



Essay Ideas

For Younger Students

*The importance of food in *The Hobbit* or *The Lord of the Rings*.*

Carefully read the book you want to work from if you have not already done this. Note down and think about eating and feasting of all kinds in the story. Who does it? Where is it done? What do you think is important about it? Don't forget trolls, orcs, wolves and the things they eat.

*Clothes in *The Hobbit* or *The Lord of the Rings*.*

Carefully read the book you want to work from if you have not already done this, Note down and think about all the kinds of clothes, all the colours, and especially the words Tolkien uses to name and describe the clothes worn by his characters. How do you think clothes, their colours and the words used help us to 'see' the characters and their world? Do the clothes they wear have a special shape, are they used for special purposes, do they tell us something extra about the character?

*Homes, dwellings, and homelessness in *The Hobbit*, *Roverandom*, or *The Lord of the Rings*.*

Carefully read the book you want to work from if you have not already done this. Note down and think about all the different kinds of places in which characters live. Do they seem strange, and if they do, why do you think this is? How do all the different homes make you feel about the characters and the story? How do you feel about characters who do not have homes? How do characters feel when they have to leave their homes?

*Family life in *The Hobbit* or *The Lord of the Rings*.*

Carefully read the book you want to work from if you have not already done this. Note down and think about the way Tolkien writes about families. Does everyone in the story have a family? Are there any unusual families? Are the families happy or sad? What are the parents like? How do the children behave?

*Strange places in *The Hobbit*, *Roverandom*, or *The Lord of the Rings*.*

Carefully read the book you want to work from if you have not already done this. Note down and think about all the strange places. What makes them seem strange? Does anyone live in or near them? Are they like anything in our world? How do they add to the 'feeling' or atmosphere of the story?

Animals in [The Hobbit](#), [Roverandom](#), or [The Lord of the Rings](#).

Carefully read the book you want to work from if you have not already done this. Note down and think about all the different kinds of animals Tolkien writes about. Are they friendly to the characters, or dangerous? Are they like the animals in our world, if not, how are they different?

Monsters and evil things in [The Hobbit](#) or [The Lord of the Rings](#).

Carefully read the book you want to work from if you have not already done this. Note down and think about all creatures that are 'nassty precious!' What is it that makes them scary? Does the place where they live make them more scary? What is the best defence against them? Is there any?

Warriors and heroes in [The Hobbit](#) or [The Lord of the Rings](#).

Carefully read the book you want to work from if you have not already done this. Note down and think about the way Tolkien creates his warriors and heroes? Are they always the same characters - are heroes always armed with swords? Does heroism always take place during battles, or does it happen in other ways? How does Tolkien describe his warriors - are they always and at all times tough fighting men, or are they sometimes less war-like? Can a warrior also be a gentle character, and if so, how is this shown in the story? Are all warriors men in Tolkien's story, and are all men warriors?

Swords and other weapons in [The Hobbit](#) or [The Lord of the Rings](#).

Carefully read the book you want to work from if you have not already done this. Note down and think about the many weapons that are used in the story. Why do characters use weapons in the story? Do the weapons have names? If so, why do you think this is? Does the naming of swords remind you of any other stories where swords are named? What other kinds of weapons are there. How are they described? How are they used?

Landscapes and geography in [The Hobbit](#), [Roverandom](#) or [The Lord of the Rings](#).

Carefully read the book you want to work from if you have not already done this. Note down and think about all the different kinds of landscapes in the story. Are there mountains, rivers, forests, or any other special kinds of landscape? How do they fit into the story? What effect do they have on the characters? Are they dangerous, and if so why?

Journeys in [The Hobbit](#), [Roverandom](#) or [The Lord of the Rings](#).

Carefully read the book you want to work from if you have not already done this. Note down and think about how journeys start, and how they end. What makes them start? Is there anything special about the journey as it happens? Does it end in a special way? Is it a journey in which everyone returns home? If not, what happens and why? Is transport used, if so what is it like? If it is not, how does this affect the characters. Are there any strange forms of transport? Do all the characters in the story like the journey? Does it do them good, or harm them?

The place of children, young people and/or small people in *The Hobbit*, *Roverandom* or *The Lord of the Rings*.

Carefully read the book you want to work from if you have not already done this. Note down and think about how children and young people shown in the story. Are they the same as small people? Do they all behave in the same way? If not, how do they behave differently? Are they treated differently? Is there any confusion? Is it nice to be a child or young person in the story you have chosen to read? Do they have adventures? Is it nice to be a small person? Do other people treat them differently?

History in *The Hobbit* or *The Lord of the Rings*.

Carefully read the book you want to work from if you have not already done this. Note down and think about all the things we are told about by the characters in the story that happened long before. What effect do these stories have on the the characters telling them, on their audiences and on you? Why do you think Tolkien creates a 'history' for his characters and their world?

Poems in *The Hobbit* or *The Lord of the Rings*.

Carefully read the book you want to work from if you have not already done this. Note down and think about all the poems, rhymes and rhyming riddles in the story. Do they have a special effect on the part of the story in which they are spoken? Do the poems spoken by a character seem to fit in with what we know about him? What form do the poems take? Are they complicated or do they seem simple? Do they use easy language or difficult language? Do they all rhyme? What are they about? Are any of the amusing? Or sad?

Unusual languages in *The Hobbit* or *The Lord of the Rings*.

Tolkien is famous for, among other things, having created special languages for his Elves and for other kinds of characters. He also uses runes adapted from the real runic language used in northern Europe in the early Middle Ages. Carefully read the book you want to work from if you have not already done this. Note down and think about the way Tolkien uses these made-up languages in the story. What effect do they have? How do they fit in with the ordinary English used to tell the story? If you are writing on *The Lord of the Rings* you may like to know that a few words from the old language of England, the language of the Anglo-Saxons known as Old English, can be found in the chapters that tell the story of Rohan and its people. If you are interested in finding out more about this see the Anglo-Saxon study pack on the Tolkien Society website.