

The Two Towers Summer Reading



Eighth Grade Edition

The Two Towers by J.R.R. Tolkien (ISBN: 9780547928203, Houghton Mifflin 2012)

Sixth graders start the adventure of Bilbo Baggins; seventh grade watches Frodo take the sought-after ring on a journey; and eighth graders experience the forces of good and evil battle as the quest continues. These are not books that can be easily discerned at a first glance, but rather require many levels of reading and understanding. The summer is a good opportunity to bring this literature to the student and have each one read and ponder some of the great questions of life.

The Geneva School of Boerne's Humanities Department Mission Statement:

We, the Humanities Department at the Geneva School of Boerne, desire to engage our students in the Great Conversation of Human Civilization and to enable them to see the beauty and power of the written and spoken word so that their minds may be sharpened to properly understand the world in which they live. To this end and for these reasons, the Humanities Department at Geneva is wholeheartedly dedicated to the worth of grammar mastery, the warrant of logical reasoning, and the weight of rhetorical skill.

Our desire is for our students to enter this “great conversation” through Tolkien’s literature and thereby start to shape the muscle of sharpening their minds.

Requirements: All work is to be done by the student with occasional help from a parent.

- Make notes in the book. Mere underlining is not notes, nor are emojis or one word reactions. Notes provide a brief reminder of details on the pages.
- All work is to be written on your own notebook paper and inserted into the brads of a **navy folder**.
- These must be written in **blue or black ink**.
- Handwriting must be **neat** and in **cursive**.
- **Skip one line** between each question.
- Be attentive to **spelling** and **punctuation**.
- All questions need to be answered with **complete sentences with good sentence structure**. Do not begin with “question” words. ie: What Gollum notices about Frodo is he is kind. This is awkward. Instead write: Gollum notices Frodo is kind.

Facts: This summer work will be counted as **two quiz grades**. The grading rubric begins at a 90. Points will be added for well-written answers that include insight and detail. Points will be taken off for the following: missing key events and information, wrong information, and missing chapters. Late summaries, wrong format, or incomplete answers will be docked points.

Learning to tackle difficult reading is one way your mental muscle is developed. Relying on someone else to figure it out for you is much like having someone do your push-ups so you can get stronger. This is mental work that is sharpening your abilities. **Do not approach this as leisure reading**. With great work comes great reward.

Helpful Hints:

1. Plan a reasonable pace to complete the work with reading goals for each week.
2. Read questions prior to reading each chapter, then answer your questions immediately after reading.
3. Do not watch the movies. These do not follow the books and can confuse you.
4. Do not refer to online sources to summarize information or enlighten understanding.
5. If you find yourself drowning in the literature and feel you are having a hard time following the story, do the following:
 - a. Read aloud; this helps those who are multi-sensory learners.
 - b. Keep notes in your book of key people and events.
 - c. Read questions before reading the chapter.
 - d. Revisit previous chapters once you have a greater understanding of the story.
 - e. Discuss with a parent or fellow student.

“We are what we repeatedly do. Excellence is not an act, but a habit.” -Aristotle

“In confirmation of my pledge to you and my accountability before the Lord Jesus Christ, I profess that in all of my schoolwork, my name affirms my honor; in all of my dealings, my word is my bond.” -Rhetoric School Honor Code

A note on Summaries. Written by Mrs. Jennifer Blackstone, former Geneva Rhetoric School Humanities Instructor:

I was once asked why it wasn't acceptable to read the online summaries rather than the story itself since she would essentially get the gist of the story anyway. While the summaries may be a useful tool for reading after having read the original text, solely reading them will ultimately be to the disadvantage of the student. The price of a Geneva education isn't merely tuition; it is time, discipline, and hard work. The result is, hopefully, a thoughtful and educated disciple of Christ. You read the book to learn the moral of the story, to be drawn into the characters, the plot, and the excellent use of words. The book itself is a piece of art. The summaries are just a description of that artwork, not the art itself. Reading online summaries rather than reading the text is like traveling all the way to Paris to go to the Monet museum, standing in the lobby and asking the docent to give you a 20 minute description of Monet's best paintings because you are too busy to go look at them yourself. While you may get a good idea of what is in the paintings and be able to tell your friends that you went to the museum, you will be the one missing out.

