

AXE 5

UNIT 16

SHORT CUT

# MIGHTY DRAGONS

*How is the legend of  
the dragon depicted in  
English literature?*



## YOUR PROJECT

Bilbo tells the dwarves what happened in the dragon's lair!  
Act out the scene.

Au menu de cette unité :

### DÉCOUVERTES CULTURELLES

- Dragon Le mythe du dragon
- Dragon Le dragon dans la littérature (J.R.R. Tolkien, J.K. Rowling, G.R.R. Martin)

### OUTILS LINGUISTIQUES

- Dragon Le présent en *be + -ing*
- Dragon La phrase interrogative

### BEFORE CLASS!

Flash to listen!

Listen to [MP3 n°89](#) about the legend of St. George. Be ready to talk about it in class!



# 1 The Origins of Dragons

*How did ancient people create the fictional creature?*

## 1

### What do you know about dragons?

**Pairwork.** Each pupil reads one text. Focus on the creature and on the people's characteristics, then report back to your partner.

#### 1. Dinosaurs and crocodiles

Ancient people may have discovered dinosaur fossils and understandably misinterpreted them as the remains<sup>1</sup> of dragons. A giant beast was discovered in China, it was about 30 feet in length<sup>2</sup>, 14 feet tall and was covered in armored plates<sup>3</sup> and spikes<sup>4</sup> for defense. In Africa, Nile crocodiles may have been bigger in ancient times, perhaps inspiring European dragon legends. They were among the largest of all crocodile species, up to 18 feet in length and were capable of a movement called the "high walk," in which the trunk<sup>5</sup> was elevated off the ground.

<sup>10</sup> It may have been easy to mistake them for dragons.

1 restes • 2 one foot = 30,48 cm • 3 plaques •  
4 pointes • 5 tronc, buste

Adapted from [redacted]

#### 2. European dragons

The dragons that lurk<sup>1</sup> in European stories are powerful, wicked<sup>2</sup> and dangerous. In Christian tradition, they can symbolize Satan or sin<sup>3</sup>. Some nest in caves and guard marvelous treasures. [...] Epic poems from the Middle Ages tell of warriors and knights who battle cruel and voracious dragons. In some stories, the hero slays his foe<sup>4</sup> and wins fortune and honor. In others, he fails and is killed. During the Middle Ages, dragons became popular figures in heraldry, appearing on banners<sup>5</sup>, seals and other emblems of authority and military might.

1 wait hidden • 2 evil • 3 péché • 4 enemy •  
5 oriflammes, étendards

Adapted from [redacted]

## 2 The myth of Beowulf

**A.** Read the introduction. Focus on the dates, the countries and the characters.

Memorise them.

**B.** Study the picture on the opposite page:

- Focus on the dragon's characteristics (appearance/action).
- Imagine why it is attacking. Use *may* and *must*.

**C.** Read the rest of the text. Focus on the feelings of the dragon (actions and adjectives).

**D.** Compare with the texts above (activity 1). What are the similarities between these dragons?

*The manuscript about Beowulf\* was discovered in England in the 1600s. It is written in Old English, sometime between 700 and 950. The story reflects the warrior culture of ancient Germanic peoples, among whom wars were common and fighting was a traditional occupation. It tells the story of the hero Beowulf.*

\* /'beowulf/

<sup>1</sup> **W**hen the dragon awoke, trouble flared again. He rippled<sup>1</sup> down the rock, writhing<sup>2</sup> with anger when he saw the footprints of the prowler<sup>3</sup> who had stolen too close to his dreaming head. [...]

<sup>5</sup> The hoard<sup>4</sup>-guardian scorched<sup>5</sup> the ground as he scoured<sup>6</sup> and hunted for the trespasser who had troubled his sleep. Hot and savage, he kept circling and circling the outside of the mound. No man appeared in that desert waste, but he worked himself up by imagining battle [...].

<sup>10</sup> Then, to his delight, the day waned and he could wait no longer behind the wall, but hurtled<sup>7</sup> forth in a fiery blaze<sup>8</sup>. The first to suffer were the people on the land [...].

