



Book title

The Lord of the Ring – The Hobbit

Author

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Bibliographic information

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Literary Awards: Keith Barker Millennium Book Award, Books I Loved Best Yearly (BILBY) Awards for Older Readers (1997), Mythopoeic Scholarship Award for Inklings Studies (1990)

Links (adaptations, reviews, full texts etc.)

- https://archive.org/stream/TheHobbitByJ.R.R.Tolkien/The%20Hobbit%20by%20J.R.R.%20Tolkien_djvu.txt
- https://www.google.hr/search?biw=1600&bih=769&q=hobit+likovi&oq=Hobit+tekst&gs_l=psy-ab..1.1.0i71k1lI4.0.0.0.4231.0.0.0.0.0.0.0.0.0.0...1..64.psy-ab..0.0.0....0.7vuw-GHevc8



Theme

The evolution and maturation of the protagonist Bilbo Baggins is central to the story. This journey of maturation, where Bilbo gains a clear sense of identity and confidence in the outside world, may be seen as a Bildungsroman rather than a traditional quest.

Short summary

The action begins when the wizard Gandalf and 13 patrons enter the house of Bilbo Baggins: Thorin Hraustotit, Óin, Glóin (his son Gimli is one of the main figures in the Lord of the Rings), Dwalin, Balin (He was Gimli's cousin who was in Khazad-Dum), Bifur, Bofur, thick Bombur, brothers Feli and Kili, Dori, Nori and Ori). They persuade Bilbo to go with them on the voyage and soon move. Soon, the troupe is captured by Trolls, but the Trolls fail to hide from the sun and become obscure. The fellow takes some of their treasures and goes to Rivendell. From there they move to Mount Erebor to kill the dragon Smaug. After leaving the Rivendell they were captured by the Goblins but failed to escape. During the run, Bilbo lost, and in the dark found the unique Ring. With the help of the eagles they manage to cross over the Misty Mountains, and come to the Beorn House. They then go to Mirkwood, where they captured King of the Thatchers of Thatchers. But once again, they escape to the wine barrels and go to Lake Town. In Lake Town they are supplied and moved to the mountains. Bilbo manages to steal the gold cup, and Smaug from the revenge attack on Jezergrad. Bard manages to kill the dragon. The congregation remains closed in the mountains, and the army of people from Lake Town, the viles of Mrkodol, and the dwarves from the Iron Mountain are moving treasured. The armies are preparing for the attack, but then the Orcs from the Maglena Mountains are attacked and they unite. With great losses, the Anti-Military Army wins and shares the treasures in equal parts. This battle is still called the battle of the five armies.

Why is the story appropriate for the targeted groups of RSP readers?

1. Appropriate for the target group of readers
2. Reflects readers interests
3. It is highly motivational
4. Recommendations and the report emerged from the survey results

What are the distinguished readers interests reflected by this book/story?

It is future oriented and guides the pupils in terms they can understand in both, their conscious and unconscious mind in order to relinquish their infantile dependency wishes and achieve a more stratifying independent existence. The wish-fulfillment element of fantasy both relieves anxiety and shows the child that personal success can be obtained, although at a certain price. At the heart of this lesson is the fact that the hero must work



for his success. Magic accessories and good advice may be given to him, but he must use these aids actively and appropriately, and success often comes only after years of obscure labor or initial failure. Thus, the development of the hero is less a matter of change than of self-discovery.

Why is this story motivational for the pupils?

1. The Hobbit presents an intriguing variation on the usual quest narrative. The object of the expedition, Smaug's treasure, is not desired by the main character, Bilbo Baggins. The seeker is instead the obsessive dwarf Thorin Oakenshield. But Bilbo is also on a kind of quest. By joining the dwarves he hopes to prove to himself that he has inherited his grandfather's courage. While we would expect to find a brave-hearted fighter like Thorin venturing into a dragon's cave, Tolkien demonstrates that "a humble hero" may also be suited to such exploits.
2. The overcoming of greed and selfishness has been seen as the central moral of the story.
3. The Hobbit employs themes of animism. An important concept in anthropology and child development, animism is the idea that all things—including inanimate objects and natural events, such as storms or purses, as well as living things like animals and plants—possess human-like intelligence (John D. Rateliff calls this the "Doctor Dolittle Theme" in *The History of the Hobbit*, and cites the multitude of talking animals as indicative of this theme).

Is there a historical, political, multi/inter cultural, migrant or similar context recognized in this book/story?

