



# THE LORD OF THE RINGS

## A Teacher's Guide

BY J.R.R. TOLKIEN

*The Fellowship of the Ring*

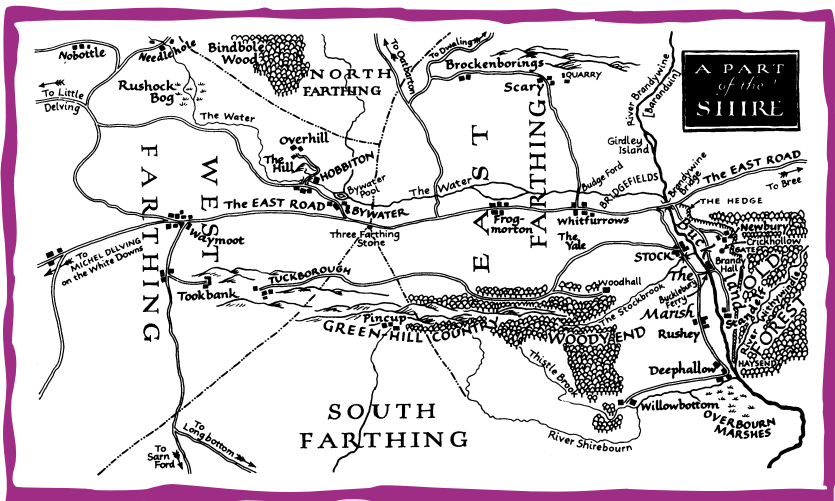
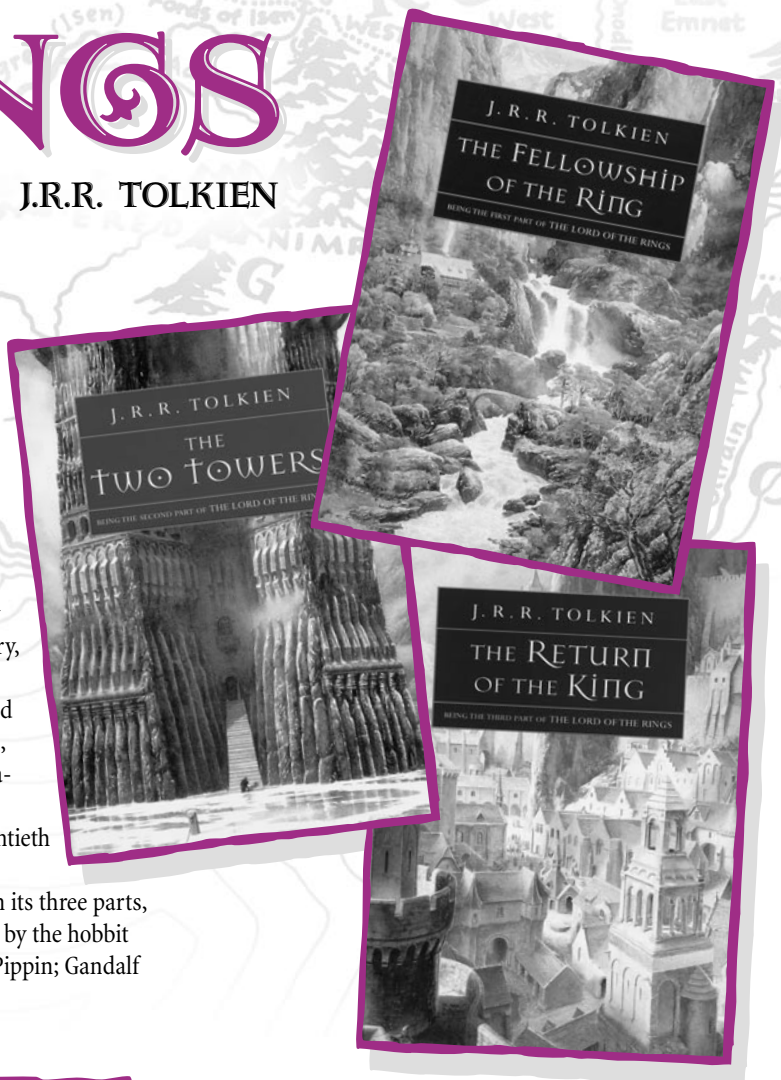
*The Two Towers*

*The Return of the King*

*One Ring to rule them all, One Ring to find them,  
One Ring to bring them all and in the darkness bind them*

Since its first publication in 1954–55, Tolkien's original, powerful fantasy, *The Lord of the Rings*, has accumulated fame, fans, and critical acclaim. No other writer of Tolkien's century created an imaginary world as distinct as Middle-earth, complete with its own geography, history, languages, and legends. And certainly no one has created characters as endearing as Tolkien's large-hearted, hairy-footed hobbits. The hobbits and their fellow creatures of Middle-earth — wizards, men, elves, ents, dwarfs, orcs, trolls, wargs, the Nazgûl, and others — continue to seize the imaginations of readers of every age.

In addition to being named in three different 1997 polls as the twentieth century's best book, *The Lord of the Rings* is one of those notable books that is repeatedly assigned by teachers and recommended by librarians. In its three parts, J.R.R. Tolkien's masterwork tells of the grand and noble quest undertaken by the hobbit Frodo and the Company of the Ring: his fellow hobbits, Sam, Merry, and Pippin; Gandalf the Wizard; Gimli the Dwarf; Legolas the Elf; Boromir of Gondor; and the mysterious stranger called Strider.



This Teacher's Guide is intended to assist teachers and students in appreciating both the world of Frodo Baggins and his companions and Tolkien's accomplishment in constructing that world. It is divided into sections corresponding to reading assignments that range from thirty-six to fifty-seven pages in length. Each section includes comprehension questions, vocabulary, and questions for class discussion, essays, and projects. Several of the questions apply to the entire novel rather than specific chapters. These questions usually contain such phrases as "As you read ahead" or "As the story progresses" or an inclusive reference to *The Lord of the Rings*. Teachers and students should feel free to consider additional topics and questions — Tolkien's great novel, like all great works of art, will prompt ongoing discussion.





## J.R.R. TOLKIEN

(1892-1973)

**1892** John Ronald Reuel Tolkien was born to English parents on January 3, in Bloemfontein, South Africa.

**1895** Tolkien's mother, Mabel, returned with Ronald (as he was called by family and early friends) and his brother, Hilary, to the West Midlands of England.

**1896** Ronald's father, Arthur, died in February. The family moved from industrial Birmingham to rural Sarehole.

**1900** Began attending Birmingham's King Edward's School. He already exhibited a precocious linguistic imagination and created with his cousins a series of languages. Also in 1900, Mabel and her sister, May, converted to Roman Catholicism. Ronald and Hilary were baptized into the Catholic Church and remained devout Catholics for the rest of their lives.

**1904** Mabel Tolkien died. Care of twelve-year-old Ronald and ten-year-old Hilary was assumed by Father Francis Morgan.

**1908** With his brother, moved to a boarding house behind the Birmingham Oratory. Edith Bratt, a fellow boarder, became his friend and eventually his wife.

**1911** At Oxford, he studied the classics, Old English, and the Germanic languages and struck up a friendship with C. S. Lewis (later a fellow professor at Oxford), with whom he shared his thoughts and writings.

**1914** Became betrothed to Edith Bratt. World War I declared.

**1915** Graduated from Oxford with first-class honors in English language and literature. Commissioned as a second lieutenant in the Lancashire Fusiliers.

