

# STAGE PAGE

FOR TEACHERS &  
STUDENTS

Welcome to Stage Page!

This is a reproducible performance guide published by the Education Department of the Arts Center of Cannon County, Woodbury, TN.

This Stage Page is designed to be used before and after experiencing an Arts Center production to maximize learning and fun!

WATCH

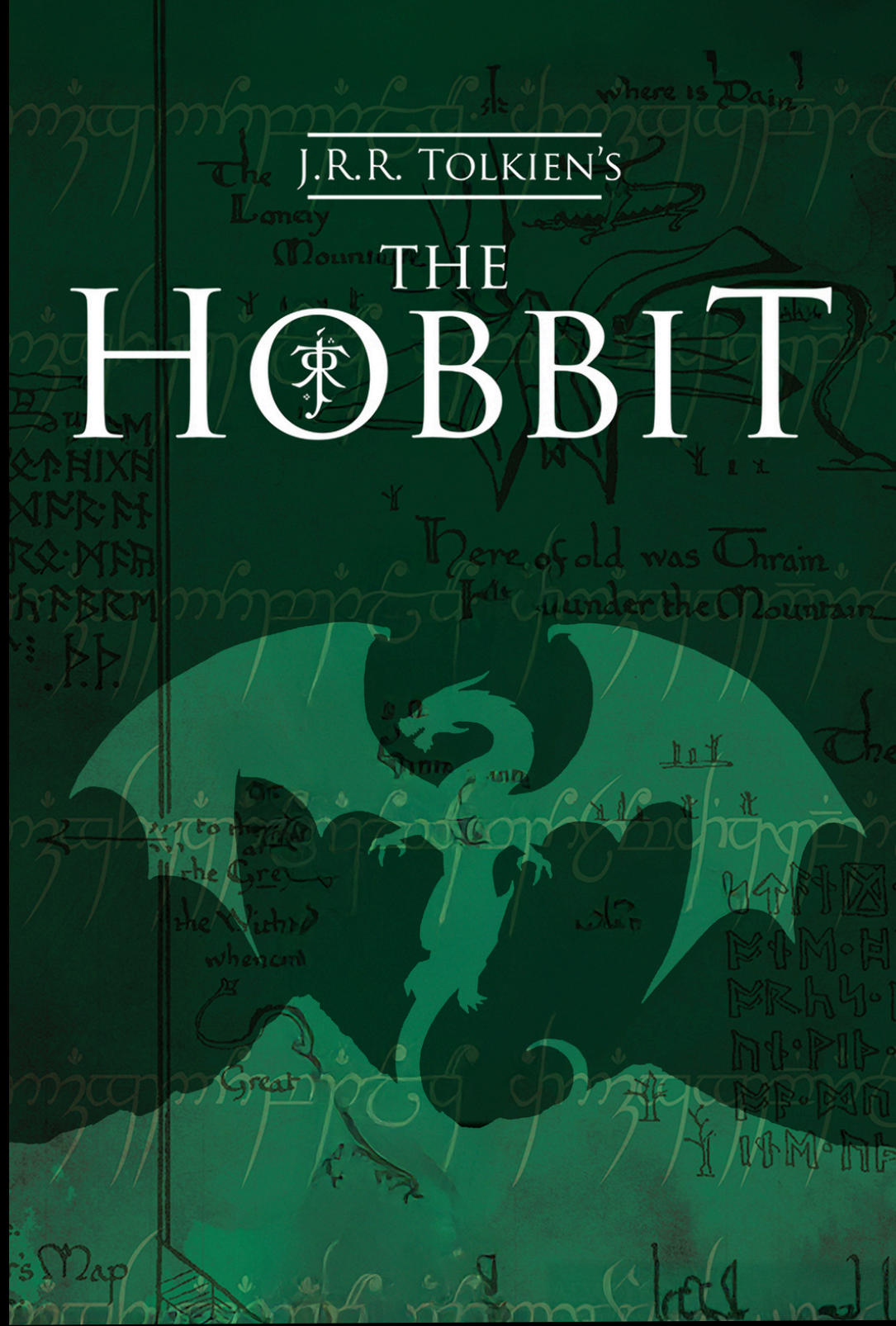
LISTEN

THINK

IMAGINE



**THE ARTS  
CENTER**  
OF CANNON COUNTY



J.R.R. TOLKIEN'S

# THE HOBBIT

Bilbo Baggins is a comfortably well-off hobbit with a love for rousing adventure stories. Real adventures, however, are definitely not his cup of tea. But when Gandalf the wizard knocks at Bilbo's door, before he knows it, he is off on a perilous quest.