1 onduler • 2 se tortiller • 3 rôdeur • 4 trésor • 5 brûler •  
6 fouiller • 7 foncer • 8 embrasement

**Beowulf,**  
Seamus Heaney's translation, 1999

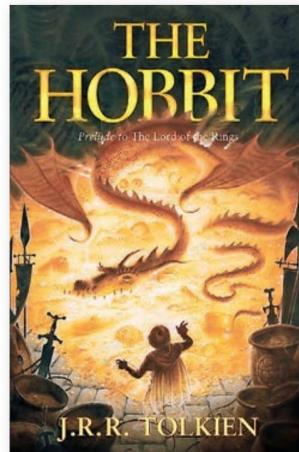


## 2 Famous Dragons in Modern Literature

*How have dragons evolved in modern literature?*

### 1 Smaug, the treasure keeper

- A. Describe the book cover and imagine what is going on.
- B. Read the text. Use [Worksheet n°47](#) to find the equivalents of the words given and the superlatives.
- C. Read the text again. Focus on Bilbo and Smaug's names and personalities. What is the narrator's opinion about the characters?
- D. Why is the film entitled *The "Desolation" of Smaug*?
- E. **Go further.** Is Smaug a modern or a traditional dragon?



J.R.R. Tolkien

(1892-1973, England), English writer and scholar who achieved fame with his children's book *The Hobbit* (1937) and his richly inventive epic fantasy *The Lord of the Rings* (1954-55).

“ Well, thief! I smell you and I feel your air. I hear your breath. Come along! Help yourself again, there is plenty and to spare!”  
But Bilbo was not quite so unlearned in dragon-lore as all that, 5 and if Smaug hoped to get him to come nearer so easily he was disappointed.  
“No thank you, O Smaug the Tremendous!” he replied. “I did not come for presents. I only wished to have a look at you and see if you were truly as great as tales say. I did not believe them.”  
“Do you now?” said the dragon somewhat flattered, even though he did not believe a word of it.  
“Truly songs and tales fall utterly short of the reality, O Smaug the Chieftest and Greatest of Calamities,” replied Bilbo.  
“You have nice manners for a thief and a liar,” said the 15 dragon. “You seem familiar with my name, but I don't seem to remember smelling you before. Who are you and where do you come from, may I ask?”  
“You may indeed! I come from under the hill, and under hills and over the hills my paths led. And through the air, I am 20 he that walks unseen.”

“So I can well believe,” said Smaug, “but that is hardly our usual name.”  
[...] “I am the friend of bears and the guest of eagles. I am Ringwinner and Luckwearer; and I am Barrel-rider,” went 25 on Bilbo beginning to be pleased with his riddling.  
“That's better!” said Smaug. “But don't let your imagination run away with you!” [...] This of course is the way to talk to dragons, if you don't want to reveal your proper name (which is wise), and don't want to 30 infuriate them by a flat refusal (which is also very wise). No dragon can resist the fascination of riddling talk and of wasting time trying to understand it. There was a lot here which Smaug did not understand at all (though I expect you do, since you know all about Bilbo's adventures to which he was referring), 35 but he thought he understood enough, and he chuckled in his wicked inside.

*The Hobbit,*  
J.R.R. Tolkien, 1937



### YOUR TURN! 2 Act out!

**Pairwork.** Now read the scene again and act it out!

#### HELP!

##### Nouns

- air /eə/
- barrel
- bear /beə/
- breath /breθ/
- calamities /kəlæmətɪz/
- eagle /i:gəl/
- path /pæθ/
- reality

##### Verbs

- feel /fi:l/
- hear /hɪə/
- say
- spare /speə/

##### Adjectives

- great
- tremendous /trɪ'mendəs/

##### Adverbs

- through /θru:/
- utterly /'ʌtali/

### 3 Hagrid's baby dragon

A. Look at the picture. What is Hagrid's relationship with this dragon?

B. Read the texts. Give a title to each one and justify.

C. Do all the characters share the same feelings about the dragon?

#### HELP!

##### Adjectives

- motherly
- fascinated by
- passionate about
- moved: ému(e)



Hagrid meets Norbert, *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone*, Chris Columbus, 2001

#### Text 1

The egg was lying on the table. There were deep cracks in it. Something was moving inside; a funny clicking noise was coming from it. They all drew their chairs up to the table and watched with bated breath<sup>1</sup>. All at once there was a scraping noise and the egg split open. The baby dragon flopped on to the table. It wasn't exactly pretty; Harry thought it looked like a crumpled<sup>2</sup>, black umbrella. Its spiny wings were huge compared to its skinny jet body and it had a long snout<sup>3</sup> with wide nostrils, stubs of horns and bulging, orange eyes. It sneezed. A couple of sparks flew out of its snout.

