



The Hobbit

by J.R.R. Tolkien

Teacher's Guide

Written By Mary Ellen Snodgrass

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Synopsis

Chapter 1

On April 28, Bilbo Baggins, the hobbit, sits at home nurturing secret yearnings for adventure (adventure being frowned upon among hobbits, who are smaller than dwarves and generally prefer to dwell in quiet comfort in well-appointed underground homes, or hobbit-holes). Gandalf the wizard promises a trek to be revealed the next day, when he organizes a party of dwarves—Balin and Dwalin, Kili and Fili, Dori, Nori, Ori, Oin, Gloin, Bifur, Bofur, Bombur—and their leader, Thorin Oakenshield, son of the dwarf king. The fourteen visitors eat and celebrate with songs of dwarf history. After inscribing curious symbols on the front door, Gandalf designates Bilbo as official burglar for their expedition east to the Lonely Mountain to reclaim from the dragon Smaug the dwarf national treasure.

Gandalf supplies a key and map drawn by Thrór, Thorin's grandfather. Thorin proposes that they travel to Long Lake to the lair of Smaug, a dragon who raids Dale and kidnaps people to eat. Family history reports that Azog the goblin killed Thrór; on April 21 a hundred years earlier (recent history to the long-lived dwarves), Thrain, Thorin's father, had disappeared. Deeply troubled with these events, Bilbo goes to bed.

Chapter 2

While Bilbo oversleeps, Thorin and his dwarves set off on ponies. At 10:45 a.m., Bilbo realizes that the expedition is in earnest. Gandalf appears at 10:50 a.m. and urges Bilbo to join them in ten minutes at the Green Dragon Inn, Bywater. Bilbo races away without a pocket handkerchief. The expedition grows wearisome after it begins to rain around tea-time. Gandalf disappears.

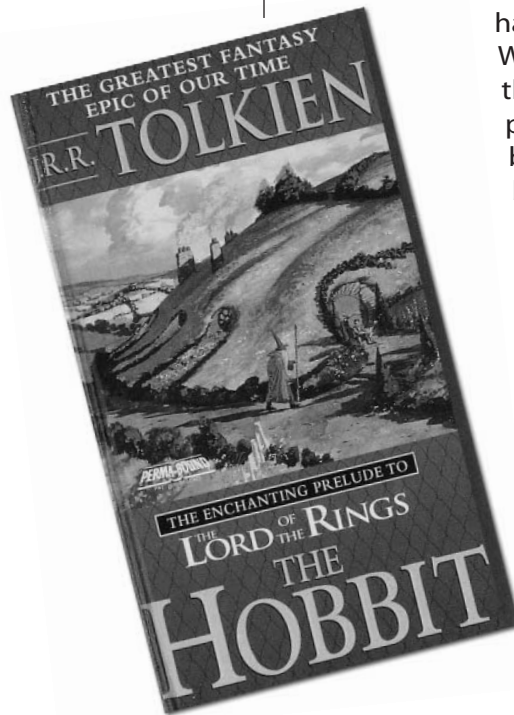
At night the band falls into the hands of three trolls, Bert, Tom, and William, who want man flesh rather than mutton. Bilbo picks William's pocket. The angry trolls capture all but Thorin, who hurls a smoldering branch at them. The trolls thrust a bag over Thorin's head and argue with each other and with Gandalf's disembodied voice, which they fail to identify; Gandalf's goal is to keep the trolls, who aren't very bright, occupied until daylight does them in. By daylight, the travelers, released from captivity, find the trolls turned to stone.

Bilbo locates the trolls' key, opens the door to their cave, and finds their goods unguarded. Gandalf explains that he heard about the trolls

and returned just in time to rescue the dwarves. From the trolls' treasure, he and Thorin select swords; Bilbo opts for a knife. The remainder of the hoard they bury, and then they set out for a journey of a few days, which will take them to Rivendell, home of the half-elven Lord, Elrond.

Chapter 3

Passing through a secret valley, skirting the Misty Mountains, the group follows Gandalf and arrives at Rivendell in June to the sound of elf tunes. They meet Elrond and his elves, who invite them to stay with them at the Last Homely House on the edge



of the wilderness. Elrond interprets runes on Thror's map and recognizes the two swords as Orcrist and Glamdring, elf-made weapons dating to great battles of the goblin wars. Cryptically, Elrond indicates that the dwarves can open the door with the key on the last moon of autumn, the threshold of winter. Joyful and refreshed on a midsummer's day, the expedition departs.

Chapter 4

Moving eastward over the bitterly cold Misty Mountains, the troop flees a storm and shelters in a cave. A fissure in the cavern opens slowly, ominously. Goblins attack, capture, and chain Bilbo and the thirteen dwarves. Only Gandalf escapes. Deep in subterranean halls, the dwarves and Bilbo expect the worst. The goblins demand to know why Thorin carries Orcrist, a sword that has a history of killing goblins. At that moment, using wand and sword, Gandalf puts out the light and frees Thorin's men. The troop flees in the myriad passages. Dori carries Bilbo, who cannot run as fast as dwarves, but drops him, rendering him unconscious.

Chapter 5

Determined to proceed, Bilbo feels his way down the moist passages of the Misty Mountains and locates a ring, which he deposits in his pocket. Gollum, a strange, hobbit-sized, amphibious creature with bulging eyes, paddling about an underground lake, coerces Bilbo into a riddling match. Bilbo wins. Gollum concludes that Bilbo has found the "precious," a ring that makes its wearer invisible. Bilbo puts the ring on his finger and follows the muttering Gollum, who unwittingly leads him to an exit. Bilbo jumps over him, slips past the goblins, and runs out the gate to the woods.

Chapter 6

On the eastern slope of the Misty Mountains at high summer, Bilbo relishes the freedom of invisibility by sneaking into the dwarves' camp, to the amazement of all, and narrating his misadventure with Gollum, omitting mention of the ring. The dwarves have new respect for Bilbo as a burglar after witnessing his ability to sneak past both goblin and dwarf guards; Gandalf suspects there's more to Bilbo's story and gives him a speculative look, but says nothing. Gandalf, in turn, explains how he guided the dwarves safely to the back

gate. Gloating over the death of the Great Goblin, the cavalcade moves on. The howl of wolves sends all but Bilbo up trees. The group cannot escape goblins and wolf-like Wargs, who imprison them in a clearing ringed by five fir trees. Gandalf fires flaming pine cones at the Wargs and unintentionally sets the limbs afire. Before the dwarves perish, Gandalf prepares to hurl himself onto the goblins in a suicide effort. At the last minute, a cadre of Eagles carries them away to their eyries, saving them from death. On rock ledges, the dwarves and Bilbo cook small game for dinner and curl up to sleep.

Chapter 7

The next morning, the eagles fly the party to the Carrock, a crag in the center of the Great River accessed by a stony ford. The party visits the fearful Beorn the skin-changer, who is able to adopt many disguises and who delights in keeping bees. To ease the owner's apprehension about so many guests, Gandalf slowly introduces the dwarves to Beorn. Gandalf explains their run-in with the goblins and attains lodging for the weary band and dinner served by domesticated animals. During the second night, Beorn learns from the bears that the goblins and Wargs are hunting the dwarves. Outfitted with new ponies, a horse for Gandalf, and provisions, the group leaves for Mirkwood, a perilous forest. Beorn warns them that they can survive only by keeping to the path. On the third day, at the outer rim of Mirkwood, Gandalf departs on private business. The band dismount and leave on foot.

Chapter 8

The dark, musty interior of the forest dismays the adventurers. Their hope runs low along with their food and provisions. While trying to retrieve a boat on the distant shore, they cross, but must rescue Bombur from the magic stream, which plunges him into a four-day sleep. The band waste their arrows on spectral deer. Strange noises and laughter disquiet them. To the side of the path two days later, Balin spies a flicker. Despite Beorn's warnings, three times they leave the trail to follow it and imagine banquets awaiting them ahead. Instead, giant spiders capture them. Bilbo dons his ring and fights off the spiders, killing many with his knife, which he names Sting. Meanwhile, the Wood-elves capture Thorin, who refuses to divulge his itinerary and purpose. The Elvenking has Thorin sent to his dungeon.

Chapter 9

The next day, while seeking the path, the rest of the dwarves fall into the hands of the Wood-elves and suffer prison rather than reveal their destination. Bilbo, still invisible, sneaks into the Elvenking's palace, frees Thorin during the autumn feast, and discovers a portcullis opening onto a stream. After the jailer and Galion the butler fall asleep, Bilbo takes the dungeon keys, opens the cells, and steers the dwarves to empty barrels, which bob down to Lake-town. Bilbo floats on top of a barrel and oversees the venture, but fears that the dwarves may not survive.

Chapter 10

Early the next morning, in sorry shape from bruises and bumps, the dwarves arrive unharmed and unarmed among friendly human traders and are welcomed by the Master. Thorin explains that the Elvenking wrongfully imprisoned the expedition and declares himself the dwarf king's heir. The group feasts and sings; less joyful is Bilbo, who suffers a three-day head cold. Townspeople revive ancient prophecies of the dragon's death. Two weeks later, in late autumn, Bilbo and the dwarves depart north toward the Lonely Mountain, the most treacherous segment of their expedition. The Master is pleased that he no longer has to feed his visitors.

