

the hobbit
OR
there and Back again

by J. R. R. Tolkien

Unit by – Jamie Arndt

12-10-99

To the Teacher:

The book *The Hobbit* is only a tiny window into the whole mythical land of Middle-Earth that Tolkien invented. The world of Middle-Earth itself has a huge and intricate history that is written about in books such as the *Simarillion*, the *Lord of the Rings* trilogy, and others. So in a sense, this is a historical book because Tolkien takes the role of a person who uncovered an ancient book (called *The Red Book of Westmarch*) and translated it into the story you see before you. Though it is possible to view this story as an allegory, the author has been quoted as saying that he much rather prefer history and would probably rather have you view this story as such.

The vocabulary words are for the students to look up in a dictionary or you could have the students try to figure them out based on the context. They are meant not only to enhance the student's vocabulary but to help the student along in the meaning of the story. The writing assignments at the end of certain chapters are meant to help the student imagine and write out scenes that the book didn't directly go into much detail. Encourage the students to use their imaginations as much as possible in the writing assignments as "The Hobbit" itself is one huge fairy tale. There are many more possibilities for creative writing assignments but the author of this unit just decided to include a few.

And lastly, since this is a fairy tale it will deal with a lot of fanciful beings, events, and magic. Be sure to warn the students to be discerning and realize that such things (trolls, goblins, wizards, dwarves, elves, dragons, etc.) are just made up and will never be real. After all, this is just a story...

Chapter 1: An Unexpected Party (pages 1-27)

Vocabulary words:

luxurious (pg. 3)
braces (pg. 4)
throng (pg. 9)
flummoxed (pg 11)
audacious (pg 16)

1. What was Bilbo Baggins' parents names?
2. What was so weird about the Took side of his family?
3. List the names of the dwarves in order of their appearance?
4. Why did Gandalf hit Bilbo's door with his staff instead of ringing the doorbell?
5. Up to this point, do you think that Bilbo would make a good burglar? Why?

Writing Assignment: Write out what you would do if thirteen people just invited themselves into your house and told you what to do.

Chapter 2: Roast Mutton (pages 28-44)

Vocabulary words:

requisite (pg 29)
ambling (pg 31)
toothsome (pg 35)
scabbards (pg 43)

1. Why didn't Bilbo find the note?
2. What alerted the trolls to Bilbo's presence?
3. Name the three trolls.
4. How were the trolls fooled until daylight when they turned to stone?
5. When did you figure out who fooled them?

Writing Assignment: Write out the conversation between the trolls when they decided to come out of the mountains and into the forest.

Chapter 3: A Short Rest (pages 45-54)

Vocabulary words:

forded (pg 45)
homely (pg 46)
merry (pg 51)

1. What was the name of the master of the house at Rivendell?
2. What are the names of the two swords that Gandalf and Thorin found in the troll's cave? →
3. Who is Durin?
4. How long did they stay at Rivendell? What day did they leave?

Chapter 4: Over Hill and Under Hill (pages 55-67) *next page?*

Vocabulary words:

uncanny (pg 55)
thoroughly (pg 58)
splintered (pg 60)
gnashed (pg. 65)

1. Which chain of mountains did they have to cross?
2. Which two dwarves went to go find a cave? Do you think they thoroughly explored it?
3. Which part of Bilbo's dream came true?
4. What did the goblins call the swords that Gandalf and Thorin had?
5. Who killed the Great Goblin?
6. Why was this chapter called "Over Hill and Under Hill"?

Writing assignment: Write out a conversation between some goblins that convinced one of them to go around the corner that Gandalf and Thorin had last been at.

Chapter 5: Riddles in the Dark (pages 68-89)**Vocabulary words:**

subterranean (pg. 70)
bulging (pg. 71)
throttled (pg. 71)
dreadfully (pg. 78)
antiquity (pg. 79)

1. What do elvish blades do when goblins are near?
2. Was it smart for Bilbo to not go swimming in the lake? Who lived on the island in the middle of the lake?
3. Why was Bilbo's last riddle not exactly fair?
4. What was Gollum's "birthday present"? What did it do to the person who wore it?

