

KS3 Bookclub

The Hobbit, J R R Tolkien
Wonder, R J Palacio

The Hobbit

(Good additional notes: <https://www.shmoop.com/hobbit/> <http://www.houghtonmifflinbooks.com/hmh/site/hobbit/home/hobbiteducators/>)

- **What genre/type of book is it?** fantasy, coming of age book, quest story
- **Who is/are the lead character/s in this book?** Bilbo, Gandalf, Thorin (+13 other dwarfs), the dragon, Bard, the Master, Beorn, Elvenking, Elrond
- **Who are they and what did they do?**
- **From who's perspective is this book written?** First person, but the narrator never features in the book apart from as the odd 'I'
e.g. chp 1, p15.
'Gandalf! If you had heard only a quarter of what I have heard about him, and I have only heard very little of all there is to hear...'
However, it focuses on Bilbo's journey
- **Would you like to see the story written from anyone else's perspective?**
- **Summarise the story.**
- **What difference does Bilbo's Took ancestry make to the story?**
- **Is Bilbo a moral hobbit - does he always do the right thing?**
- **Is Bilbo a thief?**
- **What do the following represent?**
 - The Hill** - comfort, safety, security, lack of development (a place where time stands still - nothing ever happens)
 - Mirkwood** - going into the darkness, the challenge, the place where you see what your heroes are really made of
 - The dragon** - greed, selfishness, pride, the corrupting influence of money
 - Elves** - nature, goodness, kindness, light
 - Goblins** - mechanisation, a removal from the natural world, evil, cruelty, darkness
 - Gandalf** - parenthood, guardianship, reassurance
- Chp12 P203 (4th para in)

'If you think it is my job to go into the secret passage first, O Thorin Thrain's son Oakenshield,... somehow I don't think I shall refuse. Perhaps I have begun to trust my luck more than I used to in the old days' - he meant last spring before he left his own house, but it seemed centuries ago.

- What does this tell us about Bilbo?

It goes on to say:

'Now who is coming with me?'
He did not expect a chorus of volunteers, so he was not disappointed.

- **What does this tell us about the dwarfs?**

- Dragon sickness represents greed

Who gets it? the dragon

Thorin, and to a lesser extent, the dwarfs
the old Master
the wood elves
the lake people
and to a certain extent, bilbo and the bard.

- **What protects Bilbo from getting it?** His love of simple pleasures, such a home, food and singing. His fear of others attacking him for his gold. His inability to know what to do with lots of gold.
- **Does this have anything to do with Gandalf picking him for the quest?**
- **Does Bilbo have anything in common with Gollum?**
- **What do you think they think of each other?**
- **Does Gollum have anything in common with Thorin?** They are both homeless; feel safest at the bottom of a mountain, in the dark; take comfort in their personal treasure, a ring, the Arkenstone
- **Did you enjoy the book?**
- **What did you like about it?**
- **Would you recommend it to someone else?**

Activity:

Kennings are very well used in Old English, Norse and Icelandic texts/poetry, such as Beowulf. They are much shortened (two words) metaphors used in place of a noun e.g. earth-wiggler. Some are more like a riddle, e.g. whale road, for sea, while others are more descriptive, e.g. rat-slayer.

Look at Bilbo's conversation with Smaug in Chp 12, p212.

- how many kennings can you find?
- what does Bilbo mean by them?
- write some of your own, and we will see if we can guess what they are
 - for an animal
 - for your parent
 - a non-living natural thing
 - a manmade thing
 - favourite pet (or a pet you would like to own)
 - something/one you dislike.

Wonder

(Good additional notes: <https://www.gradesaver.com/wonder>, <https://www.shmoop.com/wonder/>)

- **What genre/type of book is it?** coming of age book
- **Who is/are the lead character/s in this book?** August/Auggie, Via, Summer, Jack, Justin, Miranda, Mum, Dad, Mr Tushman
- **Describe them and tell their story?**
- **From who's perspective is this book written?** First person, each saying their own section, so that we, the reader, have to piece it all together.
- **Why do you think it was written like this?**
- **Do you think any of the characters ever really know each other's story?**
- **What adventures did the main character go through?**
- **What events brought the characters further together or further apart?**
- **Is Via a good sibling to have?**
- **Which one did you most relate to?**
- **How did you feel about the main characters?**
- **Have you ever felt that you stood out for the way you looked?**
- **What does it feel like/do you think it would feel like?**
- **Most people have felt like they don't fit in in one way or another over the course of their lives, does this mean everyone should be able to relate to Auggie in one way or another?**
- **Was the story believable?**
- **Did it make any difference to you as a reader knowing that Auggie was home educated before he went to school?**
- **Did it make you want to go to school?**
- **Who did you feel most sorry for and at what part in their story?**
- **Was it the ending you hoped for?**
- **Would you change the ending in any way?**
- **What does the helmet mean to August?**
- **Do you have anything similar that you like to hide behind?**
- **What was the significance of Auggie cutting off his rats tail (hair)?**
- **Most books about growing older have some significant moment where their childhood is cast aside and they are moving into a whole new world. Did any of the other characters show this kind of development?**

- Graduation was also a mile stone. **What do you think that represented?**
- **What did the woods at camp represent?**
- **What do you think Daisy signifies?** love/loyalty/friendship. Daisy stays in the home in this story, as she represents the unwavering support and love that the home gives to all the individual members of the family and holds them up in times of difficulty.