Chapter 11

It takes the group two days to row over the Long Lake into the River Running and near the Lonely Mountain, where town guides depart. That night, Thorin sends scouts to reconnoiter the ancient remains of Dale, at one time a thriving dwarf town until Smaug began ravaging it. The expeditioners scale rough stairs, locate a side entrance, and despair that it remains closed. On the last week of autumn, Bilbo observes a thrush cracking snail shells, an omen that the door will yield. Thorin applies his key to the door, which opens on a long tunnel.

Chapter 12

Bilbo follows the tunnel to Smaug's hall, which is filled with treasure. Bilbo snatches a two-handled cup and flees by midnight. Smaug awakens, realizes that something is missing from his hoard, and menaces the dwarves, who lift their company, man by man, up the rock face and into the tunnel. At dawn, Smaug traps them with fallen stone.

Again Bilbo comes to their rescue. He struts before Smaug and observes an unsheathed spot on the left side of his scaly chest. Smaug makes a lethal run on the dwarves' empty camp and scorches Bilbo with his hot breath. The thrush appears to understand their actions and hears their words.

Chapter 13

Meanwhile, the dwarves enter Smaug's lair and plunder his treasure. Bilbo locates the most valuable bauble, the Arkenstone, which he conceals from the dwarves. Two and a half days after Smaug sealed them into the tunnel, Thorin hustles the dwarves through palace passageways toward a distant look-out tower at the Forest Gate, which he remembers from the old days. There they dine on cram (a filling, but tasteless, food) and water and look out on the ruined bridge and former town of Dale.

Chapter 14

Smaug wreaks revenge on Esgaroth by attacking the village. Finally, the people flee from the village; the Master abandons his subjects and attempts to row to safety amid the general confusion. Bard, who had initially saved the lives of the villagers by warning of his premonition of Smaug's attack, proves the bravest, staying back with the rest of the archers in a last-ditch defense of the burning town. Suddenly the thrush alights on Bard's shoulder, and Bard, a descendent of a great lord, finds that through some ancestral memory, he is able to understand the bird. The thrush tells Bard of Smaug's unshielded spot, and Bard, using an ancient arrow, hits the spot. Smaug falls into the lake.

The people proclaim Bard king, but he remains loyal to the Master and helps organize the ruined town against hunger and sickness. Three days after the victory, the Elvenking learns that Smaug is dead and hurries to grab the treasure. Eleven days after Smaug's death, the elves join Bard and the Lake-towners in a march on the Lonely Mountain.

Chapter 15

Roac, son of Carc, a friendly raven, answers the thrush's summons to help the dwarves and the army of plunderers and directs Thorin to trust Bard. Thorin chooses instead to call in his cousin Dain and to contest Bard's claim on the hoard. Bard declares war. Bilbo, weary with fighting and marching, grumbles.

Chapter 16

As danger gathers on all sides, Bilbo withdraws over the precipice by rope and, wearing his invisibility ring, sneaks through the sentinels. He offers the Arkenstone to the Elvenking and Bard, who have a scant two days before facing Dain's advancing forces. The Elvenking warns that Thorin will not cede the Arkenstone without a fight. In their camp, Bilbo reunites with Gandalf, then returns to the mountain, where he climbs up the rock face without awakening Bombur, the sentinel.

Chapter 17

Thorin bargains with Bard, promising him Bilbo's one-fourteenth of the hoard in exchange for the Arkenstone. Puffed up with greed and self-importance, Thorin repudiates Bilbo, whom he returns unpaid and unhonored to Bard as a traitor to the expedition. Some of the dwarves resent Thorin's high-handed treatment of the group's official burglar. The negotiations halt until noon the next day.

Bard bars the way to Thorin's stronghold. The Battle of Five Armies ensues, involving goblins, Wargs, dwarves, elves, and men. At the peak of the fighting, the goblins are boxed in on the mountain; other goblins climb over the peaks to attack the dwarves. Thorin bravely rallies his troops, but cannot surmount Bolg's men. Bilbo, still invisible, remains near the Elvenking and dreads the carnage to come. Just as the eagles bring hope of rescue, Bilbo is again knocked unconscious.

Chapter 18

The next day, Bilbo awakens and approaches the dwarves' camp in Dale, where Gandalf sports a sling and Thorin lies dying. The two reconcile and rejoice that Beorn rescued Thorin and killed Bolg. Bilbo regrets bungling the matter of the Arkenstone and learns how the battle ended: The eagles wiped out the goblins; Beorn, in the shape of a giant bear, carried Thorin from the fray. After giving their all to shelter Thorin, Fili and Kili were killed.

Dain, now the king of the mountain, settles with Bard, who buries Thorin deep in the mountain with the Arkenstone on his breast and receives a fourteenth of the treasure. In step with the Elvenking, Gandalf escorts Bilbo westward toward home. At the Elvenking's home, Bilbo gives him a valuable necklace; the king names Bilbo "elf-

friend." By yuletide, the Bilbo and Gandalf reach Beorn's house. In spring, the pair of travelers turn toward the hobbit's burrow.

Chapter 19

At Rivendell on May 1, Gandalf visits with Elrond and announces that the necromancer has been driven from Mirkwood but not destroyed. A week later, the pair continue to the land of the trolls. Bilbo loads the cache of troll treasure. Outside his home by June, Bilbo interrupts an auction conducted by greedy Sackville-Baggins relatives, who believe him dead. Content at home, he hangs up his coat of mail, buys presents for kin and friends, and composes verse. The ring remains hidden.

In later years, Gandalf and Balin visit him. News of the rebuilding of Lake-town and Dale carries the death notice of the Master, who was replaced by a wiser, less rapacious ruler. Gandalf implies that Bilbo's role in fulfilling prophecy was a true and natural end of their adventure.

Timeline

The distant past	Smaug the dragon, lured by the dwarves' wealth, destroys the town of Dale, routs the dwarves from the Lonely Mountain, and steals their treasure; Thorin escapes, along with his grandfather, Thrór, his father, Thráin, and a handful of others. Azog the goblin kills Thrór in the mines of Moria.
April 21, 100 years past	Thráin, Thorin's father disappears.
April 28, present day	Bilbo Baggins greets Gandalf the wizard.
April 29	Gandalf organizes a party of thirteen dwarves, with Thorin Oakenshield as leader and Bilbo as official burglar.
April 30	Bilbo arises late.
10:50 a.m.	Gandalf urges Bilbo to join the dwarves at the Green Dragon Inn.
11:00 a.m.	The expedition departs to the east.

tea-time	The expedition grows weary-some after it begins to rain. Gandalf disappears. Three trolls capture all but Thorin.	autumn feast	Bilbo frees Thorin, puts the dwarves in empty barrels, and floats to Lake-town.
first week of May	The travelers find the trolls turned to stone. Bilbo opens the door to their cave and takes their treasure. The group journeys toward Elrond.	next morning	The dwarves receive hospitality from the Master.
June	Near Rivendell they detect the sound of elf tunes. Elrond invites them to the Last Homely House and interprets runes on Thror's map.	three days later	Bilbo recovers from a head cold.
June 24	The expedition departs over the Misty Mountains.	late autumn	Bilbo and the dwarves depart toward the Lonely Mountain.
that night	The troop shelters in a cave. Goblins capture Bilbo and the thirteen dwarves. Gandalf puts out the light and frees Thorin's men. Bilbo finds a magic ring, defeats Gollum in a riddling match, and runs out the gate to the woods.	two days later	They leave town guides behind.
high summer	The dwarves climb five fir trees to escape wolves. Eagles carry them away to their eyries.	that night	Thorin sends scouts to Dale. The expeditioners scale rough stairs but cannot open a side entrance.
next morning	Eagles fly them to the Carrock, where they meet Beorn the skinchanger.	last week	Bilbo orders Thorin to use the key and discovers a tunnel leading to Smaug's treasure.
second night	Beorn learns from the bears that the goblins and Wargs are hunting the dwarves. The group leaves for Mirkwood, a perilous forest.	midnight	Bilbo snatches a two-handed cup and flees.
third day	At the outer rim of Mirkwood, Gandalf departs; the band dismounts and leave on foot. Bombur is overcome by the magic stream.	dawn	Smaug traps the dwarves in the tunnel. Bilbo locates the Arkenstone. Smaug wreaks revenge on Esgaroth but is killed by a black arrow from Bard's bow.
four days later	Bombur awakens from a protracted sleep.	two days later	Thorin leads the dwarves to a tower at the Forest Gate.
two days later	They leave the trail. Giant spiders capture them. Bilbo fights off the spiders. The wood-elves return and capture Thorin, whom the Elvenking puts in the dungeon.	next day	The Elvenking learns that Smaug is dead and hurries to grab the treasure.
next day	The dwarves are also imprisoned.	eight days later	The elves join the march on the Lonely Mountain.
		before the war	Bilbo offers the Arkenstone to the Elvenking and Bard.
		two days later	Dain arrives; the Battle of the Five Armies begins. Thorin bargains with Bard and repudiates Bilbo.
		next day	Negotiations halt. Dwarves, goblins, Wargs, elves, and men fight; the Eagles fly in to rescue the dwarves.
		next day	Bilbo makes peace with Thorin, who lies dying. Dain, who becomes king of the mountain, settles with Bard.
		late autumn yuletide	Gandalf escorts Bilbo home. Bilbo and Gandalf reach Beorn's house.
		spring	Bilbo and Gandalf turn toward the hobbit's burrow.

