READER: THE HOBBIT

Characters, Summary and Word Vocabulary | Grade 6 | Chapters 1 to 6 | by J.R.R. Tolkien

PART 1: THE CHARACTERS

Bilbo Baggins	The hero of the story. He is a small, comfort-loving hobbit from Bag End who enjoys tea, food and a quiet life. The dwarves hire him as their burglar. He starts out timid, but he grows into a brave, clever and resourceful adventurer. He finds a magic ring that makes him invisible.
Gandalf	A wise and powerful wizard. He begins the adventure, chooses Bilbo for the quest and guides the group. He rescues them again and again with magic and quick thinking.
Thorin Oakenshield	The proud, serious leader of the thirteen dwarves. He is the rightful heir to the dwarves' treasure in the Lonely Mountain and is determined to win it back.
The Dwarves	Twelve more dwarves travel with Thorin: Balin, Dwalin, Fili, Kili, Dori, Nori, Ori, Oin, Gloin, Bifur, Bofur and Bombur. They are strong and loyal to Thorin, but doubtful about Bilbo.
Smaug	A huge, greedy dragon who stole the dwarves' treasure. He sleeps on it inside the Lonely Mountain and is the great danger at the end of the quest.
The Trolls	Tom, Bert and William are three huge, stupid and greedy creatures. They capture the company in Chapter 2 and turn to stone in the sunrise.
Elrond	The wise and kind elf-lord of Rivendell. He shelters the company in Chapter 3 and reads the hidden writing on their map.
The Goblins	Cruel, ugly creatures who live in tunnels under the Misty Mountains. Their leader is the Great Goblin. They capture the company in Chapter 4.
Gollum	A thin, slimy creature who lives alone beside a dark underground lake. He lost his magic ring, which Bilbo finds. He plays the riddle game with Bilbo in Chapter 5.
The Wargs	Evil wolves that work with the goblins. They hunt the company through the night in Chapter 6.
Lord of the Eagles	The proud and noble king of the great eagles. He rescues the company in Chapter 6.

PART 2: CHAPTER SUMMARIES AND VOCABULARY

Chapter 1: An Unexpected Party

Bilbo Baggins is a respectable hobbit who lives in a comfortable hole at Bag End and hates anything that disturbs his routine. One morning the wizard Gandalf visits and invites him on an adventure. Bilbo refuses politely, but Gandalf marks his door. The next afternoon thirteen dwarves arrive one after another, until the house is full of noise, food and song. Thorin Oakenshield explains how the dragon Smaug attacked the dwarves' kingdom and stole their treasure from the Lonely Mountain. They need a burglar to help them take it back, and Gandalf has chosen Bilbo. Bilbo is terrified and faints, but the adventurous Took side of his family slowly wakes up. The next morning the dwarves have already left, so Bilbo hurries out of his door, without even a handkerchief, to join them.

Word	Meaning	Example sentence
reputation	what people generally think of you	*The knight had a reputation for honesty.*
bewildered	very confused	*The new student felt bewildered on the first day.*
flustered	nervous and mixed up	*He was flustered when the guests arrived early.*
hospitality	kindness shown to guests	*We thanked them for their warm hospitality.*
indignant	angry because of unfair treatment	*She was indignant when they blamed her.*
reluctant	unwilling; not wanting to do something	*He was reluctant to leave his cosy bed.*
venture	a risky journey or adventure	*The sailors set out on a dangerous venture.*

Chapter 2: Roast Mutton

The journey begins in fine weather, but the land becomes wild and the rain begins to fall. The company is cold, wet and hungry, and Bilbo longs for his warm house. One night they see a fire in the distance, and Bilbo is sent to investigate. He finds three trolls named Tom, Bert and William cooking mutton. Bilbo tries to steal a purse from a troll, but it squeaks and he is caught. The dwarves rush to help and are popped into sacks one by one. The trolls squabble about how to cook them, and Gandalf cleverly copies their voices to keep them arguing until sunrise. The first rays of the sun turn the trolls to stone. In the trolls' cave the company finds a hoard of gold and fine swords. Bilbo takes a small knife that is as good as a sword for a hobbit.

Word	Meaning	Example sentence
wilderness	a wild, empty place where nobody lives	*Lions roam the wilderness of Africa.*
ravenous	extremely hungry	*After the long walk we were ravenous.*
mimic	to copy someone's voice or actions	*The parrot can mimic its owner.*
squabble	to argue noisily about small things	*The twins squabble over the toys.*
petrified	turned to stone; or frozen with fear	*He stood petrified when he saw the snake.*
hoard	a hidden store of treasure or goods	*The pirate buried his hoard on the island.*
plunder	to steal goods by force	*The robbers came to plunder the village.*

Chapter 3: A Short Rest

After leaving the trolls' cave, the company travels on and sees lights in a hidden valley. They reach Rivendell, called the "Last Homely House", which is the home of the wise elf-lord Elrond. Here the tired travellers wash, eat fine food, hear beautiful elf-songs and sleep soundly. Elrond examines Thorin's map and finds moon-letters, hidden writing that can only be read in the light of the moon. They tell of a secret door in the Lonely Mountain and the special day on which it can be found. This is the first real hope the dwarves have had. After a peaceful rest the company says goodbye and sets out for the Misty Mountains.

