

Tolkien's Life: A Timeline

3rd January 1892	John Ronald Reuel (J.R.R.) Tolkien is born in Bloemfontein, South Africa
Summer 1896	Tolkien and his family move to Birmingham, England
November 1904	Tolkien's mother, Mabel, dies, leaving Tolkien and his brother, Hilary, to move in with their Aunt Beatrice
1908	Tolkien, and his brother Hilary, move to lodge with a Mrs Falkner, where Tolkien meets his future wife, Edith, who was another lodger there
December 1910	Tolkien obtains a scholarship to study at Oxford University
Summer 1911	Tolkien and 3 close friends form the 'Tea Club and Barrovian Society'
October 1911	Tolkien begins studying at Oxford University
28th July 1914	The First World War begins
Late 1915	Tolkien enlists (joined the army) as a second lieutenant in the Lancashire Fusiliers
22nd March 1916	Tolkien and Edith get married in Warwick
April - May 1916	Tolkien takes an army signalling course, and travels to France the next month
1st July 1916	The Battle of the Somme begins
October 1916	Tolkien reports as sick and returns to England, suffering from 'trench fever'
1917 - 1918	Tolkien is in and out of Brooklands Officers' Hospital
November 1918	The Tolkien family returns to Oxford, where Tolkien gets a job working on the Oxford English Dictionary
Autumn 1920	Tolkien begins work as a Reader in English Language at Leeds University, so the Tolkien family moves to Leeds
Summer 1923	Tolkien is convalescing (recovering) from pneumonia at his brother, Hilary's farm
July 1924	Tolkien is appointed as Professor of English Language at Leeds University
Autumn 1925	Tolkien is appointed as Professor of Anglo-Saxon at Oxford University, so the Tolkien family returns to Oxford
11th May 1926	Tolkien and C.S. Lewis meet at a Merton College English Faculty Meeting
Summer 1930	Tolkien writes "In a hole in the ground there lived a Hobbit" on the blank sheet of an exam paper he's marking
September 1931	Tolkien and another colleague, Hugo Dyson, talk about their faith in Jesus to C.S. Lewis, who begins to believe in God
21st September 1937	'The Hobbit' is published by Allen & Unwin, and because of its success, Stanley Unwin urges Tolkien to write a sequel
1st September 1939	The Second World War begins
1943	Tolkien works as an air-raid warden
June 1945	Tolkien becomes Professor of English Language and Literature at Oxford University
29th July 1954	'The Fellowship of the Ring' is published
11th November 1954	'The Two Towers' is published
20th October 1955	'The Return of the King' is published

29th November 1971	Edith Tolkien dies, at the age of 82
28th March 1972	Tolkien is awarded a CBE from Queen Elizabeth II
2nd September 1977	J.R.R. Tolkien dies from a stomach ulcer, at the age of 81
1980 - 2017	Christopher Tolkien, Tolkien's third son, edits and publishes Tolkien's unfinished works
16th January 2020	Christopher Tolkien dies, at the age of 95

Glossary

Arkenstone

The Arkenstone was discovered beneath the Lonely Mountain by the dwarves, and became an heirloom of the Dwarven royal family there once it had been cut and fashioned. In *The Hobbit*, it is the piece of treasure Thorin is most anxious to find.

Bag End

Bag End is the hobbit-hole where Bilbo Baggins lives. It is situated in Hobbiton, and is one of the biggest and best hobbit-holes in the Shire. In *The Lord of the Rings*, Frodo Baggins, his nephew, also lives there.

Balrog

Balrogs were Maiar (plural of Maia) that were corrupted by Melkor, the first Dark Lord of Middle-earth. The Balrog featured in *The Lord of the Rings* lived beneath the Mines of Moria, and pursued the Fellowship to the Bridge of Khazad-dûm, where it faced Gandalf the Grey and both fell into the abyss.

Battle of the Five Armies

The 'Battle of the Five Armies' is a battle waged between the Orcs and Wargs of the Misty Mountains, the Lake-men, the Woodland Elves and the Dwarves, towards the end of *The Hobbit*.

Dragon-sickness

In *The Hobbit*, dragon-sickness is a type of sickness caused by large amounts of treasure that has been hoarded and kept by a dragon. It affects some more than others, but often results in greedy, illogical and even violent behaviour.

Dwarves

The dwarves are a tough race of people who live in the mountains, practising mining and blacksmithing. In 'The Hobbit', the thirteen dwarves of Thorin's company are Thorin, Fili, Kili, Óin, Glóin, Balin, Dwalin, Ori, Dori, Nori, Bifur, Bofur and Bombur. Gimli, who appears in *The Lord of the Rings* as a member of the Fellowship, is the son of Glóin.

Eldar

The Eldar are those Elves who have left Middle Earth and undertake the journey to Valinor, also called the Undying Lands. The Elves dwelt there in eternal bliss, as well as Ring-bearers Bilbo and Frodo Baggins, who travelled there at the end of *The Return of the King*.

Elrond

Elrond is the master of Rivendell, a stronghold and refuge of the Elves. In *The Lord of the Rings*, he hosts the Council of Elrond at Rivendell, where the members of the Fellowship are chosen. It is also discovered that Elrond was the herald of Isildur during the Second Age, meaning Elrond was present at 'The Siege of Barad-dûr'.

Ents

Ents are a very old race of tall, talking trees, who protect certain forests from Orcs and other dangers. In *The Lord of the Rings*, Treebeard – the oldest Ent at that time – rescues Merry and Pippin from the Uruk-hai. Treebeard also leads the charge on Isengard, and after the War of the Ring, oversees the replanting of the trees that Saruman had cut down.