# A Note To Teachers

Thank you for joining us at the Arts Center of Cannon County and our production of *The Hobbit*. We look forward to your visit.

The opportunity to view live theatre is an educational experience unlike any found within the walls of a classroom. Live theatre is a lesson in observation, empathy, and cultural literacy. When a student watches a live performance, they are witnessing a “human story” unfold in real-time just a few feet away. Audiences are transported to a different world and allowed to peer into a life and situation beyond their own. These moments can assist students in developing a stronger sense of self and a deeper understanding for the world around them.

In the production of *The Hobbit* students will encounter an unlikely hero of Bilbo Baggins. It is our hope that audiences will be reminded that even the smallest and unprepared adventurer can become an important leader.

The purpose of this material is to enhance the educational impact of your field trip and help your students recognize the themes and lessons of the production they attend. The following activities are for use in the class either before or after your visit to The Arts Center of Cannon County.



# PREPARING YOUR STUDENTS FOR THEIR FIELD TRIP

A few reminders to your students will make your field trip more enjoyable

## Seating

There is often limited time to seat students before the show starts. Asking them to sit as they are lined up is helpful to us. Please ask chaperones to line up with the student they want to sit with and follow the line. We seat students on a first come, first served basis but do make allowances for very young students. Your group may not be able to all sit in the same section.

Please tell our staff if your students will need to use the restroom. If they need to go before the show starts, it's best to be seated first and then let them up one row at a time. If they need to go before getting back on the bus, please let us dismiss the other schools first and then let them go one row at a time. The performance will run approximately one hour and students should not leave their seats unless they have an emergency.

## Theatre Etiquette

- Once you are seated, stay in your seats. Keep your hands to yourself and talking to a minimum.
- Be considerate of others around you. While waiting for the performance to begin, talk quietly and keep your hands, arms and feet to yourself.
- Be aware that the lights will dim and sometimes go fully dark for a few seconds before the show starts!
- Listening is important. If you talk during the performance, others may not be able to hear and you will miss important parts of the story. Be mindful to give your full attention during the performance and don't talk to your neighbors. However, feel free to clap, laugh, and react to what is happening onstage! The actors love to hear your reactions!
- Once the show is done, show your appreciation to the actors by clapping during the bows!
- Stay seated until you are released by rows back to your bus.

**MOST IMPORTANTLY, HAVE FUN, ENJOY THE  
PERFORMANCE, AND...**

**WATCH LISTEN THINK IMAGINE**



## WORDS TO KNOW

Below are some words your students may not be familiar with.  
Check them out before the show!

horde: a large group of people.

kinsmen: a person's blood relation; relative; family member.

stealth: cautious action or movement.

haste: speed or urgency in action or movement; hurry.

picturesque: visually attractive, especially in a quaint or pretty style.

vermin: wild animals that are believed to be harmful or carry disease.

trinket: a small ornament or item of jewelry that is of little value.

ragtag: (adjective) untidy; disorganized; (noun) a group of people perceived as undesirable.

peril: serious and immediate danger.

admirable: deserving respect or approval.

hospitable: friendly and welcoming to strangers or guests.

numbskull: a stupid or foolish person.

esteemed: held in great respect.

calamity: an event causing great and often sudden damage or distress; a disaster.

smith: a worker in metal.

truce: an agreement between enemies or opponents to stop fighting.

parley: a conference with the opposing side to discuss terms.

# SOCIAL STUDIES / WORLD CULTURES

World War I was a massive conflict that changed the world forever. It lasted from 1914 to 1918 and involved almost every major power on Earth. It was so big that people at the time didn't call it "World War I"—they called it "The Great War." JRR Tolkien was thought to take much of his inspiration for the Hobbit & Lord of the Rings from his experiences fighting in this world conflict.

