



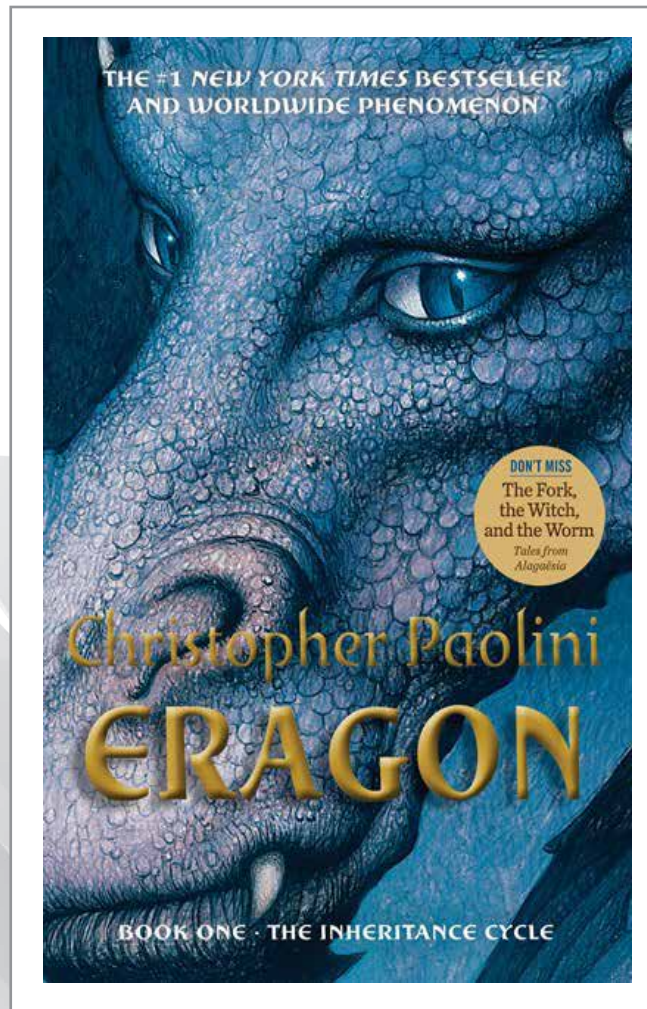
**TEACHER GUIDE**

**GRADES 6-8**

COMPREHENSIVE CURRICULUM BASED LESSON PLANS

# Eragon

Christopher Paolini



**READ, WRITE, THINK, DISCUSS AND CONNECT**

# Eragon

Christopher Paolini

## TEACHER GUIDE

### NOTE:

The trade book edition of the novel used to prepare this guide is found in the Novel Units catalog and on the Novel Units website. Using other editions may have varied page references.

Please note: We have assigned Interest Levels based on our knowledge of the themes and ideas of the books included in the Novel Units sets, however, please assess the appropriateness of this novel or trade book for the age level and maturity of your students prior to reading with them. You know your students best!

---

**ISBN 978-1-50203-767-1**

Copyright infringement is a violation of Federal Law.

© 2020 by Novel Units, Inc., St. Louis, MO. All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, translated, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any way or by any means (electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording, or otherwise) without prior written permission from Novel Units, Inc.

Reproduction of any part of this publication for an entire school or for a school system, by for-profit institutions and tutoring centers, or for commercial sale is strictly prohibited.

Novel Units is a registered trademark of Conn Education.

Printed in the United States of America.

