reached the stands, C. S. Lewis capped his earlier criticism with a suitable blessing: "It is comforting, in this troubled day, to be once more assured that the meek shall inherit the earth."

### GENERAL OBJECTIVES

1. To differentiate aspects of fantasy.
2. To discuss the theme of friendship and loyalty.

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3. To explain the nature of evil.
4. To compare the behavior of free peoples, i. e. elves, dwarves, hobbits, and men.
5. To discuss the importance of the journey motif.
6. To isolate human foibles among the hobbits.
7. To enumerate simple pleasures that lessen the pain of the journey.
8. To explain the importance of hospitality and generosity.
9. To discuss the various prejudices among the different creatures of Middle-earth.

### SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES

1. To account for Tom Bombadil's freedom from fear of evil.
2. To explain the depiction of evil in the form of dark, faceless horsemen.
3. To contrast the levels of evil demonstrated by Saruman, Gollum, Sauron, orcs, and a balrog.
4. To contrast Frodo's dreams.
5. To explain how the threat of war is a unifying agent.
6. To contrast the varying landscapes that the travelers encounter and their effect upon the courage of each traveler.
7. To explain the nature and purpose of Gandalf as a character.
8. To discuss the importance of narrative verse to the story.
9. To explain why Frodo accepts the challenge of the ring.

### MEANING STUDY

Below are words, phrases, or sentences that have a particular meaning in the story. Explain the meaning each has in this novel. Page numbers are provided so that you can re-read the passages from which the item is taken.

1. I don't know how to say it, but after last night I feel different. I seem to see ahead, in a kind of way. I know we are going to take a very long road, into darkness; but I know I can't turn back. (Book I, Chapter 4)  
*(Sam Gamgee, gardener turned adventurer, attempts to explain his mission. His words are not eloquent, but he captures the lure that has led first Bilbo, then Frodo from the safe haven of Hobbiton to the wide and dangerous world beyond. Sam perceives that deep within him lies the call that will not be denied. For Frodo, this is enough. He replies, ". . . I understand that Gandalf chose me a good companion. I am content. We will go together.")*
2. If you want to know, you have all come out from your feast too soon, and you have disturbed me—in the middle of making up a song. (Book II, Chapter 1)

*(Bilbo, whom Frodo last saw on their mutual birthday over seventeen years earlier, has obviously ended his gadabout stage and entered a contemplative era, which the author considers a suitable conclusion to life. As Bilbo describes his more cerebral activities, he has given up adventure and travel and has come to Rivendell to write on his book and make up songs. "And I listen and I think. Time doesn't seem to pass here. It just is. A remarkable place altogether.")*

3. Some here will remember that many years ago I myself dared to pass the doors of the Necromancer in Dol Guldur, and secretly explored his ways, and found thus that our fears were true: he was none other than Sauron, our Enemy of old, at length taking shape and power again. (Book II, Chapter 2)

*(Gandalf, brave in his search for knowledge, once studied the dark sorcery of the Necromancer, a conjuror who consorts with the dead. In his traffic with the dark spirit he learns what great philosophers have often stated—that evil comes in many forms, but evil itself is a single entity. [Sauron, the more familiar name for the Necromancer, derives from the Greek sauros or lizard, a suggestion of the biblical snake. His henchmen, particularly the wily Gollum, speak their evil in hisses.]*

4. I see yellow cream and honeycomb, and white bread, and butter; milk, cheese, and green herbs and ripe berries gathered. Is that enough for us? (Book I, Chapter 7)

*(The simple vegetarian fare of Goldberry and Tom Bombadil's table suggests a peaceful alliance with nature, from which goodness flows. Tom is the one being who is unaffected by the ring's power. His idyllic existence in the old forest brings a pleasant respite to the journeymen. After a steamy wash in earthenware ewers of water, the hobbits don soft green slippers and join Tom and Goldberry at their abundant table. Even the fire, redolent with a sweet-smelling wood, lulls them into greater rest. Goldberry rounds out the evening with a proper benediction. "Have peace now," she said, "until the morning! Heed no nightly noises! For nothing passes door and window here save moonlight and starlight and the wind off the hill-top. Good night!")*

5. All Hobbits were, in any case, clannish and reckoned up their relationships with great care. They drew long and elaborate family-trees with innumerable branches. In dealing with Hobbits it is important to remember who is related to whom, and in what degree. (Prologue)

*(Tolkien pokes gentle fun at the foibles of hobbits, who, like humans, take great pride in their genealogy. The author carries his jest about their family pride to a proper conclusion, noting that "Hobbits delighted in such things, if they were accurate: they liked to have books filled with things that they already knew, set out fair and square with no contradictions.")*

*Yet Bilbo and Frodo defy the typical life of hobbits by*

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remaining bachelors. Their lack of involvement in intimate familial relationships allows them the freedom to wander. Otherwise, Tolkien would have to compensate for the psychological draw of homefire and children during the dreary, dismal days of their journey.)

