

PRE-SHOW EDUCATIONAL WORKBOOK

Welcome to Theatre of Youth’s 53rd season and *THE HOBBIT*

This packet has been designed with an educator, parent and student in mind! We want to broaden our audience’s experience and help you to prepare for future visits to The Historic Allendale theatre! To the right you will find a table of contents that will help you navigate through the packet. All of our activities have been assigned a title to help you connect this experience with the NYS Next Generation Standards. Those titles are COMPREHEND, CHALLENGE, COMMUNICATE, CREATE, COMMENT and CONNECT. We hope that this will help you lead a discussion or inspire you to create your own show and book-based activities.

Students that attend performances with their school also have access to our playbill which includes a post-show educational guide. These activities will also be titled for educators to connect the classroom to the student’s experience when they visit Theatre of Youth. Activities include vocabulary, an opportunity to be inspired artistically, or to engage in a conversation about a topic or a concern.

THE THEATRE:

The Allendale, one of Buffalo’s first neighborhood theatres, was built in 1913 and included gold trimmed walls, leaded glass windows and a stunning domed ceiling with dozens of modern light bulbs. At first, the popular movie house specialized in silent films and photoplays of Broadway productions, with a custom-built symphonic organ for accompaniment. The years were not kind to The Allendale Theatre. Fortunately, the Allentown Association saved it from demolition and in 1986, Theatre of Youth entered a partnership with the City of Buffalo to raise funds and renovate the theatre for its permanent home.

Preserving the original integrity during the “make-over”, the theatre is equipped with a proscenium stage, fly and wing space, a sound and lighting system, dressing rooms, rehearsal space, and seating for 469 people.



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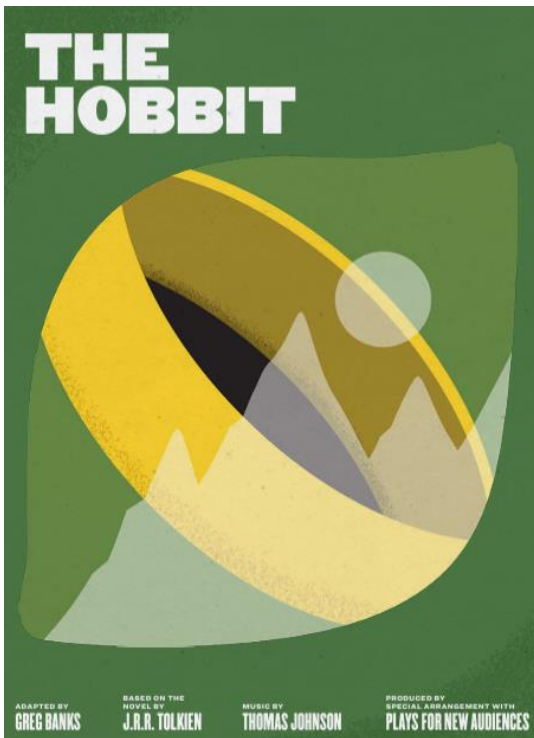
Get Ready for Your Trip!

THEATRE ETIQUETTE:

Theatre etiquette is a simple set of rules to help audience members fully enjoy the show, and for actors and the backstage crew to safely perform their work for you! Here are some important elements of theatre etiquette:



- Arrive on time and get to your seat without running.
- Visit the restroom before the performance begins.
- Respect the theatre. Don't put your feet on the seats and avoid bouncing up and down.
- Turn OFF and put away phones and other electronic devices.
- Please do not talk to your neighbor during the performance.
- No food or drinks inside the theater.
- If you like something that you see, you may clap or laugh- it shows the actors that you like what they are doing!
- Open your eyes, your hearts and your minds and enjoy the show!