## HOW DID IT START? (THE SPARK)

The war didn't start for just one reason. Europe was like a powder keg waiting to explode because of nationalism, building up big armies, and making secret deals (alliances).

The "spark" happened in June 1914, when Archduke Franz Ferdinand (the heir to the throne of Austria-Hungary) was assassinated in Sarajevo. Because of those secret alliances, one country declaring war led to a chain reaction that pulled everyone else in.

## HOW WAS IT FOUGHT? (TRENCH WARFARE)

Unlike wars before it, WWI was famous for Trench Warfare. Soldiers on both sides dug long, deep ditches in the ground to protect themselves from new, deadly technology like machine guns and heavy artillery.

- No Man's Land: The dangerous, muddy space between the enemy trenches.
  - The Conditions: Life in the trenches was rough. It was muddy, smelly, and full of rats.
- New Tech: This war saw the first use of tanks, airplanes for combat, submarines (U-boats), and even chemical gas.

### DID YOU KNOW?

We still celebrate the end of the war today. In many countries, it is called Remembrance Day, and in the U.S., we call it Veterans Day.

## World War I

### Allied Powers vs Central Powers



### WHY DID THE U.S. JOIN IN 1917?

For most of the war, the United States stayed out of it. Two big things changed that:

1. Sinking of the Lusitania: A German U-boat sank a British passenger ship with Americans on board.
2. The Zimmermann Telegram: Germany sent a secret message to Mexico asking them to attack the U.S. if the U.S. entered the war. This was the final straw.

### HOW DID IT END?

By 1918, the Central Powers were exhausted. On November 11, 1918, at 11:00 AM, both sides agreed to stop fighting.

The war officially ended with the Treaty of Versailles in 1919. The treaty was very harsh on Germany, forcing them to take all the blame and pay billions of dollars in damages—which, unfortunately, helped set the stage for World War II later on.

# SOCIAL STUDIES / WORLD CULTURES

Below is an overview of the author's life and accomplishments. Our hope is that the information provided will give insights into the connection between the life and work of this world renowned author.

## WHO WAS J.R.R. TOLKIEN?

J.R.R. Tolkien was an English fantasy author and academic. Tolkien settled in England as a child, going on to study at Exeter College.

While teaching at Oxford University, he published the popular fantasy novels *The Hobbit* and *The Lord of the Rings* trilogy. The works have had a devoted international fan base and been adapted into award-winning blockbuster films.

## TOLKIEN'S SERVICE IN WWI

Tolkien enlisted as a lieutenant in the Lancashire Fusiliers and served in World War I, making sure to continue writing as well. He fought in the Battle of the Somme, in which there were severe casualties, and was eventually released from duty due to illness.

## TOLKIEN'S CAREER AND THE INKLINGS

Tolkien joined the faculty of the University of Leeds in 1920 and a few years later became a professor at Oxford University. While there, he started a writing group called The Inklings, which counted among its members C.S. Lewis and Owen Barfield. It was also at Oxford, while grading a paper, that he spontaneously wrote a short line about "a hobbit."

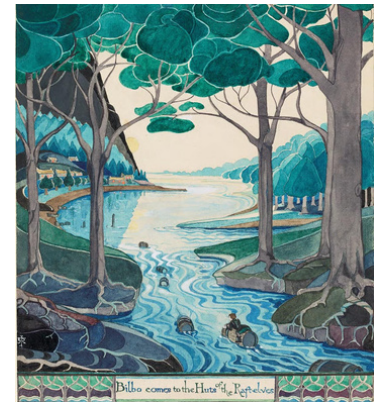
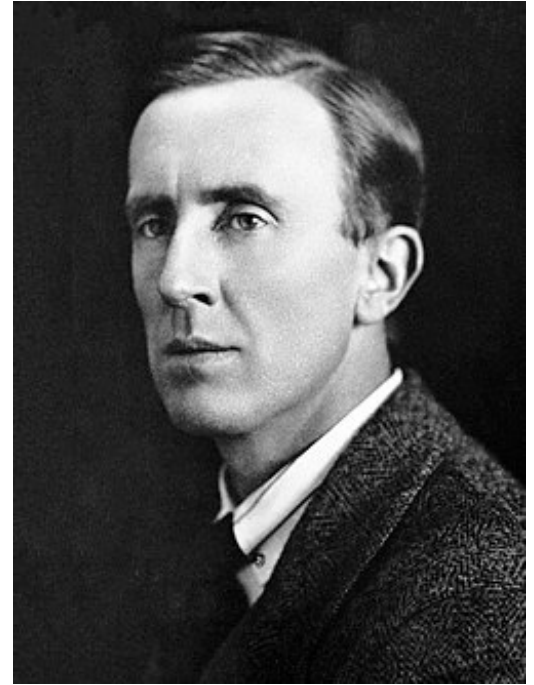
## TOLKIEN'S BOOKS