Aiming to read 12-15 pages at each sitting is generally a reasonable and palatable goal.

Book Three

Chapter 1: The Departure of Boromir

"Thus passes the heir of Denethor, Lord of the Tower Guard! This is a bitter end. Now the Company is all in ruin. It is I that have failed. Vain was Gandalf's trust in me. What shall I do now?...How shall I find them and save the Quest from disaster?" ~ Aragorn

1. How is the funeral of Boromir different from those in our culture?
2. What clues do Aragorn, Gimli, and Legolas use to help determine the fate of the hobbits? (Give at least 3) What do they learn from these clues?
3. After discovering that the hobbits are missing, Aragorn says, "An evil choice is now before us." What is the choice they must make, and why does Aragorn call it "evil?"
4. What observation does Legolas make of the orcs?
5. Why does Aragorn decide to follow the orcs?

Chapter 2: The Riders of Rohan

"The counsel of Gandalf was not founded on foreknowledge of safety, for himself or for others," said Aragorn. "There are some things that it is better to begin than to refuse, even though the end may be dark."

1. Write some of the "vivid verbs" Tolkien uses as he tells of the journey and describes the landscape. ie: "All night the three companions *scrambled* in this bony land, climbing to the crest..." (411). "A cliff *frowned* upon their right;" (411).
2. We come upon the second poem/song that Aragorn sings as a tribute to great cities of Middle Earth. What are some details you would include in a song about Boerne?

3. Look up the word *league* and write the definition of the one referring to measurement of distance.
4. What news of Rohan do Eomer and the Riders give to our traveling friends?
5. What do they learn of the fate of the orcs they are tracking to find Pippin and Merry?
6. When they meet the riders, Eomer and his men refer to “old tales” that make him suspicious of our traveling friends, the lady Galadriel, and the hobbits. From what we know, how reliable are his opinions?
7. “The world is all grown strange,” laments Eomer. He then asks a question central to *The Lord of the Rings*: “How shall a man judge what to do in such times?” Aragorn answers, “As he ever has judged... Good and ill have not changed since yesteryear; nor are they one thing among Elves and Dwarves and another among Men. It is a man’s part to discern them, as much in the Golden Wood as in his own house.” Read 1 John 4:1-6. How does this passage help **us** with the question of discerning “good and ill”?
8. What does Gimli see in the middle of the night?

Chapter 3: The Uruk-hai

“You will get almost a chapter in old Bilbo’s book, if ever I get a chance to report to him. Good work; especially guessing that bairy villain’s little game, and playing up to him. But I wonder if anyone will ever pick up your trail and find that brooch. I should hate to lose mine, but I am afraid yours is gone forever.” ~Merry

1. In chapter 3, we finally catch up with Merry and Pippin, discovering the details of their own adventure while Aragorn and Company have been searching for them. Why have they not been killed by the orcs?
2. We also discover there are actually two groups of orcs. Only a couple of them are named. Who is Ugluk? Who does he report to? Where does he plan to take the hobbits? What is the symbol they wear?
3. Another one named is Grishnakh. Where has his group come from, and what does he say is their mission? What is the symbol of this group?
4. What does Pippin remember about Rohan?
5. How does Grishnakh die?
6. How are Merry and Pippin able to escape?
7. Who kills Ugluk?

Chapter 4: Treebeard

“...I’ve lived a very long, long time; so my name is like a story. Real names tell you the story of the things they belong to in my language, but it takes a very long time to say anything in it, because we do not say anything in it, unless it is worth taking a long time to say, and listen to.” ~ Treebeard

1. What is an ent? How is it different than a tree?
2. Who taught them to speak?
3. What does Treebeard say of Gandalf?
4. What is his opinion of Saruman?
5. What sparks Treebeard and the other Ents to action?

6. Tolkien once wrote “I am obviously much in love with plants and above all trees, and always have been; and I find human maltreatment of them as hard to bear as some find ill-treatment of animals.” Treebeard and the Ents seem to represent this love. Read Genesis 1: 28-31 and Psalm 8. What do these passages suggest is God’s attitude toward nature and man?
7. Describe or draw a favorite part of nature that you enjoy. Color is encouraged in artwork.