**1916** Married Edith Bratt. Saw action in the Somme offensive.

**1917** Discharged from the army. First son, John, born. Began writing the stories that evolved into *The Book of Lost Tales* and, eventually, *The Silmarillion*.

**1918-20** Assistant Lexicographer on the *Oxford English Dictionary*.

**1920** Second son, Michael, born.

**1920-25** Reader, later Professor (1924), of English Language at the University of Leeds.

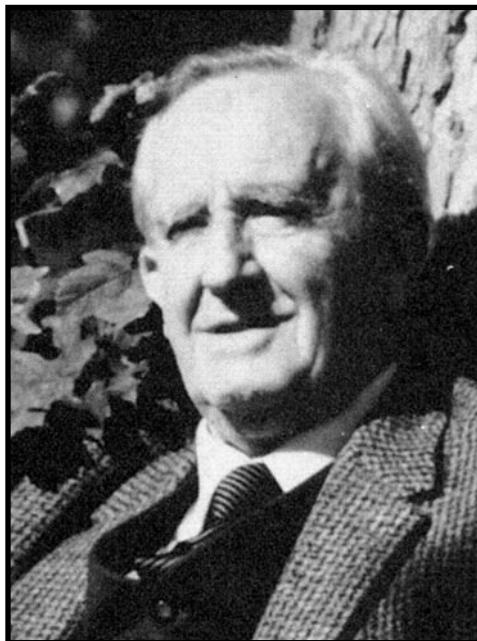
**1924** Third son, Christopher, born.

**1925-45** Rawlinson and Bosworth Professor of Anglo-Saxon and Fellow of Pembroke College, Oxford. His specialty was Anglo-Saxon and its relation to similar old Germanic languages. His double perspective on the texts in those languages as both linguistic sources and literature was described as "his unique insight at once into the language of poetry and the poetry of language."

**1929** Fourth child, Priscilla, born. Got into habit of writing illustrated Christmas letters to the children (*The Father Christmas Letters*) and telling original bedtime stories.

**1930s** First began telling his children of a little creature named Bilbo. (He later recalled a day of marking students' examination papers: "One of the candidates had mercifully left one of the pages with no writing ... and I wrote on it: 'In a hole in the ground there lived a hobbit.'")

**1936** Completed his book about the hobbit, Bilbo Baggins. Delivered his influential lecture, "Beowulf, the Monsters and the Critics."



Billett Potter

**1937** *The Hobbit* published, with maps and illustrations prepared by Tolkien. Publishers started asking for a sequel. In December, Tolkien wrote them, "I have written the first chapter of a new story about Hobbits — 'A long expected party.'"

**1945-59** Merton Professor of English Language and Literature at Oxford, a position he held until his retirement in 1959.

**1949** *Farmer Giles of Ham* published.

**1954-55** *The Lord of the Rings* published in three parts.

**1956** A twelve-episode adaptation of *The Lord of the Rings* presented by BBC radio.

**1962** *The Adventures of Tom Bombadil* published.

**1964** *Tree and Leaf* published.

**1965** An American paperback edition of *The Lord of the Rings* published, which became a cult novel on college campuses.

**1967** *Smith of Wootton Major* and *The Road Goes Ever On* published.

**1968** Moved with Edith to Poole, near Bournemouth.

**1971** After his wife's death, returned to Oxford.

**1972** Received a CBE from Queen Elizabeth II.

**1973** Died, at age eighty-one, on September 2.

**1976** *The Father Christmas Letters* published.

**1977** *The Silmarillion* (edited by Christopher Tolkien) published posthumously.

**1980** *Unfinished Tales of Númenor and Middle-earth* published.

**1981** *The Letters of J.R.R. Tolkien*, edited by Humphrey Carpenter and Christopher Tolkien, published.

**1982** *Mr. Bliss* published.

**1983** *The Monsters and the Critics and Other Essays* published.

**1983-97** *The History of Middle-earth* series (twelve volumes) published.

# J.R.R. TOLKIEN ON MIDDLE-EARTH AND ITS RESIDENTS

(All quotations are from *The Letters of J.R.R. Tolkien*, edited by Humphrey Carpenter and Christopher Tolkien.)

“I have, I suppose, constructed an imaginary *time*, but kept my feet on my own mother-earth for *place*. I prefer that to the contemporary mode of seeking remote globes in ‘space’. However curious, they are alien, and not lovable with the love of blood-kin. *Middle-earth* is (by the way & if such a note is necessary) not my own invention. It is a modernization or alteration (N[ew] E[nglish] D[ictionary]) ‘a perversion’) of an old word for the inhabited world of Men, the *oikoumene*: middle because thought of vaguely as set amidst the encircling Seas and (in the northern-imagination) between ice of the North and the fire of the South. O.English *middan-geard*, mediæval E. *midden-erd*, *middle-erd*. Many reviewers seem to assume that Middle-earth is another planet!” (To Rhona Beare, 14 October 1958, No. 211)

“I have not used ‘magic’ consistently, and indeed the Elven-queen Galadriel is obliged to remonstrate with the Hobbits on their confused use of the word both for the devices and operations of the Enemy, and for those of the Elves. I have not, because there is not a word for the latter . . . But the Elves are there (in my tales) to demonstrate the difference. Their ‘magic’ is Art, delivered from many of its human limitations: more effortless, more quick, more complete . . . And its object is Art not Power, sub-creation not domination and tyrannous re-forming of Creation. The ‘Elves’ are ‘immortal’, at least as far as this world goes: and hence are concerned rather with the griefs and burdens of deathlessness in time and change, than with death. The Enemy in successive forms is always ‘naturally’ concerned with sheer Domination, and so the Lord of magic and machines; but the problem: that this frightful evil can and does arise from an apparently good root, the desire to benefit the world and others — speedily and according to the benefactor’s own plans — is a recurrent motive.” (To Milton Waldman, prob. late 1951, No. 131)

“The Third Age [of Middle-earth] is concerned mainly with the Ring. [and its story is told in *The Lord of the Rings*.] . . .

“In the middle of this Age the Hobbits appear. Their origin is unknown (even to themselves) for they escaped the notice of the great, or the civilised peoples with records, and kept none themselves, save vague oral traditions, until they had migrated from the borders of Mirkwood, fleeing from the Shadow, and wandered westward, coming into contact with the last remnants of the Kingdom of Arnor.

“Their chief settlement, where all the inhabitants are hobbits, and where an ordered, civilised, if simple and rural life is maintained, is *the Shire*, originally the farmlands and forests of the royal demesne of Arnor. . . . [Tolkien’s note: The Hobbits are, of course, really meant to be a branch of the specifically human race (not Elves or Dwarves) — hence the two kinds can dwell together (as at Bree), and are called just the Big Folk and Little Folk. They are entirely without non-human powers, but are represented as being more in touch with ‘nature’ . . . and abnormally, for humans, free from ambition

or greed of wealth. They are made small (little more than half human stature, but dwindling as the years pass) partly to exhibit the pettiness of man, plain unimaginative parochial man — though not with either the smallness or the savageness of Swift, and mostly to show up, in creatures of very small physical power, the amazing and unexpected heroism of ordinary men ‘at a pinch’.]” (To Milton Waldman, prob. late 1951, No. 131)

“Treebeard does not say that the Dark Lord ‘created’ Trolls and Orcs. He says he ‘made’ them in *counterfeit* of certain creatures pre-existing. There is, to me, a wide gulf between the two statements, so wide that Treebeard’s statement could (in my world) have possibly been true. It is *not* true actually of the Orcs — who are fundamentally a race of ‘rational incarnate’ creatures, though horribly corrupted, if no more so than many Men to be met today.”

