

CHARACTERS IN CONFLICT

Conflict builds throughout *The Hobbit*, from the comical battle of wits between Bilbo and Gandalf at the beginning to the awesome Battle of the Five Armies that brings the story to its close. Some of these conflicts are rooted deep in the past, when ancestors of the story's characters competed for power. Some are conflicts based on different points of view, between characters who both believe they are right. Whatever their cause, however, all the conflicts that arise in this fantasy world can teach us something about coping with conflict in our own lives.

PART 1 Working in small groups, use the chart below to examine four conflicts that arise in the middle chapters of *The Hobbit*. Your teacher will assign one conflict to each group. Fill in the chart for your conflict, then report your findings to the class. As other groups report their findings, fill in those rows in the chart. Then share ideas about all four conflicts in a class discussion.

Characters in Conflict	Reasons for the Conflict	Quotation from the story that shows the conflict	How the conflict is resolved or could be resolved
Dwarves and Elves			
Dwarves and Men			
Bilbo and Thorin			
Bilbo and Smaug			

PART 2 Now work with your small group to create a scene based on the conflict you analyzed. Have the characters involved in the conflict each explain their side of the argument and criticize their opponent. Use quotations from the story if you can. Write out your scene on the back of this sheet or on a separate piece of paper, and choose members of your group to perform the scene for your class. After each performance, discuss in class which point of view seemed most convincing and why. Then talk about conflicts in our world that are similar to those in the story.

PART 3 There are added conflicts in the new film, *The Hobbit: The Desolation of Smaug* — conflict among the elves of Mirkwood, whose king, Thranduil, disagrees with the elf Tauriel (a new character) about helping the dwarves on their quest. There is also conflict between Gandalf and The Necromancer, whose dark stronghold south of Mirkwood is mentioned in the last chapter of the novel. After you see the film, use the chart above to analyze these conflicts and discuss how they fit into the story's overall pattern of conflict between light and darkness.



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THE HOBBIT
THE DESOLATION OF SMAUG

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