6. It would be a grievous blow to the world, if the Dark Power overcame the Shire; if all your kind, jolly, stupid Bolgers, Hornblowers, Boffins, Bracegirdles, and the rest, not to mention the ridiculous Bagginses, became enslaved. (Book I, Chapter 2)

*(Tolkien uses alliteration to enhance his point—the many simple families of Hobbiton, whatever their names, have no worth to the Dark Power until they stand in his way. Only when Bilbo and Frodo withhold the magic ring does the lord of evil deign to notice them. Gandalf emphasizes his point about the danger at hand: "I believe that hitherto—hitherto, mark you—he has entirely overlooked the existence of hobbits. You should be thankful. But your safety has passed. He does not need you—he has many more useful servants—but he won't forget you again. And hobbits as miserable slaves would please him far more than hobbits happy and free. There is such a thing as malice and revenge!")*

7. Among the Wise I am the only one that goes in for hobbitlore: an obscure branch of knowledge, but full of surprises. (Book I, Chapter 2)

*(Tolkien, speaking through the persona of Gandalf, justifies his belief in the small creatures who are his heroes. "Soft as butter they can be, and yet sometimes as tough as old tree-roots. I think it likely that some would resist the Rings far longer than most of the Wise would believe.")*

*With these words, Tolkien/Gandalf clarifies the appeal of hobbits—they are soft in the sense that they mind their own affairs; but they are firmly rooted in the realm of their beliefs. Even though they take great pleasure in comfort and good food, hobbits have a staying power when assailed by external forces.)*

8. I hope Butterbur sends this promptly. A worthy man, but his memory is like a lumber-room: thing wanted always buried. (Book I, Chapter 10)

*(Tolkien's chief literary device is the simile, as in this comparison of the innkeeper's memory to a cluttered lumber-room. In other examples, the author resorts to familiar images, usually from nature or humble life. For example, the approach of the black figures to the inn at Crickhollow is like "shades of night creeping across the ground." At the door they stand "as still as shadows of stones, while night went slowly on. The house and the quiet trees seemed to be waiting breathlessly.")*

9. When they saw them they were glad that they had taken his advice: the windows had been forced open and were swinging, and the curtains were flapping; the beds were tossed about, and the bolsters slashed and flung upon the floor, the brown mat was torn to pieces. (Book I, Chapter 11)

*(Tolkien manages to bring his story to the brink of conflict without resorting to gratuitous violence. The preceding scene, revealing the black figures on their precipitous flight, suggests that harm could have befallen the innocent hobbits, asleep at the fireplace. On the way out, one of the brigands "[lets] fall a hobbit-cloak on the step.")*

*Even in this chaotic scene at the Prancing Pony, the inference is clear—if Strider had not forbid that the hobbits go to their rooms, they might have suffered the swift retribution of the dark avengers. Butterbur, aghast at the damage, demands, "What are we coming to?" Strider has a ready answer, "Dark times.")*

10. But such a thing has not happened before, that Gandalf broke tryst and did not come when he promised. (Book II, Chapter 2)

*(At the Council of Elrond, Gandalf explains in great detail why he has not kept his promise to return. Caught in Saruman's power, Gandalf is bid to stay "until the end." Set alone on a pinnacle, like Prometheus chained to the rock, "like a fly in a spider's treacherous web," Gandalf chafes at his confinement.)*

*Utilizing the swift wings of Gwaihir the Windlord, Gandalf makes use of every connection to speed him on his way against the evil Nine. From Rohan, Gandalf gallops away on Shadowfax toward the Shire, a week too late. He follows the trail, from Backland to the house at Crickhollow, from Bree to Weathertop and on to Rivendell.)*

### COMPREHENSION STUDY

Answer the following questions in your own words. There is not always a right answer. Your judgment is important and you should be ready to defend your answers by referring to passages in the novel.

#### Questions 1-5 Literal Level

1. Describe Frodo's new house at Crickhollow.

*(To mask his real purpose in leaving Bag End, Frodo pretends that he is returning to his native Buckland. He enlists Merry's help in securing a "little house at Crickhollow in the country beyond Bucklebury." The house, located some distance from the "lane in the middle of a wide circle of lawn surrounded by a belt of low trees inside the outer hedge," is not visible from the road. Suitable to Frodo's wishes, the isolated spot is perfect for unseen exits through a rear tunnel.)*

*The house had been built for the use of guests or "members of the family that wished to escape from the crowded life of Brandy Hall for a time." Old-fashioned in the same vein as hobbit-hole, it is "long and low, with no upper storey; and it had a roof of turf, round windows, and a large round door." The dark exterior belies a friendly welcome within. On their entrance, the travelers find a wide hall with*

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doors on either side and a passage down the center of the house.