1. Tolkien wanted LOTR to read as history, an imagined slice of our planet's actual past.
2. Tolkien placed the modern problem of technology at the heart of his saga¹. He did believe that progress came at a price, and he doubted that modernism could satisfy the deeper yearnings of the human heart.

¹ For example, Gandalf rejects the whole of modern science when he proclaims, "*He that breaks a thing to find out what it is has left the path of wisdom*" (*The Fellowship of the Ring*). In contrast, the villainous Saruman *has a mind of metal and wheels* and spends his days building mills, chopping down forests, and blowing things up. Tolkien associated technology with a sorcerer gone bad because black magic and technology were, for him, pretty much the same thing. Both were motivated by a hunger for "speed, reduction of labor, and reduction ... of the gap between the idea or desire and the result or effect." He disliked technology because he believed that the domination and control of the "primary world," even in the utopian name of the good, brings tremendous suffering to Creation. With these concerns in mind, Tolkien placed the modern problem of technology at the heart of his saga. The One Ring is the supreme instrument of coercive power, its addictive potential is too great for even Gandalf or the high elves to risk. In his letters, Tolkien contrasted the black magic of technology with enchantment, the artistic creation of Secondary Worlds that satisfy desire and in turn bathe the primary world in wonder. Enchantment was the ultimate elvish craft, and the *raison d'être* of Tolkien's whole production. But, as Tolkien scholar Shippey points out, the don could not reconcile the fact that techno-magic and elvish enchantment both spring from the same source: the desire to create. After all, it was elvish lore that created the One Ring in the first place, lore the elves shared with Sauron because they believed it would help turn war-ravaged Middle-earth into a paradise.



Is there a principle of inclusion reflected in this book/story and does it promotes understanding of cultural diversities and heritage?

Tolkien's fantasy offers the possibility of active, serious participation by the reader in an imagined world, which heightens one's sense of Self and Other. This participation depends not only on the reader's intentions but also on the moral plausibility of the fantasy world. The reward for this participation is a sense of wonder that enables the reader to return to the "real" world with enhanced understanding and appreciation—either of the world itself or of his relation to it.

METHODOLOGY

Title of Activity

There and back again - A Hero's Journey

Description of educational activity

Duration: 4 x 45 minutes

Pupils' age: 15-18

Organization of the class of pupils: group work (5)

The aim of the lesson:

- use of The Hobbit as a springboard to a more general consideration of quest adventures, with a special emphasis on the heroic epic.
- help students in progress and development towards higher order thinking skills needed for Reading Comprehension while enabling them to derive both meaning and enjoyment from reading.
- involving the students in strategy of creating fantasy story by following the story composition/sequence scheme in order to help them building the skills needed for Reading Comprehension.

Support materials:

Handouts :

- ❖ "The Water of Life", The Grimm Brothers
- ❖ "The Slaying of Fafnir" (Excerpts from "Reginsmol" and "Fafnismol" in the Elder Edda)
- ❖ "The Odyssey" of Homer (Excerpts from Book VII)
- ❖ "Orpheus and Eurydice" (Greek myth)



- ❖ “The Charmed Ring” (Hindu folktale)
- ❖ Excerpts from the book: The Hobbit, Chapters VIII – XIX
- ❖ The return of the King, Ch.10, The black gate opens
- ❖ Plot structure Diagram
- ❖ A Hero’s journey – circular scheme
- ❖ Key terms

Activities:

These activities are designed to deepen students’ background knowledge of literary devices and traditions, and to introduce them to the novel’s major themes.

Students are organized in 5 groups.

1. Pre-reading activities

Teacher might begin pre-reading activities by drawing students' attention to Tolkien's own description of The Hobbit:

"If you care for journeys there and back, out of the comfortable Western world, over the edge of the Wild, and home again, and can take an interest in a humble hero (blessed with a little wisdom and a little courage and considerable good luck), here is a record of such a journey and such a traveler. The period is the ancient time between the age of Faerie and the domination of men, when the famous forest of Mirkwood was still standing, and the mountains were full of danger."

From 1968 Ballantine paperback "The Authorized Edition"

Activity 1. Your Enchanted Neighborhood

This is a mapmaking activity. The students pick a familiar place (house, building, street, neighborhood), reimagines it as an enchanted realm, and prepares a map.

What happens when we recast a cemetery as the Land of the Dead or a messy bedroom as the Vortex of Unwashed Garments? Are such transformations necessarily silly, or do they help us to see meaning in the mundane? What sort of quest might bring a hero to a post office, a municipal park, or a sewage treatment plant?