Chapter 5: The White Rider

“That is not the road that you must take. I have spoken words of hope. But only of hope. Hope is not victory. War is upon us and all our friends, a war in which only the use of the Ring could give us surety of victory. It fills me with great sorrow and great fear: for much shall be destroyed and all may be lost.” ~ Gandalf

1. What observation does Legolas make of the way the horses sounded as they disappeared in the night?
2. Describe the old man they meet in the forest of Fangorn? Who is he?
3. “They were brought to Fangorn, and their coming was like the falling of small stones that starts an avalanche in the mountains” (485). What do these words point to?
4. What does this old man tell of the enemy? (give 3 key details)
5. Who is Shadowfax?

Chapter 6: The King of the Golden Hall

“No counsel have I to give to those that despair. Yet counsel I could give, and words I could speak to you. Will you hear them? They are not for all ears. I bid you come out before your doors and look abroad. Too long have you sat in shadows and trusted to twisted tales and crooked promptings.” ~ Gandalf

1. How many years has the Golden Hall of Meduseld stood?
2. Tolkien often uses the setting to establish the mood of the story. How is the mood already different here than in the forest of Fangorn?
3. What difficulties do Gandalf and Company have entering the hall of Theoden?
4. Who is Grima Wormtongue?
5. How does Gandalf rescue Theoden? Provide 3 - 4 key steps.
6. Why was Eomer imprisoned when he returned home to Edoras? What does Eomer do upon his release from prison? What does this tell us about Eomer?
7. What opportunity does Theoden offer Grima Wormtongue to prove himself worthy? What is Grima’s response?

Chapter 7: Helm’s Deep

“Come,” said Aragorn. “This is the hour when we draw swords together!”

1. As the group travels to Helm’s Deep, what news is brought to them?
2. After reading the description of Helm’s Deep, choose 4 key phrases that give a clear image.

3. Gimli and Legolas, along with others in this chapter, prepare for battle with eagerness and excitement. Recall a time in your life that you had this same kind of energy and enthusiasm. A big game, competition, hunting, a vacation? Draw or include a picture depicting this moment in your life. Minimum 4x6 inches.
4. Aragorn states, "Yet dawn is ever the hope of men." How do his words prove true in the battle?

Chapter 8: The Road to Isengard

"I have lived to see strange days. Long we have tended our beasts and our fields, built our houses, wrought our tools, or ridden away to help in the wars of Minas Tirith. And that we called the life of Men, the way of the world. We cared little for what lay beyond the borders of our land. Songs we have that tell of these things, but we are forgetting them, teaching them only to children, as a careless custom. Now the songs have come down among us out of strange places, and walk visible under the Sun." ~ King Theoden

1. Tell the difference between a *parley* and a *fight*.
2. What had the men of the hills and Dunland heard about men of Rohan?
3. What do you imagine happened to the orcs since all the dead bodies had vanished?
4. What promise do Gimli and Legolas make to one another?
5. How do they notice Isengard has changed since Saruman took over?
6. What seems to have happened to Isengard as they approach the doors?
7. Whom do they find, much to their surprise?
8. What is your favorite snack or meal?

Chapter 9: Flotsam and Jetsam

"Why, your hair is twice as thick and curly as when we parted; and I would swear that you have both grown somewhat, if that is possible for hobbits of your age." ~ Gimli

1. Using a dictionary, define *flotsam* and *jetsam*.
2. As noted by the quote above, Gimli notices a physical change in Merry and Pippin. What is the change and what does Legolas believe has made this difference in their small friends?
3. Write some of the remarkable feats of the Ents in this attack on Isengard (at least 3 details required).
4. Tolkien writes of Isengard: "A strong place and wonderful was Isengard, and long it had been beautiful...But Saruman had slowly shaped it to his shifting purposes, and made it better, as he thought, being deceived—for all those arts and subtle devices, for which he forsook his former wisdom, and which fondly he imagined were his own, came but from Mordor; so that what he made was naught, only a little copy, a child's model or a slave's flattery, of that vast fortress...the Dark Tower."
5. Read Romans 1:20-25. How do Saruman's actions in Isengard reflect these verses?