Frodo immediately feels at home because Fatty Bolger has overseen the placement of cartloads of Frodo's belongings. The weary wanderers are treated to three tubs, a copper filled with steaming water, and the accoutrements for a bath. At his first view of his new home, Frodo is enchanted: "It's delightful! . . . I hardly feel that I have moved at all."

2. What are the longterm effects of the ring on its possessor.

(After a nine years' absence, Gandalf, looking "older and more careworn," appears at Bag End. He and Frodo catch up on local and world news in their late-night conversation, but it is not until the next morning that the real issue surfaces. Frodo inquires why Gandalf began talking about the ring and then stopped. Gandalf explains that the ring is "far more powerful than I ever dared to think at first. . . .")

He warns Frodo that the ring is capable of possessing its possessor. "A mortal, Frodo, who keeps one of the Great Rings, does not die but he does not grow or obtain more life, he merely continues, until at last every minute is a weariness. And if he often uses the Ring to make himself invisible, he fades: he becomes in the end invisible permanently, and walks in the twilight under the eye of the dark power that rules the Rings. Ultimately, the ring devours its possessor.)

3. What is the final solution to the ring's evil?

(When Frodo grasps the seriousness of his situation, he naively suggests that the ring be destroyed. At Gandalf's suggestion, he attempts to rid himself of it by throwing it into the fire, but he is unable to cast it away. Gandalf laughs grimly at the display of the ring's power over Frodo's will.

He declares that "there is no smith's forge in this Shire that could change it at all." The ring, "made by Sauron himself," must be hurled into the "Cracks of Doom in the depths of Orodruin, the Fire-mountain . . . beyond the grasp of the Enemy for ever.")

4. Explain why Sam Gamgee is an appropriate companion for Frodo.

(The youngest son of old Ham Gamgee, Sam, who lives at "Number 3 Bagshot Row," works as the gardener at Bag End. Even before Frodo prepares to make his departure, Sam and Ted Sandyman contemplate the unmistakable signs of evil stirring in Middle-earth.

On the day that Gandalf and Frodo discuss the fateful journey, Gandalf captures Sam as he eavesdrops on their conversation. The folksy, good-hearted Sam declares that he loves "tales of that sort" and begs to be taken along "to see Elves." After Frodo urges Sam to keep his personal business

private, Gandalf settles the whole matter—"You shall go away with Mr. Frodo!"

From the beginning, Sam is loyal to his employer. He declares, ". . . I am going with him, if he climbs to the Moon; and if any of those Black Riders try to stop him, they'll have Sam Gamgee to reckon with. . . ." True to his word, Sam remains steadfast, nursing Frodo through the ill effects of his shoulder wound. At the end of the novel, it is Sam who sticks with Frodo at the great falls as the party approaches the Land of Shadow. Frodo acknowledges his companion's loyalty: "It is no good trying to escape you. . . . It is plain that we were meant to go together.")

5. Explain how the Fellowship loses Gandalf during the battle with Balrog.

(In the depths of the tunnel of Moria with "Doom, Doom" in their ears, the fellowship searches for a way out. Gandalf leads the way from the Second Hall toward the Bridge of Khazad-Dûm. Beyond, they spy "fierce red light, flames, and dark smoke. Battling through an orc attack, they come upon a "great shadow, in the middle of which was a dark form, of man-shape maybe, yet greater; and a power and terror seemed to be in it and to go before it."

The satanic figure leaps across the fissure amid a wreath of flames. Its mane ablaze, it brandishes a blade and a whip. Legolas identifies the apparition: "A Balrog! A Balrog is come!" As though he can read his fate in the confrontation, Gandalf mutters, "Now I understand . . . . What an evil fortune! And I am already weary."

Boromir sounds the horn and Gandalf attempts to hold the passage over the bridge until the company can escape. Holding the balrog at bay with Glamdring, his sword, Gandalf stands firm and yells, "You cannot pass." Grey and shrunken before the great evil, the wizard nevertheless meets sword with sword. He strikes the bridge with his staff and cracks it at the balrog's feet. As the monster pitches forward, the whip tangles round Gandalf's knees, dragging him over the brink.)

### Questions 6-8 Interpretive Level

6. What is the purpose of Gandalf in the novel?

(A spokesman for wisdom, Gandalf is more than mentor, greater than a philosopher, and more purposeful than a magician. To both Bilbo and Frodo, he is a force for goodness. As Ruth S. Noel describes him in *The Mythology of Middle-Earth*, [Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1977] the "unassuming, grey-cloaked pilgrim" deliberately masks the power and purpose of his superior wisdom and common sense.