Word	Meaning	Example sentence
refuge	a safe place that protects you from danger	*The cave was a refuge from the storm.*
weary	very tired	*The weary travellers fell asleep at once.*
serene	calm and peaceful	*The lake was serene in the morning.*
decipher	to work out the meaning of hidden or difficult writing	*Scientists tried to decipher the ancient code.*
heir	a person who will receive money, property or a title	*The prince is the heir to the throne.*
lore	old stories and knowledge	*The elder told us the lore of the forest.*
hospitable	friendly and welcoming to guests	*The villagers were hospitable to strangers.*

Chapter 4: Over Hill and Under Hill

The company begins the long climb into the Misty Mountains, where a terrible storm breaks. Stone-giants hurl rocks across the valley, and the travellers are terrified. They shelter in a cave and fall asleep, but Bilbo has a bad dream about a crack in the wall. The crack opens, and goblins rush out and seize the dwarves and Bilbo. Gandalf escapes with a flash of light. Deep inside the mountain, the Great Goblin sees Thorin's sword and screams with fury. Gandalf appears again with another flash, kills the Great Goblin and helps them flee through the dark tunnels. In the chaos Bilbo is knocked on the head and left behind, alone and in total darkness.

Word	Meaning	Example sentence
treacherous	dangerous and not to be trusted	*The icy road was treacherous.*
perilous	full of danger	*They made a perilous journey across the sea.*
captive	a prisoner	*The soldier was taken captive.*
dungeon	a dark underground prison	*The king locked the thief in the dungeon.*
ferocious	very fierce and violent	*A ferocious dog guarded the gate.*
hideous	extremely ugly or horrible	*The monster's face was hideous.*
despair	complete loss of hope	*He sank into despair when he lost his way.*

Chapter 5: Riddles in the Dark

Bilbo wakes alone in the pitch-black tunnels. While crawling along, he finds a small ring and puts it in his pocket. Soon he meets Gollum, a wretched creature who lives by an underground lake. They agree to play a riddle game: if Bilbo loses, Gollum will eat him, but if Bilbo wins, Gollum will show him the way out. They exchange riddles until Bilbo, desperate for a question, asks, "What have I got in my pocket?" Gollum cannot answer and goes to find his precious ring, but it is missing. He realises Bilbo has it and chases him. Bilbo slips on the ring, vanishes, follows Gollum to the exit and leaps over him. He escapes from the goblins' tunnels with a tight squeeze through a gap.

Word	Meaning	Example sentence
cunning	clever in a sly way, often to trick others	*The cunning fox tricked the farmer.*
desperate	willing to do anything because you are in great need	*The desperate sailors sent a call for help.*
malice	a wish to harm someone	*He looked at her with malice in his eyes.*
vanish	to disappear suddenly	*The magician made the coin vanish.*
lurk	to hide and wait, usually with bad intent	*A cat lurked in the bushes.*
wretched	miserable and in a very sad condition	*The wretched dog was cold and hungry.*
gloat	to enjoy someone's failure in an unkind way	*Don't gloat when your friend loses.*

Chapter 6: Out of the Frying-Pan into the Fire

Bilbo escapes the goblins and finds Gandalf and the dwarves outside the mountain. The dwarves are amazed when he suddenly appears, and Bilbo keeps the ring a secret. But the danger is not over. Wargs and goblins pursue the company through the evening, and they flee into the trees. Gandalf hurls flaming pine cones at the wolves, but the goblins set the trees ablaze. The company is trapped at the top of burning trees, and it seems there is no escape. Just then the Lord of the Eagles hears the noise from the mountains and sees the flames. He flies down with his eagles and carries everyone to safety. The title means they escaped from one danger into a worse one.

Word	Meaning	Example sentence
pursue	to chase someone in order to catch them	*The police pursued the thief.*
frenzy	wild and uncontrolled excitement or anger	*The crowd was in a frenzy.*
perch	to sit on a high, narrow place	*The bird perched on a thin branch.*
ablaze	on fire	*The barn was ablaze.*
peril	great danger	*The climbers were in peril.*
sinister	evil or threatening	*A sinister shadow crept across the wall.*
hurl	to throw with great force	*He hurled the ball over the fence.*