[Activity: If time...

Show traditional painting with dogs in, such as [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Jan van Eyck - Portrait of Giovanni Arnolfini and his Wife - WGA7689.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Jan_van_Eyck_-_Portrait_of_Giovanni_Arnolfini_and_his_Wife_-_WGA7689.jpg).

In these paintings dogs signify loyalty... just like Daisy... guess what the other animals signify

Dog: love/loyalty/friendship

Rabbit: lust

Parrot: eloquence

peacock: sometimes pride and vanity, but generally immortality

Gold finch: the passion of christ - the red spot on its feathers came when it pulled a thorn out of Christ's head when Christ was on the cross.

Dove: peace

Lamb: jesus

Ermine (white stoat): purity

Owl: intelligence, death

Pig: greed

Fly: evil, death, decay

Butterfly: the soul, resurrection of..

Eagle: power

snake: evil, fertility

Donkey: humility, simplicity, laziness

Horse: strength

Camel: denoting asia

mouse: evil, devil. death

cat: hunter of souls, conflict, liberty

elephant: strength, docility]

- **Did you enjoy the book?**
- **What did you like about it?**
- **Would you recommend it to someone else?**

Compare and Contrast

Genre:

Both coming of age books, both about a journey

- Did either of the lead characters choose to go on a journey?
- Were they pleased that they did by the end of the book?
- Were they the same person at the end of the book as they were at the start of the book?

Themes:

Wonder: Kindness, bravery, family, being different, friendship

The Hobbit: Kindness, bravery, being different, friendship

- What do Bilbo and Auggie have in common? Unlikely heroes, both go from the safe family nest and go out to experience the big wide world.

The parental figure:

Wonder: Mum (and to a lesser extent Dad)

Hobbit: Gandalf

The hero thrown into the situation by a caring older person:

The caring parental figure can see what the hero is capable of much more than the hero themselves, while the hero likes the comfy, nice quiet life, and would not naturally leave that situation were it not for a push.

Overhearing what his contemporaries think about him:

W - halloween

H - the dwarfs in Bilbo's house P28

- How do the other school children judge Auggie?
- How do the dwarfs judge Bilbo?
- How do these positions change by the end of the book?

Both characters are underrated by the other people they are on a journey with. Their external appearance leave others thinking that they are not as special as they really are.

When do the children really begin to accept...:

Auggie? "Funny how sometimes you worry a lot about something and it turns out to be nothing."

Auggie - Section VI, pg. 215

Bilbo? First with the goblins, then the spiders, but particularly in the wood with the elves, and he helps them escape.

Death:

How does Auggie and his family feel when Daisy dies?

How do Bilbo and the other dwarfs feel when Thorin dies?

Ovations:

Via gets her standing ovation and Auggie his, "I think there should be a rule that everyone in the world should get a standing ovation at least once in their lives." Auggie - Section VI, pg. 231
Does Bilbo get one?

Both heroes had a contract before going on their 'adventure':

Auggie made with his parents, can come out of school if he doesn't like it.

Bilbo made with the dwarfs, "For your hospitality our sincerest thanks, and for your offer of professional assistance our grateful acceptance. Terms: cash on delivery, up to and not exceeding one fourteenth of total profits (if any); all travelling expenses guaranteed in any event; funeral expenses to be defrayed by us or our representatives, if occasion arises and the matter is not otherwise arranged for."

defrayed: financially provided for.

'more than meets the eye'

A - you are a 'wonder'

B - Gandalf says something similar multiple times to Bilbo.

The end

Auggie gains respectability and acceptance in school

Bilbo loses respectability and acceptance in the Shire

The Universe and fate:

Justin thinks the universe is balancing Auggie's bad luck of face with good luck of family
Gandalf says, "Surely you don't disbelieve the prophecies, because you had a hand in bringing them about yourself? You don't really suppose, do you, that all your adventures and escapes were mere luck, just for your sole benefit? You are a very fine person, Mr Baggins, and I am very fond of you; but you are only quite a little fellow in a wide world after all!" (last paragraph of book)

They both imply that the characters are all part of something bigger.