To order, contact your  
local school supply store, or:

Toll-Free Fax: 877.716.7272

Phone: 888.650.4224

3901 Union Blvd., Suite 155

St. Louis, MO 63115

[sales@novelunits.com](mailto:sales@novelunits.com)

[novelunits.com](http://novelunits.com)

## Table of Contents

Summary .....	3
About the Author .....	4
Background Information .....	4
Characters .....	5
Initiating Activities.....	6
Vocabulary Activities.....	6
Twelve Sections .....	7
Each section contains: Summary, Vocabulary, Discussion Questions, and Supplementary Activities	
Post-reading Discussion Questions .....	30
Post-reading Extension Activities.....	32
Assessment.....	33
Scoring Rubric.....	40

## Skills and Strategies

### Comprehension

Creative thinking, identifying attributes, predicting, inferring, supporting judgments, problem solving

### Literary Elements

Story mapping, setting, characterization, conflict, theme, cause and effect, point of view, figurative language

### Vocabulary

Definitions, synonyms, sorting, word maps

### Listening/Speaking

Discussion, oral presentation, drama

### Writing

Creative writing, personal narrative, dialogue, poetry journalism, folklore

### Critical Thinking

Brainstorming, research, compare/contrast, analysis, evaluation

### Across the Curriculum

Literature—Hero’s Journey, legends, ballads, mythical creatures; Social Studies—government, piracy, secret codes; Math—conversion; Science—healing plants, ground water, gemstones; Art—scroll, tapestry, models, crests, design, illustration

**Genre:** fantasy, adventure

**Setting:** imaginary Empire of Alagaësia

**Point of View:** third person

**Themes:** good vs. evil, coming of age, believing in oneself, courage, honor, duty, leadership, empathy, destiny

**Conflict:** person vs. self, person vs. person, person vs. society, person vs. nature

**Style:** narrative

**Tone:** dark, serious, and uncertain

**Date of First Publication:** 2002

## Summary

In the land of Alagaësia, Dragon Riders were once respected peacekeepers until rider-turned-madman Galbatorix and his Thirteen Forsworn betrayed and destroyed them. For nearly 100 years, King Galbatorix has oppressed his kingdom. Then Eragon, a poor, 15-year-old farm boy, finds one of three remaining dragon eggs. Saphira hatches, and she and Eragon bond through mental communication. Two evil Ra'zac, the king's personal dragon hunters, appear in Eragon's small village and kill his uncle. Eragon, who has never met his mother or his father, seeks revenge. He leaves home to hunt the Ra'zac accompanied by Saphira and the village storyteller, Brom.

Brom teaches Eragon the history of the Dragon Riders and instructs him in sword fighting and the use of magic. While tracking the Ra'zac, Eragon, Brom, and Saphira discover murderous actions committed by the monstrous Urgals. When the Ra'zac capture Eragon, Brom, and Saphira, a stranger named Murtagh rescues them but not before Brom is fatally wounded. Before he dies, Brom reveals he is a former Dragon Rider and a member of the Varden, a rebel group who opposes King Galbatorix.

Eragon, who has dreams of an imprisoned woman, travels north with Saphira and Murtagh until he is captured by Urgals and locked in the same prison as the woman in his dreams, an elf. Murtagh and Saphira rescue Eragon and the elf, Arya. They battle a Shade, a powerful evil sorcerer, who has poisoned Arya. Looking for the hideout of the Varden who have the antidote to save Arya's life, Eragon and his friends cross the Hadarac Desert pursued by Urgals. The Varden rescue them just as they are overcome by the Urgals. Though they have let them inside the mountain Farthen Dûr, a hideout built by dwarves, the Varden do not trust Murtagh, who admits he is the son of Morzan, one of the Thirteen Forsworn.

King Galbatorix and his forces seek out Eragon. The Varden, the elves, and the dwarves each want Eragon's sworn loyalty. Eragon is physically and magically tested. During a battle with the Urgals, Eragon slays the Shade, Durza, though he suffers a disfiguring wound and is trapped in Durza's horrific memories. The Mourning Sage contacts Eragon in his mind and convinces him to further his training in the land of the elves. Now Eragon Shadeslayer, Eragon accepts his destiny as a Dragon Rider, independent of any king or leader.