The award-winning fantasy novel *The Hobbit* — about the small, furry-footed Bilbo Baggins and his adventures — was published in 1937, and was regarded as a children's book, though Tolkien would state the book wasn't originally intended for children. He also created more than 100 drawings to support the narrative. Over the years, while working on scholarly publications, Tolkien developed the work that would come to be regarded as his masterpiece — *The Lord of the Rings* series, partially inspired by ancient European myths, with its own sets of maps, lore and languages.

## ONLINE RESOURCES:

[Tolkien Biography](#)

[Youtube - Tolkien's books and artwork](#)



SOURCE: ALL INFORMATION PROVIDED BY BIOGRAPHY.COM

# SOCIAL STUDIES / WORLD CULTURES

## Activity: Rice Map Making

**This is classic “Rice Mapping” technique, often used by fantasy writers like Tolkien, creates organic natural looking landmasses by using the random scatter of the grains of rice to dictate the shape of your world.**

### THE SET UP:

- 1) **The Paper:** Use a large sheet of white construction paper, cardstock, or water color paper.
- 2) **The Rice:** about half a cup of uncooked rice for each student or a small group to share.
- 3) **The Surface:** Work on a flat table where the paper won't move.
- 4) **The Art Supplies:** pencil, sharpie, colored pencils or watercolors

### THE BIG POUR:

Hold your container of rice about 6 inches above the paper.

**For a Continent:** Pour the rice in a steady stream into the center. It will naturally pile up and spread outward.

**For an Archipelago:** Move your hand in a swirling or “S” motion as you pour to create scattered islands.

### THE OUTLINE:

- 1) **Refining the Coastline:** Before you pick up a pen, use your fingers or a toothpick to fine-tune the shapes. You may want to nudge any stray grains of rice into a clump to make an island or join them with the coastline.
- 2) **Perimeter:** Take a fine tip pen or a pencil and trace the outer perimeter of the rice.
- 3) **Don't be too perfect:** The beauty of this method is the “wiggly” line. Follow the jagged edges of the rice grains - this creates realistic, craggy coastlines that look like they were shaped by erosion.
- 4) **Inner Details:** If there are gaps inside your rice pile, trace those too; these will become your inner lakes.

### THE REVEAL:

Carefully funnel the rice back into its container. Now you are left with a completely unique, organic map outline!

### MAKING IT “PROFESSIONAL”:

Once the rice is gone, you can add depth to your map:

- 1) **Adding Color and Creativity:** This is where students can use their art supplies to color their map adding mountainous regions, lakes, rivers, grasslands, etc.
- 2) **Map Essentials:** Once students have created their terrain have them add the basic map essentials:  
Title, Legend, Compass Rose, Scale

### ONLINE TUTORIALS:

[Rice Mapping Tutorial Video](#)

# SOCIAL STUDIES / WORLD CULTURES

In the production of *The Hobbit* you will see the character of Smaug the dragon portrayed by a puppet. Below are some resources to learn more about puppets and how they are different around the world.

## What is Puppetry?

At its core, puppetry is a form of performance where inanimate objects (the puppets) are brought to life by a human operator, known as a puppeteer. Unlike standard acting where the performer uses their own body to tell a story, a puppeteer transfers their energy, voice, and movement into an object to create the illusion of life.

Puppetry is one of the oldest forms of entertainment and communication, predating written language in many cultures. Its significance lies in how it has served society over thousands of years. Before books were common, puppetry was a vital tool for the oral tradition. It was used to act out complex religious myths, historical battles, and moral lessons. Because puppets can do things humans cannot—like fly, shrink, or lose a limb and "heal" instantly—they were perfect for depicting supernatural stories and folklore.

