

# The Hobbit



THE  
TOLKIEN  
SOCIETY

## Lesson 3: Exploring the Myths and Science of Middle-earth: Elves, Magic, and Dragons

**Subject Areas:** English, Social Studies/History, Science

**Skills:** Collaboration, Research, Creativity

### Learning Objectives

- Students will explore the mythical elements of Tolkien's Middle-earth and draw parallels to real-life folklore and scientific concepts
- Students will create infographics to visually represent the connections between mythical elements and science.

### Materials

- Copies of The Hobbit or key excerpts relevant to topic
- Computers or laptops with internet access
- Writing and drawing materials

### Lesson Activities

#### 1. Review and Preparation:

- Recap the key points from the previous lesson (Lesson 2: Create a Virtual Walking Tour).
- Introduce the three mythical elements: Elves, Magic, and Dragons.

#### 2. Exploration and Discussion:

- Read a short excerpt from The Hobbit that features one of these mythical elements (e.g., a passage about Elves or a magical event). Discuss the passage as a class.
- Facilitate a discussion about how these mythical elements in Middle-earth might have parallels in real-life folklore from different cultures. For example, how do the Elves compare to mythical creatures like fairies or nature spirits in various folklores?

#### 3. Scientific Connections:

- Explain that myths often arise from observations of the natural world and unexplained phenomena. Discuss how scientific understanding can sometimes explain the origins of mythical creatures or magical phenomena e.g. Dragons/Fossils, Mermaids/Manatees, Will-o'-the-Wisps/Swamp Gas, Magic/Chemistry.
- Ask students to brainstorm how real-life scientific concepts might relate to the mythical elements in Middle-earth. E.g. how can science ideas help us explain why Smaug acts the way he does? How has he adapted to his surroundings or how is his behaviour similar to animals in our world?



#### 4. Infographic Creation:

- Assign each student an element (Elves, Magic, or Dragons).
- Students research create an infographic poster that visually represents the connections between their mythical element and real-life folklore and science examples.

#### 5. Presentation and Peer Feedback:

- Have a few students share their infographic posters with the class.
- Facilitate a brief discussion about the posters, focusing on the visual representations and the connections students made.

#### Possible Assessment Activities:

- Infographic Poster Evaluation: Assess the clarity, content, creativity, and integration of students' infographic posters.
- Reflection: Have students write or provide oral reflections on their learning and insights gained during the lesson.
- Peer Assessment: Implement peer evaluations for infographic posters.
- Group Collaboration: Assess students' teamwork and communication skills within their groups during collaborative activities.

#### Extension:

- Students create their own mythical hybrid creature and write a short description explaining its characteristics and origins.