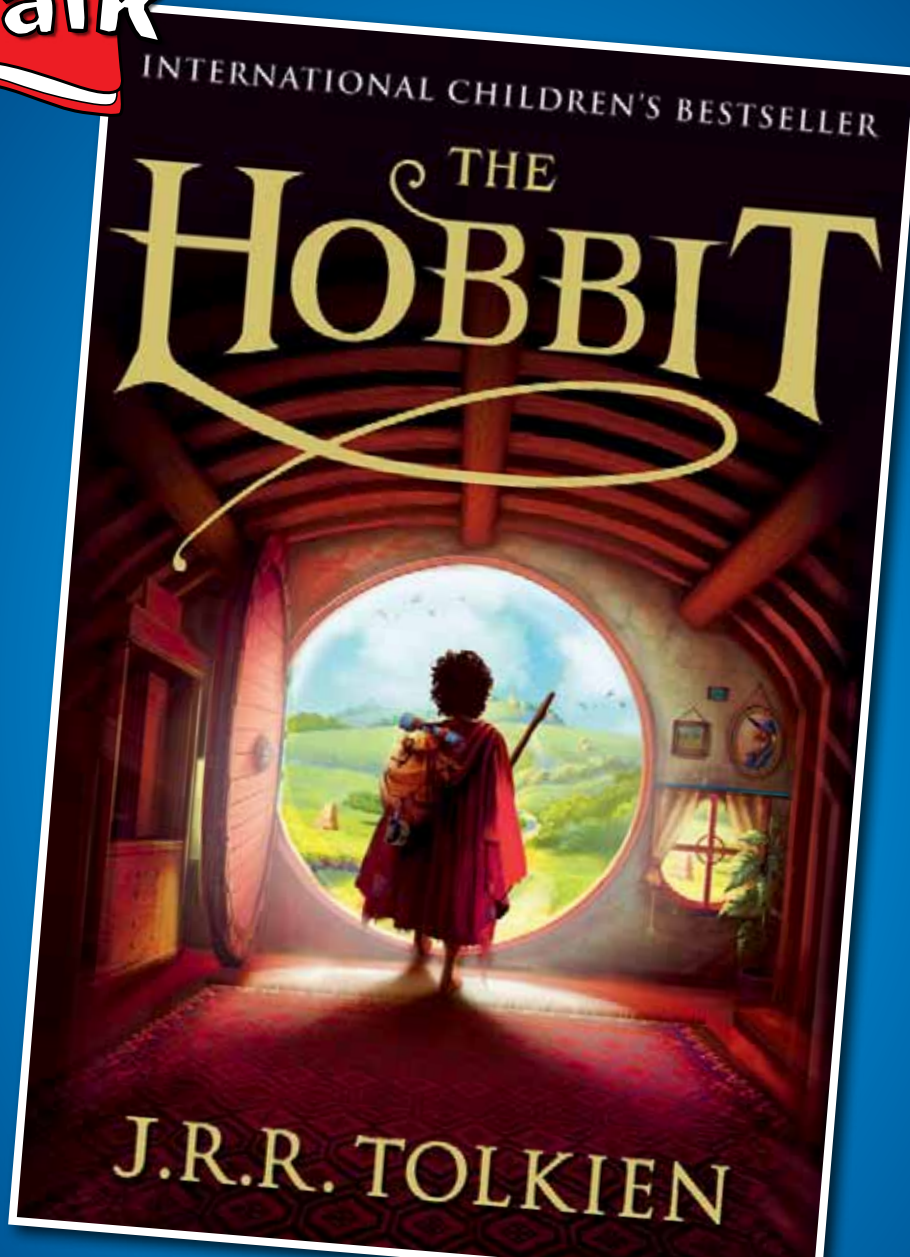


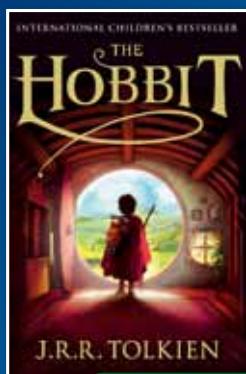
 SCHOLASTIC

**Book
Talk**



AGES 8+

**Engage and inspire your
pupils with a Book Talk!**



Look out for this book at your Fair!