Galadriel

The Lady Galadriel ruled the woods of Lothlórien with her husband, Celeborn, and is one of the greatest Elves in Middle-earth. She carried a Ring of Power, Narya, which is why her power would diminish when the One Ring was destroyed, as Narya would be rendered powerless.

Gandalf

Gandalf the Grey is a wizard that was sent to Middle-earth to help fight against Sauron. In *The Hobbit*, he joined Thorin and his company to help reclaim the Lonely Mountain from Smaug. In *The Lord of the Rings*, he journeys with the Fellowship, aiding them in their quest to destroy the One Ring. He is sent back to Middle-earth after dying at 'The Battle of the Peak', reborn as Gandalf the White.

Goblins / Orcs

In *The Hobbit*, 'Orcs' and 'Goblins' are used to mean the same thing. They are cruel, ugly, bad-hearted creatures that live deep in the mountains. By the time of *The Lord of the Rings*, Sauron had returned to Mordor and created a vast army of Orcs from there, who fought for him at the major battles in *The Return of the King*.

Gollum

Gollum, also known as Sméagol, was a Hobbit-like creature who was damaged and broken by the One Ring. In *The Lord of the Rings*, he unintentionally destroys the Ring by falling with it into the fires of Mount Doom.

Hobbits

Hobbits are a small race of people who typically live underground, or in holes carved into hills. In *The Hobbit*, the main Hobbit we see is Bilbo Baggins, who becomes the fourteenth member of Thorin's company, as they didn't want to have an unlucky number of people. In *The Lord of the Rings* trilogy, four members of the Fellowship were Hobbits: Frodo Baggins, Samwise Gamgee, Meriadoc Brandybuck and Peregrin Took.

Isengard

Isengard, and the tower of Orthanc within it, were Saruman's base of operations during *The Lord of the Rings*. It was later destroyed by the Ents, led by Treebeard, and later restored, with the Ents replanting the trees lost to Saruman's greed.

Legendarium

A legendarium is a literary collection of legends. 'Tolkien's legendarium' refers to the body of J.R.R. Tolkien's writing concerning Middle-earth. This includes *The Hobbit*, *The Lord of the Rings*, *The Adventures of Tom Bombadil*, *The Silmarillion*, *Unfinished Tales*, *The History of Middle-earth* (12 volumes), *The Children of Húrin*, *Beren and Lúthien*, *The Fall of Gondolin*, *The Nature of Middle-earth* and *The Fall of Númenor*.

Middle Earth

Middle-earth is the continent that Tolkien's stories take place in his world of 'Arda'.

Mirkwood

Mirkwood is the largest remaining forest in Middle Earth. In *The Hobbit*, Mirkwood is where Thorin's company encounter giant spiders, and are captured by Wood Elves.

One Ring

The One Ring was made by Sauron, so that he could enhance his power and gain lordship over the peoples of Middle-earth. It was cut from his hand by Isildur at the end of 'The Siege of Barad-dûr'. The Ring abandoned Isildur until it was found by Sméagol and Déagol, and when the Ring abandoned Gollum, it was found by Bilbo Baggins, in *The Hobbit*. It was ultimately destroyed with Gollum in the fires of Mount Doom, in *The Lord of the Rings*.

Ringwraith

The Nazgûl, or Ringwraiths, were the dreaded ring-servants of the Dark Lord Sauron. Sauron had given nine of the sixteen Rings of Power in his possession to great lords and warriors of men, and Sauron succeeded in corrupting them, using the One Ring. They became enslaved to the will of Sauron, and their lives and powers were bound to him.

Sauron

The Dark Lord Sauron is the main antagonist of *The Lord of the Rings* trilogy. He is a subversive Maia – originally a spirit created to help the Valar – and the second Dark Lord of Middle-earth. He appears in *The Hobbit* briefly as 'The Necromancer', a disguise he uses to hide from the Elves whilst he tries to regain his power in Dol Guldur. In *The Return of the King*, when the One Ring was destroyed, the vast majority of Sauron's being and power was lost, so he could no longer affect his will upon the world, and never again grow strength.

Smaug

Smaug the Terrible is a ginormous dragon who came from the mountains in the North to attack Erebor and take the gold there. He is the main antagonist in *The Hobbit*, and was killed by Bard, who shot a Black Arrow at the weak spot in his armour.

Undying Lands

Valinor, also known as the Undying Lands, is the realm of the Valar, located in Aman, a continent west of Middle-earth. By the time of *The Lord of the Rings*, the Undying Lands were no longer a physical part of Arda (the Earth), and only Elves could sail there in ships that could pass out of the Spheres of the Earth. By special permission of the Valar, Ring-bearers Frodo and Bilbo Baggins sailed to the Undying Lands, and after the death of Aragorn, Legolas would also sail there, bringing Gimli with him. Samwise Gamgee later reunited with Frodo in the Undying Lands as well.

Uruk-hai

Uruk-hai were the strongest breed of Orc warrior, bred by Saruman at Isengard.

White Council

The White Council, or the Council of the Wise, was a group of Elves and Wizards of Middle-earth, formed to counterbalance the growing power of Sauron whilst he was hiding at Dol Guldur. The members of the White Council at the time of *The Lord of the Rings* and *The Hobbit* were Saruman the White – the leader of the Council who was later expelled – Gandalf the Grey – later Gandalf the White – Radagast the Brown, Galadriel, Elrond, Glorfindel and Círdan.