Writing Assignment: Make up your own riddle that Bilbo could have asked Gollum or vice versa.

Chapter 6: Out of the Frying-Pan into the Fire (pages 90-110)**Vocabulary words:**

dell (pg. 91)
confusticate (pg 92)
sorrel (pg. 96)
infested (pg. 98)
uproar (pg. 103)

1. Who had dropped Bilbo before they got split up?
2. Up to this point, what do you think of Bilbo as a burglar? What do the dwarves think of him?
3. How many days were they in the mountain?

4. With whom did the goblins team up with to get the dwarves, Gandalf, and Bilbo?
5. How is this chapter aptly named?
6. Who saved the dwarves, Gandalf, and Bilbo? Why did they owe a favor to Gandalf?

Chapter 7: Queer Lodgings (pages 111-138)

Vocabulary words:

appalling (pg. 114)
 furrier (pg. 114)
 scramble (pg. 116)
 unimpeachable (pg. 118)
 peril (pg. 127)

1. What was an unusual thing about Beorn?
2. Why did Gandalf keep the interruptions coming when he was talking with Beorn?
 Who came last and why?
3. What were the noises that Bilbo heard outside of Beorn's house?
4. Why are the goblins and wargs so angry at the dwarves?
5. What are some things that Beorn and Gandalf told them about Mirkwood?
6. Why wouldn't the dwarves want to go north or south around Mirkwood?

Chapter 8: Flies and Spiders (pages 139-169)

Vocabulary words:

pitch-dark (pg. 140)
 bulbous (pg. 140)
 bowled (pg. 144)
 boughs (pg. 147)
 froth (pg. 160)

1. Why wouldn't the dwarves light fires at night?
2. What two notable things did Bilbo do for them in this chapter?
3. What did Bilbo name his sword?
4. When Bilbo told them the real story of what happened in the mountain, did the dwarves still hold him in high regard?
5. Where is Thorin?

Chapter 9: Barrels Out of Bond (pages 170-187)

Vocabulary words:

hewn (pg. 171)
 nimble (pg. 173)
 portcullis (pg. 175)
 wearisome (pg. 177)
 turnkey (pg. 181)

1. Why didn't the dwarves tell the elven king their real plans for traveling to Mirkwood?
2. What two elves made it possible for Bilbo to execute his plan?
3. Up to this point, what do you think of Bilbo as a burglar?

4. What was the weak point in Bilbo's plan?
5. Why didn't the raft-elves look in the barrels?

Writing Assignment: The chief of the guards had to explain to the elven-king how the dwarves got out even though the keys were on his belt when he woke up. Write out the conversation between the two.

Chapter 10: A Warm Welcome (pages 188-200)

Vocabulary words:

ominous (pg. 189)
buffeted (pg. 192)
draggled (pg. 194)
waylaid (pg. 195)
obscurest (pg. 197)

1. Why was the eastern end of the elf-road not too useful anymore?
2. Why were the guards not paying attention while Bilbo was unpacking the dwarves?
3. Why were the people so happy at the return of the dwarves?
4. Why was it foolish for the lake-people to sing songs about the mountain-king's return?
5. Why wasn't the Master sorry to see the dwarves leave?

Writing assignment: From the information in this chapter, try to draw a map of Lake-town.

Chapter 11: On the Doorstep (pages 201-209)

Vocabulary words:

provisions (pg. 201)
reek (pg. 203)
threshold (pg. 205)
freckled (pg. 208)
vapour (pg. 209)

1. How could they tell they found the secret door?
2. Why wouldn't conventional means help them open the door?
3. What had Gandalf given Thorin at the beginning of the quest which aided in them opening the door? Who did Gandalf get the key from?
4. Looking at both maps, trace the path they have taken up to this point?

Chapter 12: Inside Information (pages 210-231)

Vocabulary words:

esteemed (pg. 210)
vastness (pg. 213)
menace (pg. 214)
smouldering (pg. 218)
awkward (pg. 220)
skulking (pg. 222)

1. What did Bilbo steal from the dragon hoard? Why wasn't it smart?
2. Who almost got forgotten outside the mountain when Smaug awoke?
3. How had Bilbo come up with the names for himself? Why was that smart? Did he follow that advice when he met strangers before?
4. Where was Smaug not protected?
5. How had Smaug tried to sneak up on his visitors on the "doorstep"?