THE HOBBIT by Greg Banks

Based on the novel by J.R.R. Tolkien, With music by Thomas Johnson

Produced through special arrangement with Plays for New Audiences

Production Sponsor: Hodgson Russ LLP

Recommended Ages: 10+

Our unlikely hero, Bilbo Baggins, would much rather be sitting in his cozy Hobbit Hole with a cup of tea and a plate of bacon and eggs. However, he somehow finds himself on a magically mystical adventure. Staged with speed and surprises, you'll be delighted as things change before your very eyes. Discover what happens as Bilbo travels on an epic journey over freezing mountains and a frightening forest, meeting all sorts of fierce creatures—some who want to eat him, others who turn into dear friends.

WHO WORKS AT A THEATRE?

Theatre is all about collaboration.

Discovering the many roles needed to create, rehearse and present a play is like learning a theatre’s special formula to success. It allows us to observe how artistic companies collaborate, much like your favorite sports team. Whether or not you like performing, you may be surprised by the way some of these positions peak your interest! When audience members like yourself are familiar with these roles, seeing a play is more exciting because we can appreciate the effort that goes into presenting a great show.



Here are some of the roles you’ll find within a theatre company.

If you were part of a production, what roles would you be interested in exploring? Circle them!

Playwright	The storyteller who writes the script, creating the words and dialogue.
Producer	The person who plans, organizes, and finances the production.
Artistic Director	The creative leader who shapes the artistic vision and style of the show.
Director	The leader responsible for guiding the actors and overall production.
Choreographer	The expert who creates dance or stage combat routines and choreography for the performers.
Designer	The artist who designs costumes, makeup, sets, lighting, and other visual elements.
Stage Manager	The organizer who ensures the show runs smoothly backstage during performances.
Crew	The team of behind-the-scenes workers who handle technical and set aspects.
Cast	The group of actors who portray the characters and bring the story to life.
Audience	The people who attend the performance to enjoy and experience the show.

ACTIVITIES:

This pre-show educational activity workbook is created in partnership with The Just Buffalo Writing Center (JBWC).



JBWC is a free, after-school creative writing program for young writers and artists (ages 12-18). Along with access to interactive writing workshops, literary events, and one-on-one writing feedback, JBWC writers are provided platforms to share their work. Drop in to get inspired by your peers and our phenomenal teaching artists & visiting authors. Learn more at justbuffalo.org!

And thus, your adventure begins...

COMPREHEND: Let's meet the characters!

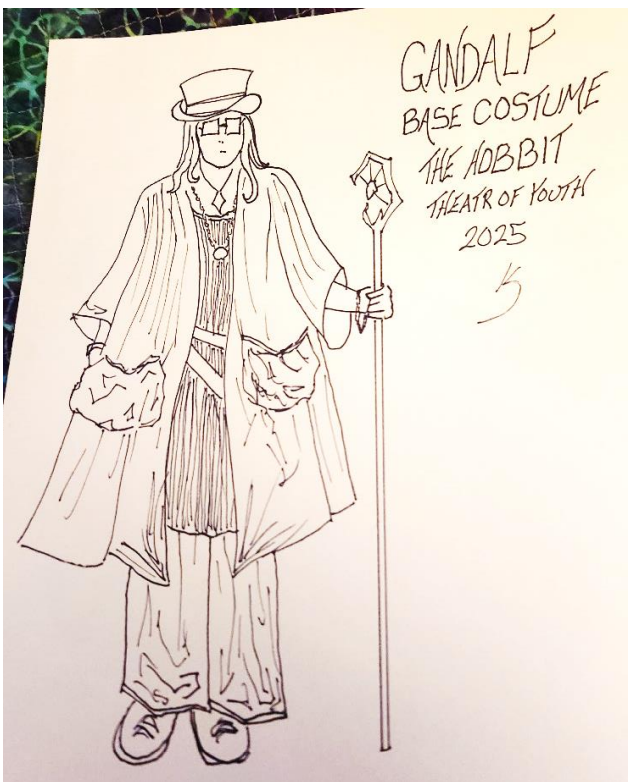
Did you know Theatre of Youth produced this same play years ago? This year's adaptation will be new and unique. Use these sneak peek photos from our current costume design to learn more about the characters you will see on stage at TOY.

