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**Literature**  
Teaching Unit  
*Chapter-by-Chapter Study Guide*



## The Hobbit

by J. R. R. Tolkien

- Learning objectives
- Study Guide with short-answer questions
- Background information
- Vocabulary in context
- Multiple-choice test
- Essay questions
- Literary terms



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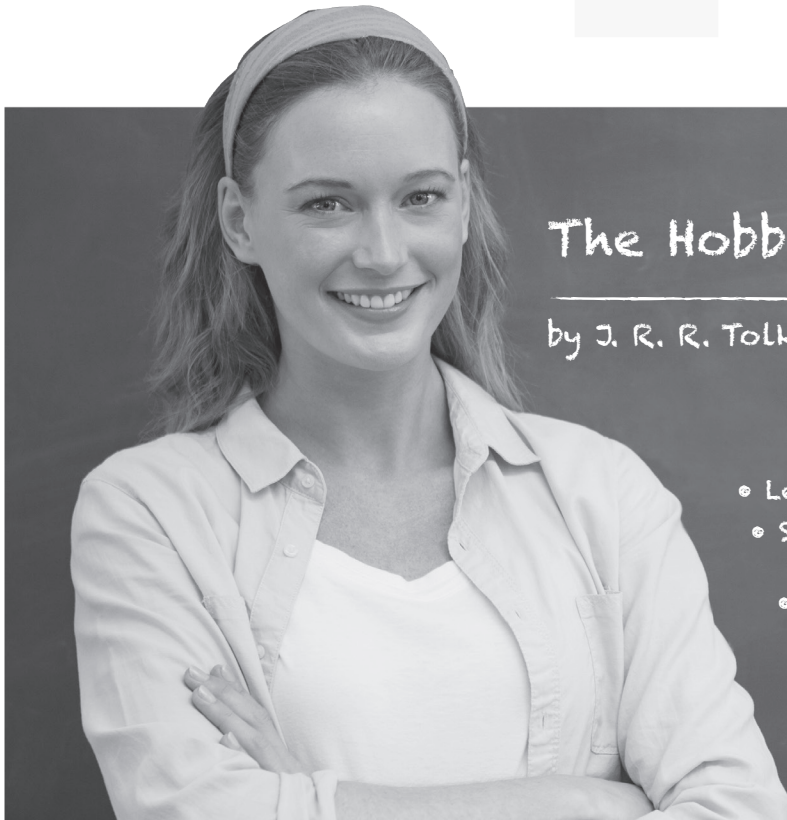
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# Literature Teaching Unit

*Chapter-by-Chapter Study Guide*



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ISBN: 978-1-58049-198-3

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Item No: 300480

## 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** – \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

8. Find an example of how Tolkien vividly describes the natural surrounding Bilbo and his friends inhabit. Why do you think he spends so much time describing the countryside?

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9. What is the legend about moon-letters? What riddle to they reveal to Elrond? What is Durin's Day?

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10. *The Hobbit* was originally written for children. It contains many of the elements of a fairy tale including goblins, wizards, dwarves and other imaginative characters. There are also life lessons or generalizations about life imbedded in the story. State a generalization about life using the following passage from the story.

“Now it is a strange thing, but things that are good to have and days that are good to spend are soon told about, and not much to listen to; while things that are uncomfortable, palpitating, and even gruesome, may make a good tale, and take a deal of telling anyway.”

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6. “Every worm has his weak spot,…”

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7. List three important characteristics about dragons Bilbo discovers when he decides to talk to Smaug. What important information does Bilbo learn when he flatters Smaug?

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8. What is a proverb? Find a proverb in this chapter that becomes popular with Bilbo after his adventure with Smaug.

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9. What are the dragon’s words about dwarves that has Bilbo worried? How does Thorin reassure Bilbo of the dwarves’ trustworthiness?

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10. What is the Arkenstone of Thrain?

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