A complex character, he parallels Merlin—"both powerful, prophetic, inscrutable, and suddenly, unexpectedly, human." Each bears a heavy responsibility—the salvation of an innocent people. Mys-

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terious and at times capricious, as when he summons a smoke dragon in celebration of Bilbo's birthday, Gandalf appears when he is needed to help the kingdom of Middle-earth restore peace.)

7. What human foibles are outstanding in hobbit behavior? (The hobbits, Tolkien's own mythic creations, are peaceable, rather hedonistic souls given to simple pleasures, including six meals a day when they can get them. According to the Prologue, they had been warlike in the dim past, when they were "obliged to fight to maintain themselves in a hard world." But at the time of the story, their lives gravitate toward a less bellicose existence.

Their childlike weaknesses for gossip, superstition, petty greed, and family intrigue reflect Tolkien's gentle satire on human foibles. Their focus is inward, toward the business of the Shire. Bustling and provincial, hobbits are a humble people who prefer the pleasures of hospitality, a warm fire, a clay pipe, and a good night's sleep to grandeur or wealth.

Averse to the ins and outs of more complicated politics, Hobbits are clannish and family-oriented. Like their human counterparts, they delight in genealogies, particularly those that are accurate, as "they liked to have books filled with things that they already knew, set out fair and square with no contradictions."

Because of their smallness and weakness, the deeds of Bilbo and Frodo seem vastly heroic, far beyond what the reader might expect of lesser creatures pitted against the greater odds of monsters and mighty villains. It is the human side of the hobbits that contrasts the daring of Bilbo and Frodo.)

8. Discuss how Gollum is a victim of his own greed. (Gandalf narrates the tale of Sméagol, later called Gollum. Impelled by the urge to possess the ring that his friend Déagol brings up from the river bed during a fishing expedition, Sméagol murders his friend and discovers the ring's secret—invisibility for its wearer. Wicked at heart, Sméagol uses the ring "to find out secrets" and puts his knowledge to "crooked and malicious uses."

Shunned and unpopular, he turns to thieving and muttering to himself and earns the name Gollum for the "gurgling in his throat." Even his grandmother casts him out. Alone and wandering, Gollum feeds himself on raw fish, which he catches with invisible fingers, and turns away from the light. To escape the prying eye of the sun, he "wormed his way like a maggot into the heart of the hills, and vanished out of all knowledge."

Deep in his cave, Gollum falls victim to the power of his "precious," which he both loves and hates. Ultimately the ring, capable of deciding its own fate, deserts him by revealing itself to Bilbo. Gandalf pictures Gollum as a sniveling, snarling liar and guilt-ridden murderer, gnawing bones in his dismal

quarters. When caught, Gollum whines and cringes his way free, rubbing "his long hands, licking his fingers as if they pained him, as if he remembered some old torture.")

### Questions 9 and 10 Critical Level

9. Explain the importance of hospitality as a theme of the novel.

(A major theme of *The Fellowship of the Ring* is hospitality, which Frodo and his companions encounter along the way. Tolkien dwells on the simple pleasures of warmth, good food, pleasant conversation, and entertainment as a relief from the harrowing challenges that face the travelers on their journey. Before Bilbo's birthday party, "every kind of provision, commodity, or luxury that could be obtained in Hobbiton or Bywater or anywhere in the neighbourhood," is stockpiled for the great event. So many invitations are extended that the "Bywater post-office was snowed under, and voluntary assistant postmen were called for."

On the long-awaited day—Thursday, September 22—according to hobbit custom, Bilbo bestows simple gifts on each guest. Entertainment includes "songs, dances, music, games, and of course, food and drink. There were three official meals: lunch, tea, and dinner (or supper). Gandalf polishes off the evening with his own specialty—fireworks, climaxing in a "red-golden dragon—not life-size, but terribly life-like."

Throughout his odyssey, Frodo, encounters similar displays of hospitality, although not so lavish as the birthday party. At Woodhall, he is guest of Gildor, who offers bread, sweet berries, and a fragrant drink. At the gathering, Frodo, naturally garrulous, sits, "eating, drinking, and talking with delight." He departs with enough food for breakfast.

In other welcoming situations, Frodo warms to hospitality—in Farmer and Mrs. Maggot's kitchen, in his new home at Crickhollow, at the home of Tom Bombadil and Goldberry, and the round table at the Prancing Pony. The culmination of support for Frodo occurs in Book II in the Hall of Fire, where Elrond entertains Frodo with minstrels, friendly conversation, and a feast in Frodo's honor. The next day, "feeling refreshed and well," Frodo is ready for the business at hand—the council that will settle the matter of the ring.)