Activity 2. The Hero Next Door

Have each student select an acquaintance that he or she admires: doctor, minister, priest, teacher, grandparent, uncle... Equipped with a notepad or a recording device, the student then interviews this unofficial mentor.

Does the subject see herself as a counselor in the Gandalf mold? As a pilgrim on a journey? As a seeker on a quest? What advice does the mentor have for young people? Students should write up the interviews in their daily journals.

Activity 3. A Dragon's Diary.

A quest adventure typically requires the hero to defeat a dragon or other monster. In this activity, each student chooses a famous literary nemesis and then writes an entry in that creature's diary. The bestiary is large: Grendel, Humbaba, Polyphemus, Fafnir, Tiamat, Python, the Midgard Serpent, a dozen others. (To encourage original research, keep Smaug off limits.) While most students will want to narrate an encounter between dragon and hero, some may prefer to record a more boring day in the monster's life.

Activity 4. Bilbo Goes to Hollywood

Ask the group to assume that a talented movie director has created an ideal adaptation of The Hobbit. Students then writes a review of this nonexistent film, citing the choices the director made in successfully translating Tolkien's themes from text to screen. Conversely, the class might write negative reviews of a hypothetical failed attempt to film The Hobbit.

Activity 5. Epics North, East, South, and West

This activity requires you to equip the classroom with a large world map. Group selects and researches a different heroic epic. Students needn't read the whole poem, but they should probe deeply enough to answer basic questions. From what culture does the epic emerge? Who is the hero? What does he seek? Each group should summarize its findings as an illustrated sidebar, posting it near the appropriate region on the map. The possibilities include: the Iliad and the Odyssey (Greece), the Aeneid (Italy), Beowulf (England), the Táin bó Cúailnge (Ireland), the Mabinogion (Wales), the Nibelungenlied (Germany), the Song of Roland (France), the Poem of My Cid (Spain), the Kalevala (Finland), Ilya Muromets (Russia), the Mahabarata (India), the Epic of Gilgamesh (Iraq),



Shah-Namah (Iran), the Book of Dede Korkut (Turkey), Emperor Shaka the Great (South Africa), the Epic of Sundiata (West Africa), Lac Long Quang and Au Co (Vietnam), Popul Vuh (Central America), and Haion-Hwa-Tha (North America).

2. Reading activity

1. The handouts are distributed among the groups of students:
 - "The Water of Life", The Grimm Brothers
 - "The Slaying of Fafnir" (Excerpts from "Reginmol" and "Fafnismol" in the Elder Edda)
 - The Odyssey of Homer (Excerpts from Book VII)
 - "Orpheus and Eurydice" (Greek myth)
 - "The Charmed Ring" (Hindu folktale)

The students read the handouts in order to be able to connect their reading with various strands of 'literary knowledge', thus creating a more lasting and increasingly tightly woven 'web of knowledge'. Their involvement with Tolkien will not take place in mental vacuum; rather they will be able constantly to link literature, film, music art etc. with previously acquired knowledge.

2. The students are invited to read *The Hobbit* (Excerpts from the book, Chapters VIII – XIX or the book in its entirety) at home.

Post- reading activities

Activity 1: Discussion

Suggested discussion Topics:

a) The Inner Quest

In many quest stories, the protagonist undertakes a double search. Even as he labors to complete his mission, he seeks some possibility buried deep within himself. Have the class discuss Bilbo's struggle to keep his timid Baggins side from overcoming "the Tookish part." How does the Bilbo of Chapter XIX differ from the hobbit who hosted "An Unexpected Party"? Is our hero's inner quest complete when he enters the Lonely Mountain? (On page 192 we learn, "Already he was a very different hobbit from the one



that had run out without a pocket-handkerchief from Bag-End long ago.") Or does he still need to grow in curiosity, courage, or compassion?

b) From Grocer to Burglar

In Chapter I, the dwarf Gloin speaks of Bilbo in disparaging terms: "As soon as I clapped my eyes on the little fellow bobbing and puffing on the mat, I had my doubts. He looks more like a grocer than a burglar" (page 18). Ask students to recapitulate the episodes through which Bilbo earns the dwarves' respect and friendship. At what moment in Bilbo's journey does he complete the transition from grocer to hero?

