



Point of View Shift: Bilbo Baggins and World War I

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Language Arts
Grades 9-12



Introduction

J.R.R. Tolkien's *The Hobbit* is hugely popular around the world. In this lesson, students will analyze the main character, Bilbo Baggins, and relate his point of view to a new situation: World War I.

Learning Objectives

[CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.9-10.6](#). Students will analyze a particular point of view or cultural experience reflected in a work of literature from outside the United States, drawing on a wide reading of world literature.

Materials Needed

- Journals or paper
- Computers/laptops (optional)

Procedure

Prior to beginning this lesson, students will need to be familiar with the storyline of *The Hobbit*.

1. Ask students to think about the character traits belonging to Bilbo. Ask: What makes him unique? What are his weaknesses? What are his strengths? Students should brainstorm about Bilbo's character traits individually for about 3-5 minutes. They should record their findings in a journal/piece of paper. When time is up, ask students to share their findings. Write down all correct traits on the board, and ask students to add any missing traits to their individual lists.
2. The author of *The Hobbit*, J.R.R. Tolkien, was from England, and the character traits of Bilbo could be easily compared to the traits of the British soldiers during that time. Discuss England's role in World War I (1914-1918), the circumstances surrounding WWI, and how it relates to *The Hobbit*. (It is important to note that British soldiers were volunteers.)
3. Now, students will write a short narrative (350-500 words) transferring Bilbo's role in the novel to WWI: If Bilbo were a British soldier in World War I, how would his character traits help or hurt him? Explain how he would respond in particular situations based on his responses found in the novel. Students should reference the list of character traits that was developed at the beginning of the lesson to help them create their narratives. Students may also use computers or laptops to complete the assignment at the teacher's discretion.

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Evaluation

Students will write a short narrative depicting Bilbo's point of view as that of a British soldier. Please use the following rubric to evaluate student learning:

Student Name:	100%	75%	50%	25% or less
The student depicts Bilbo as a British soldier during WWI.				
The student uses Bilbo's character traits correctly.				
The student correctly portrays Bilbo's point of view in relation to WWI.				
The student uses correct grammar and punctuation.				