May 1	They visit with Elrond at Rivendell.
a week later	Gandalf and Bilbo continue to the land of the trolls and load the buried treasure.
June 22	Bilbo interrupts an auction conducted by greedy relatives who believe him dead.
later years	Gandalf and Balin visit Bilbo.

Author Sketch

A child of the empire, John Ronald Reuel Tolkien [toh'l' keen] was born in Bloemfontein, Orange Free State, South Africa, on January 3, 1892, where he lived until he was three. The son of financier

Arthur Reuel and Mabel Suffield Tolkien, he and younger brother Hilary returned home with their mother. Their father remained in Africa and died within months of their separation. Tolkien studied at home on the edge of Hall Green, Birmingham, and learned Latin from his mother.



At age twelve, Tolkien, whose family were devout Roman Catholics, was orphaned and became the ward of a priest. He lived in a series of temporary arrangements and attended King Edward VI's School in Birmingham, where he distinguished himself in language study. He mastered legend, literature, and whimsy, which he evolved into a private fantasy world grounded in folk myth, philology, and fun. By early manhood, he began creating an orderly mythology out of the fragmented English past, for which there existed no formal epic.

At Exeter College, Oxford, Tolkien completed a B.A. in 1915, served on the front lines in France with the Lancashire Fusiliers for the next three years, and was discharged with trench fever. On March 22, 1916, Tolkien married pianist Edith Mary Bratt, his childhood sweetheart. They had four children, John, Michael, Christopher, and Priscilla. On return to Oxford for an M.A. in 1919, he wrote "The Voyage of Earendel, the Evening Star," the beginning of his canon, which relieved some of his wartime stress and sadness at the loss of friends.

He sought the company of fellow saga lovers, the Coalbiters and the Inklings, particularly C.S. Lewis, a fellow Christian and creator of children's lore.

For his children, Tolkien held story hour, introducing Bilbo Baggins. An expert etymologist fluent in Anglo-Saxon, Latin, Greek, Old and Middle English, Old Norse, Gothic, and Finnish, he taught English at the University of Leeds from 1920-25, then for the next twenty years at Oxford. In 1945, he was elevated to Merton Professor of English, a post he held for twenty-four years. His scholarly pursuits include honorary resident fellow of Merton College, tutor, Leverhulme research fellow, Sir Israel Gollancz Memorial Lecturer at the British Academy, Andrew Lang Lecturer at St. Andrews University, W.P. Ker Lecturer at the University of Glasgow, and O'Donnell Lecturer at Oxford. He published in *The King Edward's School Chronicle*, *Oxford Magazine*, *Medium Aevum*, *Dublin Review*, *Welsh Review*, and *Shenandoah: The Washington and Lee University Review*. Two years after his wife's death, he died of gastric ulcer and pulmonary infection, September 2, 1973, in Bournemouth, England, and was buried in Wolvercote Cemetery, Oxford.

Critic's Corner

One of England's greatest fantasists and linguists, Tolkien left behind a mass of manuscripts, research, maps, song, poems, and an elf language that he constructed as the binding force for learned works on Middle-earth. The work fell to his son Christopher to edit and publish after his father's death. A noted scholar, Tolkien also acquired a trove of honors from the Royal Society of Literature, Philological Society, Science Fiction Writers of America, *New York Herald Tribune*. He also won the Children's Spring Book Festival Award, an honorarium from University College in Dublin, International Fantasy Award, Benson Medal, Order of the British Empire, and Locus Award for fantasy. Marquette University in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, owns the manuscripts of his fantasies. A sizable number of his letters reside at the BBC archives, Oxford's Bodleian Library, the Dictionary Department of Oxford University Press, the Humanities Research Center of the University of Texas at Austin, and the Wade Collection of Wheaton College, Wheaton, Illinois.

General Objectives

1. To discuss the quest motif
2. To describe the physical, mental, and emotional effects of coping alone among strangers
3. To characterize the value of logic and wise decisions
4. To note virtues such as friendship, loyalty, and hospitality
5. To contrast narrative, riddle, legend, and dialogue
6. To account for tyranny, strife, war, and villainy
7. To contrast scenes of despair, isolation, fear, threat, and challenge
8. To explain the symbolism of the changing seasons
9. To discuss the author's concept of heroism
10. To elucidate positive and negative examples of pride and overreaching

Specific Objectives

1. To characterize Bilbo's ambition and genius
2. To compare the lead eagle, Beorn, Bard, Gandalf, and Thorin as leaders
3. To recount how Bilbo escapes Gollum
4. To contrast Mirkwood and Smaug's lair as settings
5. To summarize the significance of Orcrist, Glamdring, and Sting
6. To narrate the history of the Lonely Mountain
7. To study the implications of the Arkenstone
8. To account for Bilbo's gift to the Elvenking
9. To explain the symbolism of Bard's black arrow
10. To account for shifting scenes of darkness and light, falling and flying

Tolkien's Published Works

Songs for the Philologists, 1936
Beowulf: The Monsters and the Critics, 1937
Chaucer as a Philologist, 1943
Tree and Leaf, 1945
Farmer Giles of Ham, 1949
The Tolkien Reader, 1953
THE LORD OF THE RINGS TRILOGY
The Fellowship of the Ring, 1954
The Two Towers, 1954
The Return of the King, 1955

The Adventures of Tom Bombadil and Other Verses from the Red Book, 1963
The Road Goes Ever On: A Song Cycle, 1967
Smith of Wootton Major, 1967
Smith of Wootton Major [and] Farmer Giles of Ham, 1969
Sir Gawain and the Green Knight, Pearl, and Sir Orfeo (trans.), 1975
Tree and Leaf, Smith of Wootton Major, The Homecoming of Beorhtnoth, 1975
Farmer Giles of Ham, The Adventures of Tom Bombadil, 1975
The Father Christmas Letters, 1976
The Silmarillion, 1977
Pictures by J.R.R. Tolkien, 1979
Unfinished Tales of Numenor and Middle-Earth, 1980
Poems and Stories, 1980
The Letters of J.R.R. Tolkien, 1981
The Old English Exodus, 1981
Mr. Bliss, 1983
Finn and Hengest: The Fragment and the Episode, 1982
The Monsters and the Critics and Other Essays, 1983
Bilbo's Last Song, 1990
The Book of Lost Tales, Part 1, 1983
The Book of Lost Tales, Part 2, 1984
The Lays of Beleriand, 1985
The Shaping of Middle-Earth: The Quenta, the Ambarkanta, and the Annals, 1986
The Lost Road and Other Writings: Language and Legend before The Lord of the Rings, 1987
The Return of the Shadow: The History of The Lord of the Rings, Part 1, 1988
The Treason of Isengard: The History of The Lord of the Rings, Part 2, 1989
The War of the Ring: The History of The Lord of the Rings, Part 3, 1990
Sauron Defeated: The History of The Lord of the Rings, Part 4, 1992
Roverandom, 1998
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Related Reading

Richard Adams, *Watership Down*
 Ray Bradbury, *The Electric Grandmother and Something Wicked This Way Comes*
 Orson Scott Card, *Ender's Game*
 Arthur Clarke, *2001: A Space Odyssey*
 Susan Cooper, "The Dark Is Rising Sequence"
 Robert Heinlein, *Have Spacesuit, Will Travel and The Glory Road*
 Carel Kapek, *R.U.R.*

Ursula LeGuin, *The Earthsea Trilogy and Tehanu*
Lois Lowry, *The Giver*
Maurice Maeterlinck, *The Blue Bird*
Ayn Rand, *Anthem*
Christina Rossetti, *Goblin Market*
Mary Stewart, *The Crystal Cave and The Hollow Hills*
Gore Vidal, *A Visit to a Small Planet*
Oscar Wilde, *The Happy Prince*
Jane Yolen, ed., *Street Rhymes Around the World*

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Literary Terms and Applications

For a better understanding of J.R.R. Tolkien's fantasy, present the following terms and applications:

Allegory: a literary work that functions on two or more levels of meaning by comparing objects to symbols beyond the scope of the work. Based on Christian principles as well as the heroic traditions of world epic, King Arthur, and the Grail cycle, *The Hobbit* elucidates themes of challenge, sacrifice, moral choice, personal fault, forgiveness, and redemption. Bilbo, the chosen burglar, transcends his base role to become a local and ethnic hero, a messiah figure evolved from a bumbling anti-hero to a mythic savior. On a more timely level, the events also reflect the terrors of World War I and the end of conflict worldwide.

Irony: an implied discrepancy between what is said or done and what is meant. Gandalf's unlikely choice of Bilbo as idea man for his dwarf expedition introduces the motif of bungled chances and unlikely rescues as the group makes its way through fearful locales to the end of their quest. A superb joke at the end depicts the greedy, self-enriching relatives rifling Bilbo's holdings as though picking his corpse. His untimely return—from the dead, as it were—ends the auction just in time. Although he keeps Gollum's ring, Bilbo, unused to acclaim, returns to the fuddy-duddy lifestyle of a country squire and relieves himself of the enhanced reputation that grows around him.