'Isn't he beautiful?' Hagrid murmured. He reached out a hand to stroke the dragon's head. It snapped at his fingers, showing pointed fangs.

'Bless him, look, he knows his mummy!' said Hagrid.

<sup>1</sup> en retenant leur souffle • <sup>2</sup> froissé • <sup>3</sup> museau

#### Text 2

They looked at the dragon. It had grown three times in length in just a week. Smoke kept furling out of its nostrils. Hagrid hadn't been doing his gamekeeping duties because the dragon was keeping him so busy.

There were empty brandy bottles and chicken feathers all over the floor. 'I've decided to call him Norbert,' said Hagrid, looking at the dragon with misty eyes<sup>1</sup>. 'He really knows me now, watch. Norbert! Norbert! Where's Mummy?'

'He's lost his marbles<sup>2</sup>', Ron muttered in Harry's ear. 'Hagrid,' said Harry loudly, 'give it a fortnight<sup>3</sup> and Norbert's going to be as long as your house. Malfoy could go to Dumbledore at any moment.' Hagrid bit his lip.

<sup>1</sup> with emotion • <sup>2</sup> il a perdu la boule • <sup>3</sup> deux semaines

*Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone*,  
J.K. Rowling, 1997



## 4 Daenerys's dragons

- A. Look at the still. What is Daenerys's relationship with this dragon?
- B. Read the text. Focus on the dragon's characteristics and on Daenerys's (Dany) feelings.

- C. Why is Daenerys also called "the mother of dragons?"
- D. How has the dragon evolved from Beowulf to Game of Thrones?



Daenerys and Rhaegal, *Game of Thrones*, Season 1, episode 10, HBO, 2011

The dragons were no larger than the scrawny cats she had once seen skulking<sup>1</sup> along the walls of Magister Illyrio's estate in Pentos... until they unfolded their wings. Their span<sup>2</sup> was three times their length, each wing a delicate fan of translucent skin, gorgeously colored, stretched taut between long thin bones. When you looked hard, you could see that most of their body was neck, tail, and wing. Such little things, she thought as she fed them by hand. Or rather, tried to feed them, for the dragons would not eat. They would hiss and spit<sup>3</sup> at each bloody morsel of horsemeat, steam rising from their nostrils, yet they would not take the food... until Dany recalled something Viserys had told her when they were children.

Only dragons and men eat cooked meat, he had said.

When she had her handmaids char<sup>4</sup> the horsemeat black, the dragons ripped at it eagerly, their heads striking like snakes. So long as the meat was seared<sup>5</sup>, they gulped down several times their own weight every day, and at last began to grow larger and stronger. Dany marveled at the smoothness of their scales, and the heat that poured off

them, so palpable that on cold nights their whole bodies seemed to steam. Each evenfall<sup>6</sup> as the khalaasi set out, she would choose a dragon to ride upon her shoulder. Irri and Jhiqui carried the others in a cage of woven wood slung between their mounts, and rode close behind her, so Dany was never out of their sight. It was the only way to keep them quiescent. [...] The largest of her three [dragons] was shiny black, his scales slashed<sup>7</sup> with streaks<sup>8</sup> of vivid scarlet to match his wings and horns. [...]

"The green one shall be Rhaegal, for my valiant brother who died on the green banks of the Trident. The cream and gold I call Viserion. Viserys was cruel and weak and frightened, yet he was my brother still. His dragon will do what he could not. "And the black beast?" asked Ser Jorah Mormont.

"The black", she said, "is Drogon".