10. Analyze existential themes in the novel.

(Early in the novel, Tolkien stresses existential themes, particularly the challenge that faces a single, frail creature. When Frodo begins to grasp the significance of his heirloom, he concludes, "I am a danger, a danger to all that live near me. I cannot keep the Ring and stay here. I ought to leave Bag End, leave the Shire, leave everything and go away."



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*His sigh expresses the severity of the onus on a single pair of shoulders. Frodo sharpens the picture of exile, "a flight from danger into danger, drawing it after me." Gingerly he voices his fear, "And I suppose I must go alone. . . ." The only comfort he can find in his quandary are Gandalf's few words, ". . . you are not ready for that long road yet."*

*Gildor provides some insight into the challenge of the gathering evil. "The wide world is all about you: you can fence yourselves in, but you cannot for ever fence it out." Yet, he, too, holds out some hope: "Courage is found in unlikely places. . . . I name you Elf-friend; and may the stars shine upon the end of your road!"*

*Tolkien echoes the theme of loneliness and discouragement at various times during the journey. Just before Frodo is wounded at Weathertop, he has a premonition of the peril that lies ahead: "In that lonely place Frodo for the first time fully realized his homelessness and danger. He wished bitterly that his fortune had left him in the quiet and beloved Shire."*

*To offset the grimness of existential themes, Tolkien emphasizes the importance of friendship and loyalty. Frodo is never far from assistance from both stranger and friend. His battles are real enough, fraught with deadly danger, but the aid of Aragorn, Gandalf, Tom Bombadil, and his loyal companions provide the bolster he needs to keep going. At the end, as he turns his back on all and trudges toward the ultimate challenge, he realizes that Sam Gamgee, his loyal gardener, remains fearlessly beside him, ready to face what lies ahead.)*

### Question 11 Creative Level

11. Working with a small group, create a poem about one of the key events in the novel, such as Frodo's fight with Boromir, the battle at Weathertop, Gandalf's clash with the balrog, or the attack on the Prancing Pony. Emphasize Anglo-Saxon words and topographical features of the setting. Set the poem to a familiar tune.

### STUDENT INVOLVEMENT ACTIVITIES

1. Create an index of inhabitants, history, geography and other details from Middle-earth to accompany the text. Identify each of the following: Anduin, Aragorn, Arwen Evenstar, Athelas, Bag End, Balin, Balrog, Barliman Butterbur, Barrow-Downs, Barrow-Wights, Bilbo Baggins, Bill Ferny, Black Breath, Boromir, Brandywine River, Bree, Caradhras, Celeborn, Crickhollow, Dark Riders, Dunedain, Durin's Stone, Elbereth Gilthoniel, Elrond, Farmer Maggot, Fatty Bolger, Fatty Lumpkin, Ford of Bruinen, Frodo, Galadriel, Gandalf the Grey, Gildor, Gil-Galad, Gimli, Glóin, Glorfindel, Goldberry, Gondor, Gwaihir, Hobbiton, Hobbits, Isildur, Isildur's bane, Legolas, Lobelia Sackville-Baggins, Lothlórien (Lórien), Meriadoc Brandybuck (Merry), Middle-earth,

Mirkwood, Misty Mountains, Mordor, Moria, Mount Doom, Old Man Willow, Orcs, Orodruin, Peregrin Took (Pippin), Prancing Pony, Rangers, Ring of Adamant, Tinúviel, Rivendell, Sam Gamgee, Saruman, Sauron, Shire, Smaug, Sméagol, Sting, Strider, Thorin Oakenshield, Tom Bombadil, Wargs, Weathertop. [Note that you may have to refer to information from *The Hobbit*, which is frequently mentioned in this work.]

2. Explain why Frodo's cry of "Elbereth Gilthoniel!" saves him during the assault of the Dark Riders on Weathertop.
3. Draw an enlarged version of the map that precedes the Prologue to *The Fellowship of the Ring*. In red, trace Frodo's journey from the Shire to the Great River which borders Mordor. Mark with pins the location of major events in the story.
4. Give a short oral explanation of the title of the book, emphasizing the relationships among the characters who make the journey with Frodo.
5. Select a narrative poem to read aloud into a tape recorder. Stress the rhythm of the verses and the most important character and place names.
6. Lead a debate of the following statement as it applies to the novel: The desire to dominate others is the greatest evil.
7. Write an essay on the concept of the hero as it applies to Frodo and his uncle Bilbo. Draw contrasts to comic strip, TV, and movie heroes and heroines. Explain why a hobbit is not the most likely choice for the central character of an adventure story.
8. Keep a vocabulary list of unfamiliar topographical terms used in the novel, such as glade, weir, coppice, alder-trees, greensward, sloe, tussock, and nettle.
9. Write an illustrated report on the history and nature of runes. Demonstrate the use of the Germanic system of runes by transliterating a familiar passage, such as a nursery rhyme or child's song, from alphabet to runes.
10. Organize a game of charades and act out significant characters, objects, places, and scenes from the story.