c) The Metaphorical Quest

The plain meaning of quest is a search, and yet the concept enjoys loftier connotations. Which of humanity's hopes and dreams would students exalt with the word quest? (Possibilities include world peace, a cure for cancer, and contact with extraterrestrials.) What pursuits are students unwilling to call quests? Can the class think of controversial enterprises that have nevertheless been labeled quests? (Students might cite the Human Genome Project, for example.) What distinguishes a quest from a conquest? If you know exactly what form your desired object will take, does that mean you aren't really on a quest?

d) The Crutch of Invisibility

Throughout *The Hobbit* Bilbo performs brave and sometimes foolhardy actions, often after becoming invisible via the magic ring. Do students think Bilbo's use of the ring was necessary in every case? Whom do we admire more, the person who wields a powerful object or the person who cultivates his natural gifts? Which of Bilbo's interventions struck the class as particularly heroic? Which did the students find disturbing? Is Bilbo responsible for Smaug's murderous rampage?

e) Symbolism versus Allegory

Most students are familiar with the concept of symbolism in poetry and fiction. As the class discusses *The Hobbit*, you can help students distinguish true literary symbols (objects, characters, and events whose meanings evolve as the story progresses) from mere



allegorical equivalences (objects, characters, and events whose meanings are fixed from the outset). What symbolic significance do students find in Tolkien's use of swords, water, magical objects, and the dragon's hoard? What rescues these elements from the purely allegorical realm?

f) Destiny on the Wing

Like Tolkien's other works, *The Hobbit* implies a world of mysterious forces operating beyond human understanding and hobbit ken. Have the class discuss the ordering principle that evidently hovers over Middle-earth. What moments in the story might trace to providence or destiny rather than mere chance? Is the eagles' climactic appearance a eucatastrophe? In confronting these questions, students will want to reread Gandalf's final speech to Bilbo: "Surely you don't disbelieve the prophecies, because you had a hand in bringing them about yourself? You don't really suppose, do you, that all your adventures and escapes were managed by mere luck, just for your sole benefit?"

Activity 2:

A Hero's journey

This discussion spins off from the handout called "The Water of Life." Begin the conversation by presenting basic elements of a quest adventure as it is presented on A Hero's journey – circular scheme. Next have the class map "The Water of Life" onto this model. Finally, invite the class to fit *The Hobbit* to this scheme. What tests does Bilbo face as the journey progresses? How close does he come to being weeded out?

Activity 3:

The Gandalf's Gazette.

Invite the group to imagine that daily newspapers issue from Gandalf. After picking a favorite tale, the student imagines a typical article from *The Fairyland Sentinel* or *The Enchanted Enquirer*, then writes it out in her daily journal. This piece might be a news report (TROLLS PLAN TO RAISE TOLLS), a feature story (WAYWARD SLIPPER UNITES PRINCE AND SCULLERY MAID), or an editorial (WE MUST REOPEN THE HANSEL AND GRETEL CASE). At some point in the article, the student should allude to the theme of the Faerie narrative in question.



Activity 4. Finding Your Inner Troll

So basic and compelling are the great fairy tale motifs — the impossible task, the rash promise, the forbidden action — that many students will enjoy incorporating them into their own fiction. The idea is not to produce a Faerie story for its own sake, but to use the genre in exploring a personal theme or making a satirical point. The setting can be archaic or contemporary, the characters convincing or comical. If students have trouble thinking up plots, remind them that the genre thrives on wish-fulfillment fantasies. What if a frustrated high school athlete, disgruntled babysitter, bored software engineer, envious business executive, or failed Nascar driver turned to Faerie in seeking her heart's desire?

Activity 5: The Circle as Symbol

The motif of the ring recurs in Western literature, variously symbolizing infinity, eternity, harmony, perfection, and sometimes imprisonment. Assign student group to research the "circle myth" of his or her choice. The possibilities include King Arthur's Round Table, Dante's Circles of Hell, Wagner's Ring of the Nibelung, the legend of King Solomon's Ring etc. The student might present his findings as a hypothetical movie poster, magazine ad, book jacket, or travel brochure ("Escape to the Inferno This Winter").

Evaluation and assessment method:

Teacher's role – provide materials and and act as mediator, facilitator or initiator of discussions.

In order to evaluate and assess the effective impact of the previous activities upon the students, they are asked to:

1. Write a critical essay on suggested Discussion topics
2. Write their own fantasy stories by following the circular scheme (Handout: *A Hero's journey*).
3. Read The return of the King, Ch.10, *The black gate opens* and describe and distribute the stages of a key dramatic action by following the plot structure diagram line (Handout: Plot structure Diagram).