“But G[andalf] is not, of course, a human being (Man or Hobbit). . . . I would venture to say that he was an *incarnate* ‘angel’ — strictly [a messenger]; that is, with the other *Istari*, wizards, ‘those who know’, an emissary from the Lords of the West, sent to Middle-earth, as the great crisis of Sauron loomed on the horizon. By ‘incarnate’ I mean they were embodied in physical bodies capable of pain, and weariness, and of afflicting the spirit with physical fear, and of being ‘killed’, though supported by angelic spirit they might endure long, and only show slowly the wearing of care and labour.” (To Robert Murray, S.J. (draft), 4 November 1954, No. 156)

“Gandalf is a ‘created’ person; though possibly a spirit that existed before in the physical world. His function as a ‘wizard’ is an angelos or messenger from the Valar or Rulers: to assist the rational creatures of Middle-earth to resist Sauron, a power too great for them unaided. But since in the view of this tale & mythology Power — when it dominates or seeks to dominate other wills and minds (except by the assent of their reason) — is evil, these ‘wizards’ were incarnated in the life-forms of Middle-earth, and so suffered the pains both of mind and body. They were also, for the same reason, thus involved in the peril of the incarnate: the possibility of ‘fall’, of sin, if you will. The chief form this would take with them would be impatience, leading to the desire to force others to their own good ends, and so inevitably at last to mere desire to make their own wills effective by any means. To this evil Saruman succumbed. Gandalf did not.” (To Michael Straight (drafts), prob. January or February 1956, No. 181)

“I am in fact a *Hobbit* (in all but size). I like gardens, trees and unmechanized farmlands; I smoke a pipe, and like good plain food (unrefrigerated), but detest French cooking; I like, and even dare to wear these dull days, ornamental waistcoats. I am fond of mushrooms (out of a field); have a very simple sense of humour (which even my appreciative critics find tiresome); I go to bed late and get up late (when possible). I do not travel much.” (To Deborah Webster, 25 October 1958, No. 213)

# THE FELLOWSHIP OF THE RING

## PROLOGUE – BOOK ONE: CHAPTER I, A LONG-EXPECTED PARTY

### Comprehension Questions

1. From what year and what event are all dates of the Shire-reckoning calculated? (4)
2. How did the hobbits come to settle the Shire? (5)
3. Where was Frodo raised, and how did he come to live with Bilbo Baggins? (24)
4. What do the hobbits mean by “filling up the corners”? (28)
5. What are Bilbo’s “three purposes” for gathering his 144 guests at his birthday dinner? (30)
6. Why does Bilbo want to go away? (32)

### Vocabulary

unobtrusive (1)	warren (23)	scintillating (27)	waistcoat (28)
perilous (3)	commodity (25)	phalanx (27)	perfunctory (29)
imbibed (7)	pavilion (26)	provender (28)	spasm (34)

### Discussion and Essay Questions

1. How would you describe the hobbits’ way of life and the main characteristics of their appearance and behavior? How are they different from us, and how are they similar? When you finish the book, ask yourself the same question.
2. As you read, be aware of details of history and geography. How does Tolkien create a sense of a real world with real landmarks and a real history?
3. We are told that Gandalf’s “real business was far more difficult and dangerous” than working with fire. As you read, what do you discover Gandalf’s real business to be, and why is it dangerous?
4. Why is it important that Bilbo give up the Ring to Frodo? Why does he have so much difficulty doing so?
5. Why is Gandalf so concerned about the Ring and its effects on the person who possesses it? Why doesn’t he tell Bilbo straight out what the Ring can do to him?

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## BOOK ONE: CHAPTER II, THE SHADOW OF THE PAST – CHAPTER III, THREE IS COMPANY

### Comprehension Questions

1. How does Frodo learn of the Enemy and the rebuilding of the Dark Tower in the Land of Mordor? (42)
2. Who is Saruman the White? (47)
3. What has Gandalf been doing during the seventeen years following Bilbo’s disappearance? (49)
4. Who was Sméagol, and who has he become? (51)
5. Why does Frodo so readily agree with Gandalf’s advice that he go to Rivendell? (63)
6. Why does Gildor say to Frodo, “I name you Elf-friend”? (82)

### Vocabulary

ominous (42)	respite (50)	furtive (54)	frugal (70)
disquieting (42)	loathsome (52)	dishevelled (68)	tussocky (75)
malice (48)	abominable (53)	coppices (69)	forbodes (83)

### Discussion and Essay Questions

1. Gandalf tells Frodo, “There is such a thing as malice and revenge.” As you read, ask yourself how malice and revenge enter the story, who their agents are (whether heroes or villains), and what their effects are?
2. Why is it important that Sauron not be allowed to gain possession of the One Ring? How can he be prevented from acquiring it?
3. What does Gandalf mean when he says of Sméagol, “The Ring had given him power according to his stature.” Is the Ring itself evil and destructive, or may its powers be used for good or evil, depending on the moral character of its bearer?
4. What is the significance of Gollum’s having been a hobbit before acquiring the Ring? How can greed, envy, and other vices — especially when associated with an object of great beauty or value — so transform someone?
5. Gandalf tells Frodo, “But you have been chosen, and you must therefore use such strength and heart and wits as you have.” As the book progresses, in what ways is Frodo called upon to use “such strength and heart and wits” as he possesses? In what ways are we all called upon to deal with the demands of life in a similar way?

# THE FELLOWSHIP OF THE RING

## BOOK ONE: CHAPTER IV, A SHORT CUT TO MUSHROOMS – CHAPTER VI, THE OLD FOREST

### Comprehension Questions

1. Of what material is Farmer Maggot’s house built? (90)
2. What is Pippin’s full name? (91)
3. Who was the founder of the Brandybuck family and the original builder of Brandy Hall? (97)
4. What are the chief differences between the Bucklanders and the other hobbits of the Four Farthings? (97)
5. Why did Frodo choose the house at Crickhollow? (98)
6. How do Merry, Pippin, and Sam know that Frodo has been planning to leave the Shire? (101)

### Vocabulary

bower (84)	conspiracy (96)	inquisitiveness (102)	writhing (109)
causeway (86)	bollards (96)	scrupulous (103)	hoary (114)
compensated (91)	wallowing (99)	sluggard (107)	pincers (115)

### Discussion and Essay Questions

1. How would you explain Sam’s determination to stay with Frodo no matter what? How would you explain the change in him as a result of meeting and talking with the Elves?
2. What qualities do Sam, Pippin, and Merry possess that make them suitable companions for Frodo on his journey? As the story progresses, how do the four change and grow?
3. How important is trust to the Fellowship and to the maintenance of friendship? How would you define trust? How does the importance of trust become clear in subsequent episodes?
4. “We are horribly afraid,” Merry tells Frodo, “but we are coming with you.” How do Merry, Sam, and Pippin overcome their fears? Are there any instances in your, your family’s, or your friends’ lives when someone acted in spite of fear?
5. What kinds of light and what kinds of darkness appear in *The Lord of the Rings*? What circumstances and characters are associated with each? How does the contrast of light and dark help us to understand the conflict between good and evil?