AGES 8+

Price	£6.99 / €9.90
Case	Read On
Author	J.R.R Tolkien
Illustrator	David Wyatt
Publisher	HarperCollins Children's Books

Using this book in your classroom

Themes

This classic fantasy adventure explores the themes of **courage and heroism, friendship, endurance and loyalty.**

Summary

Bilbo Baggins is a respectable hobbit who enjoys his cosy life at home and has no wish to go on an adventure. One day, he is tricked by his friend Gandalf the wizard into accepting a job as 'burglar' on an expedition with Thorin Oakenshield and his band of dwarves to regain their gold and treasure, which was stolen by the dragon Smaug who lives in the Lonely Mountain.

Their quest takes Bilbo and the dwarves through some uncomfortable adventures, and Bilbo finds courage he never knew he possessed as they narrowly escape the clutches of one enemy after another, from trolls and goblins to giant spiders and deadly Wood-Elves. When he meets Gollum in the goblin tunnels under the Misty Mountains and steals Gollum's magical ring which gives him the power of invisibility, the dwarves begin to treat Bilbo with a new respect.

After many dangerous adventures, Bilbo and the dwarves reach the Lonely Mountain. Bilbo breaks into Smaug's lair and steals some of his treasure. He also finds out about Smaug's fatal weak spot – the gap in his armour. Smaug realises that he has been robbed, and sets out to destroy the nearest town in revenge – until he is shot down by an archer who aims at the dragon's weak spot.

With the dragon defeated and his treasure discovered, there is still an argument to be settled between the various warring parties who claim a share of the treasure. Bilbo tries and fails to prevent war breaking out, but in the end what unites dwarves, men and elves is the threat posed by the approaching army of goblins and evil Wargs. When all work together they are finally able to defeat the evil forces, and as the battle ends, Bilbo can return home to his cosy house once more. He arrives back a changed hobbit, however – richer, with his share of the dragon's treasure, but also wiser and braver.

Did you know?

- *The Hobbit* was J.R.R Tolkien's first fantasy novel, and it grew out of a story he had invented to amuse his children at bedtime. It was first published in 1937, and has never been out of print since.
- When Tolkien delivered the manuscript of the book to his publisher, Stanley Unwin, Unwin gave it to his ten-year-old son Rayner to read. Rayner enjoyed it so much that Unwin immediately decided to publish it!

The Story Session

1. Introducing the story

- Start by asking what the children already know about hobbits, and about this story in particular. Have they seen any of the *Lord of the Rings* films, or heard about the new film of *The Hobbit*? Share any ideas or insights the children have. Read the first few paragraphs of the story aloud (pages 11 to 13) and then ask the children to tell you what they have found out about hobbits.
- Read the whole of Chapter 1, 'An Unexpected Party', out loud. You could ask the children to take turns to read, or read the whole chapter to them yourself. Pause to discuss what else they have learnt about hobbits, and about Bilbo in particular. Ask them what they think Bilbo will decide to do, whether he will go on the journey with the dwarves and what kinds of problems he might face if he does.

2. Reading the story

- If you don't have time to read the whole story aloud as a class, encourage the children to read the rest of the book independently or in groups.
- Pause periodically to discuss the story and talk about how the characters change and develop. Can the children identify some key points in the story where Bilbo seems to change and grow as a character? For example, can they compare the way Bilbo complains at the start of the journey (e.g. in Chapter 2, 'Roast Mutton', pages 46-47) with the way he behaves in Chapter 8, 'Flies and Spiders', pages 192-193, when he bravely kills a giant spider all on his own?
- As they read the whole story, ask the children to think about which of Bilbo's adventures they found most exciting, and why. Which of the enemies faced by Bilbo and the dwarves are the most frightening? By the end of the story, do the children think Bilbo has changed forever? If so, in what ways?

3. Follow up

- At the end of the book, look back at what Gandalf says to the dwarves on page 33: 'You asked me to ... back to digging coal.' Ask the children: 'Do you think Gandalf was right to choose Bilbo to go on the expedition?' Talk about the ways in which Bilbo was a good choice, and the ways in which he was an odd choice for this kind of adventure. Did he justify Gandalf's faith in him?
- Ask the children to imagine that they are trying to put together their own team to take part in a quest. What will their quest be? Who do they want to be on their team? They can include real people, characters from books or characters they have made up themselves. Ask them to draw up a job advertisement for people to take part in their quest, explaining what the quest is and what kinds of skills will be needed.
- Watch the trailer for *The Hobbit* film at www.thehobbit.com

YOU TELL US

- Did you use these notes to have a Book Talk in class? • Were they helpful?
- Are there any changes you'd like to see to make them more useful?

We're always happy to hear your comments, so please email us at bookfairs@scholastic.co.uk or bookfairs@scholastic.ie