

The hobbit,
conventions and
recurring elements.



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In J. R. R Tolkien's award-winning 1937 novel *The Hobbit*, it is extremely evident that there are a multitude of elements that support the conventions of the fantasy genre. Most recurring themes, events and characters support the fantasy genre. There is a continuous quest all throughout the novel to retrieve supposed stolen gold from the dragon Smaug, there are animals, certain races and characters that could not exist in reality, and there is magic, all of which are classic elements of the fantasy genre. Tolkien has clearly included these in order to support the fantasy genre, and to re-affirm the fact that the novel is a fantasy. Throughout the novel, we see the main protagonist, Bilbo Baggins, thirteen dwarves led by Thorin Oakenshield and a wizard named Gandalf the Grey on a quest to retrieve stolen gold from a dragon named Smaug. During this quest, Bilbo, the dwarves and Gandalf almost are eaten by Trolls, almost eaten by giant spiders, and venture through a dark, mysterious black forest, and many. These are all elements of a perilous and long journey and quest, which is a typical convention of the fantasy genre shown in the novel *The Hobbit*. Early in the novel, leader of the dwarves, Thorin, stated, " We shall soon before the break of day start on our long journey, a journey from which some of us, or perhaps all of us (except our friend and counsellor, the ingenious wizard Gandalf) may never return. It is a solemn moment. " — *The Hobbit*, 1937, J. RR Tolkien, pg 21. Tolkien has directly included this in the novel to justify the fantasy convention of an adventurous quest in the novel. There are a great number of different species and races in the novel, including Dwarves, Elves, Hobbits, Trolls and Goblins just to name a few. Beings that could not exist in reality are considered part of the fantasy genre, and these beings are seen frequently in the novel as even the main protagonist Bilbo is a part of a fictional

species, the Hobbits. These beings are considered a convention of the fantasy genre because they do not, and cannot exist in reality. Bilbo, the main protagonist and Hobbit, is the most commonly seen of the non-existent races and species that are seen in the novel, Tolkien describes this species early in the novel, “ Hobbits have no beards. There is little or no magic about them, except the ordinary everyday sort which helps them to disappear quietly and quickly when large stupid folk like you and me come blundering along, making a noise like elephants which they can hear a mile off. They are inclined to be at in the stomach; they dress in bright colours (chiefly green and yellow); wear no shoes, because their feet grow natural leathery soles and thick warm brown hair like the stuff on their heads (which is curly); have long clever brown fingers, good-natured faces, and laugh deep fruity laughs (especially after dinner, which they have twice a day when they can get it). ”— The Hobbit, 1937, J. RR Tolkien, pg 4. Other animals are also seen, one obvious one being the Wargs which are a supposed breed of ferocious, barbaric and vicious wolves depicted in the novel. Tolkien including these non-existent creatures such as Hobbits, Elves, Dwarves and Wargs further proves that the novel The Hobbit meets the conventions of a fantasy genre. During certain times of the novel, the fictional skill of conjuring magic has been evident through two main characters, Gandalf and Beorn. Gandalf uses magic throughout the novel in times of self-protection and to inflict pain on enemies. “ He gathered the huge pinecones from the branches of his tree. Then he set one alight with bright blue fire, and threw it whizzing down among the circle of the wolves. It struck one on the back, and immediately his shaggy coat caught fire, and he was leaping to and fro yelping horribly. ” - The Hobbit, 1937, J. RR Tolkien, pg 120. The type of magic that Beorn uses

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is different, Beorn uses magic to transform himself into a great Bear, and shape-shifting could be seen as a form of magic. " If you must know more, his name is Beorn. He is very strong, and he is a skin-changer." - The Hobbit, 1937, J. RR Tolkien, pg 135. Most fantasy novels will have the convention of magic in some form and The Hobbit is no exception, and magic is often seen during times of peril which is also common among fantasy genre novels. In the following quote, Gandalf is using magic to protect himself from Goblins, a fictional species invented in the novel, " When goblins came to grab him, there was a terrible flash like lightning in the cave, a smell like gunpowder, and several of them fell dead. " The Hobbit, 1937, J. RR Tolkien, pg 71. Magic is a convention of the fantasy genre because it does not and cannot exist in reality. Since magic is actively seen throughout the novel, it refutes the fact that the novel meets the conventions of fantasy genre. Tolkien's famous work The Hobbit undoubtedly meets the meets many conventions of the fantasy genre, including, the perilous journey and quest, the various non-existent races, species and animals, and magic. All three of these conventions can be seen as large fantasy conventions which are frequently used in other fantasy novels. The convention of the journey and quest which is the main part of the novel is the most commonly recurring part of the novel, is commonly seen not just in The Hobbit, but in other fantasy novels. Mythical and non-mythical (but non-existent) species, races, and animals are also a common sight in the novel, and this is a common fantasy convention. This is seen through the main character Bilbo, who is also part of a non-existent species. Magic is less frequently seen in the novel, but is no doubt still a theme, and convention of fantasy in the novel, and magic is also commonly seen as a fantasy convention in other fantasy novels. Tolkien's <https://assignbuster.com/the-hobbit-conventions-and-recurring-elements/>

highly-acclaimed work The Hobbit is undeniably a fantasy novel as it meets the fantasy conventions of the journey and quest, includes characters that are part of non-existent species, animals, and races, and includes the theme of magic. Bibliography J. R. R. Tolkien, 1991. The Hobbit. 70th Anniversary Edition. Grafton. The Hobbit Book. 2011. The Hobbit Book. [ONLINE] Available at: [Accessed 08 November 2011]. Author analysis: J. R. R. Tolkien | Focus on Fantasy. 2011. Author analysis: J. R. R. Tolkien | Focus on Fantasy. [ONLINE] Available at: [Accessed 08 November 2011]