## BOOK ONE: CHAPTER VII, IN THE HOUSE OF TOM BOMBADIL – CHAPTER IX, AT THE SIGN OF THE PRANCING PONY

### Comprehension Questions

1. How does the spell cast on Frodo by Goldberry differ from the spell of “fair Elven-voices”? (121)
2. When did Tom Bombadil first meet Goldberry? (123)
3. How are Sam, Merry, and Pippin dressed when Frodo sees them laid out in the barrow? (137)
4. What does Tom Bombadil choose from the barrow treasure for each hobbit, and what makes his choices special? (142)
5. Why, when they reach the East Road, do the four hobbits feel “a deep loneliness and sense of loss”? (143)
6. Who are the Rangers and what sets them apart? (146)

### Vocabulary

pinnacle (125)	russet (132)	incantation (137)	damasked (142)
barrows (128)	standing stones (134)	bumpkin (140)	botanical (152)
wights (128)	marrow (137)	brooch (142)	shanks (153)

### Discussion and Essay Questions

1. When Frodo asks Tom Bombadil about the Old Willow Man, Tom replies, “Some things are ill to hear when the world’s in shadow.” What does he mean? Why are some things “ill to hear when the world’s in shadow”?
2. Based on Tom Bombadil’s response to Frodo’s question, “Who are you, Master?” on Goldberry’s earlier description of him as “the Master of wood, water, and hill,” and on his appearance and behavior, who — or what — would you say he is? Why is he important to the hobbits’ success?
3. We are told that “there is a seed of courage hidden ... in the heart of the fattest and most timid hobbit, waiting for some final and desperate danger to make it grow.” In what ways does this become clear concerning Frodo, Sam, and the other hobbits?
4. What kinds of songs are sung in *The Lord of the Rings*? Do the circumstances in which each is sung have particular importance? How do their own songs and songs taught to them help Frodo and his friends?
5. Frequently in myths and legends, waking from sleep or donning new clothes (as following the barrow episode) indicates that the hero has reached a new level of knowledge, strength, skill, or courage. When does this kind of incident occur in *The Lord of the Rings*?

# THE FELLOWSHIP OF THE RING

## BOOK ONE, CHAPTER X STRIDER – CHAPTER XII FLIGHT TO THE FORD

### Comprehension Questions

1. Why has Strider been looking for Frodo Baggins? (161)
2. What pledge does Aragorn make to Frodo and his friends? (168)
3. According to Strider, when and where are the Black Riders the strongest? (171)
4. What was Amun Sûl, and what remains of it? (181)
5. What does Strider find in the middle of the Last Bridge, and how does he interpret it? (196)
6. Who is Glorfindel? (204)

### Vocabulary

rogue (160)	stealth (172)	wraith (180)	haggard (191)
indignant (163)	sallow (176)	undulating (180)	pungent (193)
pondering (171)	quagmires (178)	cairn (182)	beryl (196)

### Discussion and Essay Questions

1. What do you think Strider means when, speaking of the Dark Riders, he tells the hobbits, “You fear them, but you do not fear them enough, yet.” How is it possible to not fear something or someone enough?
2. How do the ways in which the Black Riders “see” and otherwise sense their surroundings link them with evil and the dark and make them particularly terrifying? In what ways are these “talents” and powers important in subsequent episodes?
3. After being wounded in his fight with the Black Rider, Frodo realizes “that in putting on the Ring he obeyed not his own desire but the commanding wish of his enemies.” How can the Ring make someone act against his own interests and in the interests of his enemies? What other instances are there of characters acting against their own best interests?
4. Who or what is “the Enemy”? How are the Enemy’s powers and limitations revealed? What counter-powers do Frodo and his companions wield against the Enemy? Where do these counter-powers come from?
5. What special (unsuspected) qualities and talents does Sam Gamgee reveal as the journey continues? As the story progresses, in what ways does Sam become essential to Frodo’s success and to a successful outcome to the quest?

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## BOOK TWO: CHAPTER I, MANY MEETINGS – CHAPTER II, THE COUNCIL OF ELROND

### Comprehension Questions

1. Which of the Dark Lord’s chief foes live in Rivendell, and why don’t they fear the Ringwraiths? (216)
2. Who is Arwen, what other name does she bear, and what is her importance to her people? (221)
3. When were the Rings of Power forged and by whom? (236)
4. Why was the victory of the Last Alliance on the Slopes of Orodruin bittersweet? (237)
5. How did Gollum escape from the Elves of Northern Mirkwood? (249)
6. Where was Gandalf imprisoned and how did he escape? (254)

### Vocabulary

chattels (216)	habergeon (227)	carcanet (228)	bane (237)
brands (218)	chalcedony (227)	errantry (229)	necromancer (244)
panoply (227)	adamant (227)	baldric (234)	tryst (258)

### Discussion and Essay Questions

1. “There are many powers in the world, for good or for evil,” Gandalf tells Frodo. What powers, for good and evil, do Frodo, Gandalf, and their companions confront? What are the sources and the effects of each?
2. Why is Aragorn known by so many names; where does he come from; what are his strengths and weaknesses; and what is his importance? What is the significance of his being “descended through many fathers from Isildur”? Why doesn’t he claim the Ring?
3. Saruman advises Gandalf that their best choice would be to join with the “new Power” that is rising so “to direct its course, to control it.” To what extent is the main theme of *The Lord of the Rings* power, its uses and abuses, and its consequences?
4. Gandalf says that “the power of Saruman is still less than fear makes it.” How does fear magnify an adversary or a problem?
5. How do Elrond’s comments at the end of Book Two, Chapter II, apply to the quest on which the Company is about to embark?  
“The road must be trod, but it will be very hard. And neither strength nor wisdom will carry us far upon it. This quest may be attempted by the weak with as much hope as the strong. Yet such is oft the course of deeds that move the wheels of the world: small hands do them because they must, while the eyes of the great are elsewhere.”  
What examples from your own world and the world at large can you think of when great deeds have been done by “small hands”?

# THE FELLOWSHIP OF THE RING

## BOOK TWO: CHAPTER III, THE RING GOES SOUTH – CHAPTER IV, A JOURNEY IN THE DARK

### Comprehension Questions

1. Why does Gandalf say he will accompany Frodo? (266)
2. Who reforges the Sword of Elendil, and what new name does it receive? (269)
3. Why can't the Company cross the Misty Mountains through the Gap of Rohan? (288)
4. Who opens the West-door, and how does he do it? (300)
5. Why does Gandalf reject the middle and left-hand passages and choose the right-hand passage? (306)
6. Whose tomb does the Company come upon in the large square chamber on the east side of Moria? (312)

### Vocabulary

mementoes (270)	faggot (280)	sinuous (300)	gnarled (306)
sylvan (276)	furlong (2281)	fissures (303)	draught (306)
delved (276)	routed (291)	chasms (303)	corslet (309)

### Discussion and Essay Questions

1. Who are the nine assigned by Elrond to the Company of the Ring, and why? Why is it important that the Company represent the "Free Peoples of the World"?
2. Why, as Gandalf says, would it "be well to trust rather in friendship than to great wisdom" in deciding who should accompany Frodo? In what ways might true friendship be more powerful than great wisdom?
3. What does Bilbo give to Frodo on the day before the Company sets out? Why might it be important that Frodo possess these gifts? In what ways do these gifts turn out to be important?
4. What is the importance of Elrond's farewell words to the Company? As you read ahead, what importance do these words take on?
5. What does Boromir mean when he says, "The wolf that one hears is worse than the orc that one fears"? In what ways do both present dangers and imagined dangers imperil the Company? Which seems most fearful to you, and why?