Based on your initial impression of them, what character title would you assign them? For instance, based on Gollum's character description, one may want to give them the title of "THE CORRUPTED" and your teacher could be titled "THE WISE".



A reluctant hero with a kind heart, Bilbo starts as a timid and comfort-loving hobbit but discovers courage, resourcefulness, and leadership as he embraces the adventure.

Bilbo's title:



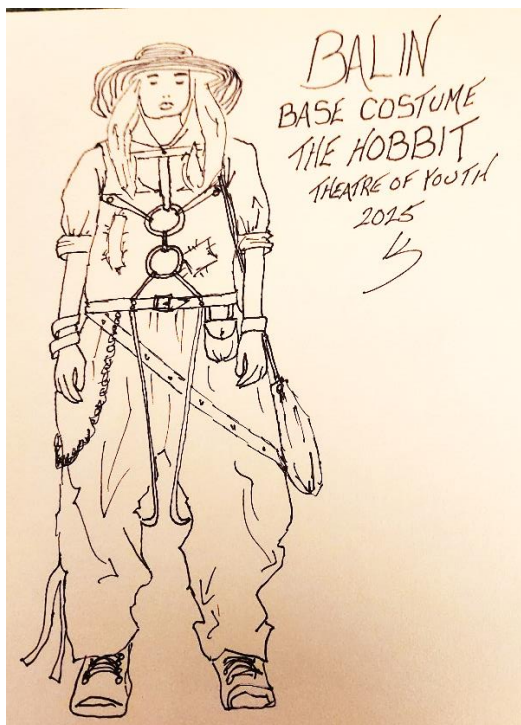
A wise and mysterious wizard, Gandalf serves as a guide and motivator, often pushing others out of their comfort zones while remaining calm and insightful.

Gandalf's title:



A tough and loyal dwarf, Dwalin is a skilled warrior who values honor and strength. His no-nonsense attitude masks a deep sense of duty to the group.

Dwalin's title:



The elder statesman of the dwarves, Balin is kind, thoughtful, and supportive. His wisdom and gentler demeanor make him a calming presence in tense moments.

Balin's title:



The youngest and most adventurous of the group, Kili is spirited, brave, and curious. His youthful energy often leads to bold, impulsive actions.

Kili's title:

CHALLENGE: Can you solve this Hobbit themed wordsearch created by JBWC’s Michael DeLaplante? Best of luck on this quest!

Word Search

L	E	C	O	N	F	I	D	E	N	C	E	I	P
F	F	G	N	O	G	A	R	D	H	I	H	R	E
B	A	D	V	E	N	T	U	R	E	D	T	I	R
B	R	A	V	E	R	Y	N	E	H	M	G	G	S
F	H	N	V	S	I	N	O	V	A	I	N	A	E
L	B	N	T	O	L	K	I	E	N	D	E	N	R
R	E	C	N	E	R	E	F	F	I	D	R	D	V
A	H	E	O	B	L	I	B	A	B	L	T	A	E
E	N	O	A	O	G	T	K	G	B	E	S	L	R
O	L	A	Y	D	N	D	E	O	N	E	C	F	A
R	A	N	D	L	I	E	E	F	E	A	N	E	N
E	A	H	G	E	R	R	E	L	D	R	A	F	C
H	R	D	E	E	R	G	O	B	D	T	A	D	E
I	D	E	A	G	R	O	W	T	H	H	R	D	C


- BILBO
- GREED
- ADVENTURE
- MIDDLE EARTH
- BRAVERY
- TOLKIEN
- HERO
- STRENGTH
- GROWTH
- GANDALF
- CONFIDENCE
- PERSERVERANCE
- DRAGON
- RING
- DIFFERENCE

Michael DeLaPlante is a JBWC Youth Ambassador and sophomore at City Honors with a burning passion for both poetry and politics. He is the founder of *Writers For A Cause Literary Magazine* and has been involved in multiple publications such as *Mini Wonderland Publishing* and *Wordplay*. In his free time, he is a member of his school's speech and debate team and enjoys reading.