Riddle: a child's question-and-answer game, puzzling definition, or teasing comparison; also, conundra and enigmas concerning religious, ethical, and moral truths, a literary form found in folk literature and song from Persia, the Middle East, Africa, Greece and Rome, native America, and Celtic England. Tolkien, an expert on Anglo-Saxon literature, draws on Aldhelm's *Enigmata* (ca. 708), Cynewulf's poems (8th century), and the *Exeter Book* (10th century) for the face-off between Gollum and Bilbo for basic images of a mountain, teeth, daisy, darkness, eggs, and fish, typical subjects that puzzled the English riddler's audience in early times.

The Importance of Setting

The milieu of *The Hobbit* is as varied and challenging as the characters and events. Moving east from Hobbiton, Bilbo leaves behind the genteel comforts of an underground home to meet with his fellow travelers at the Green Dragon Inn in Bywater. The trek from the trolls' cave to a valley and broad periphery skirting the Misty Mountains takes him and the dwarves to Rivendell for a brief respite before challenging the first fearful terrain at the Misty Mountains. Although Bilbo postpones the venture, he soon must pass through the mountains as he heads into progressively terrifying settings at the dwarves' camp and beyond. Throughout his passage, he passes realistic settings alive with flora and fauna, checkered with shifts of light and dark, and beset by conditions of weather that might afflict any traveler in unknown terrain.

The motif of challenge takes firm shape at subsequent settings—the eagles' eyries, Carrock in Great River, and Mirkwood, pierced by the Forest River. The height of Bilbo's feats occurs in Smaug's Hall on the Lonely Mountain and the subsequent war that destroys Dale. From underground to the surface, through forest, and over water, Bilbo meets the challenge that Gandalf assures him he can overcome to right ancient wrongs against the dwarves, reestablish the safety of Lake-town, and

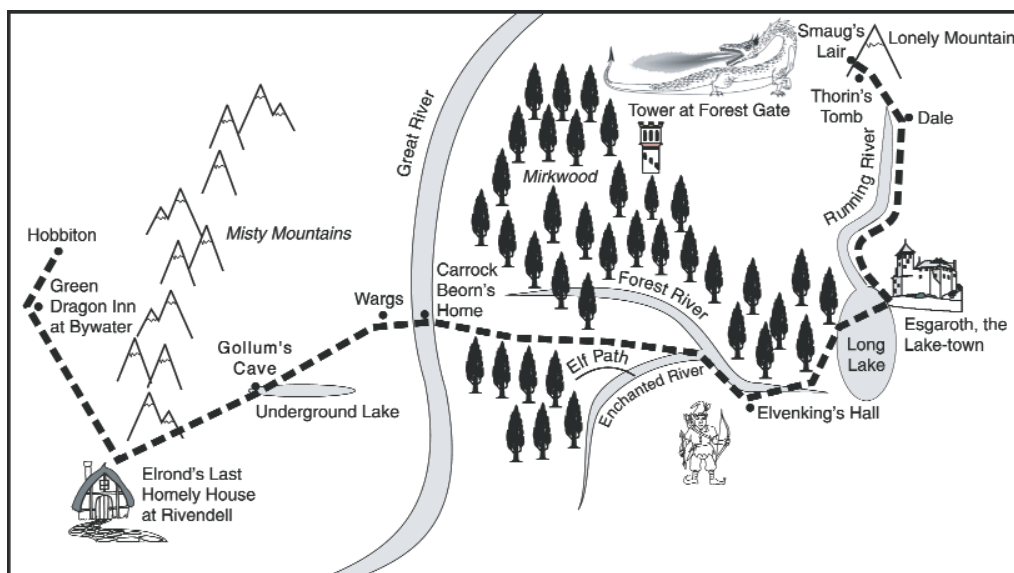
allot treasure to the deserving. On return to Hobbiton, Bilbo discovers that predators can threaten his own doorstep. His grasping relatives dispersed and his belongings restored, he is content to withdraw once more to the home that suits his true nature—a subterranean cozy where he can be his true self.

Cross-Curricular Sources

For more information about fantasy and science fiction, Anglo-Saxon culture, a parody of Tolkien's novel, illustration, audio-visual editions, and other subjects and issues deriving from the novel, consult these sources:

Bored of the Rings, Henry N. Beard
Characters in Crisis, Center for Humanities
Dictionary of Imaginary Places, Alberto Manguel and Gianni Guadalupi
The Hobbit (audiotape), BBC
The Hobbit (video), Library Video Company

Also, consult these websites:
 Resources for Medieval Studies
<http://labyrinth.georgetown.edu/>
 "Science Fiction and Fantasy Writers of America,"
<http://www.sfga.org>.



Themes and Motifs

A study of the central issues and situations in J.R.R. Tolkien's *The Hobbit* should include these aspects:

Themes

- challenge
- contentment
- expedition
- failure
- achievement
- self-esteem
- atonement
- conflict
- loss
- compromise
- fairness
- redemption

Motifs

- accepting a leader's role
- loss of familiar comforts
- manipulation by evil
- asserting self-control
- playing outside the rules
- depending on the hospitality of strangers
- coping with overpowering odds
- acknowledging self-doubt
- taking responsibility for actions
- reestablishing a lasting peace

Meaning Study

Below are words, phrases, sentences, or thought units that have a particular meaning in the novel. Explain the meaning of each. Chapter and page numbers pinpoint the context in which the item appears.

1. "By some curious chance one morning long ago in the quiet of the world, when there was less noise and more green, and the hobbits were still numerous and prosperous, and Bilbo Baggins was standing at his door after breakfast smoking an enormous long wooden pipe that reached nearly down to his woolly toes (neatly brushed)—Gandalf came by." (Chapter 1, p. 3)
(The author chooses the time of myth and legend, long ago—definitely before World War I—when all was newer, fresher, and cleaner.

Human beings are present, but they are not the dominant race. Civilization and industry have yet to threaten the environment. It is the time of Middle-earth in the third age of the world. The land is probably what is now Western Europe but so far in the past that the shape of the continent is not even recognizable.)

2. "Then Gandalf's smoke-ring would go green and come back to hover over the wizard's head. He had quite a cloud of them about him already, and in the dim light it made him look strange and sorcerous." (Chapter 1, p. 13)
(In this bizarre pose, Gandalf's air and behavior reflect supernatural agencies such as magic, sleight of hand, or witchcraft. Like a looming dragon, the wizard looks sorcerous in the failing light because the smoke rings cover his features with haze, as though he is deliberately obscuring his identity and displaying his dark powers.)
3. "He paused for breath and for a polite remark from the hobbit, but the compliments were quite lost on poor Bilbo Baggins, who was wagging his mouth in protest at being called *audacious* and worst of all *fellow conspirator*, though no noise came out, he was so flummoxed." (Chapter 1, pp. 16-17)
(The state of bewilderment or confusion that overcomes Bilbo endears him to the reader, who discovers a hero unaware of his qualities, which only Gandalf seems to recognize. Since Bilbo has lived a pleasant but uneventful life for his first fifty years, the dwarves' talk of a bold enterprise silences him. This is a condition that Bilbo suffers repeatedly.)
4. "He knew, of course, that the riddle-game was sacred and of immense antiquity, and even wicked creatures were afraid to cheat when they played at it." (Chapter 5, p. 80)
(After encountering the slimy Gollum deep in the mountain of the goblins, Bilbo joins him in a riddling contest, an ancient tradition among the image-loving Anglo-Saxons. Modern readers familiar with Greek mythology may recognize a certain parallel in the myth of the Sphinx, a monster with a woman's face, lion's body, and bird's wings who devoured young men who failed to answer her riddle. To the question of "What goes on four legs in the morning, two at

noon, and three in the evening," Oedipus correctly responded, "Man, who crawls, walks, then leans on a cane in old age.")

5. "Escaping Goblins to be caught by wolves!" he said, and it became a proverb, though we now say 'out of the frying-pan into the fire' in the same sort of uncomfortable situations." (Chapter 6, p. 99)
(In various situations Bilbo makes observations that later acquire the status of proverbs or terse statements of wisdom. In this instance, he has just escaped from the goblins' lair only to be chased up a tree by wolves. The Middle-earth aphorism has its analogy in common parlance. Bilbo coins other proverbs that are appropriate to the fantasy world of his milieu, for example, "Never laugh at live dragons," when Smaug almost incinerates him with his dragon breath. Also endearing is his discovery on return that he had "lost more than spoons," a comment on his loss of stature among neighbors who disdain adventuring.)
6. "He fought the real battle in the tunnel alone, before he ever saw the vast danger that lay in wait." (Chapter 12, p. 215)
(Although Bilbo is clearly the story's hero, he is hardly valorous in the usual sense. He prefers comfort and good food to hardship and adventure. Frequently frightened, Bilbo seldom thinks of himself as either brave or warlike, yet now he finds himself in the tunnel leading to Smaug the dragon, the most fearful creature in the world. The battle that Bilbo fights in the tunnel is an inner conflict. He overcomes his timidity and advances to face the dragon. His courage is not that of a warrior hero. He is a hobbit who decides to attend to his duty in spite of fear.)
7. "His rage passes description—the sort of rage that is only seen when rich folk that have more than they can enjoy suddenly lose something that they have long had but have never before used or wanted." (Chapter 12, p. 217)
(When the dragon awakes, he knows that the great two-handled cup is gone from his immense treasure, even though he has no real use for it or any of his loot. Tolkien makes a moral commentary on current times by comparing Smaug's rage with that of the affluent

who are deprived of a possession or some bit of wealth for which they have no need or use. Dragons and some rich people merely perch on their stores. They neither share with the less fortunate nor enjoy possessions as Bilbo had done in his hobbit hole. The resentment of the rich erupts when anyone takes a particle of superfluous wealth, more as an issue of ownership than any true grief or sense of loss.)