Chapter 10: The Voice of Saruman

“We will have peace...when you and all your works have perished – and the works of your dark master to whom you would deliver us. You are a liar, Saruman, and a corrupter of men’s hearts. You hold out your hand to me, and I perceive only a finger of the claw of Mordor?” ~ King Theoden

1. What specific warning does Gandalf give the others about Saruman?
2. Name the two visitors who quickly see through the words of Saruman.
3. What breaks the spell of the men when Saruman offers to have a private conversation with Gandalf?
4. Under what conditions does Gandalf offer to let Saruman go free?
5. What is thrown at Gandalf, and by whom?
6. How long does Treebeard promise to watch over the new forest called Watchwood?

Chapter 11: The Palantir

“He has grown, or something. He can be both kinder and more alarming, merrier and more solemn than before, I think. He has changed; but we have not had a chance to see how much, yet. Remember, Saruman was once Gandalf’s superior: head of the Council, whatever that may be exactly. He was Saruman the White. Gandalf is the White now. Saruman came when he was told, and his rod was taken; and then he was told to go, and he went!” ~ Merry

1. What is keeping Pippin curious?
2. Does Pippin know he is doing something he should not? How do we know?
3. Give 5 details of what Pippin saw in the Palantir.
4. What are the nine-winged things?
5. Who is given watch over the stone?
6. Which hobbit goes with Gandalf; which one goes with Aragorn?

Book Four

Chapter One: The Taming of Smeagol

“One Ring to rule them all and in the Darkness bind them.”

1. How do Sam and Frodo use the Elven rope given to them in Lothlorien?
2. In dealing with Gollum once he is discovered, Frodo is reminded of words spoken by whom? Record that quote.
3. How do they “tame” Smeagol? [hint: it was a 3 or 4 step process]
4. Consider how Smeagol is used to being treated and how Frodo treats him. Contrast the differences here. [provide both]
5. Why can they trust his “oath” on the ring?
6. Biblical Connection: Compare Gollum’s response to the Elven rope to the way demons respond to the name of Jesus. Provide a Bible verse with this answer.

Chapter Two: The Passage of the Marshes

“The tricky lights. Candles of corpses, yes, yes. Don’t you heed them! Don’t look! Don’t follow them!” ~ Gollum

1. Mark in your book and write on your paper at least three of each of the following:
 - a. Personification
 - b. Simile
 - c. Alliteration
2. What is Frodo’s perspective on their completion of the mission to destroy the ring? What does he believe it will cost them?
3. Why is it important that Sam overhears the “debate” of Gollum?
4. Who do you think “She” is?

Chapter Three: The Black Gate is Closed

“If there is only one way, then I must take it. What comes after must come.” ~ Frodo

1. What changes (more than one) do we (and Sam) notice in Frodo? What might we blame for this?
2. How many times do Frodo and Sam ask Gollum if this new path is guarded?
3. As the men are marching toward Mordor, Gollum says, “Always more people going to Mordor.” Why is this happening?
4. On page 629, Gollum speaks of Aragorn. Go back to Book Two chapter two in *The Fellowship of the Ring* and give a few details of Aragorn’s recount of his own experience with Gollum.

Chapter Four: Of Herbs and Stewed Rabbit

“Po – ta – toes!” ~ Sam

1. Note the landscape change between Mordor and the present location. Provide some distinct details that make this landscape different from where they have been.
2. What food does Gollum desire and how does he like it prepared?
3. What are the “nasty red tongues?”
4. When Sam decides to cook, what is Gollum’s contribution?
5. How do these men know Boromir?
6. What do they know of the legend and lore of Middle Earth? Provide two to four details they share.
7. What is “Isildur’s Bane?” Why is the “sword that was broken” significant?
8. What does Sam get to see?

Chapter Five: The Window on the West

“The Lady of Lorien! Galadriel! You should see her, indeed you should, sir...I wish I could make a song about her!”
~ Sam

1. Why is the chapter entitled “The Window on the West?”
2. How do Faramir and his men know Boromir is dead?
3. By the way he and his men treat Sam and Frodo, what do we learn of Faramir’s character traits?
4. From page 662, tell three more details of the legend and lore that these men, especially Faramir, share.
5. What is the significance of the Rohirrim? Who else in the novel has met them? How did that interaction go?
6. What is your favorite detail of nature? Write a description or include a half page drawing.

We will complete the rest of the book in the early weeks of school in September. See you then!

~Mrs. Wheeler