Photo of Michael at the JBWC Wordplay Release by Pat Cray.



CREATE: As we dive into *The Hobbit*'s world of Fantasy, prepare to enter the Dragon's Lair with JBWC's Zelda Abramovich! Use this passage to create your own adventure by writing the completed sentences below. Use extra paper as needed.



In the Dragon's Lair

"Slowly, _____ crept down the _____ tunnel. The air was _____ and heavy, carrying the _____ scent of _____. As they moved closer, their _____ brushed against the _____, and a _____ noise echoed through the _____. At last, _____ reached the end of the passage and looked out into a _____ chamber. The sight made their _____ stop _____. Piles of _____ glittered like _____ in the dim light, and the floor was covered with _____ treasure. In the center of it all, a _____ dragon lay _____, its _____ rising and falling with each breath. _____ tried to stay _____, but their _____ couldn't stop _____. This was no ordinary _____. This was _____, the _____ terror of the _____."

The passage above is taken from Chapter 12, "Inside Information," in The Hobbit by J.R.R. Tolkien.

Zelda Abramovich is a writer, poet, and senior in high school. She has been published in *Scholastic Choices*, *Illustoria Magazine*, *Teen Ink*, *The WEIGHT Journal*, *jGirls Magazine* and various local art organizations. A proud Youth Ambassador with the Just Buffalo Writing Center, she believes that the poems you are taught in school will never be as good as the ones you find yourself.