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## BOOK TWO: CHAPTER V, THE BRIDGE OF KHAZAD-DÛM – CHAPTER VII, THE MIRROR OF GALADRIEL

### Comprehension Questions

1. What is Lothlórien, and why is it important to Legolas? (328)
2. What feeling comes over Frodo when he crosses the Silverlode? (340)
3. What is Cerin Amroth, and what is located there? (341)
4. What does Frodo see to the south and to the west from the great flet on Cerin Amroth? (342)
5. What and where is the Mirror of Galadriel? (362)
6. What ring does the Lady Galadriel wear, and why is it important? (356)

### Vocabulary

scimitars (313)	plaited (335)	fosse (344)	wrack (354)
truncheon (317)	fallow (337)	plight (347)	glazed (355)
boles (320)	poignant (341)	ewer (352)	assuaged (356)

### Discussion and Essay Questions

1. What are the implications of Aragorn's statement to his companions after the loss of Gandalf: "We must do without hope"? To what extent will hope only hinder the Company in its mission?
2. What evidence, up to now and later in the book, supports Haldir's statement, "Indeed in nothing is the power of the Dark Lord more clearly shown than in the estrangement that divides all those who still oppose him"? What are the causes and consequences of this estrangement?
3. What is Lord Celebrorn's and Lady Galadriel's importance, in terms of their age, wisdom, and powers? Why might Gandalf have wanted to lead Frodo and company to them?
4. We are told that before the Lady Galadriel's gaze each member of the Company "had felt that he was offered a choice between a shadow full of fear that lay ahead, and something that he greatly desired." Why might this choice be important?
5. How would you interpret what Frodo and Sam see in the Mirror of Galadriel? What do the scenes seen by each have to do with what may be or what is to be? In what ways might the mirror be "dangerous as a guide to deeds," and what might happen if it were used as a guide?

# THE FELLOWSHIP OF THE RING

## BOOK TWO: CHAPTER VII, FAREWELL TO LÓRIEN – CHAPTER X, THE BREAKING OF THE FELLOWSHIP

### Comprehension Questions

1. What is the nature of Boromir’s and Aragorn’s disagreement concerning which course to follow? (380)
2. What does Boromir announce he will do when they reach the Isle of Tindrock? (380)
3. What is Argonath? (383)
4. What does Boromir want to do with the Ring? (389)
5. Where does Frodo sit after escaping from Boromir, and what does he see from there? (391)
6. What is Aragorn’s recommendation concerning what the Company should do next, and how do the others react?

### Vocabulary

hythe (362)	phial (367)	eyot (373)	pikestaff (387)
tortuous (364)	husbanding (371)	gunwale (375)	mustering (389)
fen (364)	wolds (372)	sloe (375)	wains (391)

### Discussion and Essay Questions

1. On their last evening in Lórien, Boromir argues that the Company’s choice is between destroying the Ring and destroying “the armed might of the Dark Lord.” Can one of these actions be taken and not the other? Why or why not?
2. What gifts does Lady Galadriel give to the members of the Company? How is each gift appropriate? As the novel progresses, how does each gift aid its recipient?
3. On Amon Hen, Frodo tells Boromir that no speech will help him, “For I know what I should do, but I am afraid of doing it.” In what other instances, previously and later, does a character know what must be done but fear doing it?
4. What considerations lead Frodo to decide to go forward alone? Would you do the same? Why or why not?
5. Do you think it is right that *The Fellowship of the Ring* ends with Frodo and Sam setting off alone “on the last stage of the Quest”? How have Frodo and Sam grown since we first met them?

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# THE TWO TOWERS

## BOOK THREE: CHAPTER I, THE DEPARTURE OF BOROMIR – CHAPTER III, THE URUK-HAI

### Comprehension Questions

1. What does Aragorn see from the high seat on Amon Hen? (403)
2. Who are the “Three Kindreds” to which Aragorn refers? (410)
3. What, and how, does Aragorn know about the horsemen of Rohan? (420)
4. Why is Saruman the chief concern of the Rohirrim? (426)
5. What are the Orcs’ orders regarding the hobbits? (435)
6. How do Merry and Pippin escape from the Orcs? (445)

### Vocabulary

perplexities (403)	cresses (413)	burnished (421)	thwart (423)
dale (411)	mail-clad (421)	raiment (422)	craven (426)
escarpment (413)	flaxen (421)	haughty (423)	splayed (430)

### Discussion and Essay Questions

1. As they prepare Boromir’s funeral, Aragorn says to Gimli, “We must guess the riddles, if we are to choose our course rightly.” And Gimli responds, “Maybe there is no right choice.” How often does choosing the right course of action depend upon guessing “riddles” correctly? In what circumstances might there be “no right choice”?
2. Why does Aragorn choose to follow the Orcs and not go after Frodo? Why is that choice so painful? In what ways might our more difficult and painful choices be the most important?
3. Why does Aragorn proclaim his true identity — with all his names — to Éomer at this time? What direction does *his* mission take as a result? What does Aragorn’s mission turn out to be and how is it related to Frodo’s mission?
4. “Do we walk in legends or on the green earth in the daylight?” Éomer asks. After finishing *The Lord of the Rings*, how would you answer Éomer’s question? How would you explain Aragorn’s response: “A man may do both”? How would you describe the relationship between legends and day-to-day living?
5. Merry and Pippin look back out of the shadows of Fangorn, “little furtive figures that in the dim light looked like elf-children in the deeps of time peering out of the Wild Wood in wonder at their first Dawn.” How would you describe the initial innocence of all the hobbits? How is their innocence a counter to the more complicated experience of men, the ancient knowledge of Elves, the wisdom of Gandalf, and the evil of Sauron?

# THE TWO TOWERS

## BOOK THREE: CHAPTER IV, TREEBEARD – CHAPTER V, THE WHITE RIDER

### Comprehension Questions

1. Why is Treebeard reluctant to reveal his real name? (454)
2. What is Entmoot, and where will it occur? (467)
3. Who is Gwaihir the Windlord, and what has he been doing for the past several days? (484)
4. What must Aragorn do now, according to Gandalf? (489)
5. Who is the White Rider? Who gives him that name, and why? (490)
6. How did Gandalf escape from the abyss? (490)

### Vocabulary

dingle (468)	knoll (478)	treble (487)	eyrie (490)
conclave (470)	daunts (479)	surety (489)	cleave (492)
resonant (471)	haft (482)	uttermost (490)	sedge (494)

### Discussion and Essay Questions

1. Treebeard says of Saruman, “He has a mind of metal and wheels; and he does not care for growing things.” In what other ways does Tolkien show the evils of technology and the goodness of growing things? What characters and creatures are associated with “metal and wheels” and their effects and which with “growing things”?
2. What does Treebeard mean when he says, “But there, my friends, songs like trees bear fruit only in their own time and their own way.” To what extent is this true of the songs in *The Lord of the Rings*? In what ways might it also be true of individual people?
3. How would you explain the failure of Aragorn, Gimli, and Legolas to recognize Gandalf in the forest of Fangorn, even after he speaks to them? In what other instances does Gandalf successfully hide or disguise his identity? What are his reasons and what are the consequences? What instances are there of other characters hiding or disguising their identity?
4. How do Gandalf’s comments on the Enemy reveal Sauron’s limitations and the limitations of any evildoer? What might result from Sauron’s expectation that his foes will act *as he would act*? To what extent do we expect others to think and act as we do?
5. What does Gandalf mean when, speaking of Saruman’s supposed allegiance to Sauron, he comments that “a treacherous weapon is ever a danger to the hand”? What instances of this kind of danger occur throughout the novel? How might Gandalf’s comment refer to the Ring itself?
6. Gimli is told that Treebeard, Gandalf, Aragorn, Legolas, and Gimli himself are all dangerous. In what ways is each dangerous? How is the danger that each presents revealed? To what extent and in what ways might this also be true of Frodo, Sam, Elrond, and others?

