

The Hobbit



By

J.R.R. Tolkien

A Novel Study
by Nat Reed

The Hobbit

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About the author: Nat Reed was a member of the teaching profession for more than 35 years. He was a full-time instructor at Trent University in the Teacher Education Program for nine years. For more information on his work and literature, visit novelstudies.org.

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Suggestions and Expectations

This curriculum unit can be used in a variety of ways. Each chapter of the novel study focuses on one or two chapters of *The Hobbit* and is comprised of four different activities:

- Before You Read
- Vocabulary Building
- Comprehension Questions
- Language and Extension Activities

A principal expectation of the unit is that students will develop their skills in reading, writing, listening and oral communication, as well as in reasoning and critical thinking.

Links with the Common Core Standards (U.S.)

Many of the activities included in this curriculum unit are supported by the Common Core Standards. For instance the *Reading Standards for Literature, Grade 5*, makes reference to the following activities:

- a) determining the meaning of words and phrases. . . including figurative language;
- b) explaining how a series of chapters fits together to provide the overall structure;
- c) compare and contrast two characters;
- d) determine how characters ... respond to challenges;
- e) drawing inferences from the text;
- f) determining a theme of a story . . . **and many others.**

Students can work on the activities at their own pace. Every activity need not be completed by all students. A **portfolio cover** is included as well as a **Student Checklist**.

Themes which may be taught in conjunction with the novel include overcoming greed and selfishness; the maturation process (personal growth), overcoming difficulty, courage.

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List of Skills

Vocabulary Development

1. Locating descriptive words/phrases
2. Listing synonyms/homophones
3. Identifying / creating *alliteration*
4. Use of capitals and punctuation
5. Identifying syllables
6. Identify *anagrams*
7. Identify *personification*
8. Use of singular/plural nouns
9. Listing compound words
10. Identifying parts of speech
11. Determining alphabetical order
12. Identification of root words
13. Identify/create *similes*
14. Identification of a *cliffhanger*
15. Identification of *foreshadowing*

Setting Activities

1. Summarize the details of a setting
2. Developing map skills

Plot Activities

1. Complete a *time line* of events
2. Identify conflict in the story
3. Identify the climax of the novel
4. Five W's Chart

Character Activities

1. Determine character traits
2. Protagonists and antagonists
3. Relating personal experiences
4. Comparing two Characters

Creative and Critical Thinking

1. Research
2. Write a newspaper story
3. Write a letter to a friend
4. Complete an Observation Chart
5. Conduct an interview
6. Write about personal feelings
7. Write a book review
8. Complete a KWS Chart

Art Activities

1. A Storyboard
2. Create a collage
3. Design a cover for the novel
4. Design an Information Card

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Synopsis

Bilbo Baggins is a hobbit who enjoys a comfortable, unambitious life, rarely travelling further than the pantry of his hobbit-hole in Bag End.

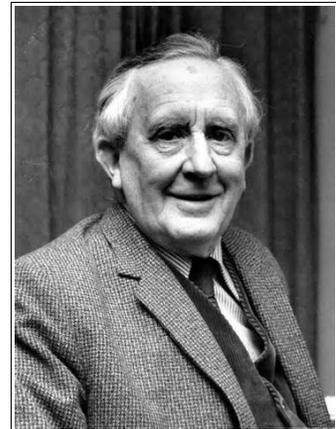
But his contentment is disturbed when the wizard, Gandalf, and a company of thirteen dwarves arrive on his doorstep one day to whisk him away on an unexpected journey 'there and back again'. They have a plot to raid the treasure hoard of Smaug the Magnificent, a large and very dangerous dragon...

The prelude to *The Lord of the Rings*, *The Hobbit* has sold many millions of copies since its publication in 1937, establishing itself as one of the most beloved and influential books of the twentieth century. [<http://www.tolkien.co.uk>]

Author Biography

J.R.R. Tolkien

John Ronald Reuel Tolkien was born on 3rd January 1892 in Bloemfontein, England. After serving in the First World War, Tolkien embarked upon a distinguished academic career and was recognized as one of the finest philologists (study of literature) in the world. He is, however, best known as the creator of **Middle-earth** and author of such classic and extraordinary works of fiction as **The Hobbit**, **The Lord of The Rings** and **The Silmarillion**. His books have been translated into more than 40 languages and have sold many millions of copies worldwide. He was awarded a CBE, and an honorary Doctorate of Letters from Oxford University in 1972. He died in 1973 at the age of 81.



