

The Hobbit

Chapters 1–4

by J. R. R. Tolkien

Pre-Reading Vocabulary Practice

Optional Post-Reading Quiz Included

Practice words: audacious, cunning, haughty, ingenious, obstinately, prudent, purloined, reverence, uncanny, venerable

PRE-READING ACTIVITY

Vocabulary Preview 2

Answer Key — Preview 3

Caution: share only if self-checking

OPTIONAL POST-READING QUIZ

Vocabulary in Context 4

Answer Key — In Context 5

Caution: do not share with students

About the Pre-Reading Activity (open-dictionary; ungraded or completion grade):

Students preview 10 words from the upcoming reading, each in a sentence that supports understanding. They choose the best meaning from 3 choices.

About the Optional Post-Reading Quiz (use after reading, or skip):

Same words, now in real excerpts from the text, with questions that build reading and analytical skills.

Vocabulary Sections for this Book:

Section 1 · Chapters 1–4 · Bilbo's unexpected party and the road out

Section 2 · Chapters 5–8 · Bilbo alone in the goblin tunnels

Section 3 · Chapters 9–12 · In the halls of the Wood-elves

Section 4 · Chapters 13–15 · Inside the Lonely Mountain

Section 5 · Chapters 16–19 · Under siege at the Lonely Mountain

Bold = this section. Other sections are available at verbalworkout.com.



verbalworkout.com

(all resources free)

Vocabulary Preview

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Name _____ Date _____ Period _____

Read each prompt. Then choose the best meaning for the bold word.

1. Her **audacious** plan was to sail across the ocean alone.

- A. bold and daring
- B. secret and quiet
- C. huge and costly

2. The carved doors showed the great **cunning** of the old craftsmen.

- A. sly tricks and deceit
- B. skill in making things
- C. great wealth and power

3. The **haughty** man lifted his chin and walked past us.

- A. in a great hurry
- B. arrogantly proud
- C. lost in deep thought

4. The engineer designed an **ingenious** little engine.

- A. powerful and fast
- B. simple and cheap
- C. cleverly inventive

5. She **obstinately** kept using her old, broken phone.

- A. out of pure laziness
- B. just to save money
- C. in a stubborn way

6. A **prudent** traveler always checks the weather first.

- A. wise and careful
- B. rich and lucky
- C. calm and patient

7. Someone **purloined** the cookies from the jar overnight.

- A. stole sneakily
- B. quietly hid
- C. carefully counted

8. The pilgrims spoke of the temple with **reverence**.

- A. deep respect and awe
- B. growing excitement
- C. lively curiosity

9. An **uncanny** silence filled the empty old house.

- A. heavy and complete
- B. sudden and short
- C. strange and eerie

10. The **venerable** judge had served the court for forty years.

- A. famous for a quick temper
- B. respected for age and wisdom
- C. known for harsh rulings

Reading Helpers

(Not quizzed — helpful for this text.)

flummoxed — completely confused or bewildered

ANSWER KEY

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#	KEY
1	A
2	B
3	B
4	C
5	C
6	A
7	A
8	A
9	C
10	B

Vocabulary in Context

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Name _____ Date _____ Period _____ Score _____ / 10

Read each excerpt carefully. Then choose the best answer to each question.

1 “Thorin indeed was very haughty, and said nothing about service ...”

As it is used in the passage, the word ‘haughty’ suggests that Thorin

- A. was annoyed at the long wait
- B. felt himself above the others
- C. was embarrassed by his fall

2 “... the love of beautiful things made by hands and by cunning and by magic ...”

As it is used in the passage, the word ‘cunning’ most nearly means

- A. sly trickery and deceit
- B. skill in making fine things
- C. secret, clever scheming

3 “... this most excellent and audacious hobbit—may the hair on his toes never fall out!”

It is ironic that Thorin toasts Bilbo as ‘audacious’ because Bilbo has shown himself to be

- A. rude and ungrateful
- B. greedy for treasure
- C. timid and easily frightened

4 “All the same, I should like it all plain and clear, said he obstinately ...”

Which statement is best supported by Bilbo speaking ‘obstinately’?

- A. He refuses to drop his request
- B. He forgets what he asked
- C. He gives in to Thorin

5 “... doing his best to appear wise and prudent and professional ...”

The passage most strongly suggests that Bilbo wants the dwarves to see him as

- A. wealthy and important
- B. bold and adventurous
- C. careful and sensible

6 “... my grandfather was King under the Mountain again and treated with great reverence by the mortal men ...”

According to the passage, the men’s ‘great reverence’ for Thrór means they regarded him with

- A. ordinary politeness
- B. deep respect and awe
- C. cautious mistrust

7 “... purloined the beer, and walked off without their noticing him.”

It can reasonably be inferred that to ‘purloin’ the beer, a burglar would have to

- A. take it without being seen
- B. trade something for it
- C. ask the trolls to share it

8 “He was as noble and as fair in face as an elf-lord, as strong as a warrior, as wise as a wizard, as venerable as a king of dwarves, and as kind as summer.”

Which statement about Elrond is best supported by calling him ‘venerable’?

- A. His dignity earns deep respect
- B. He is young and carefree
- C. He is feared by his people

9 “... they did not dare to sing or talk too loud, for the echoes were uncanny, and the silence seemed to dislike being broken ...”

According to the passage, the echoes and silence of the heights made the place feel

- A. lonely but peaceful
- B. vast and grand
- C. eerie and unsettling

10 “... especially the ingenious devices for killing large numbers of people at once ...”

The passage most strongly suggests that the goblins’ ‘ingenious’ devices were

- A. cleverly invented and designed
- B. old and rusted
- C. simple and harmless

ANSWER KEY

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#	KEY	NOTE
1	B	
2	B	Here 'cunning' carries its older sense of skilled craftsmanship, not the modern 'slyness' the distractors play on.
3	C	Character comprehension.
4	A	
5	C	
6	B	Event comprehension.
7	A	
8	A	
9	C	
10	A	'Ingenious' is a positive-sounding word for cleverness; note how Tolkien turns it to a dark purpose here.

Teacher Context: Chapters 1–4

Bilbo is recruited by Gandalf and thirteen dwarves for a quest to reclaim their treasure from the dragon Smaug. The company sets out, is nearly eaten by trolls, rests at Rivendell, and is captured by goblins in the Misty Mountains. Ends before 'Riddles in the Dark' to keep Bilbo's encounter with Gollum opening the next section.