Many cultures developed unique puppetry styles that became symbols of their national identity:



**Wayang Kulit (Indonesia):** Shadow puppets made of leather used to tell epic stories that last all night.



**Punch and Judy (England):** A rowdy, comedic style of glove puppetry that became a staple of seaside entertainment.

### ONLINE RESOURCES:

[How we made our Smaug Puppet](#)

[How to make a sock puppet](#)

[The three little pigs shadow puppet performance](#)

[How to make a shadow puppet](#)

[How to make hand shadow puppets for kids](#)

[More complex hand shadow puppets](#)

[Jim Henson shows how to make characters with anything](#)

[Jim Henson's "Muppets on Puppets" puppets around the world.](#)



**Bunraku (Japan):** Highly sophisticated puppets operated by three people, focusing on intense emotional realism.

# SOCIAL STUDIES / WORLD CULTURES

In JRR Tolkien's book "The Hobbit", the character of Bilbo Baggins has a love for storytelling. Below is the history of storytelling and on the following page is an activity to try.

## The Oral Tradition of Storytelling

Think of the oral tradition as the world's oldest "social media" feed—except instead of scrolling through TikTok, people sat around fires, shared meals, and passed down everything they knew through spoken word. Before we had printing presses, iPhones, or even written alphabets, human history lived entirely in the air between two people talking.

### What Exactly is Oral Tradition?

Oral tradition is the practice of passing down stories, history, laws, and customs from one generation to the next by word of mouth. It isn't just "telling a story"; it's a living library. To make sure people didn't forget the important stuff, storytellers used "memory hacks" like:

- **Rhythm and Rhyme:** Much like lyrics in your favorite song, rhymes make information easier to memorize.
- **Repetition:** Repeating key phrases (think of a chorus in a song) helped the audience remember the main point.
- **Exaggeration:** Making a hero a little stronger or a monster a little scarier made the story "sticky" so it wouldn't be forgotten.

### Why it Matters to History

If it weren't for oral tradition, we would have a massive "black hole" in human history.

- 1. Preserving the "Unwritten":** For thousands of years, civilizations like the Ancient Greeks, West African empires, and Indigenous tribes across the Americas didn't write their histories down. Oral tradition was their only "hard drive."
- 2. The Truth Behind the Myth:** Many myths are actually based on real events. For example, some oral stories about "giant floods" or "mountains spitting fire" turned out to be memories of actual tsunamis or volcanic eruptions that happened thousands of years ago.
- 3. Community Identity:** History wasn't just a list of dates; it was a way for a group of people to say, "This is who we are, and this is where we came from."

### Why it Matters Today

You might think we don't need oral tradition because we have Wikipedia, but it's actually all around you:

- **Family Legends:** That funny story your grandma tells every Thanksgiving about the time your dad got stuck in a tree? That's oral tradition. It builds your family's unique "culture."
- **Urban Legends and Jokes:** Ever heard a story about a "friend of a friend" that turned out to be a spooky myth? That's oral tradition in the digital age.
- **Cultural Survival:** For many cultures today, especially those that were oppressed or had their books destroyed, speaking their native languages and telling their ancestral stories is an act of strength and survival.

# SOCIAL STUDIES / WORLD CULTURES

An oral storytelling activity is a fantastic way to build confidence, improve narrative structure, and tap into the ancient tradition of sharing stories aloud. For middle schoolers, the key is to provide enough structure to prevent "stage fright" while allowing for creative freedom.

## Activity: The Artifact's Journey

**Objective:** To practice improvisation, sequencing, and the use of "vocal performance" (tone, pacing, and volume) to engage an audience.

### 1. The Setup (The "Mystery Bag"):

Collect several random, everyday objects and place them in an opaque bag or box. Items could include:

- An old, rusted key.
- A single, worn-out leather glove.
  - A dried-up marker.
- A compass or an old watch.
  - A smooth river stone.

### 2. The Hook: The Oral Tradition

Before starting, briefly explain that for most of human history, stories weren't written down—they lived in the breath and memory of the speaker. Great storytellers use more than words; they use their voice (pitch and speed) and body (gestures and eye contact) to paint a picture.