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## THE FELLOWSHIP OF THE RING

### VOCABULARY TEST

Replace the underlined word in each of these sentences with the author's original word from the list that follows. You will have words left over when you finish.

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1. The horses of the Nine cannot contend with him: tireless, swift as the flowing wind.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2. "May your beer be laid under an enchantment of exceeding excellence for seven years!" said I.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 3. Only a little higher, if I remember rightly, this path leaves the cliff and runs into a wide shallow drain at the bottom of a long hard slope.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 4. Do not lay it aside, even in sleep, unless fortune brings you where you are safe for a while; and that will seldom chance while your search lasts.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 5. Only the diminishing might of Gondor stands now between him and a march in power along the the coasts into the north. . . .
- \_\_\_\_\_ 6. "And yet its caution can no longer keep back the Nine," said Galdor.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 7. The Nine have been unhorsed indeed but that is but a pause, ere they find new steeds and swifter.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 8. The brawl was sharp, but the orcs were dismayed by the fierceness of the defence.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 9. There was a flash like flame and the helm burst apart.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 10. Be bold, but alert!
- \_\_\_\_\_ 11. They came to a low room with a sloping roof (a shed, it seemed, built on to the north end of the house.)
- \_\_\_\_\_ 12. They gleamed as he drew them from their black sheaths, created of some strange metal, light and strong, and set with many fiery stones.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 13. They made ready, packing their bags and burdening their ponies.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 14. The flies began to torment them, and the air was full of clouds of tiny gnats that crept up their sleeves and breeches and into their hair.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 15. There were Nine Riders at the water's edge below, and Frodo's spirit trembled before the threat of their uplifted faces.

affray asunder conical delved fissure knoll lading levying midges outlier penthouse quagmires  
quailed quest respite shrouded silvan sluggard squib surpassing tiding tribute trough  
tryst vaulting vie vigilance waning wary wrought

## THE FELLOWSHIP OF THE RING

### COMPREHENSION TEST A

#### Part I: Quotation Completion (30 points)

Supply a word to complete each of the following statements. Choose your answers from the list that follows. Place them in the blanks provided at left.

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1. But I'm glad, \_\_\_\_\_. I cannot tell you how glad. Come along! It is plain that we were meant to go together.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2. Eldest, that's what I am. Mark my words, my friends: \_\_\_\_\_ was here before the river and the trees; \_\_\_\_\_ remembers the first raindrop and the first acorn.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 3. Gandalf was thinking of a Spring, nearly eighty years before, when \_\_\_\_\_ had run out of Bag End without a handkerchief.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 4. "This is \_\_\_\_\_," he said, and thrust it with little effort deep into a wooden beam.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 5. With a terrible cry the \_\_\_\_\_ fell forward, and its shadow plunged down and vanished. But even as it fell it swung its whip, and the thongs lashed and curled about the wizard's knees, dragging him to the brink.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 6. There was only one thing he could do: trembling he pulled out the Ring upon its chain and quickly slipped it on his finger, even as \_\_\_\_\_ sprang at him again.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 7. . . . \_\_\_\_\_ was going to be *thirty-three*, 33, an important number: the date of his "coming of age."
- \_\_\_\_\_ 8. Sméagol, who is now called \_\_\_\_\_, has escaped.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 9. "It's addressed plain enough," said Mr. \_\_\_\_\_, producing a letter from his pocket . . . .
- \_\_\_\_\_ 10. I am \_\_\_\_\_, daughter of the River.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 11. "Where does that other old animal, that \_\_\_\_\_, come from?" asked Frodo.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 12. Well, if it isn't Master \_\_\_\_\_—Mr. Peregrin Took, I should say!
- \_\_\_\_\_ 13. I will give you a travelling name now. When you go, go as Mr. \_\_\_\_\_.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 14. . . . Frodo's wine had not been included in the sale to the \_\_\_\_\_.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 15. "\_\_\_\_\_ commanded it," answered Gandalf. "The river of this valley is under his power, and it will rise in anger when he has great need to bar the Ford."

Aragorn Balrog Barrow-Wights Bilbo Boromir Butterbur Elrond Fatty Lumpkin Frodo  
Gildor Goldberry Gollum Orcs Pippin Sackville-Bagginses Sam Sauron Sting Tom Underhill

#### Part II: Matching (20 points)

Match each of the following descriptions with a name from the list that follows. Place the letter of your answer in the blank provided at left.