Biography courtesy of <http://www.tolkien.co.uk>

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Name: _____

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Chapter 1



Before you read the chapter:

The **protagonist** in most novels features the main character or “good guy”. The protagonist of **The Hobbit** is a strange little hobbit named **Bilbo Baggins**, whose life goes through some dramatic changes as the story unfolds. Think back on some of your favorite characters from past novels you have read or movies you’ve seen. What do you think makes for an especially interesting **protagonist**?



Vocabulary:

Choose a word from the list to complete each sentence.

dignity	absurd	prosperous	intricate
prudent	estimable	parchment	obstinate

1. Charlene thought she was quite _____ by refusing to go with him.
2. How _____ to think that some people still think the earth is flat.
3. Bilbo thought his _____ suffered when he was made to look foolish.
4. Uncle Sam operated a _____ little shoe store on the edge of the city.
5. Being able to wisely judge someone’s character is an _____ talent.
6. The maze that the local farmers built was so _____ that it took us hours to find our way to the exit.
7. My little sister can be so _____ that it is impossible for anyone to change her mind.
8. We found a valuable _____ in a trunk in my grandfather’s attic.

Questions



1. What is the setting of Chapter One?

2. Name the thirteen dwarves who dropped in on Bilbo Baggins.

b. Which of the thirteen was the most important? _____

3. What is your impression of Bilbo Baggins' personality in this chapter?_

4. **Gandalf** is described as being a wizard – and a very old and powerful one at that. What is a wizard? List three distinguishing characteristics describing the powers that a “typical” wizard might possess. (You may have to investigate the topic to get particular details.)

1	
2	
3	

5. Proper etiquette is very important to Bilbo. True or False

6. Why was Bilbo resentful about the presence of the dwarves in his home?

7. According to Gandalf what special talent did Bilbo possess that would come in handy on the upcoming quest?

8. Why do you think that Bilbo started to act more courageously as the meeting with the dwarves and Gandalf continued?

9. Who was **Smaug** and why was he such a problem for so many people?

10. What do you think Bilbo's mission will entail?

Language Activities



A. Choose ten words from this chapter with two or more **syllables**. Indicate the syllables by drawing a line between each syllable. **Example:** good / bye.

B. Characters of *The Hobbit*

A number of fascinating characters inhabit the world of Bilbo Baggins :

- Hobbits
- Wizards
- Dwarves
- Dragons
- Goblins
- Elves
- Trolls



Using resources in your school library or on the Internet, research one of the above creatures and record three fascinating facts to share with your classmates.

Creature: _____

1.	
2.	
3.	

C. Who is going to help the poor old action word?

An **adverb** is a part of speech defined as *a modifier (or helper) of a verb* (usually an action word). Often an adverb will end in the letters *ly* (i.e. **slowly**). Our novel features many creative adverbs.

1. Runes were old letters originally used for cutting or scratching on wood...

→ In this sentence, which verb does **originally** modify? _____

2. They discreetly disappeared, and the family hushed it up...

→ In this sentence, what verb does **discreetly** modify? _____

3. ... which helps them disappear quietly and quickly...

→ In this sentence the adverbs _____ and _____ modifies the verb _____

D. Thror's Map

Check Thror's Map near the beginning of the novel.