## About the Author

Born in Southern California in 1983, Christopher Paolini has lived most of his life in Paradise Valley, Montana. Homeschooled by his parents, who own the publishing company Paolini International LLC, he graduated from high school at the age of 15 by completing correspondence courses with American School in Chicago, Illinois. Paolini's writing is inspired by the works of Philip Pullman, Mervyn Peake, J.R.R. Tolkien, E.R. Eddison, Garth Nix, Octavia Butler, Raymond E. Feist, Anne McCaffrey, Frank Herbert, and many others. Postponing college until he was older, Christopher Paolini decided to write a fantasy story based on his daydreams that he would enjoy reading and that he never intended to publish. He outlined the *Inheritance* trilogy (now the *Inheritance* cycle), and then worked for two years before showing the manuscript of *Eragon* to his parents. *Eragon* was first published by his parents' company in 2002, and after a long national tour to promote the book, *Eragon* was picked up by Alfred A. Knopf, a major New York publishing house. The book received mixed reviews and has been criticized for its clichéd plot and its similarity to *Star Wars*, *Lord of the Rings*, and *Dragonriders of Pern*. Yet for all the criticism, the book garnered enthusiastic praise for Paolini's imaginative talent, won numerous awards, and quickly became a bestseller. The book was made into a feature film in 2006 and has spawned video games and numerous online fansites. Between book tours in the United States, Canada, United Kingdom, Spain, Germany, France, and Italy, Paolini wrote the second and third books, *Eldest* (2005) and *Brisingsr* (2008), and deemed a fourth book necessary to do justice to the story of *Eragon* and his dragon, Saphira. In an interview, Paolini said he believes in "the magic of stories to give you wonder, awe, and revelations."

## Background Information

The Hero's Journey is a pattern found in mythology as well as today's literature, drama, and movies, and is easily observed in fantasies such as *Eragon*. It is a useful tool to analyze literature, to teach writing, or to discover more about oneself. The term "Hero's Journey" is credited to Joseph Campbell in *The Hero with a Thousand Faces* (Princeton University Press, 1949). In his study of mythology, Campbell identified common elements of a hero's quest and the archetypes of a hero, the latter based on the psychology of Carl Jung. Another excellent source for further insight is Christopher Vogler's *The Writer's Journey: Mythic Structure for Writers* (Michael Wiese Productions, 1992, 1998, 2007). Sources vary on the number of stages in the Hero's Journey; however, the stages are not meant to be followed as a formula but used in various combinations. Christopher Vogler, on page 26 of his 2nd Edition, recaps the Hero's Journey as follows:

1. Heroes are introduced in the ORDINARY WORLD, where
2. they receive the CALL TO ADVENTURE.
3. They are RELUCTANT at first or REFUSE THE CALL, but
4. are encouraged by a MENTOR to
5. CROSS THE FIRST THRESHOLD and enter the Special World, where
6. they encounter TESTS, ALLIES, AND ENEMIES.
7. They APPROACH THE INMOST CAVE, crossing a second threshold
8. where they endure the ORDEAL.
9. They take possession of their REWARD and
10. are pursued on THE ROAD BACK to the Ordinary World.
11. They cross the third threshold, experience a RESURRECTION, and are transformed by the experience.
12. They RETURN WITH THE ELIXIR, a boon or treasure to benefit the Ordinary World.

## Bless the Child, Argetlam–Arya’s Test

As their guide, Orik shows Eragon and Saphira to the dragonhold above the city and answers questions about dwarves and their history. People respectfully call Eragon by the name Argetlam, or Silver Hand. He and Saphira bless a child, giving her hope and a future. They meet Angela and Solembum hiding in the dragonhold and go to see the dwarf king, Hrothgar. Eragon passes the Twins’ testing until they ask him to perform a task only masters can do. Arya berates the Twins and then tests Eragon’s skills in sword fighting.