8. "I am he that buries his friends alive and drowns them and draws them alive again from the water. I come from the end of a bag, but no bag went over me." (Chapter 12, p. 223)
(As in the earlier episode against Gollum, Bilbo plays the riddle game with Smaug, but now he is much better at it because he has grown in self-confidence. Instead of telling Smaug his name, Bilbo speaks in riddles. Readers familiar with Bilbo's style can easily interpret his word game. This model refers to the ingenious escape he devises for the dwarves held captive by the wood-elves. He hides them in barrels which are floated downstream to Lake-town. In a sense, he has buried his friends alive, drowned them, and drawn them alive again from the water. The second part of the quotation refers to the name of Bilbo's home, Bag-end.)
9. "There is always more about you than anyone expects!" (Chapter 16, p. 274)
(Everyone except Gandalf persists in underestimating Bilbo. Most judge him by his appearance and see only a diminutive, tremulous hobbit. Gandalf frequently admonishes the dwarves by telling them that there is more to Bilbo than anyone knows or expects. His courage and resourcefulness finally convince the rest that Gandalf is right. They eventually recognize the hobbit's worth by valuing his quiet courage, compassion, and generosity.)
10. "I have heard songs of many battles, and I have always understood that defeat may be glorious. It seems very uncomfortable, not to say distressing. I wish I was well out of it." (Chapter 17, p. 286)
(Bilbo does not participate in the Battle of the Five Armies, but chooses to put on his magic ring and vanish. His participation is limited to observing and reporting. He is too compassion-

ate to enjoy strife or anticipate triumph. He is familiar with the epics that glorify war and even ennobled defeat, but his firsthand observation of the battle leads him to question the heroic aspects of fighting. When the goblins and wolves are apparently defeating the allied elves, dwarves, and men, Bilbo observes nothing commendable in slaughter.)

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 from the novel.

Questions 1-5 (Literal Level)

1. Describe hobbits.

(Hobbits, unlike dwarves, elves, trolls, goblins, and dragons, are Tolkien's invention. In his words, hobbits are rare and shy of humans, whom they describe as Big People. Only half the size of humans and smaller than dwarves, they are beardless and devoid of magic. They "disappear quietly and quickly when large stupid folk like you and me come blundering along, making a noise like elephants which they can hear a mile off." Inclined to be paunchy, they prefer bright-colored garments, usually green and yellow, and go barefoot because their feet are protected with leathery soles and coverings of warm, brown curly hair. Their good-natured smiles and deep laughs make them welcome company at gatherings, which they enjoy, especially if the food is ample and the hosts are outgoing.)

2. Why do Gandalf and the twelve dwarves want Bilbo to accompany them?

(Since thirteen is an unlucky number, Bilbo becomes the fourteenth member of the expedition to steal the treasure under the Lonely Mountain, which is guarded by Smaug, a dire and dangerous fire-breathing dragon. Gandalf selects Bilbo because he is unable to find a hero and must settle for a burglar. Bilbo has never stolen and he is not convinced that Gandalf has made a wise choice.)

At first the whole idea of grand theft shocks and puzzles Bilbo. For clarification of his role, he asks for more details. Thorin, the dwarves' leader, explains that the treasure once belonged to his grandfather, Thrór, who had been king under the mountain until Smaug drove him and his dwarves away. On that note, Bilbo accepts the challenge and agrees to accompany Gandalf and the twelve dwarves for one-fourteenth share of the treasure.)

3. Describe Bilbo.

(In the opinion of most hobbits, anyone who has an adventure is a disreputable person. Respectable hobbits stay at home living comfortably and uneventfully day to day. The Bagginses, Bilbo's paternal ancestors, have always enjoyed exemplary, staid reputations deriving from being stay-at-homes. Bilbo is the image of his stolid father and has remained unchallenged by adventure for his first fifty years.)

On the other hand, Bilbo's maternal ancestors, the Tooks, are not quite as respectable or predictable as the Bagginses because they have a suspect heritage of occasional adventure. Bilbo has inherited "something a bit queer in his makeup from the Took side," a smidgen of risk-taking that clashes with the Baggins penchant for dullness. While the Baggins side of Bilbo's nature relishes quiet comfort, peaceful home, and good food, the Took side is stirred by the song of the dwarves: "Then something Tookish woke up inside him, and he wished to go and see the great mountains, and hear the pine trees and the waterfalls, and explore the caves, and wear a sword instead of a walking stick." This awakening of daring is the soul of the story.)

4. What hazards do Bilbo and the dwarves encounter on their way to the Lonely Mountain?

(During the journey, Bilbo and the dwarves confront a steady march of hazards. Gandalf saves them twice on initial escapades, when trolls capture the company to eat them and after goblins trap and enslave them. Separated from the dwarves, Bilbo has a close call in the slimy

world of Gollum, a dark cavern pierced by the creature's private lake. Only the accidental discovery of Gollum's magic ring of invisibility saves Bilbo from capture and destruction.

Shortly after the escape from goblins, Gandalf, Bilbo, and the rest encounter evil wolves known as Wargs, who chase them up trees. Eagles soar in and save them just as Gandalf is about to sacrifice himself in a dive amid burning limbs. In Mirkwood, Bilbo and his friends face starvation. When they disobey Beorn and leave the path, the dwarves encounter first giant spiders and then Wood-elves. Bilbo rescues the group on both occasions. Finally, they emerge from Mirkwood and arrive in sight of their destination, the Lonely Mountain.)

5. Define or explain Orcrist, Glamdring, Sting, Arkenstone, Chiefest and Greatest of Calamities, and the Battle of the Five Armies. (The two great elvish swords, Orcrist the Goblin-cleaver and Glamdring the Foe-hammer, are found in the trolls' cave, where Gandalf and Thorin take them. The Great Goblin howls in rage and his men gnash their teeth, clash their shields, and stomp their feet because they recognized Thorin's sword, which had slain hundreds of goblins when the elves hunted them or battled at their walls. The dwarves call the sword Orcrist, Goblin-cleaver. The Goblins call it Biter and hate it and anyone who wields it.

A less fearful weapon, Sting, a long knife of elvish design, is taken from the trolls' cave. It is the perfect size for a sword for the diminutive Bilbo, and he uses it to slay the giant spider. The experience alters him because he has achieved the victory all alone in the dark, without Gandalf's magic or the aid of dwarves. As a result of his success with Sting, Bilbo feels changed into a fiercer, bolder warrior who can face hand-to-hand combat without fear.

The three weapons help the group reclaim the Arkenstone, dubbed "Heart of the Mountain," a great diamond and Smaug's most valuable bauble. Thorin dreams of its thousand-faceted globe, which in time past shone like silver in fire-light or sun-sparkled water or star-spangled snow. When Bilbo locates the stone, he hides it in his deepest pocket and cedes it to Bard as a

bargaining tool to settle peace terms with Thorin. At the end of an unnecessary war, Bard buries the Arkenstone with Thorin, exclaiming, "There let it lie until the Mountain falls! ... May it bring good fortune to all his folk that dwell hereafter!"

The Chiefest and Greatest of Calamities, according to Bilbo, is Smaug, the fire-breathing dragon. This flaunted title suggests that Smaug is more than a monster. He is a tremendously destructive natural phenomenon, like a volcano or a cyclone. Yet, at his death, the Battle of the Five Armies, worse than the circling dragon, remains ahead of the company. When the goblin horde demands revenge on the dwarves, they swarm across the mountain and confront a combined army of dwarves, men, and elves. In the end, the goblins lose after the dwarves, Beorn, and the eagles turn the tide of battle.)

Questions 6-8 (Interpretive Level)

6. Identify Gandalf, Thorin, Lord of the Eagles, Beorn, and Bard. (In Chapter 1, Gandalf is the wizard of white magic who chooses Bilbo to accompany him and the dwarves on their trek. Their leader, Thorin Oakenshield, is head dwarf and grandson of Thrór, the King under the Mountain. Gandalf uses sorcery on two occasions to save the expedition from doom. When the dwarves battle the trolls, Gandalf tricks the attackers into staying outside until dawn, causing them to turn to stone. Later, he rescues the company from goblins. When the company faces the Wargs, the Lord of the Eagles leads his flock to rescue Bilbo, the dwarves, and Gandalf by spiriting them away to their eyries on the rock ledges of the Misty Mountains.

An ambiguous figure, Beorn, the skin-changer, is capable of taking human or animal shape. Described by some as a bear descended from ancient bears of the mountains, he is also linked with prehistoric men who predate Smaug and the goblins. A host to the company, Beorn offers horses and warns the company to stay on the path through Mirkwood. Because he loves animals like children, he demands the return of his mounts.

After the company enters Mirkwood, Gandalf leaves them on their own. Subsequently, a less magical hero appears in the person of Bard, captain of Lake-town's archers, who quells Smaug by directing an arrow into the dragon's heart. In the beginning of the Battle of the Five Armies, Bard leads the men, but does not triumph alone. The eagles again turn the tide of battle, but Thorin is mortally wounded. Beorn appears in the battle's last hour as a giant bear. As a reward to the noble eagles, Dain crowns their lord with gold.)