1 rôder • 2 envergure • 3 siffler et cracher • 4 faire brûler • 5 cuite • 6 crépuscule • 7 balafrees • 8 marques

A Clash of Kings,  
George R.R. Martin, 1998



### HELP!

#### Nouns

- shriek /ʃrɪk/ / screech /skri:tʃ/ / scream /skri:m/

#### Adjectives

- bloodcurdling:  
à glacer le sang

- fearsome /fɪə.səm/:  
redoutable
- fantastic /fæn'tæstɪk/ / mythical /mɪθɪkəl/
- feral /'ferəl/ / wild /waɪld/
- voracious /və'reɪʃəs/

#### Verbs & expressions

- obliterate /ə'bɪlɪtəret/ = make disappear
- unleash /ʌnlɪʃ/: déchaîner
- fire-breathing beast
- reduce to ashes

### YOUR PROJECT

Bilbo is back from the dragon's lair! He tells the dwarves what happened. Act out the scene. Use Worksheet n°48 for help.

# LANGUAGE LAB



- Unit's vocabulary
- Audio words
- MP3
- Interactive Test

## ★ 1. Fill in these sentences with these words.

- medieval • mighty • breathe • knight • slayer •  
 treasures • battle • devilish • greed
- A. Dragon lovers hope they could be able to ... fire one day, they are so crazy!  
 B. Beowulf is a ... poem in which a ... fights a ... dragon.  
 C. Why are dragons so fond of ...? Their ... is limitless!  
 D. Hagrid believes that dragons are ... and fascinating!  
 E. Daenerys Targaryen won a ... thanks to her dragons.  
 F. Saint George is known as the dragon ..., he was brave enough to kill it!

## ★★ 2. Translate these sentences.

- A. Hobbits like Bilbo are not warriors but they are brave and generous.  
 B. J.R.R. Tolkien imagined a speaking dragon inspired by medieval legends.  
 C. Dragons tales (contes) still fascinate kids today.

## ★★ 3. Make negative sentences, then correct them as in the example:

*Smaug is playing cricket* → *Smaug isn't playing cricket.*  
*He is setting the town on fire.*

- A. Saint George is having fun with the dragon.  
 B. Beowulf and the dragon are talking about their next fight.  
 C. Bilbo is offering a cup of tea to Smaug.  
 D. Hagrid and Harry are attacking the baby dragon.  
 E. Daenerys is eating her dragon.

## ★★ 4. Turn these sentences into questions.

- A. The warrior is getting closer to the monster.  
 B. The lady in the tower is petting the dragon.  
 C. The knights are surrounding the castle.  
 D. The three dragons are devouring the cow.

## ★★★ 5. Fill in these sentences with these expressions.

breathe fire • make a fire • set fire on • to play with fire • open fire (shoot) • to fire questions at someone

- A. The dwarves started ... Bilbo when he got out of the dragon's lair, he couldn't even answer!  
 B. If dragons couldn't ..., they would be less dangerous!  
 C. When knights chase dragons, they ..., you never know what dragons are up to!  
 D. Smaug ... the village out of anger, everything was destroyed!  
 E. The dwarves usually ... at night to get warmer.  
 F. If a dragon attacked London today, the army would ...!

## 6. Interactive test! What is your score?



## OPEN YOUR EARS!



### SHOW TIME

- Écoutez et répétez.

MP3 n°90



Once upon a ✤ time  
 there was a ✤ brave ✤ knight called  
 ✤ George.

L'intonation anglaise pour les phrases affirmatives suit le schéma suivant :

Montée en début de phrase et chute sur la dernière syllabe. Ceci est particulièrement clair dans les contes pour enfants où l'intonation est très marquée.

- Écoutez et répétez.

MP3 n°91



There is a ✤ hobbit in my ✤ house!

/ðəz/

There was a ✤ terrible ✤ fight between

/ðəwəz/

St ✤ George and the ✤ dragon.

Notez la prononciation de There is / There are :  
 jamais accentués et toujours réduits.

## Picture challenge

- 3 sentences
- ★★ 4 to 6 sentences
- ★★★ 7 sentences and +

How many sentences can you make using what you have learnt? Collect stars!