### 3. The Prompt

Each student (or small group) draws one object from the bag. They have three minutes to brainstorm a story that answers these three questions:

1. Where was this found? (The Setting)
2. Who did it belong to? (The Character)
3. Why is it important? (The Conflict/Plot)

### 3. The Rules

To make the environment safe and professional, establish these "Storyteller Rules":

- **The "No-Script" Rule:** Students can jot down three bullet points, but they cannot write out a script. The goal is to speak to the audience, not read at them.
- **The "Wait for Silence" Rule:** The storyteller does not begin until the "campfire" (the class) is completely silent.
- **The "Cliffhanger" Bonus:** Encourage them to end the story right at a moment of high tension.

### Scaffolding for Different Learners

- **For the Reluctant Speaker:** Allow them to tell the story in a pair, where one person "pantomimes" the action while the other speaks.
- **For the Aspiring Writer:** Encourage them to use sensory details. Instead of "It's a key," say "The iron felt cold and smelled like old pennies."

# SCIENCE

Were Hobbits real?!? In 2003 a group of scientist discovered the bones of what looked to be a small human. Read the information below and see what you think.

## HOMOFLORESIENSIS (NICKNAMED “HOBBITS”)

In 2003 a paleontological dig on the Flores Island of Indonesia connected JRR Tolkien’s fantasy characters to a scientific discovery. The uncovering of the 3-foot-7-inch ancient human species immediately reminded scientist of JRR Tolkien’s “The Hobbit”. Studies show that Homofloresiensis now nicknamed “The Hobbit” lived in Indonesia, until roughly 50,000 years ago. This species displayed island dwarfism, and likely developed smaller bodies in order to survive limited island resources.



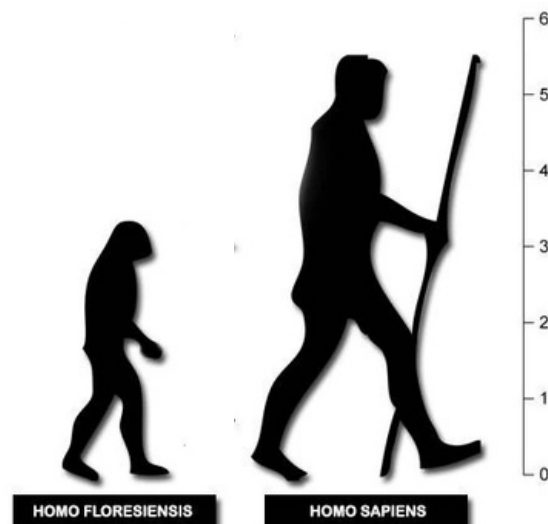
## WHERE IS FLORES ISLAND?



## HOMOFLORESIENSIS QUICK FACTS

- Discovered in 2003 at Liang Bua on the Island of Flores in Indonesia.
- Skeletal description:
  - A mound of bone around the eyebrow area.
  - No chin. Instead the jaw slopes backwards.
  - Low skull, widest around the ears with a sloping forehead.
  - Shrugged shoulders.
  - Short legs make the arms appear long.
  - Almost half the size of a human female.
  - Wide pelvis.
  - Long feet compared to the length of the legs.

## HUMAN VS. HOMOFLORESIENSIS



## ONLINE RESOURCES TO DO SOME DISCOVERY OF YOUR OWN!

[Podcast](#)

[Online Article](#)

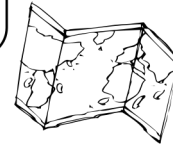
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# A Hero's Journey

