

Individual Learning Packet

Teaching Unit

The Hobbit

by J.R.R. Tolkien

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Objectives

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

1. define vocabulary words found in the story.
2. point out examples of humor, including slapstick humor, throughout the story.
3. list the identifying physical and lifestyle characteristics of each group below and comment on the values of wealth, war, and relationships for the groups:
 - dwarves
 - elves
 - hobbits
 - men of the lake
 - trolls
 - goblins
4. discuss Tolkien's style of narration and point out examples of when the narrator breaks away from telling the story to speak directly to the reader.
5. define the characteristics of a fantasy and discuss ways *The Hobbit* qualifies as one fantasy.
6. find examples of legends in the story and point out how they contribute an air of verisimilitude to the story.
7. discuss the author's poetic writing style, including his use of personification and rhyme and meter in his prose.
8. point out examples of foreshadowing.
9. cite incidents from the story which support the following overall theme: Good men can overcome evil through courage, luck, good sense, and by maintaining friendly relations with other groups and their natural surroundings.
10. discuss the significance of sword names in the story.
11. point out the incidents in the story which demonstrate the following generalizations:
 - most interesting stories have both good and evil in them;
 - great wealth makes individuals greedy for even more;
 - frightened individuals may turn against their friends and leaders in times of trouble.
12. write a character sketch of Gollum and comment on Tolkien's definition of evil.

Questions for Essay and Discussion

1. Tolkien was a scholar who loved to study languages. He carefully selected many unusual vocabulary words he used in this story. For example: He named the protagonist “Bilbo,” which also means “sword” or “rapier.” Define the following terms and state why you think Tolkien carefully selected each of these words: attercop, bard, flummoxed, rune, tomnoddy, necromancer, toothsome
2. In what ways is the episode with the trolls an example of slapstick humor?
3. Why do the dwarves seem to think it is only proper to send Bilbo on the risky assignments? For example, Bilbo is asked to investigate the tunnel in the mountain to see if Smaug is at home.
4. Bilbo states at the end of the story that he likes the elves. What does he find likable about this “race?”
5. At the end of the book, why is Bilbo no longer considered to be respectable by the other hobbits? What special abilities do hobbits in general have that makes Bilbo useful to the dwarves?
6. Hobbits are accustomed to living in tunnels. Why is Bilbo uncomfortable in the goblin tunnels?
7. What type of narration is used in this novel? Why do you think the narrator frequently interrupts the flow of the story to make comments directly to the reader?
8. A fantasy is a fictional work, which does not represent the real world. In what ways does *The Hobbit* qualify as an example of a fantasy novel? Even though Bilbo’s world is fictional, how does Tolkien manage to make it seem real for the reader?
9. Why are the moon-letters important to the story?
10. What do you think is Tolkien’s definition of evil? Which of the races in this story are evil and why?
11. Cite incidents from the story to prove the following statement: Bilbo overcomes evil by luck, courage, and good sense.
12. Why does Bilbo decide to name his sword “Sting”? What other swords have names in this story?
13. Relate an incident from the story that supports each of the following generalizations about life:

Great wealth is dazzling.

Under stress, people will turn against their leaders.

The Hobbit

Chapter 1 – An Unexpected Party

1. Define the following vocabulary words from this chapter:

• **audacious** – _____

• **conspirator** – _____

• **flummoxed** – _____

• **laburnums** – _____

• **necromancer** – _____

• **remuneration** – _____

• **rune** – _____

• **throng** – _____

2. Identify each of the following places described in this chapter.

• **The Hill** – _____

• **The Water** – _____

• **The Mountain** – _____

Chapter 5 – Riddles in the Dark

1. Find an example of foreshadowing at the beginning of this chapter when Bilbo is alone in the tunnel.

2. Tolkien is a master of language. Even though *The Hobbit* is written mostly in prose, Tolkien includes many songs and sentences with poetic elements. Sometimes they have meter like the lines in a poem. Find a short passage in this chapter that illustrates his poetic writing style.

3. Many critics believe the character Gollum represents Tolkien's idea of evil. Cite incidents from this chapter to support or refute this idea.

4. What are the rules Bilbo and Gollum agree to concerning the riddle contest?

Chapter 10 – A Warm Welcome

1. Define the following vocabulary words from this chapter.

• **clamor** – _____

• **enmity** – _____

• **quay** – _____

2. What does the below quotation suggest to the reader about the character and leadership qualities of the Master of the Men of the lake?

“As for the Master he saw there was nothing else for it but to obey the general clamour, for the moment at any rate, and to pretend to believe that Thorin was what he said.”

3. Why does the Master decide to help the dwarves continue their quest to recover their treasure?

Chapter 15 – The Gathering of the Clouds

1. Define the following vocabulary words from this chapter.

• **besieged** – _____

• **carriion** – _____

• **succored** – _____

2. What piece of wise advice does Roäc, the ancient raven, have for Thorin?

3. Find a passage in this chapter showing that the dwarves and Bilbo want peace with their neighbors.

4. Briefly list the reasons Bard thinks his people deserve part of the treasure.

5. How does Thorin respond to Bard's claims to the treasure? For what reasons do you agree or disagree with Thorin's position?

