

British Literature Summer Reading Assignment

"Adventures are not all pony rides and May sunshine."

"In a hole in the ground, there lived a hobbit..." Little did famed author, J.R.R. Tolkien know, that these words would launch not only a beloved novel, but a series of novels that would enchant readers for decades. Beyond his novels, many readers do not know that Tolkien was a professor of Anglo Saxon, and borrowed his ideas heavily from the writings of that time period, such as *Beowulf*- our first major reading of the school year. Your journey into British Literature will begin with the subject that Tolkien loved: Anglo Saxon. Then, we will work our way into the heroics of the Medieval era, the drama of the Renaissance, the intellectual questioning of the Age of Reason, and the revolution of Romanticism.

I have two challenges for you:

First, I challenge you to read this novel in hard copy. Tolkien's sweeping nature imagery is a perfect companion to a breezy summer day in the shade, not on a computer screen, cooped up inside. On top of this, science has concluded that benefits of reading on paper far outweigh screen reading. This book becomes a keepsake for many readers.

Second, I challenge you to actually read this novel. Sure, there are movies and Sparknotes, but neither of those mediums give you the experience that Tolkien intended: the challenge and joy of reading his work. I give a challenge to all of my students: will you be a person who earns your grades, or someone who "gets" grades through lies? Plain and simple. When you apply to college, can you say that you earned every percentage of your grade point? When you score your first big job with your college degree, can you truly say that you did all of the work necessary to get there? This is a decision that I made as a high schooler, and I lay this challenge out for my own students.

The assignment:

You are to become the character Bilbo Baggins. In first person perspective, keep a diary of Bilbo's thoughts as he travels with his dwarf companions. For each chapter, write a diary entry. As an upperclassman, I do not put word limits on my students. Gone are the days of "four sentences make a paragraph." I want you to write, write well, and write thoroughly. Your grade will be based on how well you do this.

These diary entries may be handwritten or typed. Your finished product should look like a diary. You may purchase a diary for this purpose, or, you may fashion one and decorate it to look like a diary.

Keep in mind that the main reason for this writing assignment is to see what kind of writer you are. I use this first writing sample as a diagnostic for your writing and reading comprehension. This is a time to really show off for me!

Rubric:

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| Is there a diary entry for each chapter of <i>The Hobbit</i> ? | _____/20 |
| Is each entry written from the perspective of the protagonist, Bilbo Baggins? Do the entries show comprehension of the text and accurately depict what happened in that chapter? (I am not looking for a summary of the chapter. You may focus on one or two things that happened to Bilbo if you wish.) | _____/50 |
| Is each entry an example of good writing? Are entries free of spelling and grammatical errors? Does the writing flow well? | _____/20 |
| Is your diary creatively presented? | _____/10 |
| Project total: | _____/100 |

Projects are to be submitted on the first day of class. This will be the first grade entered for the first quarter. All projects will receive 10% off for each day late. Please contact me at gloriann.curley@plymouthchristian.org before the due date if any issues arise. I am always willing to help my students, even during the summer!

I look forward to having you as a part of my classroom!

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