**Directions: For any story, answer the following questions to determine the hero's journey.**

1. Ordinary world - What is the hero's world like at the beginning of the story?



2. Call to adventure - What happens to prompt the hero to take a step into the adventure?



12. Return with the elixir - What knowledge or wisdom does the hero bring back with him or her?

3. Refusal of the call - Does the hero refuse to go? If so, why?

11. Resurrection of the hero - What is the final test?

4. Meeting with the mentor - Who helps the hero gain wisdom?

## Hero's Journey

10. The road back - How does the hero attempt to return to his or her normal life?

5. Crossing the first threshold - When does the hero cross the point of no return in the story?

9. Reward - What does the hero receive as a reward?

6. Tests, allies, and enemies - How do the other characters affect the hero?

8. Ordeal - What happens when the story reaches a life-or-death point?

7. Approach - Does the hero try and fail? How so? What does he do when he fails?



# LANGUAGE ARTS

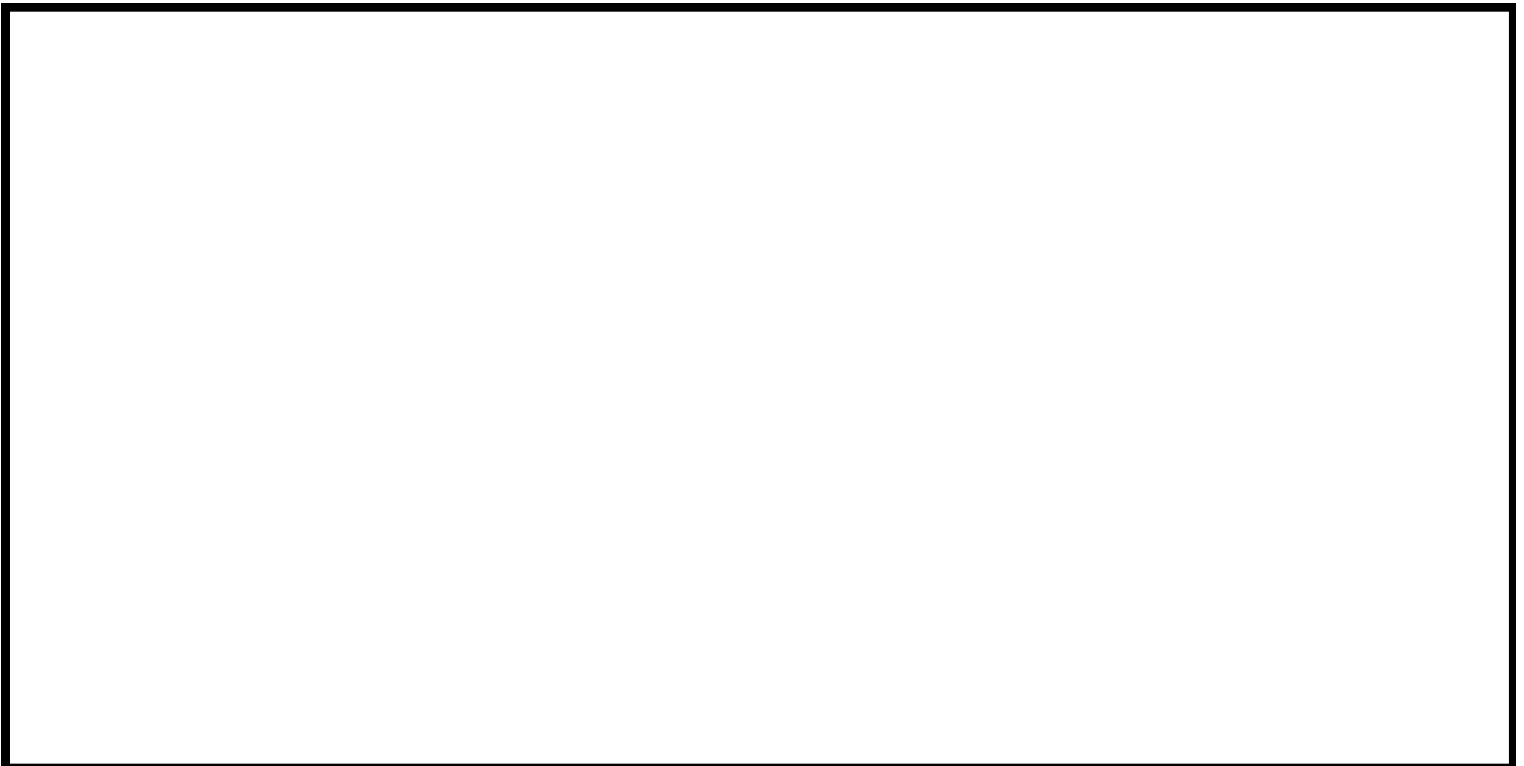
Read the description of Bilbo's home, taken from *The Hobbit* by JRR Tolkien then complete the activities below.