## BOOK THREE: CHAPTER VI, THE KING OF THE GOLDEN HALL – CHAPTER VIII, THE ROAD TO ISENGARD

### Comprehension Questions

1. What changes come over Théoden when he goes outside his hall with Gandalf? (504)
2. Where is Helm’s Deep, and how did it get its name? (516)
3. What do Gimli and Legolas promise one another as they ride toward Isengard? (535)
4. What has the Wizard’s Vale, Nan Curunír, become? (540)
5. What stands at the center of Isengard, and what is its appearance? (541)
6. By whom, and when, was the “the true pipe-weed” first introduced among the hobbits? (544)

### Vocabulary

hauberk (497)	carrion (502)	parapet (519)	fretted (524)
wizened (501)	leechcraft (508)	blazoned (521)	whetting (524)
sooth (501)	coomb (517)	postern (521)	translucent (534)

### Discussion and Essay Questions

1. Awaiting entrance to Théoden’s hall, Gandalf says, “A king will have his way in his own hall, be it folly or wisdom.” Replacing “king” with “person” and applying it to Bilbo, Gandalf, Saruman, Celeborn, Aragorn, Sauron, Tom Bombadil, and others, how is this true throughout the novel?
2. What is characteristic of each building and residence in the various regions of Middle-earth? How is each peculiar to its location and the ways of its residents? What details provide a clear picture of each?
3. “The world changes,” says King Théoden, in the citadel of Hornburg, “and all that once was strong now proves unsure.” To what does he refer? What other instances are there in the book of the once-strong now proving unsure?

(Continued)

# THE TWO TOWERS

- In response to Éomer's attributing the victory in Helm's Deep to Gandalf's wizardry, Gandalf says, "Your own valour has done more, and stout legs of the Westfold-men marching through the night." What is the importance in *The Lord of the Rings* of wizardry and of valor, strength, and stamina?
- How are Théoden's remarks to the Ents after the siege of Isengard related to present-day environmental concerns and past and present attitudes toward nature and the earth? What other statements and episodes in *The Lord of the Rings* have a bearing on this issue?

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## BOOK THREE: CHAPTER IX, FLOTSAM AND JETSAM – CHAPTER XI, THE PALANTÍR

### Comprehension Questions

- Who or what are the Huorns? (551)
- Why is Aragorn suspicious about the pipe-weed that Merry and Pippin have found? (560)
- What effects does Saruman's voice have? (564)
- What does Gandalf advise that Treebeard do to prevent Saruman's escape? (572)
- According to Gandalf, who is more in Saruman's thoughts than anyone else, and why? (574)
- What is the palantír, and why is it appropriate that Aragorn be its guardian? (580)

### Vocabulary

flotsam (546)	embrasures (563)	dotard (567)	festers (571)
jetsam (546)	gainsaid (564)	remonstrance (567)	bracken (575)
floundered (559)	gibbet (566)	livid (569)	wheedling (577)

### Discussion and Essay Questions

- What has corrupted Saruman and transformed his wisdom and caring to greed and hate? How are Gandalf, Aragorn, Frodo, and others able to withstand the temptations and desires to which Saruman, Gollum, Wormtongue, and others succumb?
- "Often does hatred hurt itself," says Gandalf. How is this true of hatred and evil in *The Lord of the Rings* and in actual life?
- "Well, well," says Treebeard, "things will go as they will; and there is no need to hurry to meet them." On the other hand, Gandalf repeatedly acts to make things happen and to influence the outcome of events. What are the benefits and limitations of both approaches? What are their results?
- What does Pippin see and hear — and what happens to him — when he looks into Saruman's glass ball? How is Pippin's experience a threat to the Company? Why might it have been more of a threat than it turns out to be?
- What does Gandalf tell Pippin about the *palantíri*? How have they served Sauron? Why might they be important to Middle-earth now?

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## BOOK FOUR: CHAPTER I, THE TAMING OF SMÉAGOL – CHAPTER III, THE BLACK GATE IS CLOSED

### Comprehension Questions

- How do Frodo and Sam succeed in descending the eastern cliffs of Eryn Muil? (596)
- What does Gollum tell Frodo and Sam about Mordor? (601)
- What is the answer to the riddle posed by Gollum's song, "Alive without breath"? (607)
- What are the "tricksy lights" that appear in the Dead Marshes, and why are they dangerous? (613)
- What are the names of Mordor's principal landmarks? (622)
- What does Sam say about Minas Ithil and the Tower of the Moon?

### Vocabulary

vehemence (593)	protrude (608)	peats (617)	sump (618)
spate (594)	noisome (611)	leprous (617)	pinion (630)
bight (596)	gibbering (615)	defiled (617)	stooped (v.) (631)

### Discussion and Essay Questions

- In what ways, as it seems to Sam, are Frodo and Gollum "in some way akin and not alien"? What accounts for their similarities and their differences?
- Frodo does not think "we need give thought to what comes after" he and Sam complete their mission. When does he begin to think otherwise, and what does he then think of? What do Sam and others think of when they look beyond their respective missions?

(Continued)

- Why is it both appropriate and ironic that Sméagol leads Frodo and Sam through the Dead Marshes and over the mountains into Mordor? Do his motives turn out to be what they seemed to be at the start?
- What details does Tolkien give to establish a sense of the regions, landscapes, and terrains through which the Fellowship travels? Can you compare each with an actual landscape or region that you know about?
- How would you describe Frodo's new look and new tone that Sam notices when Frodo speaks to Sméagol before the gate of Mordor? What do they, and the warning that Frodo addresses to Sméagol, tell us about the ways in which Frodo has changed?

## BOOK FOUR: CHAPTER IV, OF HERBS AND STEWED RABBIT – CHAPTER VI, THE FORBIDDEN POOL

### Comprehension Questions

- How far is it from the Morannon to the Cross-roads above Osgiliath, and how long does Gollum plan on taking to cover that distance? (634)
- What was once the relationship between Ithilien and Gondor? (636)
- What does Sam notice about the sleeping Frodo? (638)
- What is the Mûmak, and what becomes of it? (647)
- How did the Rohirrim become the allies of Gondor? (663)
- Why does Faramir advise Frodo not to follow Gollum to the high pass of Cirith Ungol? (677)

#### Vocabulary

whiffling (635)	gangrel (643)	steward (654)	elixirs (663)
encroached (635)	careering (646)	victuals (659)	founded (672)
dryad (636)	boding (651)	broached (660)	canker (676)

### Discussion and Essay Questions

- What lineage does Faramir claim, and how is it related to Aragorn's lineage? What other lineages are presented in the novel? Why do you think Tolkien places so much emphasis on his chief characters' family histories and ancestries?
- What concept of war does Faramir support in his talk with Frodo? What other kinds of armed conflict are found in *The Lord of the Rings*? Where do recent and current armed conflicts in the actual world fall along the spectrum of wars presented in *The Lord of the Rings*?
- What does Sam mean when he says, "It strikes me that folk takes their peril with them into Lórien, and finds it there because they've brought it"? What instances are there in *The Lord of the Rings* of people carrying their own peril with them wherever they go?
- "I am wise enough to know," says Faramir, "that there are perils from which a man must flee." What perils, physical and other, are there from which Tolkien's characters flee or do not flee? Why is it wise to flee from some perils and not from others?
- Sam says that Faramir reminds him of Gandalf. In what ways are Faramir and Gandalf alike? How is Sam's observation proven by Faramir's actions and words, up to now and later? Who else do you think shares these qualities?