7. How does Bilbo change during the adventure? (When Bilbo finally returns to Bag-end and his hobbit hole, Gandalf remarks that he is a very changed hobbit. At the story's start, he is a typical, stolid hobbit repelled by the thought of daring. After the dwarves' song awakens his Tookish side, he willingly goes questing. At first bewildered, uncomfortable, and awkward, he dismays his comrades, who question Gandalf's wisdom in selecting the burglar. They seem to be proven right in the first episodes, in which Bilbo is easy prey to trolls and goblins. Only after he outwits Gollum on his own does he develop confidence.

A turning point in Bilbo's powers is the discovery of Gollum's "precious," the magic ring that makes the wearer invisible. With the ring as an equalizer in a world of bigger, stronger foes, Bilbo grows more skillful. His resourcefulness in rescuing dwarves from giant spiders and wood elves compels them to revise their opinion of him. In Gandalf's absence, Bilbo must rely on his own wits to lead the expedition. His noblest and most heroic moment occurs when he defies Thorin to give Bard the Arkenstone in the hope that the gesture will avert bloodshed.)

8. Why does Thorin turn against Bilbo? (Because Smaug is enraged by the dwarves' attempt to steal his treasure, he destroys Lake-town. The lake-men understandably demand compensation for their loss. The elves also believe that they have a claim on part of the treasure. Thorin, however, refuses to recognize that others have any right to the dragon's loot. Obsessed with finding the Arkenstone, he rates the diamond above the dragon's treasure and is thunderstruck when Bilbo uses the Arkenstone

as leverage to avoid more fighting. When Thorin learns that Bilbo has handed the stone to Bard as a gift of peace, he drives Bilbo away, calls him a traitor, and threatens to strike him if the two meet again.

Given the value of the Arkenstone to the dwarves, Thorin's reluctance to cede the treasure is plausible. At the same time, his pride, stubbornness, and ingratitude lead to personal enmity against Bilbo, who has done his best to be of service. Thorin thus represents the blind side of determination and the obdurate man's inability to compromise, an act that requires both sides of an issue to give up something of value.)

9. How do characters differ in their feelings about treasure? (Nearly every character except Gandalf and Bilbo is obsessed with the vast treasure under the mountain. Even though the dwarves, elves, and men are basically decent, their avarice almost drives them to war. Although Bilbo is entitled to a fourteenth share of the treasure, he alone is never overcome by greed. Because he is willing to give up his rightful part in search of peace, he moves Thorin to a change of heart.

Mortally wounded, Thorin repents of pride and greed and reevaluates Bilbo, praising him for goodness, courage, and wisdom. In his final words, Thorin says, "If more of us valued food and cheer and song above hoarded gold, it would be a merrier world." In the end, Bilbo divests himself of treasure and, under duress, accepts two small chests of silver and gold. Most of the treasure passes rapidly through his hands to others. He wants only to return home to peace and contentment.)

10. Explain why Bilbo is happier in the years after his return. (The quality of Bilbo's life grows richer because he has risked it all for a noble and unselfish adventure. In addition to memories, Bilbo acquires interesting friends, although he loses the respect of his hobbit neighbors. Tolkien reminds the reader that the elves are true to their friend and that dwarves, wizards, and other outsiders honor Bilbo, making him the traditional "prophet without honor in his own

land." Although counted "queer" by his neighbors, Bilbo does not mind. His satisfaction at the musical sound of his kettle on the hearth becomes more than it had before he knew hunger and danger on the expedition. The loss of reputation seems a small price to pay for personal enrichment and the self-esteem he has gained from his role in a heroic quest.)

Questions 11 and 12 - (Creative Level)

11. In a speech, contrast Bilbo to great heroes, adventurers, and tacticians of history, for example, Queen Elizabeth, Kamehameha, Marco Polo, John Glenn, Joan of Arc, Geronimo, Simon Bolivar, Chief Joseph, Sun Yat Sen, Che Guevara, George Washington, Catherine the Great, Toussaint-L'Ouverture, Empress Theodora, or Chief Seattle.
12. Account for the use of evocative names, particularly *Mirkwood*, *Beorn*, and *Wargs*. Debate symbolic implications of *Belladonna*, *Baggins*, *hobbit*, *precious*, and *Gollum*.

Across the Curriculum

Drama and Cinema

1. Write several conversations which are only implied, such as Bilbo's relatives' plans to split the proceeds of the auction, the Elvenking's interest in the dwarves' destination, Gandalf's camaraderie with Beorn, Bard's obeisance to the Master of Lake-town, Bilbo's revilement of the spiders, Thorin's private comments about Bilbo's treachery, Gollum's complaints about the goblins, Smaug's curses on Dale and its citizens, and Thorin's last conversation with his father.
2. View several films and television series on strife, such as *Rob Roy*, *The Last of the Mohicans*, *Robin Hood*, *Robin and Marian*, *Pocahontas*, *The Lion King*, *Aladdin*, *Taras Bulba*, *Lawrence of Arabia*, *Dances with Wolves*, *El Cid*, *The Man Who Would Be King*, *The Wind and the Lion*, *The Hunt for Red October*, *Star Wars*, *Watership Down*, and *Dune*. Discuss with a small group the types of diplomacy that avoid crisis.

3. Divide the class to study the background elements of the story, particularly the limits of magic, the author's use of terrain, animals, and natural disasters to illustrate evil, the physical and emotional cost of hunger and disappointment, and the ambiguity of heroism. Determine if Bilbo has done anything worth pride or honor.
4. Explain in a speech how the author depicts foibles, particularly Bilbo's late sleep on the morning the expedition leaves, Thorin's self-righteousness, the Master's attempt to row away from his town's sufferings, Smaug's greed, Bilbo's need of a clean handkerchief, Gandalf's anger at personal questions, the turnkey's drunkenness, William's stupidity, and Beorn's uncertain hospitality to so large a group of visitors.

Science

1. Compose a lecture on the use of physical strength and momentum in various rescues, particularly the barrel ride, opening a passage into the mountain, tricking Smaug, hurling burning branches, rowing on the magic river, and escaping on eagles' backs.
2. Compose extended definitions of human limitation. Pantomime how characters display heroic qualities without being heroes. Include the dash of the eagles to the rescue, Bard's encouragement of the archers, Kili and Fili's support of Thorin, Gandalf's part in the battle, Dain's immediate march to help Thorin, Bilbo's discussions with Smaug, Bombur's attempt to fetch the boat, and Thorin's dedication to the Arkenstone.

Geography

1. Create a mural or website that introduces these natural settings described or mentioned in the text: glade, valley, lair, cavern, underground river, bracken, stony ford, shingly shore, heath, tunnel, watch-tower, rock-face, spur, eddy, precipice, eyrie, meadhall, rocky ledge of the eyries, burrow, stony pier, quay, and greenwood.
2. Using computer graphics or other media, sketch the contrasting topography of the Misty Mountains and Hobbiton.

Art

Using desktop publishing or other media, design a page from a genealogy of the Took family, a chart characterizing supernatural beings (Wargs, elves, trolls, hobbits, dwarves, dragons, necromancers, wizards), a hymn honoring Thorin, a translated list of magic runes, a sign welcoming visitors to Lake-town, a sign offering bannocks and mead, directions to the Green Dragon Inn, a monument honoring Thorin and his family, multiple views of a suit of chain mail, a business card for an auctioneer or professional burglar, an epitaph for Fili and Kili, a news headline about Bilbo's treasure and magic ring, an illustrated entry on lichen or eyries for an encyclopedia or science book, a scientific explanation of the strength of spider webs, a chart depicting harness for a woods pony, and a schematic drawing of Gollum's lair or the Elvenking's dungeon.

Law

1. Launch a website explaining the difference between the golden years of Thrór and the settlement of Esgaroth under the elected Master. How does Tolkien make times of yore seem more romantic, more appealing? What does Thorin's martyrdom do for the return of peace to the valley? Why is his burial beneath the Arkenstone a fitting tribute to sacrifice and dedication?
2. Make an oral report on the theme of disobedience and lawlessness. Contrast the dwarves before and after they leave the path in Mirkwood. Discuss how the trolls and spiders reflect greed and deceit. Explain why Thorin is angry that Bilbo locates the Arkenstone, then slips out of camp to reveal the treasure to the Elvenking and Bard and use it as a bargaining chip. Discuss the dwarves' response to Thorin's anger at Bilbo.

Economics

1. Determine the value of a small chest of gold coins and a small chest of silver coins.
2. Write a brief address explaining how to put great treasure or natural resources to the best use, for example, in Dale and Esgaroth. Discuss how community needs demand attention. List shared needs, including protection, health, food, peace, and opportunity.

Describe how corruption of leaders like the Master and Thorin often plunges ordinary people into wasteful wars.

