

Vocabulary Workshop® Tools for Excellence

Differentiated Passages

Grade 9

PASSAGE 1

UNIT 1

Read the following passage, taking note of the **boldface** words and their contexts. These words are among those you will be studying in Unit 1. As you complete the exercises in this unit, it may help to refer to the way the words are used below.

I'll Wait for the Movie

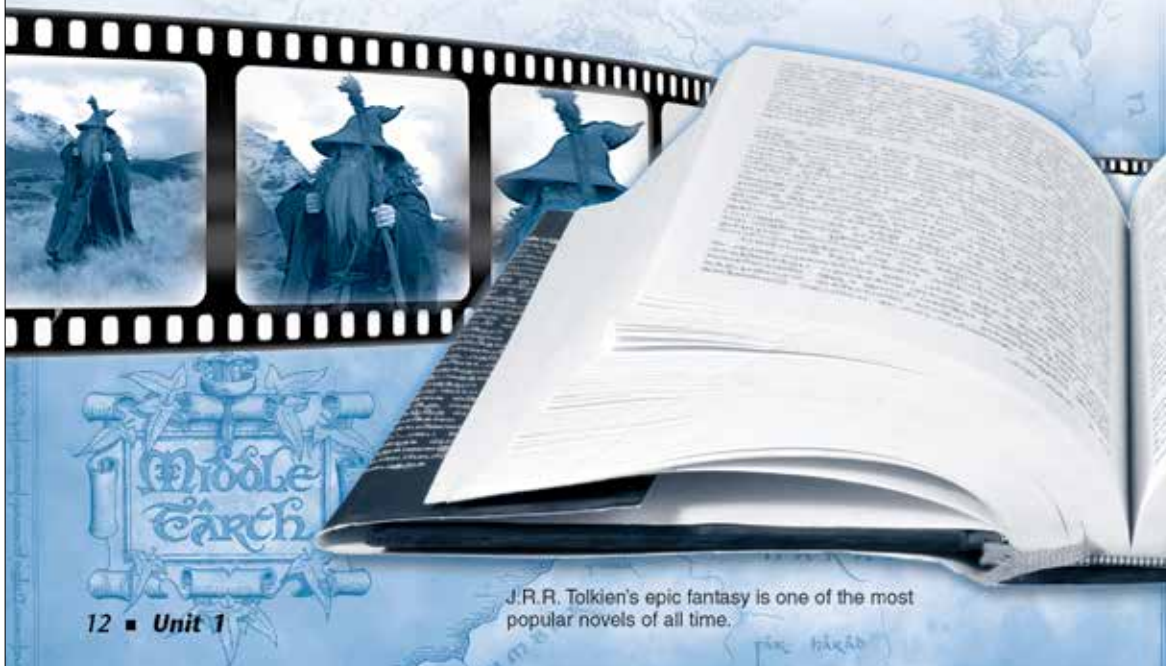
< Compare-and-Contrast Essay >

Cue scene: Middle-Earth characters Aragorn, Legolas, and Gimli leap off a ship, swords in hand, to **breach** archenemy Sauron's lines in the epic Battle of Pelennor Fields. This is a crucial moment in the movie version of *The Lord of the Rings: Return of the King*. Alas, the haunting showdown with the ghostly **brigands** does not actually occur in author J.R.R. Tolkien's books.

Film fans do not have to speak Elvish to enjoy director Peter Jackson's blockbuster *Lord of the Rings* (LOTR) trilogy. But do the movies do justice to Tolkien's enduring and popular novels? And is it possible for the LOTR purist to watch the films without cringing at every discrepancy? Readers are often disappointed with movie adaptations of their favorite novels. In fact, they might be **predisposed** to dislike any movie version. This is a perennial problem

for film directors, scriptwriters, readers, and moviegoers alike.

Filmmakers often **commandeer** the story and make it their own. Their motivation might be this cliché: "a picture paints a thousand words." They eliminate characters or events, or they add new ones. And authors can't complain: When they sell the rights to their work, they usually **relinquish** control. Filmmakers understand that their audience is **opinionated**, as evinced by LOTR fans posting online comments about Jackson's adaptation. Some claim that Jackson made a **muddle** of the books, that his tinkering is **spurious**, or that the films show only **spasmodic** flashes of greatness. Other fans show **unbridled** enthusiasm, saying that Tolkien's **perennial** classics are too long and **diffuse** and that the director's snipping



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was essential. And some fans are more **circumspect** in their criticism, realizing it is impossible to please everyone.

The **dilemma** facing filmmakers is that reading a book is a more interactive experience than watching a movie. A reader visualizes every scene in the book and decides what the characters look and sound like, what they wear, how their environs appear. For those who read the LOTR books first, the movie's Frodo may not resemble the Frodo they imagined. How can Peter Jackson's vision of Middle-Earth reflect the ones created in the mind's eye of millions of readers?

It is easy to imagine that moviegoers and readers are always **deadlocked** over which medium is better. Those who have read the book may come away from the multiplex disappointed: *The movie left out so much! Why was that memorable scene transposed to the beginning?* On the other hand, those who see the movie first may be awed by the director's imaginative retelling or by the stirring music and special effects. Most movies based on books retain key characters, scenes, and themes. Directors and scriptwriters strive to tell the same story and evoke the same emotions as the author of the original book. Both share an audience yet address one that is exclusively their own.