## BOOK FOUR: CHAPTER VII, JOURNEY TO THE CROSS-ROADS – CHAPTER X, THE CHOICES OF MASTER SAMWISE

### Comprehension Questions

- What is special about the staves that Faramir gives to Frodo and Sam? (679)
- As the Black Rider and his army emerge from Minas Morgul, how does Frodo resist putting on the Ring? (691)
- What does Sam hope for "all the time"? (697)
- What happens to Sam when he puts on the Ring? (717)
- What are the orders from Lugbúrz to the Watchers in the tower regarding any prisoners? (723)
- How does Sam get into the blocked passage? (724)

#### Vocabulary

portends (679)	charnel (689)	impervious (706)	orb (717)
gorse (683)	warrant (v.) (701)	fey (708)	lubber (718)
covert (n.) (683)	baleful (705)	doughtiest (712)	larder (722)

(Continued)

# THE TWO TOWERS

## Discussion and Essay Questions

1. In Sam's speech on "the old tales and songs," what does he say characterizes the tales and songs that really matter? How does he distinguish between "the best tales to hear" and "the best tales to get landed in"? What examples of each can you give?
2. What do you think Gollum feels and thinks when he sees Frodo and Sam sleeping, with Frodo's head in Sam's lap? How does Sam's reaction destroy that feeling? To what extent does Sam destroy any chance of Gollum's changing?
3. How do you picture "She that walked in the darkness," as she approaches Frodo and Sam in Shelob's Lair? In what ways does she embody the malice and terror of "the powers of night"? What dislikes and fears does Tolkien draw on to create Shelob and other creatures of malice and evil?
4. What moves Sam to decide that he has to go on, "to see it through," even though doing so is "altogether against the grain of his nature"? How do you explain Sam's dedication, courage, and decisiveness? What is there about Sam that enables him to "walk and bear his burden"?
5. What towers give the second part of *The Lord of the Rings* its title, and why are they important? What parts do towers play in Frodo's and Aragorn's missions and other actions throughout the novel?

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# THE RETURN OF THE KING

## BOOK FIVE: CHAPTER I, MINAS TIRITH – CHAPTER II, THE PASSING OF THE GREY COMPANY

### Comprehension Questions

1. What is the Rammas Echor? (733)
2. What stands over the fountain in Minas Tirith's citadel? (736)
3. What kind of special power does Lord Denethor have? (748)
4. Who lived in Lossarnach? (753)
5. What does Aragorn decide that he and the Dúnedain will do, and how do the others react? (761)
6. Why does Aragorn summon the unseen dead to the Stone of Erech? (770)

### Vocabulary

beacons (731)	byre (734)	liege (741)	title (753)
quays (734)	bastion (735)	manger (745)	thain (760)
oast (734)	monoliths (737)	flagon (746)	wroth (769)

### Discussion and Essay Questions

1. What are the main characteristics of the various towns and cities of Middle-earth, from Hobbiton to Minas Tirith? How do the layout and construction of each reflect the needs and way of life of its inhabitants?
2. Comparing Gandalf and Denethor, Pippin notes that "Gandalf had the greater power and the deeper wisdom, and a majesty that was veiled." How would you describe Gandalf's power, wisdom, and majesty? How are they revealed? How is Gandalf's majesty similar to and different from the majesty of others?
3. Gandalf tells Denethor, Steward of Gondor, "For I also am a steward." Of what and whom is Gandalf a steward and by what authority? What "worthy things" now in peril do you care for, and why?
4. How do Pippin and Merry fulfill their oaths of service to Lord Denethor and King Théoden? What is remarkable about the two hobbits entering the armed service of two great leaders?
5. Éowyn protests to Aragorn, "All your words are but to say: you are a woman, and your part is in the house." What are Éowyn's and Aragorn's views of her duty? What variety of women does Tolkien present in *The Lord of the Rings*? What roles do they play?
6. How do Tolkien's chapter endings create suspense and make you want to keep reading? How do they keep the various parts of the story — especially those concerning Frodo, Gandalf, Aragorn, and Théoden — moving forward?

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## BOOK FIVE: CHAPTER III, THE MUSTER OF ROHAN – CHAPTER V, THE RIDE OF THE ROHIRRIM

### Comprehension Questions

1. What, and where, are the Púkel-men? (777)
2. Where is Frodo on the evening when Pippin and Beregond walk on the walls of the Citadel of Minas Tirith? (790)
3. What does Gandalf guess is the Enemy's reason for beginning his war earlier than expected? (797)
4. What are Denethor's final orders, and how does Pippin react? (808)
5. What is Grond, and what is its purpose? (810)
6. Who are the Woses, and what does Elfhelm the Marshal tell Merry concerning them? (813)

(Continued)

# THE RETURN OF THE KING

## Vocabulary

buttresses (774)

sonorous (775)

gloaming (775)

concourse (776)

fealty (786)

girths (787)

lithe (787)

brazier (793)

mirk (803)

pyre (807)

balusters (808)

ravening (810)

## Discussion and Essay Questions

1. How does the great cloud rising from Mordor and overshadowing everything as far west as Harrowdale represent Sauron's spreading power? What do the forces of good have at their command to oppose the growing darkness?
2. Besides their appointments as esquires to the rulers of Rohan and Gondor, what other parallels between Merry and Pippin are there? What parallels exist or have existed between other pairs of characters — Gollum and Wormtongue, Gandalf and Saruman, Arwen and Éowyn, for example?
3. How does Denethor and Gandalf's debate concerning the Ring reflect the Ring's central importance? How are the arguments on both sides expressed elsewhere in *The Lord of the Rings*? What do these arguments reveal concerning the temptations, uses, and abuses of power?
4. Why might "all great lords, if they are wise," use others as their weapons as Denethor's notes? What instances do you find in *The Lord of the Rings* and in our world of leaders using others to obtain their ends?
5. What beings, from hobbits to Woses, populate Middle-earth? What are the distinguishing characteristics of each, and what part does each play in the battle? How is the allegiance of each indicated or expressed?
6. As the Rohirrim advance on besieged Minas Tirith, "the joy of battle was upon them." What is this "joy of battle," and what other instances of it are there in the novel? To what extent do any of the hobbits experience this emotion? What are the dangers of giving oneself up to "the joy of battle"?