Students are assessed on their ability to demonstrate:

- knowledge of the content and form of literary text from different countries and culture
- engagement with writers' ideas and treatment of themes
- appreciation of how texts relate to wider contexts
- recognition and appreciation of how writers create and shape meanings and effects
- empathy, through re-creation of a character's voice and thoughts

Effect of the activities on RSP reading:

Proposed methods affecting development of higher order cognitive skills.

Throughout, the emphasis is on acquiring new skills through a structured process of practice to fluency, transfer, and generalization that builds on what students have previously learned.

Connection to curriculum

Grade: 1-4

Curriculum:

World and English Literature: Traditional folk literature, including myths, tales, sagas, poems, legends, ballads, and epics

Civic education - Power, Corruption, and Personal responsibility

Sociology – The Price of Progress

History: Mythology ; The Great War / 19th century – the age of progress.

Geography – Ancient world Maps

Ecology - Love of nature and the effect industrialization and globalisation

Psychology – "Will to power" - The corrosive effect on the heart and mind

Music Art – *Der Ring des Nibelungen*, Richard Wagner's opera.

Knowledge:

- Contribution of fantasy literature to an understanding of areas of human concern
- Critical thinking about the world, interdependency between people, friendship, rivalry
- Wider and universal issues of Tolkien's narrative
- Better understanding of themselves and of the world around them
- Enjoy the experience of reading fantasy literature



- Different ways in which author achieve the effects on readers
- Fantasy's contribution to aesthetic, imaginative and intellectual growth

Skills:

- Exploring rich heritage of the oral tradition through readings, discussions, journal writing, projects etc.
- Understand and respond to literary texts in different forms and from different countries and cultures
- Collecting, selecting and evaluating background informations
- Read, interpret and evaluate literary text
- Develop an understanding of literal and implicit meaning, relevant contexts and of the deeper themes or attitudes that may be expressed
- Present an informed, personal response to literary text
- Communicate an informed personal response appropriately and effectively
- Work/cooperate effectively in groups
- Skills of empathy
- Skills in improvisation and dramatisation
- Learning through active participation
- Debating

Competences:

The student should be able to:

- Comprehend The Hobbit at the level of plot, character, setting, and idea.
- List characteristics of a quest story
- Indicate which of Tolkien's characters might be considered archetypes.
- Say what is meant by a "metaphorical quest."
- Discuss some differences between symbolism and allegory.
- Indicate how Bilbo Baggins's adventures changed him for the better.
- Appreciate Gandalf's distinction between providence and "mere luck."
- Appreciate the astonishingly complex world in which Tolkien's novels unfold.
- Think critically and write clearly about Tolkien's themes, with special emphasis on their contemporary relevance.
- Understand how Tolkien's fiction is informed by many literary and linguistic traditions, as well as by philosophical, psychological, sociological, and political issues that reverberate through the entire secondary school curriculum.



Bibliographic reference to be used during the activity

Features cover art by J.R.R. Tolkien.

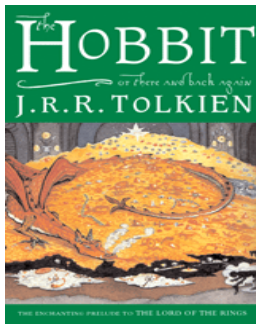
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Digital sources

- <http://www.thehobbit.com/>

Results

Outcomes of the lesson:

The student are/will be able to:

- demonstrate clear critical/analytical understanding of the authors' intentions and the texts' deeper implications and the attitudes it displays
- make much well-selected reference to the text
- respond sensitively and in detail to the way language works in the text
- communicate a considered and reflective personal response to the text.
- sustain a perceptive and convincing response with well-chosen detail of narrative and situation

Recommendations

Many students, especially those with difficulties, find that visual schedules helps them organizing the reading activities. Planning how to begin the story and how the action will proceed is crucial and speaks to the need for understanding the sequence. Listing the elements of the sequence form can be very helpful. The visuals (charts, illustrations etc.) can also be used as tool to help students analyse information in the reading comprehension process. As a student gathers information about what he wants to include



in his story, he may need significant help with integrating components, particularly with first efforts and as expectations become more complex.

Proposed activities and method, together with the selected novel (or any other fantasy genre text) can help in increasing RSP readers interest in reading while affecting their higher order cognitive skills (integration, inference, analysis, creativity, negotiation, assumption, prediction, anticipation, clarification of information).