Social Studies

1. Discuss Bilbo's decision to negotiate an end to hostilities before the Battle of Five Armies. How could Bilbo have saved lives if he had achieved a truce between Thorin and Bard? Why is Dain an essential ingredient in the legend? What happened to Thorin's father?
2. Make a timeline of events in the story. Highlight moments of emotional and physical stress, for example, opening the wine barrels to free the dwarves, eating cram over a period of days, searching in vain for the Arkenstone, matching wits with Gollum, battling the auctioneers for personal property, and trying to locate a way into Smaug's lair.
3. Correlate the creation of Tolkien's fantasies with the events of World War I. Determine why the time period is essential to his study of peace, war, and compromise.
4. Pantomime the qualities of leadership in Napoleon, Queen Elizabeth I, Colin Powell, Alexander the Great, Moses, Julius Caesar, Montezuma, George Patton, Geronimo, Blackjack Pershing, Douglas MacArthur, Dag Hammarskjöld, Hatshepsut, Simon Bolívar, Tadeusz Kosciuszko, Moshe Dayan, the Dalai Lama, Charles de Gaulle, Genghis Khan, Joan of Arc, King Arthur, Boadicea, Shaka, Dwight Eisenhower, Indira Gandhi, Adolf Hitler, Idi Amin, Joshua, Che Guevara, Katherine the Great, Jawaharlal Nehru, Eleanor of Aquitaine, and Fidel Castro. Discuss how education and custom reduce the number of female leaders.
5. Name a leader who most resembles Bilbo in unassuming background and appearance and in greatness of heart, courage, and daring.

Psychology and Health

1. Make contrasting chalkboard definitions of ambition, competitiveness, guilt, treachery, suspicion, and fear. Explain how the terms define the controlling emotions felt by major and minor characters.

2. Compose a cause-and-effect matrix showing how certain actions, attitudes, or behaviors lead to positive or negative results. For example, after the recovery of Orcrist, how do the goblins react? How does Bilbo's surrender of the Arkenstone divide loyalties and cause Thorin to castigate Bilbo? Does Bard's loyalty to the Master seem foolish or honorable after the Master tried to desert his people?
3. Describe in a short speech the effects of loneliness, insecurity, disillusion, danger, imprisonment, terror, threat of death, greed, manipulation, hunger, thirst, darkness, and enrichment on characters in the story. How does Bilbo express his gratitude to the Elvenking? Why does Thorin's death scene uplift and ennoble him? How does flight underground from Gollum and Smaug seem appropriate to a hobbit?

Language and Speech

1. Compose individual posters explaining these terms: mail, helm, mattocks, hauberk, skewer, booby, steed, hart, beech, rushes, pantry, braces, hilt, parapet, nosebag, sorrel, goblin, fender, rune, parchment, cavalcade, troll, faggot, bannock, tinder and flint, ogre, imp, carrock, drinking bowl, mead, eave, lichen, tupence, quoits, nine pins, cob, thong, flagon, buttertub, cask, post and lintel, fly-wall, battering-ram, raven, thrush, eyrie, and gloaming.
2. Compose a short speech to describe the wartime roles of Bolg, Beorn, the eagles, the Necromancer, dragons, Gandalf, Thorin, the dwarves, Bilbo, the spiders, Wargs, Gollum, maidens of Dale, Bard, the Master, Lake-town citizens, Smaug, Roac, Carc, trolls, birds, and the goblins.
3. Compose a first person account of detention in a spider web, underground dungeon, burning fir tree, tunnel, trolls' bag, eyrie, Wargs' jaws, or goblins' lair. Describe the details that raise apprehension, particularly damp air, chill, darkness, lack of food and water, fear of jailers, and the dangers of death from falling, drowning, or being eaten or roasted alive.

Literature

1. Explain to a small group why Gandalf implies that Bilbo was meant to display heroic qualities and to help the elves regain their power from the usurping dragon. Why do the dwarves lose faith in Bilbo? At what points does he display leadership and self-confidence? What legendary or epic characters does Bilbo resemble, such as Robin Hood, Poncho Villa, Hrothgar, King Arthur, Attila the Hun, Sir Galahad, Rob Roy, Chuchulain, Beowulf, Cochise, Sir Lancelot, El Cid, or Merlin?
2. Using examples from *The Hobbit*, devise a word game such as Twenty Questions that features the trickery of villains and the naivete of Thorin's expedition. Stress the importance of Bilbo's ring.
3. Discuss the lack of female characters. What traits does Bilbo admire in Belladonna? Why are there no mates mentioned for the Elvenking, the Master, Roac, Thorin, Carc, Bard, Bolg, or Dain? How does the exclusion of female characters limit the story?
4. Create and discuss a list of images from the novel that appeal to the five senses. For instance, "For three days he sneezed and coughed, and he could not go out, and even after that his speeches at banquets were limited to 'Thag you very buch'"; "Then something Tookish woke up inside him, and he wished to go and see the great mountains, and hear the pine-trees and the waterfalls, and explore the caves, and wear a sword instead of a walking-stick"; and, "They were still standing over him, cursing their ill luck, and Bombur's clumsiness, and lamenting the loss of the boat which made it impossible for them to go back and look for the hart, when they became aware of the dim blowing of horns in the wood and the sound as of dogs baying far off."

Student Involvement Activities

1. Explain briefly the purpose and nature of a riddle. Make up new verses to describe the answers to Gollum's riddles. Make up riddles for Orcrist, Smaug's breast mail, the key to Smaug's lair, burning pine cones, an eyrie, Sting, a burrow, Bilbo's pipe, Thror's parchment, Gandalf's wand, Glamdring, and the Arkenstone.
2. Draw a book jacket or poster emphasizing the extent of Bilbo's travels. Style your work in the form of a marked trail, mélange of items that symbolize his trials, or poses that display him fighting with Sting, sliding down the rock-face on a rope, teasing Smaug, freeing Thorin from the dungeon, fleeing Gollum and the goblins, loading barrels, sleeping in a cavern, being treated for scorching, or taking tea by his fireside.
3. Create a bulletin board illustrating simple pleasures, such as ninepins, flagons of ale, shooting the wand, fishing, bannocks with tea and clotted cream, riding ponies in the woods, camping by a fire in a dry cavern, spending the holidays with friends, joining the autumn harvest celebration, singing traditional songs, hunting for a hart, rowing, cave exploration, developing a genealogy, and rock climbing.
4. Compose a short segment in which you report on the significance of English lore to Tolkien's writings. Comment on Celtic myth and verse, runes, monuments, post-and-lintel architecture, Arthurian legends, ancient British languages, invasions, and historic saviors, including Alfred the Great, Boadicea, and Winston Churchill.
5. Apply a Freytag diagram to the novel. Label parts of the plot that form exposition, rising action, climax, falling action, and resolution. Why does this clear delineation of action lend itself well to radio, audiocassette, cartoon, or the stage? What problems would a producer have in staging *The Hobbit* as a play, opera, TV miniseries, or outdoor musical drama?
6. Characterize the ambivalence of Bilbo the burglar. Why does Gandalf have to sell both Bilbo and the dwarves on their need for Bilbo's expertise? What does Gandalf imply about the adventure in the final chapter? How do Tookish stirrings alter the image of Gandalf coercing Bilbo into accompanying the dwarves?
7. Survey the history of fantasy. How does the creation of *The Hobbit* compare with the oral composition of *Alice in Wonderland*, *Treasure Island*, *The Jungle Book*, and *The Wizard of Oz*? What does the novel share with Ursula Le Guin's *Earthsea Trilogy*, C. S. Lewis' *Narnia* cycle, Hans Christian Andersen's stories, J. M. Barrie's *Peter Pan*, Joel Chandler Harris' "Br'er Rabbit and the Tarbaby," Alfred Tennyson's "Gareth and Lynette," Mary Stewart's *The Crystal Cave* and *The Hollow Hills*, Richard Adams' *Watership Down*, and Madeleine L'Engle's *A Wrinkle in Time*?
8. Read aloud other descriptions of courage from unexpected sources. Include Alfred Tennyson's *Idylls of the King*, Mark Twain's *A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court*, Walter Dean Myers' *Fallen Angels*, Paula Fox's *Slave Dancer*, Scott O'Dell's *Sarah Bishop* and *The Island of the Blue Dolphin*, Theodore Taylor's *The Cay* and *Timothy of the Cay*, Bette Greene's *Summer of My German Soldier*, Robin Graham's *Dove*, John Neihart's *Black Elk Speaks*, Lois Lowry's *The Giver*, N. Scott Momaday's *The Way to Rainy Mountain*, C.S. Lewis' *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe*, Gary Paulsen's *Nightjohn*, Yoko Kawashima Watkins' *So Far from the Bamboo Grove*, Orson Scott Card's *Ender's Game*, and Natalie Babbitt's *Tuck Everlasting*. Discuss the importance of belief in self and empathy for others.
9. Form a team of readers to tape expanded, imaginative episodes of *The Hobbit*. Vary participants so that everyone has an opportunity to represent the Elvenking, Gandalf, Galion, Roac, Thorin, Balin, Bambur, Bilbo, Belladonna, William, Smaug, the Master, Bard, Thror, Beorn, Carc, the auctioneer, Gollum, and the Lord of the Eagles. Keep the tape in a local library for other listeners to use.

10. Compose an informal essay on scholarship. Discuss how J.R.R. Tolkien's delight in fantasy and his years of study and research into old languages, ancient legends, English history, metrical forms, imagination, epic form, and episodic style produced an unusual outgrowth in *The Hobbit*.

