

UNIT 1

Read the following selection, 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

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.

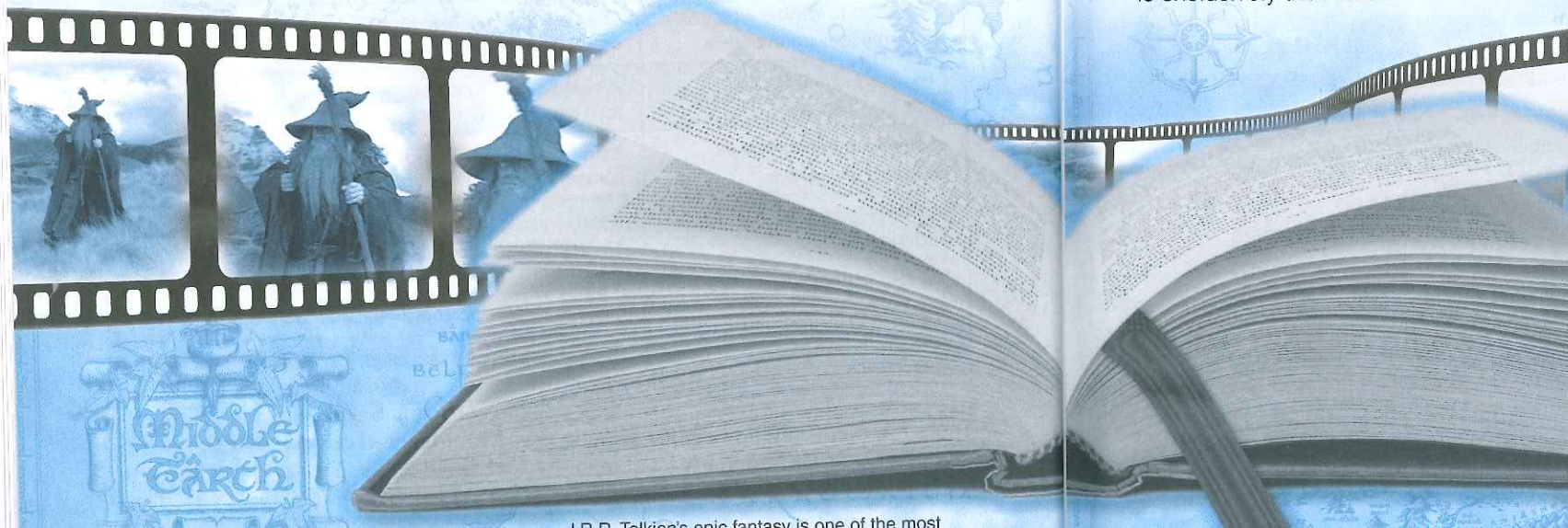
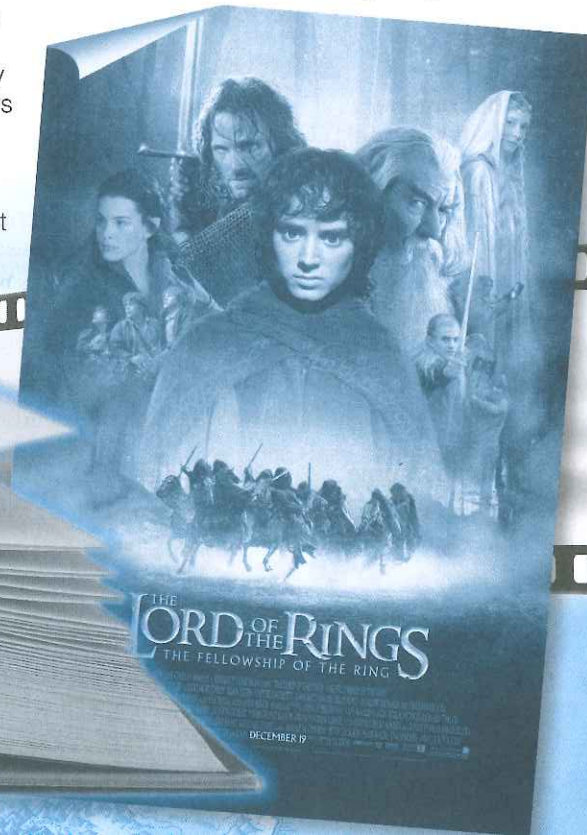
In the end, directors must rely on fans to accept the limitations of the movie. How is it possible for a two-hour movie (or even a sprawling movie trilogy) to include all of the details woven throughout a long novel? A movie that attempted to do this would end up unwieldy and **cumbersome**—a surefire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

Words



Snap the code, or go to vocabularyworkshop.com

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



Definitions

Note the spelling, pronunciation, part(s) of speech, and definition(s) of each of the following words. Then write the word in the blank spaces in the illustrative sentence(s) following. Finally, study the lists of synonyms and antonyms.

1. admonish
(ad män' ish)

(v.) to caution or advise against something; to scold mildly; to remind of a duty

The librarian had to _____ the noisy students several times before they settled down.