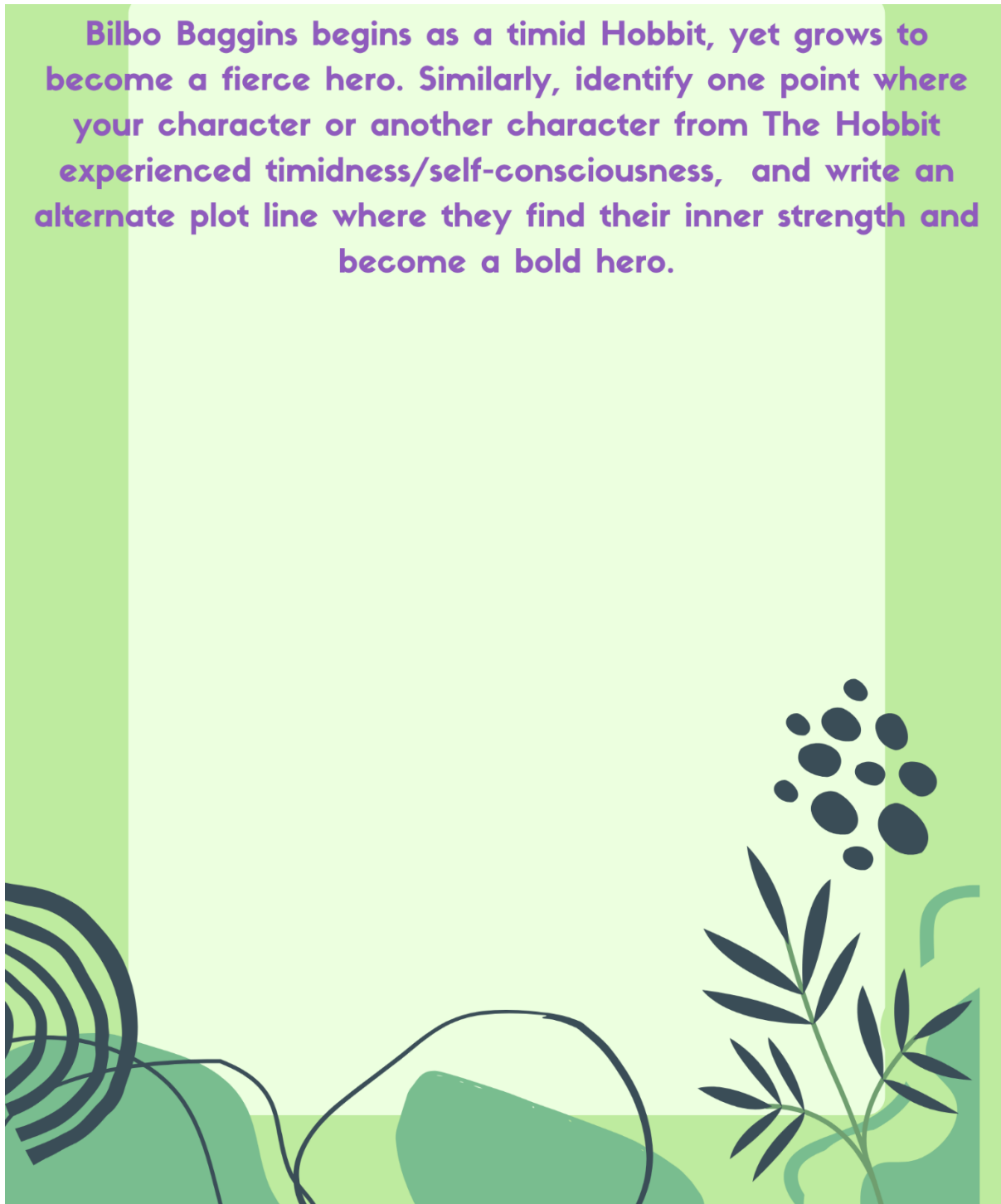


Zelda at the JBWC Showcase.
Photo by Pat Cray

COMMENT AND CONNECT:

If you had the power to change someone’s decisions or the outcome of their journey, how would you rewrite their story? Athena Beaumont at the JBWC has created a prompt to help you connect to your personal story or reinvent the journey for a character in *The Hobbit*! Use extra paper as needed.

Bilbo Baggins begins as a timid Hobbit, yet grows to become a fierce hero. Similarly, identify one point where your character or another character from *The Hobbit* experienced timidness/self-consciousness, and write an alternate plot line where they find their inner strength and become a bold hero.



COMMUNICATE:

At the JBWC using your imagination is thoroughly celebrated. Below, Zelda Abramovich has an incredibly interesting question that will get your creative juices flowing! Based on your teacher's preference, this exercise can be done solo or as a group. It can be written, turned into a very short story and even acted out in front of the class for a good laugh!

In The Hobbit Bilbo Baggins finds a ring in a cave that grants him the power to disappear. If you could pick an ordinary object to have magical powers, what would it be and what would it do? Write a short story or poem about how you discovered this object.



DISCOVERING DIVERISTY

As part of TOY’s Discovering Diversity Series, today we highlight some wonderful emerging artists!

On Portraying Complex Characters & Themes in Plays
An interview with Nova Russell by Athena Beaumont

Nova Russell '26 is a pre professional actor whose previous roles include the Lion in *Wizard of Oz*, Bert in *Mary Poppins*, and Colonel Mustard in *Clue*. Her most recent role is Oberon in *Midsummer's Night's Dream* as well as Ujima's production of *And Bid Him Sing* at shea’s 710. She thanks her family and friends for always helping her do what she loves.

Athena Beaumont is a JBWC Youth Ambassador and a student at Williamsville South High School who enjoys reading, writing fantasy and dystopian fiction, summer nights, and advocating for the environment. She fell in love with writing ever since she learned how to do so, and eventually fables about her stuffed animals turned into essays, short stories, and poems that she produces at the JBWC!!