“In a hole in the ground there lived a hobbit. Not a nasty, dirty, wet hole, filled with the ends of worms and an oozy smell, nor yet a dry, bare, sandy hole with nothing in it to sit down on or to eat: it was a hobbit-hole, and that means comfort.

It had a perfectly round door like a porthole, painted green, with a shiny yellow brass knob in the exact middle. The door opened on to a tube-shaped hall like a tunnel: a very comfortable tunnel without smoke, with panelled walls, and floors tiled and carpeted, provided with polished chairs, and lots and lots of pegs for hats and coats- the hobbit was fond of visitors.”

- The Hobbit, JRR Tolkein

## DRAW AND LABEL A DIAGRAM OF THE HOBBIT-HOLE



## WHAT DOES THE DESCRIPTION TELL YOU ABOUT BILBO?

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# RIDDLES

In *The Hobbit*, the characters of Gollum and Bilbo engage in a battle of wits to see who will win the precious ring. See if your students can figure out the riddles below.

1. There is a place where Christmas comes before Thanksgiving, where is it? **In the dictionary**
2. What can't be kept until it is given? **A promise.**
3. During which month do people work the least? **February, because it has only 28 days.**
4. What has four fingers and a thumb but isn't alive? **A glove.**
5. Why is Santa so good in Karate? **Because he has a black belt.**
6. What gets bigger when more is taken away? **A hole.**
7. The more there is, the less you see. What is it? **Darkness.**
8. What has many keys but can't open a single lock? **A piano.**
9. What can you hold in your left hand but not in your right? **Your right elbow.**
10. What is the only thing you can put in a bucket and make it lighter? **A hole.**
11. I am odd but take away one letter and I am even. What am I? **The number seven.**
12. What has 13 hearts, no lungs, and no bellybutton? **A deck of cards.**
13. Grandpa went for a walk, and it started raining. He forgot to bring an umbrella and didn't wear a hat. When he got home his clothes were soaking wet, but not a hair on his head was wet. How was this possible? **Grandpa is bald.**
14. What five letter word becomes shorter when you add two letters? **Short**
15. I speak without a mouth and hear without ears. What am I? **An echo.**
16. What breaks as soon as you say it's name? **Silence.**
17. Two mothers and two daughters are riding in a car yet there are only three people there. How? **They are a grandmother, a mother, and a daughter.**
18. What appears once in a minute, twice in a moment, but not once in a thousand years? **The letter "M".**

# BRAINTEASERS

These brainteasers are a great bellringer to get your student's minds ready for class.  
Try them out with your students!


1 history history history	2 R g rose e i n	3 MEREPEAT	4 _____ read _____
5 Arrest You're	6 M Meal M e e a a l Meal l	7 E more more more more	8 wonalicederland
9 me right	10 stefrankin	11 Chimadena	12 settle
13 millio1n	14 d e r d e r e r v i v i d e r d e r e r v i v i	15 land time	16 mini'libethereute
17 R R a a l l l l	18 score	19 ban ana	20 o_er_t_o_
21 e t a d	22 Meal Λ	23 issue issue issue issue issue issue issue issue issue issue	24 XQQQME
25 time time	26 FLUBADENCE	27 1 knows	28 BIG BIG ignore ignore

# BRAINTEASERS

These brainteasers are a great bellringer to get your student's minds ready for class.

Try them out with your students!

- 1.
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1	<b>MIND MATTER</b>	2	CYCLE CYCLE CYCLE	3	1hit 1der	4	<b>AWAY</b>
5	R ROAD A D	6	R E A D I N G	7	MCE MCE MCE	8	 TIME
9	BEHIND	10	<b>Pumped</b>	11	MILONELION	12	B BUSH A
13	yourballcourt	14	000222333444 blame	15	<b>MM MM</b>	16	H I L L ↓

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1	<b>FUSS</b> ∅	2	o L D	3	PPOD	4	<b>HiHiP</b>
5		6		7	cherry <b>CAKE</b>	8	<b>LEG</b>
9		10	tree a p p l e	11	 <b>cheese</b>	12	 feeling
13	 things	14	get get get	15	<b>heart</b>	16	long story

# LIBRARY TIME

If you like The Hobbit, here are some other books we think you will love!  
Check them out in your local library. Happy Reading!!