In the end, directors must rely on fans to accept the limitations of the movie. How is it possible for a two-hour movie (or even a sprawling movie trilogy) to include all of the details woven throughout a long novel? A movie that attempted to do this would end up unwieldy and **cumbersome**—a surefire way to disappoint moviegoers and book lovers alike.

A poster for the first movie in director Peter Jackson's *Lord of the Rings* trilogy.



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PASSAGE 2

UNIT 1

Read the following passage, taking note of the **boldface** words and their contexts. These words are among those you will be studying in Unit 1. As you complete the exercises in this unit, it may help to refer to the way the words are used below.

I'll Wait for the Movie

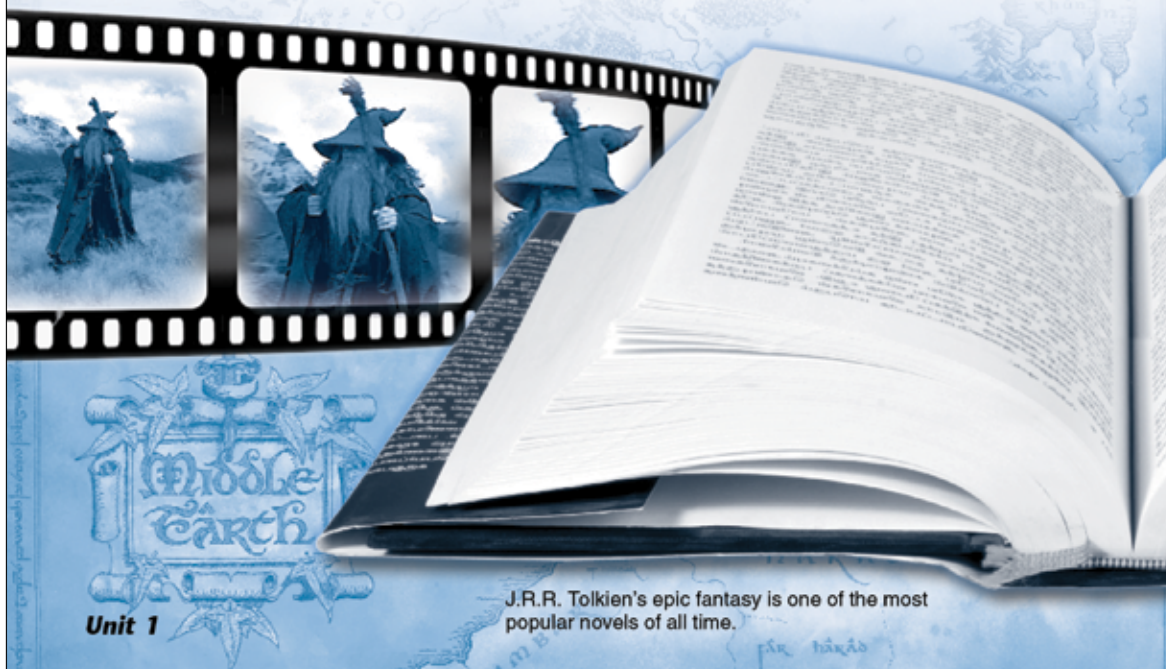
< Compare-and-Contrast Essay >

Cue scene. Middle-Earth characters Aragorn, Legolas, and Gimli leap off a ship, swords in hand. They rush forward to **breach** archenemy Sauron's lines. It is the epic Battle of Pelennor Fields. The scene is a crucial moment in the movie version of *The Lord of the Rings: Return of the King*. But the haunting showdown with the ghostly **brigands** does not actually occur in author J.R.R. Tolkien's books.

Film fans do not have to speak Elvish to enjoy the blockbuster *Lord of the Rings* (LOTR) trilogy. But readers are often disappointed with movie adaptations of their favorite novels. In fact, they might be **predisposed** to dislike any movie version.

Filmmakers often **commandeer** the story. They make it their own. Their

motivation might be this cliché: "a picture paints a thousand words." Filmmakers may eliminate characters or events. Or they add new ones. And authors can't complain. When they sell the rights to their work, they usually **relinquish** control. Filmmakers understand that their audience is **opinionated**. This is shown by LOTR fans posting online comments. Some claim that director Peter Jackson made a **muddle** of the books. They say that his tinkering is **spurious**. Others say the films show only **spasmodic** flashes of greatness. Other fans show **unbridled** enthusiasm. They claim that Tolkien's **perennial** classics are too long and **diffuse**. The director's snipping was essential. And some fans are more **circumspect** in their criticism. They realize it is impossible to please everyone.



J.R.R. Tolkien's epic fantasy is one of the most popular novels of all time.

PASSAGE 2

The **dilemma** facing filmmakers is that reading a book is a more interactive experience than watching a movie. Readers visualize every scene. They decide what the characters look and sound like. The movie's Frodo may not resemble the Frodo they imagined.

It is easy to imagine that moviegoers and readers are always **deadlocked** over which medium is better. Those who have read the book may come away from the multiplex disappointed. They may object to scenes being cut or rearranged. However, those who see the movie first may be awed by the director's imaginative storytelling. They may also be taken in by the stirring music and special effects.

In the end, directors must rely on fans to accept the limitations of the movie. How is it possible for a two-hour movie to include all of the details woven throughout a long novel? A movie that attempted to do it would end up unwieldy and **cumbersome**. It would be a surefire way to disappoint moviegoers and book lovers alike.

A poster for the first movie in director Peter Jackson's *Lord of the Rings* trilogy



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