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1. mysterious wanderers who are taller and darker than the Men of Bree
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2. recalls when Frodo was a young rascal
- \_\_\_\_\_ 3. stays behind and handles the "inquisitive folk"
- \_\_\_\_\_ 4. a sneering fellow who "would sell anything to anybody"

## THE FELLOWSHIP OF THE RING

- \_\_\_\_\_ 5. once tended Bilbo's garden, but passes the job on to his son
- \_\_\_\_\_ 6. a richly dressed dwarf who was one of the twelve companions of Thorin Oakenshield
- \_\_\_\_\_ 7. buried under a slab marked with engraved runes
- \_\_\_\_\_ 8. leaves that ease the pain in Frodo's shoulder
- \_\_\_\_\_ 9. shoots a warg in the throat with an elvish arrow
- \_\_\_\_\_ 10. shows her watery mirror to Frodo

- |                  |              |
|------------------|--------------|
| A. Athelas       | F. Gaffer    |
| B. Balin         | G. Galadriel |
| C. Bill Ferny    | H. Glóin     |
| D. Farmer Maggot | I. Legolas   |
| E. Fatty Bolger  | J. Rangers   |

### Part III: True/False (20 points)

Mark the following statements either **T** for true or **F** if any part is false.

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1. When Bilbo leaves the Shire, he is happy and eager to leave the Ring to Frodo.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2. Gandalf has known from the beginning that Bilbo's Ring is, in fact, the "One Ring of Power."
- \_\_\_\_\_ 3. Gollum still hungers for the Ring and searches for it.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 4. Sauron knows that the Ring must still exist although he does not know who possesses it.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 5. Gandalf refuses to take possession of the Ring.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 6. At the Council in Rivendell, Elrond argues against destroying the Ring.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 7. Since Frodo is the Ring bearer, he assumes leadership of the Fellowship.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 8. Boromir reveals himself as the descendant of Isildur and the rightful heir to the throne of Gondor.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 9. Saruman the White, leader of Gandalf's order, has been corrupted by the lure of the Ring.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 10. Gandalf falls into an abyss in the battle with a Balrog in Moria.

### Part IV: Essay Questions (30 points)

1. Explain why Bilbo passes the ring to his nephew.
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
2. Explain the identity and role of each member of the Fellowship of the Ring.
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
3. Contrast the destructive power of the Dark Riders with that of Saruman.

## THE FELLOWSHIP OF THE RING

### COMPREHENSION TEST B

#### Part I: Matching (30 points)

Match the following quotations with names of speakers or writers from the list below. Place the letter of your response in the blank provided at left.

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1. Remember that the Mirror shows many things, and not all have yet come to pass.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2. Miserable trickster! . . . Let me get my hands on you! Now I see your mind. You will take the Ring to Sauron and sell us all.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 3. But Mr. Frodo, he knows he's got to find the Cracks of Doom, if he can. But he's *afraid*.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 4. O Elbereth! Gilthoniel!
- \_\_\_\_\_ 5. A mortal, Frodo, who keeps one of the Great Rings, does not die, but he does not grow or obtain more life, he merely continues, until at last every minute is a weariness.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 6. Old Grey Willow-man, he's a mighty singer; and it's hard for little folk to escape his cunning mazes.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 7. I regret to announce that . . . this is the END. I am going. I am leaving NOW. GOOD-BYE!
- \_\_\_\_\_ 8. We're a bit suspicious round here of anything out of the way—uncanny, if you understand me; and we don't take to it all of a sudden.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 9. You had better leave Bag End soon, and get out of the Shire before the end of July at latest.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 10. You cannot go back . . . . Now you have come thus far, you must be brought before the Lord and the Lady.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 11. Then I will furnish your Company with boats.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 12. I had counted on passing the *Golden Perch* at Stock before sundown. The best beer in the Eastfarthing, or used to be: it is a long time since I tasted it.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 13. I was professionally interested in your ring, you may say; and I still am. I should like to know where it is, if you go wandering again. Also I think *you* have had it quite long enough.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 14. I saw a log with eyes! . . . I saw what I took to be a log floating along in the half-light behind Gimli's boat; but I didn't give much heed to it.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 15. I will do now what I must. . . . This at least is plain: the evil of the Ring is already at work even in the Company, and the Ring must leave them before it does more harm. I will go alone.

- |              |              |            |
|--------------|--------------|------------|
| A. Bilbo     | F. Galadriel | K. Lobelia |
| B. Boromir   | G. Gandalf   | L. Pippin  |
| C. Butterbur | H. Gildor    | M. Sam     |
| D. Celeborn  | I. Goldberry | N. Sauron  |
| E. Frodo     | J. Haldir    | O. Tom     |

#### Part II: Short Answer (20 points)

Supply a word or phrase in answer to each of the following questions. Place your response in the blank provided at left.