ATHENA: There are many difficult roles in *The Hobbit*. For instance, Gollum proves himself to be a very complex character, with a deep desire for a ring. What are some complex roles you've been tasked with performing as, and how do you form a believable character and act in a way that really encompasses this complexity?

NOVA: Some of the most complex roles I've had would have to belong to Oberon from *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and a character from Ujima's 2024 Dunbar Summer youth program. I believe that the best way to form a believable character is to first understand the show the character is in, second understand who the character is, and lastly choose a couple of prominent character traits that you want to define your character.



Nova Russell in performance.
 Photo by Jean-Carlos Rios

For example, when I was cast as Oberon I made sure to first understand *Midsummer's Night's Dream* and his motivations. I then picked out defining traits I wanted him to have and abided by those traits. I wanted him to be strong willed, have a royal air, yet be kind to those he cared about. Doing this allows you to get into the headspace of your character allowing for a more human response to things. One last thing I would recommend is to be yourself. In my opinion no one should ever try to copy how someone else does a character. Make the character yours without copying another person perfectly, inspiration is okay but always try to be true to yourself. Take experiences that you have and add them into the character so you are more familiarized with how one acts in those situations.

ATHENA: *In The Hobbit, various themes are reflected, such as courage, perseverance, and teamwork. What are some performance tips that you've learned over time that help portray varying themes across different plays to the audience?*

NOVA: Some ways I've learned over time to help portray various themes to an audience is to fully understand what the play is trying to convey. While a play might have many main and or underlying themes, none of them will be straightforward and simple. Understanding what a play wants to convey or at least agreeing with your cast and director about what you want to convey is vital to telling an audience a story. In my opinion, while two characters might be showing two different themes, the actors themselves must understand what the other person is trying to communicate so they can help each other. Even if two characters are conflicting in terms of what they want to show the audience, the actors must know this to ensure that each theme gets across.

The Dunbar Youth Theatre Arts Program is dedicated to training 12-18 year old students in the performance styles and traditions of their ancestors and providing them with opportunities to demonstrate their knowledge through public performance. Interdisciplinary training in acting, music, dance and technical theater is provided by professional artists with significant performance and teaching experience. Learn more at Ujimacoinc.org



Theatre of Youth (TOY) is WNY's only professional theatre fully dedicated to serving children and their families. Alongside our professional mainstage productions like *The Hobbit*, we host performing arts workshops for all ages for those who aspire to be on the stage. If you like this show, this summer we will be hosting a Shakespeare & Stage Combat workshop that you may love so stay tuned! Scholarship Assistance is available. Visit theatreofyouth.org for more information!



ARE YOU READY TO JOIN US?

We're bursting with excitement as we eagerly await your arrival at our theater for the upcoming performance. The stage is all set to whisk you away into a world filled with laughter, emotions, and captivating moments. The talented and hardworking members of our team have poured their hearts into creating a show that will form lasting and treasured memories. All we're missing is you, our audience!

LET'S GO TO THE THEATRE!



After reading through our pre-show education packet, I'm sure you're now familiar with what you may see on stage. Now what about your field trip? Have you ever been to the theatre before? What's it like?

The day of your trip, you will get on the school bus and drive to Allentown in downtown Buffalo. Upon your arrival at TOY, you will quietly enter our beautiful building, visit the restrooms as needed, then find your seats. You'll see lots of chairs, big, tall ceilings and a beautiful stage.



Following your instructors, you will sit with your group and start to get excited for the show but remember to remain seated! This will allow everyone behind you to see properly. Remember your Theatre Etiquette!



REMINDERS:



- After the performance, you will receive a playbill (given to your teacher) that includes our post-show educational workbook to bring back to your class.
- After each school time performance, the cast and crew will be available for a talk back. This will give you the opportunity to ask us any questions you may have about the show, the characters, the theatre, etc.

Start to brainstorm questions you may want to ask the characters:

See you soon!