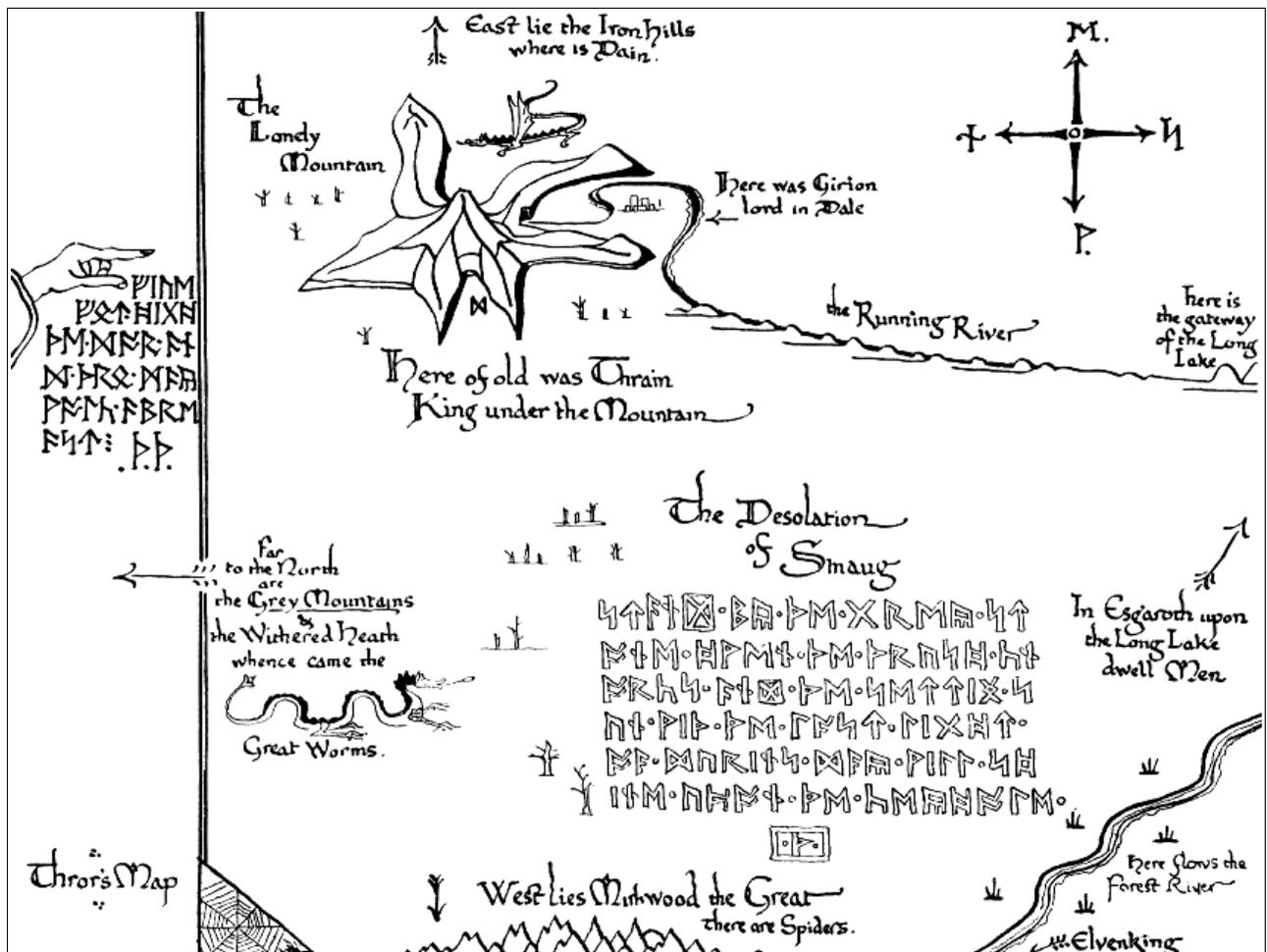
What great expanse takes up the large section in the middle of the map?

On the Compass Rose, what letter indicates the direction normally labeled with an "N"?

Where did the Great Worms originate? -----

Who dwells in Esgaroth upon the Long Lake? -----

What mountains lie far to the north? -----



Extension Activities



Storyboard

A storyboard is a series of pictures that tell about an important event in a story. A storyboard can tell the story of only one scene – or the entire novel.

Complete the storyboard below illustrating the events described in the first chapter of *The Hobbit*. You may wish to practice your drawings on a separate piece of paper.

1	2
3	4
5	6