

Individual Learning Packet

Teaching Unit

The Fellowship of the Ring

by J. R. R. Tolkien

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Item No. 300354

The Fellowship of the Ring

Objectives

By the end of this Unit, the student will be able to:

1. recognize and comment on the significance of shadows and stars as two symbols in the novel.
2. define vocabulary words from the text.
3. relate significant details about hobbits, Elves, Dwarves, Orcs, Black Riders, Wizards, and Rangers including their physical descriptions, their cultures, and their responses to the conflict between good and evil.
4. point out examples of foreshadowing and irony used in the novel.
5. relate details from the story concerning setting, characters, and plot, illustrating that this is a fantasy novel and, therefore, does not realistically portray the known world.
6. discuss how Tolkien develops verisimilitude in the novel.
7. recount details from the Prologue that are pertinent to *The Fellowship of the Ring*, specifically references to *The Hobbit* and to Bilbo's history.
8. explain how the Ring influences the Ring-bearer's life, why the Ring is difficult to destroy, and the reasons that wearing the Ring is dangerous, even for wise and good characters.
9. cite incidents from the story to support the following theme: Even though there is a benevolent guiding force influencing the characters, they still have free will to determine their lives.
10. provide evidence from the story to support the following statements about the nature of evil:
 - No one is born evil.
 - Evil is destructive.
 - Evil cannot understand motivations for good or selfless acts of heroes. This lack of understanding is a weakness that can be used to destroy evil.
 - Those who succumb to the power of evil can repent and be rehabilitated.
11. discuss the extent to which Frodo, Gandalf, and Aragorn are heroes.

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Questions for Essay and Discussion

1. Why does Gollum hate Bilbo Baggins?
2. For what reasons does Gandalf warn Frodo not to wear the Ring?
3. How does Gandalf know that Frodo's ring is the Master-ring?
4. Discuss how each of the following shows that Frodo is courageous:
 - his decision to leave the Shire
 - his fight against the Barrow-wights
 - the Dark Riders who attack at Weathertop
 - the Council meeting
 - the ending of the book
5. Cite incidents from the story to support or refute the following statement: Gandalf and the Elves believe evil-doers can be rehabilitated.
6. Gandalf suggests that Frodo is fated or selected to be the Ring-bearer. What evidence is there in this story that Frodo also has free will?
7. One of the themes of this novel is that the common people have the courage and the power to overcome evil. Select three characters from the story and discuss how each character's actions illustrate this theme.
8. Some critics believe that Tom Bombadil's home represents the Garden of Eden or paradise and that Tom is immune to the effects of the Ring because he is pure, lives without sin, and maintains a close tie to nature. Cite two other incidents from the story that also may be interpreted as supporting Christian beliefs.
9. Tolkien has been criticized for portraying his female characters in an unrealistic, idealistic way. Cite incidents from the story to discuss the extent to which you agree or disagree with this opinion.
10. The Willow Tree tries to capture the hobbits, but does not seem to be an agent of the Dark Lord. Which other incidents in the story are dangerous for Frodo and his friends, but are probably not the work of the Dark Lord?

Book I

Chapter I – A Long-expected Party

VOCABULARY

phalanx – a group of individuals united for a common purpose
prostrate – lying flat; fallen or thrown to the ground
provender – provisions, food
scintillating – giving off sparks; flashing, sparkling
vigour (vigor) – active physical or mental force or strength

1. In what ways is Bilbo an unusual hobbit?

2. Who is Frodo, and what is his relationship to Bilbo?

3. What is Sam Gamgee’s relationship to Bilbo?

4. How might the hobbits in the Shire describe Gandalf the Wizard?

5. What “Three Purposes” does Bilbo have for wanting to assemble his friends and relatives?

Chapter III – Three Is Company

VOCABULARY

bower – a place enclosed by overhanging tree limbs or vines
coppices – thickets of small trees or shrubs
draught – a drink
ere – before
forebode – indicated beforehand
greensward – green, grassy ground or turf
outliers – persons or things that exist away from the main body
snuffling – to breathe audibly and with difficulty
tussock – a thick tuft or clump of grass; a sedge, twigs

1. Frodo does not want the other hobbits in Hobbiton to know that he is leaving on a quest. What does he do to keep the reasons for his departure from Hobbiton a secret?

2. Describe the dark rider that Frodo and the others see along the road. How does Frodo feel when he sees this dark rider?

3. Tolkien uses shadows to alert the reader to the presence of the Dark Lord or his followers. Why do you think Tolkien uses this image to describe the Enemy? State a theme for the novel based on your understanding of this image.

4. Who saves Frodo, Pippin, and Sam from the Dark Riders? What new information about the Shire does Frodo receive?

5. What is Tom's parting gift to Frodo and the others?

Chapter VIII – Fog On The Barrow-Downs

VOCABULARY

barrow – a heap of earth or rocks making a grave
barrow-wight – an evil creature who occupies a barrow
hewed – chopped or cut
incantation – chanting to cast a spell or perform other magic

1. Frodo is captured by a barrow-wight and wakes up in a barrow. At first, he is frightened, but he begins to think about Bilbo and his stories of adventure.

Tolkien writes:

There is a seed of courage hidden (often deeply, it is true) in the heart of the fattest and most timid hobbit, waiting for some final desperate danger to make it grow. Frodo was neither very fat nor very timid; indeed, though he did not know it, Bilbo (and Gandalf) had thought him the best hobbit in the Shire. He thought he had come to the end of his adventure, and a terrible end, but the thought hardened him. He found himself stiffening, as if for a final spring; he no longer felt like a helpless prey.

Based on the above excerpt, why do you suppose Frodo, of all the creatures of Middle-earth, is selected to be the Ring-bearer?

2. Why does Frodo decide not to put on the Ring to escape from the barrow? How does Tom defeat the Wight?

5. Why does Gandalf believe the Company of the Ring will be safe if it is daylight outside when they reach the Gates? How is this related to the use of darkness as a symbol for evil?

6. What happens to Gandalf?

Chapter VI – Lothlórien

VOCABULARY

descried – discerned, saw
eddy – moving with a circular motion
gird – to prepare for action
plaited – braided or interwoven
sundered – separated

1. What does Aragorn discover about Frodo?

2. Legolas sings a song about the maiden Nimrodel. After the song is over, why does Aragorn say that Legolas' words "bring good counsel"? What does he learn from Legolas' song?

3. What conditions do Haldir and the others place on the Company of the Ring before permitting them to pass through elf lands? How do Gimli and Aragorn respond to these conditions?