Alternate Assessment

1. List examples of teamwork, fear, insecurity, intimidation, loyalty, victory, fairness, poor judgment, and reward on the dwarves' expedition.
2. Compile a list of actions that demonstrate why Bilbo is an unusual rescuer.
3. Compose a scene in which survivors of the last battle visit Bilbo to talk over old times.
4. Make a character list and explain the character flaws of each, including Bilbo's grumpiness, Smaug's guile, Beorn's deceptiveness, Gollum's treachery, the trolls' murderous intent, Thorin's ill will, and Gandalf's superiority.
5. Account for the help of animals, including a thrush, eagles, and a raven.

Teacher's Notes

Vocabulary

Part A: Synonyms

In the citation that follows, select terms from the list as synonyms for the underlined words.

amend	enchantment	lair	runnels	vessels
apprehension	express	lamented	splendour	whirring
bannock	fragments	lust	staggerment	wisps
bellowing	guffawing	mail	thrumming	wrought
coiled	hoard	precious	underparts	
crusted	immeasurable	prudent	vagabond	
emblazoned	infuriate	ruddy	vast	

There he lay, a (1) large red-golden dragon, fast asleep; a (2) hum came from his jaws and nostrils, and (3) puffs of smoke, but his fires were low in slumber. Beneath him, under all his limbs and his huge (4) spiraled tail, and about him on all sides stretching away across the unseen floors, lay countless piles of (5) costly things, gold (6) shaped and unwrought, gems and jewels, and silver red-stained in the (7) reddish light.

Smaug lay, with wings folded like an (8) outsized bat, turned partly on one side, so that the hobbit could see his (9) front and his long pale belly (10) covered with gems and (11) pieces of gold from his long lying on his costly bed. Behind him where the walls were nearest could dimly be seen coats of (12) mesh, helms and axes, swords and spears hanging; and there in rows stood great jars and (13) dishes filled with a wealth that could not be guessed. To say that Bilbo's breath was taken away is no description at all. There are no words left to (14) state his (15) amazement.

To say that Bilbo's breath was taken away is no description at all. There are no words left to (14) state his (15) amazement.

- | | |
|----------|-----------|
| 1. _____ | 9. _____ |
| 2. _____ | 10. _____ |
| 3. _____ | 11. _____ |
| 4. _____ | 12. _____ |
| 5. _____ | 13. _____ |
| 6. _____ | 14. _____ |
| 7. _____ | 15. _____ |
| 8. _____ | |

Part B: Definitions

Give definitions for five of the words not used in Part A.

word	definition
_____	1. _____
_____	2. _____
_____	3. _____
_____	4. _____
_____	5. _____

Comprehension Test A

Part I: Matching (30 points)

Match the following descriptions with characters. Choose your answers from the list of names below. You may use some of the answers more than once and some not at all.

- | | |
|---|------------------------|
| _____ 1. arrives at the head of a troop of dwarves | A. Smaug |
| _____ 2. neatly combs the hair on his toes | B. Lord of the Eagles |
| _____ 3. lies coiled and sleeping | C. Elrond |
| _____ 4. measure Bilbo's rooms to see if their furniture will fit | D. Elvenking |
| _____ 5. blows green smoke rings | E. Dain |
| _____ 6. represents a firm of auctioneers | F. Thorin |
| _____ 7. lisps | G. Bard |
| _____ 8. leads an air-borne rescue | H. Gandalf |
| _____ 9. is sealed in barrels with his company | I. Master |
| _____ 10. heads the maternal side of Bilbo's family | J. Grubb |
| _____ 11. assumes various shapes | K. Gollum |
| _____ 12. leads elves to Lake-town | L. Bilbo |
| _____ 13. shoots the dragon in an unprotected place | M. Old Took |
| _____ 14. lives in Rivendell in the Last Homely House | N. Beorn |
| _____ 15. dies of starvation after stealing the gold | O. Sackville-Bagginses |

Part II: Cause and Effect (20 points)

Complete each of these statements:

1. Bilbo is an unlikely choice as burglar because

2. The great battle occurs at Lake-town because

3. Gandalf frequently disappears and returns because

4. Bilbo names his sword Sting because

5. Attackers avenge the Great Goblin because

6. Orcrist and the Arkenstone go with Thorin in his tomb because

7. The ring is essential to Bilbo's bravery because

8. Bilbo wins the riddling match because

9. Mirkwood is fearful because

10. The cave in the Misty Mountains is not safe because

Comprehension Test A (Page 2)

Part III: Identification (10 points)

Explain the significance of the following details:

1. my precious _____
2. Orcrist and Glamdring _____
3. Middle-earth _____
4. Belladonna _____
5. Smaug's lair _____

Part IV: Essay (30 points)

Choose two and answer in complete sentences.

1. Account for Bilbo's clever ruses.
2. Describe the burial of Thorin Oakenshield.
3. Discuss the significance of the Arkenstone.
4. Summarize the final battle.
5. Explain why Bilbo rejects praise.

Comprehension Test B

Part I: Multiple Choice (20 points)

Identify a setting that fits each of the following descriptions. Select your answers from the list that follows.

- | | |
|--|---------------------|
| _____ 1. home of the eagles | A. Lake-town |
| _____ 2. site of the auction | B. Misty Mountains |
| _____ 3. the sound of elf tunes precedes the group's arrival | C. Mirkwood |
| _____ 4. Beorn's hospitable home | D. Green Dragon Inn |
| _____ 5. assembly point for Bilbo and dwarves | E. Rivendell |
| _____ 6. building crumbled by the dragon's tail | F. Bag-end |
| _____ 7. place that elects its masters | G. eyries |
| _____ 8. area skirted by a secret valley | H. Carrock |
| _____ 9. place where Bombur falls asleep | I. Great House |
| _____ 10. spot where Thorin lies dying | J. dwarves' camp |

Part II: Fill-in (20 points)

Fill in the paired blanks with answers that complete each statement.

1. _____ indicates that the dwarves can open the door with the key on the last moon of _____.
2. After goblins attack, capture, and chain _____ and the thirteen dwarves, only _____ escapes.
3. _____ carries _____, who cannot run as fast as dwarves, but earns Gandalf's anger for dropping him.
4. After firing flaming _____ at the _____, Gandalf prepares to hurl himself downward in a suicide effort.
5. Despite _____'s warnings, three times the dwarves leave the trail to follow a _____ and imagine banquets awaiting them ahead.

Comprehension Test B (Page 2)

Part III: Identification (20 points)

Place an X by statements that refer to Gandalf.

- _____ 1. chooses the burglar.
- _____ 2. slips down the river in a barrel.
- _____ 3. warns Bilbo that he is late.
- _____ 4. makes green smoke rings.
- _____ 5. changes into a bear.
- _____ 6. celebrates Midsummer's Day with the Elvenking.
- _____ 7. fools the trolls with disembodied voices.
- _____ 8. buries Thorin with treasure.
- _____ 9. make a wand light up.
- _____ 10. made Orcrist, the Goblin-cleaver.
- _____ 11. threatens to abandon the dwarves for leaving Bilbo.
- _____ 12. catches a nasty cold.
- _____ 13. applauds as the Elvenking honors Bilbo's bravery.
- _____ 14. ties the trolls in spider webs.
- _____ 15. insists that Bilbo receive his one-fourteenth of Smaug's treasure.

Part IV: Essay (40 points)

Choose two and answer in complete sentences.

1. Describe scenes in which Bilbo must act alone.
2. Summarize Bilbo's skill at riddling.
3. Explain how the seasons affect the dwarves' expedition.
4. Account for types of evil that beset Bilbo.
5. Compare the skills of Thorin, Bilbo, Gandalf, and Smaug.

Answer Key

VOCABULARY

Part A: Synonyms

- | | |
|-----------------|-----------------|
| 1. vast | 9. underparts |
| 2. thrumming | 10. crusted |
| 3. wisps | 11. fragments |
| 4. coiled | 12. mail |
| 5. precious | 13. vessels |
| 6. wrought | 14. express |
| 7. ruddy | 15. staggerment |
| 8. immeasurable | |

Part B: Definitions

Answers will vary.

COMPREHENSION TEST A

Part I: Matching (30 points)

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

Part II: Cause and Effect (20 points)

Answers will vary.

Part III: Identification (10 points)

- Gollum's treasured ring of invisibility.
- The elvish weapons that have killed many goblins.
- The mythic fantasy world that Tolkien creates for his adventure novels.
- Bilbo's mother, who married Bungo Baggins and lives in a luxurious hobbit hole.
- The dragon's hideout, where Bilbo sneaks in and steals the Arkenstone.

Part IV: Essay (30 points)

Answers will vary.

COMPREHENSION TEST B

Part I: Multiple Choice (20 points)

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

Part II: Fill-in (20 points)

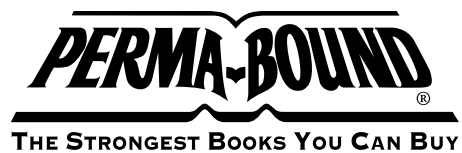
- Elrond, autumn
- Bilbo, Gandalf
- Dori, Bilbo
- pine cones, Wargs
- Beorn, flicker

Part III: Identification (20 points)

- | | | |
|------|------|-------|
| 1. X | 6. | 11. X |
| 2. | 7. X | 12. |
| 3. X | 8. | 13. X |
| 4. X | 9. X | 14. |
| 5. | 10. | 15. |

Part IV: Essay (40 points)

Answers will vary.



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