## BOOK FIVE: CHAPTER VI, THE BATTLE OF THE PELENNOR FIELDS – CHAPTER IX, THE LAST DEBATE

### Comprehension Questions

1. What happens to the Lord of the Nazgûl in the battle of the Pelennor Fields? (824)
2. How has the will of Sauron been able to enter Minas Tirith and influence Denethor? (838)
3. Why is Aragorn reluctant to enter Minas Tirith? (843)
4. What do Legolas and Gimli say about Minas Tirith? (854)
5. Why is Legolas disturbed by the sight and sound of sea gulls? (855)
6. What plan do the Captains of the West and Gandalf agree upon? (864)

## Vocabulary

brigand (821)

discomfiting (828)

hallow (n.) (833)

bier (835)

litters (840)

doggrel (847)

trammel (849)

prows (859)

succour (861)

fiefs (863)

wrights (863)

jeopardy (864)

## Discussion and Essay Questions

1. Seeing the dead porter at the Closed Door, Gandalf exclaims of the Enemy, "Such deeds he loves: friend at war with friend; loyalty divided in a confusion of hearts." What other deeds does the Enemy love — family discord, for example? What "deeds" loved by the Enemy do you find, and how does each serve the Enemy's purposes?
2. How would you explain Denethor's despair and unwillingness to cede Gondor to the rightful claimant? How do grief, hunger for power, envy, pride, and vanity affect his attitude? What other examples are there of negative qualities transforming otherwise good and noble individuals?
3. Mourning Théoden in the Houses of Healing, Merry apologizes to Aragorn for his sarcasm by saying, "But it is the way of my people to use light words at such times and say less than they mean. We fear to say too much. It robs us of the right words when a jest is out of place." What does he mean? What other instances are there of hobbits using light words and jests at serious times?
4. "It is best to love first what you are fitted to love, I suppose," says Merry; "you must start somewhere and have some roots." How is this true of the hobbits and others? To what extent does the absence of this kind of love explain the evil of Sauron, Saruman, Gollum, and others?
5. How might Gandalf's words to the Captains of the West? apply to you and your world?  
"Other evils there are that may come ... Yet it is not our part to master all the tides of the world, but to do what is in us for the succour of those years wherein we are set, uprooting the evil in the fields that we know, so that those who live after may have clean earth to till."  
What could you do to make better the years in which you live and to make the world better for those will follow you?

# THE RETURN OF THE KING

## BOOK FIVE: CHAPTER X, THE BLACK GATE OPENS – BOOKS SIX: CHAPTER II, THE LAND OF SHADOW

### Comprehension Questions

1. Why is Merry so despondent at the departure of the Army of the West? (865)
2. What terms does Sauron’s lieutenant present, and how does Gandalf respond? (872)
3. What was the original purpose of the tower of Cirith Ungol? (880)
4. What does the orc running down the stairs of the tower see when it looks toward Sam, and why? (883)
5. What is Frodo’s plan for making his way through the Morgai? (899)
6. What is happening in the Dale of Udûn as Frodo and Sam approach it? (906)

### Vocabulary

booty (866)	slavered (872)	bucklers (874)	flout (885)
ghylls (867)	sluice (873)	trough (879)	rummaged (893)
feint (867)	proffered (873)	throes (882)	scree (901)

### Discussion and Essay Questions

1. Having crossed into Mordor, Sam takes the Ring off and mutters, “Better have a look at the worst.” Why might it be better to “have a look at the worst” than to blunder around, invisible, “in a fog”? When else is having a look at the worst the best action to take?
2. What indications are there of the Ring’s increasing burden as it comes nearer to the place of its creation? How are Frodo and Sam able to deal with that increasing burden?
3. Speaking of the Orcs, Frodo says to Sam, “The Shadow that bred them can only mock, it cannot make: not real things of its own.” Why is it important that evil cannot create, while good can — that evil can only imitate or mock creation? How is this shown?
4. Sam looks up from the Morgai and sees a white star twinkling through the cloud-wrack, and “The beauty of it smote his heart, . . . and hope returned to him. For like a shaft, clear and cold, the thought pierced him that in the end the Shadow was only a small and passing thing: there was light and high beauty for ever beyond its reach.” To what extent can we think of the Shadow as “a small and passing thing”? What do you think constitutes the light and high beauty Sam considers to be forever beyond the reach of the Shadow?

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## BOOK SIX: CHAPTER III, MOUNT DOOM – CHAPTER V, THE STEWARD AND THE KING

### Comprehension Questions

1. How does Frodo react to Sam’s offer to carry the Ring, and why does he react in this way? (916)
2. What does Frodo see when he and Sam reach the road on Mount Doom, and what is the effect on him? (921)
3. What is the final display of Sauron’s power? (928)
4. What song does Legolas sing as he leaves his friends? (936)
5. What actions does King Elessar take in the days immediately following his coronation? (947)
6. Who arrives in Minas Tirith from the north on the Eve of Midsummer, and what event then takes place? (951)

### Vocabulary

insatiable (922)	vassals (927)	presage (939)	garlands (945)
stratagems (925)	turves (932)	mantle (940)	fillet (945)
bereft (925)	sloth (937)	puissant (943)	office (945)

### Comprehension and Essay Questions

1. What “new dark thought” does Sam have after his and Frodo’s escape from the Orc battalions? How would you describe the “new strength” and the “new sense of responsibility” that come upon Sam?
2. Why is it important that Gollum be responsible for the destruction of the Ring? Why does Frodo say, “But for him, Sam, I could not have destroyed the Ring”? What otherwise would have enabled Frodo to destroy the Ring, and what might have been the consequences for Frodo?
3. What song does the minstrel of Gondor sing before Aragorn, Frodo, and Sam? Why is Sam so delighted? What are the effects on those gathered? How would you explain more fully Tolkien’s description of those effects?

(Continued)

# THE RETURN OF THE KING

4. Why does Aragorn have Frodo bring the crown to him and have Gandalf place the crown on his head? Why are these two elements of his coronation appropriate? What does this indicate about the roles that Frodo and Gandalf have played in the king's return?
5. What does Gandalf tell Aragorn as they stand together on Mount Mindolluin, and why are his words important? In what ways do we now live in the Fourth Age of the world and the Dominion of Men? What is our burden — the burden that Gandalf tells Aragorn lies upon him and his kindred — and what are we making of it?

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## BOOK SIX: CHAPTER VI, MANY PARTINGS – CHAPTER IX, THE GREY HAVENS

### Comprehension Questions

1. Where does Frodo want to go before returning to the Shire, and why? (952)
2. What does Éowyn give to Merry as a parting gift, and what will it do? (956)
3. What does Aragorn tell Pippin in parting? (960)
4. What is the meaning of Elrond's parting words to Frodo? (966)
5. What is the outcome of the Battle of Bywater, 1419, and how is that battle memorialized in the Shire? (992)
6. What about the Hill causes Sam the most grief? (999)

### Vocabulary

niggard (955)	retentive (972)	grist (990)	shale (999)
fortnight (964)	scouring (975)	weskit (991)	byword (1001)
cudgel (968)	truck (986)	dawdling (995)	firth (1007)

### Discussion & Essay Questions

1. What does Gandalf mean when he tells the hobbits that they must settle the affairs of the Shire themselves? "That is what you have been trained for," he tells them. In what ways have Frodo, Sam, Merry, and Pippin been trained, and in what ways have they "grown indeed very high"?
2. What do Frodo and his companions discover when they reach the Shire? Who and what have caused the changes? How does all this reflect the battle between good and evil in which Frodo and his friends played an important part?
3. How do the changes that Sharkey has effected in the Shire reflect our world? What correctives does Tolkien suggest? What correctives would you recommend, and why?
4. How do you interpret the "new road," "secret gate," and "hidden paths" of Frodo's song as he and Sam ride into the Woody End? What do they mean for Frodo and for Sam? What new road, secret gate, or hidden path would you like to come upon in your life?
5. Just before Frodo boards the ship in the Grey Havens, he says to Sam, "It must often be so, Sam, when things are in danger: some one has to give them up, lose them, so that others may keep them." How has this turned out to be so in *The Lord of the Rings*?
6. What kind of lives do you think Sam and Rosie, Merry, and Pippin have after Frodo and Gandalf's departure?

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## NOTES

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