

Tolkien Reading Day 2024



THE
TOLKIEN
SOCIETY

Tales of Service and Sacrifice in Middle-earth

Subject Areas: English

Skills: Critical Thinking, Literary Analysis, Creative Writing, Communication

Learning Objectives

- Students will identify and define themes of service and sacrifice in Tolkien's works.
- Students will analyse selected passages from Tolkien's various works to understand how these themes are portrayed.
- Students will engage in discussion to explore the significance of service and sacrifice in Middle-earth.

Materials

- Copies of various works by J.R.R. Tolkien (e.g., 'The Silmarillion,' 'The Hobbit,' 'The Lord of the Rings') and/or handouts with selected passages highlighting themes of service and sacrifice
- Whiteboard and markers
- Writing materials (notebooks, pens, or digital devices)
- Visual aids (images related to Middle-earth or scenes depicting acts of service and sacrifice)

Lesson Activities

1. Review and Preparation:

- Define service as the act of helping or doing work for someone else, often at personal cost, and sacrifice as the act of giving up something valuable for the sake of others. Discuss how these themes are prevalent throughout Tolkien's works and contribute to the depth of his storytelling.
- Provide specific examples from Tolkien's legendarium, e.g. as Frodo's journey to destroy the One Ring, Aragorn's selfless leadership, or Gandalf's sacrifices in guiding and protecting the free peoples of Middle-earth.

2. Reading and Analysis:

- Distribute copies of selected passages from Tolkien's various works that exemplify themes of service and sacrifice.
- Read the passages aloud or have students take turns reading. Encourage them to annotate and make notes as they read.
- After reading each passage, facilitate a discussion to analyze how service and sacrifice are depicted. Prompt students to consider the motivations of the characters, the impact of their actions on the story, and any recurring themes or symbols.

3. Discussion:

- Engage the students in a broader discussion about the significance of service and sacrifice in Middle-earth. Encourage them to draw connections between the passages they've read and larger themes within Tolkien's legendarium.
- Use specific examples to guide the discussion.
- Prompt discussion questions such as:
 - How do characters in Tolkien's works demonstrate service and sacrifice?
 - What are some examples of selflessness and heroism in Middle-earth?
 - How do themes of service and sacrifice contribute to the overall narrative and world-building in Tolkien's legendarium?
 - Are there any parallels between the acts of service and sacrifice in Middle-earth and real-world experiences or historical events?

4. Reflection and Creative Writing:

- Wrap up the session by asking students to reflect on what they've learned about service and sacrifice in Middle-earth.
- Encourage them to write a short reflection or response, exploring how these themes resonate with them personally or how they relate to their own lives.
- Summarise the key points discussed during the session and encourage students to continue exploring Tolkien's works and themes of service and sacrifice in their own reading and writing.

Possible Assessment Activities:

- Students write a short paragraph reflecting on how a character from Tolkien's works exemplifies service or sacrifice.
- Students select a passage from Tolkien's stories and write a brief analysis highlighting instances of service and sacrifice within it.

Extension:

- Provide an opportunity for students to engage in creative writing by inviting them to craft their own short stories or scenes inspired by the themes of service and sacrifice in Middle-earth, using the examples discussed in class as inspiration.