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1. Who wears the ring on his little finger without vanishing?
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2. What is the name of the sword that Bilbo gives Frodo?
- \_\_\_\_\_ 3. Who was once called Sméagol?

## THE FELLOWSHIP OF THE RING

- \_\_\_\_\_ 4. Who removes the fragment of blade from Frodo's shoulder?
- \_\_\_\_\_ 5. What does Bill Ferny sell for twelve silver pennies?
- \_\_\_\_\_ 6. Who refreshes the travelers with a clear liquid from his flask?
- \_\_\_\_\_ 7. Who invites Frodo to come and sit by him at the Prancing Pony?
- \_\_\_\_\_ 8. Who disappears after singing "the cow jumped over the Moon" a second time?
- \_\_\_\_\_ 9. What did Farmer Maggot catch Frodo stealing?
- \_\_\_\_\_ 10. What does Gandalf create in honor of Bilbo's eleventy-first birthday?

### Part III: Fill-In (20 points)

Supply a word or phrase from the list below to complete each of the following statements.

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1. Strider brings leaves of \_\_\_\_\_ to heal Frodo's wound.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2. On the Last Bridge, Strider finds a \_\_\_\_\_—a sign of hope.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 3. Old \_\_\_\_\_ at the gate of Bree demands the names and business of the travelers.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 4. The \_\_\_\_\_ forgets to give Frodo the letter from Gandalf.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 5. The Black Riders are also known as the \_\_\_\_\_.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 6. Gandalf finally realizes that the password is *Mellon*, the elvish word for \_\_\_\_\_.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 7. While looking for the ring in the River Anduin, \_\_\_\_\_ was attacked by Orcs and killed.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 8. \_\_\_\_\_ saw Bilbo disappear while trying to avoid the Sackville-Bagginses.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 9. \_\_\_\_\_ has no desire to leave the Shire, so he stays behind to "deal with inquisitive folk."
- \_\_\_\_\_ 10. On \_\_\_\_\_, the advance of the fellowship is cut off by deep snowdrifts.

Arwen   Athelas   Balrog   Barrow-Wights   beryl   Bill Ferny   Caradhras   Elrond   Fatty Bolger  
Fredegar   friend   Gil-galad   Glorfindel   Harry   innkeeper   Isildur   Merry   Mirkwood   Moria  
Murcho and Blanco   mushroom   Ringwraiths   Rivendell   Wargs   Weathertop

### Part IV: Essay Questions (30 points)

1. Describe the festivities on Bilbo's eleventy-first birthday.
2. Explain why possession of the ring is so important to Sauron.
3. Contrast Gimli, Aragorn, and Sam as members of the Fellowship.

## THE FELLOWSHIP OF THE RING

### VOCABULARY TEST ANSWER KEY

1. vie
2. surpassing
3. trough
4. quest
5. waning
6. vigilance
7. respite
8. affray
9. asunder
10. wary
11. penthouse
12. wrought
13. lading
14. midges
15. quailed

### COMPREHENSION TEST A ANSWER KEY

#### Part I: Quotation Completion (30 points)

1. Sam
2. Tom
3. Bilbo
4. Sting
5. Balrog
6. Boromir
7. Frodo
8. Gollum
9. Butterbur
10. Goldberry
11. Fatty Lumpkin
12. Pippin
13. Underhill
14. Sackville-Bagginses
15. Elrond

#### Part II: Matching (20 points)

1. J
2. D
3. E
4. C
5. F
6. H
7. B
8. A
9. I
10. G

#### Part III: True/False (20 points)

1. F
2. F
3. T
4. T
5. T
6. F
7. F
8. F
9. T
10. T

#### Part IV: Essay Questions (30 points)

Answers will vary

### COMPREHENSION TEST B ANSWER KEY

#### Part I: Matching (30 points)

1. F
2. B
3. M
4. E
5. G
6. O
7. A
8. C
9. G
10. J
11. D
12. L
13. G
14. M
15. E

#### Part II: Short Answer (20 points)

1. Tom Bombadil
2. Sting
3. Gollum
4. Elrond
5. pony
6. Glorfindel
7. Strider
8. Frodo
9. mushrooms
10. dragon

#### Part III: Fill-in (20 points)

1. Athelas
2. beryl
3. Harry
4. innkeeper
5. Ringwraiths
6. friend
7. Isildur
8. Merry
9. Fatty Bolger
10. Caradhras

#### Part IV: Essay Questions (30 points)

Answers will vary

**THE FELLOWSHIP OF THE RING**

**TEACHING NOTES**





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