### Vocabulary

pinnacle  
repast  
garrisoned  
boon  
grottoes  
frivolous  
redeeming  
harked  
façade  
benediction  
coif  
proficiency  
reprieve  
acquit  
trill

### Discussion Questions

1. Why is it wise for Eragon to keep in mind “Orik’s dual loyalty and the split nature of power within Tronjheim” (pp. 615–616)? *(Answers will vary, but students should infer that Eragon has to be careful not to take sides between the Varden and the dwarves.)*
2. If you were Ajihad, would you allow the Twins to remain in the Varden? *(Answers will vary, but students should bear in mind that the Twins serve a necessary purpose as spellcasters on the battlefield and the Varden don’t have many people who can use magic.)*
3. When Orik says a servant could bring food the long way up to the dragonhold, Eragon wonders if Orik is testing him. What might Orik want to know about Eragon? *(Answers will vary. Suggestion: Orik wants to know if Eragon is considerate of others or if he feels special and worthy of extra attention because he is a Dragon Rider.)*
4. What are the advantages and disadvantages of living in Tronjheim? For all its splendor, is the city a practical place? *(Though Orik says most dwarves prefer to live in caves and tunnels, Tronjheim can safely house the entire dwarf nation when necessary. Depending on outside sources for supplies is a disadvantage,*

*especially if there is a siege. Answers will vary, but it may not be a very practical place. Getting from one place to another inside can sometimes be difficult to do quickly because of its massive size, so it could also be hard to defend if an army broke through and made it inside.)*

5. Oreck tells Eragon, “As long as you are in Tronjheim, you won’t have to buy a thing. You’ll pay for it in other ways—Ajihad and Hrothgar will see to that” (p. 624). In what ways might Ajihad and Hrothgar expect Eragon to pay? *(Answers will vary, but students should infer that Eragon could end up in the debt of the two leaders. Ajihad and Hrothgar may want Eragon to side with them on any conflicting issues or put their needs ahead of the needs of others, including Eragon’s and Saphira’s. They will want him to serve and will offer him almost anything he wants to do so.)*
6. Eragon hesitates in blessing the child because blessings can “go awry and prove to be more curse than boon...” (p. 628). Use the language glossaries on pages 734–738 to translate the blessing Eragon gives, and then discuss how the blessing could go awry. *(“Let luck and happiness follow you and may you be shielded from misfortune” [p. 734]. Answers will vary.)*
7. Review pages 629–631. Can you apply the wisdom Saphira gives Eragon to an experience in your life? Is asking questions that do not have answers a good or bad thing? Why? *(Answers will vary.)*

8. Why does Angela say Brom was cursed? Do you agree with Angela that Brom failed to guard and train Eragon? (*Brom's wyrd was to fail at all of his tasks except for killing Morzan. Answers will vary. Suggestions: Eragon reached the Varden safely. Later, during his testing and in battle, he proves himself worthy and knowledgeable. Brom taught Eragon well and did not fail him.*)
9. An uncomfortable throne reminds King Hrothgar of his obligations. What reminds Eragon of his? (*Answers will vary. Suggestions: Saphira, Zar'roc, his longing for home, the constant reactions of people around him*)
10. If Eragon had joined the Twins' group of magic users, how might his testing have been different? Why do the Twins ask Eragon to summon the essence of silver? (*Answers will vary but should include that the Twins wouldn't expect Eragon to do something only a master can do; they would have asked him if he knew how. The Twins want to harm Eragon and, if possible, learn for themselves how to perform the task that would give them complete control over an object.*)
11. **Prediction:** How will Arya repay her debt to Eragon?

### Supplementary Activities

1. Critical Thinking: King Hrothgar says that "Beware, the rock changes" is an old dictum of the dwarves (p. 647). Research dictums, proverbs, and truisms. Then write five wise sayings of your own and explain each. Explain Hrothgar's dictum.
2. Writing: Eragon enjoys reading poems written by the tenth dwarf king. Write a poem about things dwarves enjoy.
3. Writing: In a short essay, discuss at least four reasons why Eragon does not trust the Twins. Be sure to cite evidence from the novel.