Writing assignment: If you were talking with Smaug, what names would you come up with for yourself?

Chapter 13: Not at Home (pages 232-244)

Vocabulary words:

shrill (pg. 234)
hoard (pg. 235)
goblets (pg. 238)
desolation (pg. 242)
dominion (pg. 243)

1. What did Bilbo find at the top of the mound of treasure?
2. How did Thorin know where to go in the mountain?
3. How long were they in the tunnel behind the magic door?
4. What is *cram* and describe it?

Chapter 14: Fire and Water (pages 245-254)

Vocabulary words:

marauding (pg. 245)
gilded (pg. 248)
yew (pg. 248)
lightfooted (pg. 253)

1. Why hadn't the dragon caught Lake-town unprepared?
2. Who proved to be the hero of the day in Lake-town? From whom did he find out about Smaug's weak spot?
3. Why was the Master jealous of the man who killed Smaug?
4. What had spread most of the news of Smaug's death?
5. Why would no one go and try to recover jewels from Smaug's carcass?

Writing assignment: Write a journal entry for Bard on the day that Smaug attacked.

Chapter 15: The Gathering of the Clouds (pages 255-265)

Vocabulary words:

carrion (pg. 257)
issuing (pg. 259)
tumbled (pg. 262)
parley (pg. 262)
smote (pg. 265)

grim (pg. 265)

1. How old is Roac? Where did Thorin send him and why?
2. What were the dwarves doing while the elves and men were preparing to come to the mountain?
3. Why wouldn't Thorin part with any of his treasure to the elves and men? Was he right in doing so?
4. Were the elves and men right in demanding part of the treasure?
5. What are the "clouds" in the title of this chapter?

Chapter 16: A Thief in the Night (pages 266-272)

Vocabulary words:

besets (pg. 266)

rouse (pg. 268)

hasty (pg. 270)

comely (pg. 271)

1. Why did Bilbo give the Elven-king and Bard the Arkenstone?
2. Who surprised Bilbo in his appearance?

Chapter 17: The Clouds Burst (pages 273-285)

Vocabulary words:

embassy (pg. 273)

literally (pg. 275)

bewilderment (pg. 275)

hauberk (pg. 276)

mattocks (pg. 277)

siege (pg. 277)

vanguard (pg. 281)

1. What did Thorin do when he found out who gave up his Arkenstone?
2. How did Dain and his army get to the mountain so fast?
3. What had the goblins been doing ever since the death of the Great Goblin? Where is the Goblin's capital?
4. List the five armies in the Battle of Five Armies. Which army was forgotten?
5. Who came at the very end of this chapter?

Chapter 18: The Return Journey (pages 286-294)

Vocabulary words:

helm (pg. 287)

dislodged (pg. 289)

unwrought (pg. 291)

stammering (pg. 293)

Yule-tide (pg. 294)

1. Why might sometimes an invisible ring be bad?

2. Who had also come from the West to fight? Name two things he did in the battle?
3. Who became the new King under the Mountain?
4. Of the companions, who had died during or because of the battle?
5. How much treasure was Bilbo guaranteed in the old agreement? How much did he end up taking?
6. Why was it safe for Bilbo, Gandalf, and Beorn to go north around Mirkwood?

Writing Assignment: Describe a skirmish that Gandalf, Beorn, and Bilbo may have had on their way back to Beorn's house.

Chapter 19: The Last Stage (pages 295-304)

Vocabulary words:

hearth (pg. 296)

lore (pg. 297)

contentedly (pg. 299)

extraordinarily (pg. 302)

1. What had Gandalf been doing while Thorin and Company were in Mirkwood?
2. How long did Bilbo and Gandalf stay at Elrond's house this time?
3. What did Bilbo come back to his home to find?
4. How long was Bilbo away on his adventure?

More questions

1. What did Bilbo lose on this adventure? What did he gain?
2. From what point-of-view is this story told?
3. Who is/are the protagonist(s)? Who is/are the antagonist(s)?
4. Which character underwent a change? Which ones didn't?