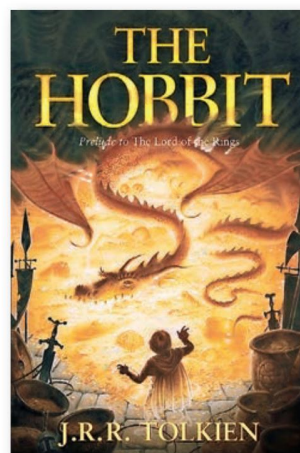


2 Famous Dragons in Modern Literature

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.”
10 “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 Chiefest 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 on Bilbo beginning to be pleased with his riddling.
25 “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 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),
30 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 /kə'læmətɪz/
- eagle /'i:gəl/
- path /pæθ/
- reality

- rider /'raɪdə/
- thief /θɪf/
- wearer /'weərə/

Verbs

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

Adjectives

- great
- tremendous /trɪ'mendəs/

Adverbs

- through /θru/
- utterly /'ʌtəli/