SYNONYMS: reprimand, call on the carpet
ANTONYMS: praise, pat on the back

2. breach
(brêch)

(n.) an opening, gap, rupture, rift; a violation or infraction; (v.) to create an opening, break through

Because of a serious _____ of the rules, two players were ejected from the game.

Our troops were unable to _____ the enemy's lines during the battle.

ANTONYMS: (v.) close, seal

3. brigand
(brig' änd)

(n.) a bandit, robber, outlaw, highwayman

Ancient caravans passing through desolate areas were sometimes attacked by _____.

4. circumspect
(sär' kəm spekt)

(adj.) careful, cautious

It is important for a diplomat to behave in a manner that is both discreet and _____.

SYNONYMS: wary, prudent, guarded
ANTONYMS: incautious, rash, reckless, heedless

5. commandeer
(käm ən dêr')

(v.) to seize for military or official use

Under certain circumstances the U.S. government has the right to _____ private property.

SYNONYMS: take over, requisition, expropriate

6. cumbersome
(käm' bər səm)

(adj.) clumsy, hard to handle; slow-moving

The bus was filled to capacity with holiday shoppers carrying large and _____ packages.

SYNONYMS: ponderous, difficult, uncomfortable
ANTONYMS: manageable, easy to handle

7. deadlock
(ded' läk)

(n.) a standstill resulting from the opposition of two equal forces or factions; (v.) to bring to such a standstill

After fifteen innings, the score remained a frustrating 3-to-3 _____.

8. debris
(də brē')

(n.) scattered fragments, wreckage

After the storm, the beach was littered with driftwood and other _____.

SYNONYMS: remains, detritus, flotsam and jetsam

9. diffuse
(v., dif yüz';
adj., dif yūs')

(v.) to spread or scatter freely or widely; (adj.) wordy, long-winded, or unfocused; scattered or widely spread

The scent of lilacs slowly _____ through the open window.

The speech was so long and _____ that most audience members were thoroughly confused by it.

SYNONYMS: (v.) disperse; (adj.) verbose, prolix
ANTONYMS: (v.) concentrate; (adj.) brief, concise, succinct

10. dilemma
(di lem' ə)

(n.) a difficult or perplexing situation or problem

During the crisis the President found himself caught in a painful _____.

SYNONYMS: predicament, quandary, pickle, bind
ANTONYM: cinch

11. efface
(e fäs')

(v.) to wipe out; to keep oneself from being noticed

Time had _____ almost all signs of the struggle that took place on that famous battlefield.

SYNONYMS: blot out, erase, expunge

12. muddle
(mäd' əl)

(v.) to make a mess of; muddle through: to get by; (n.) a hopeless mess

Too much stress and too little sleep will almost certainly _____ a person's ability to concentrate.

The _____ was principally caused by their failure to carry out the general's orders properly.

SYNONYMS: (v.) jumble, mess up; (n.) confusion, disorder
ANTONYMS: (n.) orderliness, neatness

13. opinionated
(ə pin' yən ät id)

(adj.) stubborn and often unreasonable in holding to one's own ideas, having a closed mind

My friend is so _____ that sometimes she will not listen to a reasonable proposal.

SYNONYMS: obstinate, pigheaded, inflexible
ANTONYMS: open-minded, reasonable

14. **perennial**
(pə ren' ē əl)

(*adj.*) lasting for a long time, persistent; (*n.*) a plant that lives for many years

Pizza is a _____ favorite of young and old alike in the United States.

A garden of _____ is relatively easy to maintain.

SYNONYMS: (*adj.*) enduring, recurring
ANTONYMS: (*adj.*) brief, short-lived, fleeting, ephemeral

15. **predispose**
(prē dis pōz')

(*v.*) to incline to beforehand

My genetic makeup seems to _____ me to colds and sore throats.

SYNONYMS: tending to, liable to
ANTONYMS: immunize against, shield from

16. **relinquish**
(rē lin' kwish)

(*v.*) to let go, give up

Severe illness forced me to _____ my role in the school play.

SYNONYM: surrender; ANTONYMS: hold on to, keep, cling to

17. **salvage**
(sal' vij)

(*v.*) to save from fire or shipwreck; (*n.*) property thus saved

Fortunately, we were able to _____ a few things from the fire.

_____ from sunken ships can be of great value to archaeologists and historians.

SYNONYMS: (*v.*) recover, retrieve, reclaim
ANTONYMS: (*v.*) abandon, scrap, junk

18. **spasmodic**
(spaz mäd' ik)

(*adj.*) sudden and violent but brief; fitful; intermittent

_____ flashes of lightning and booming thunderclaps were accompanied by torrential rain.

SYNONYMS: irregular, occasional
ANTONYMS: steady, continuous, chronic

19. **spurious**
(spyü' rē əs)

(*adj.*) not genuine, not true, not valid

Manufacturers who make _____ claims for their products may face fines or lawsuits.

SYNONYMS: false, counterfeit, fraudulent, bogus
ANTONYMS: genuine, authentic, bona fide, valid

20. **unbridled**
(ən brid' əld)

(*adj.*) lacking in restraint

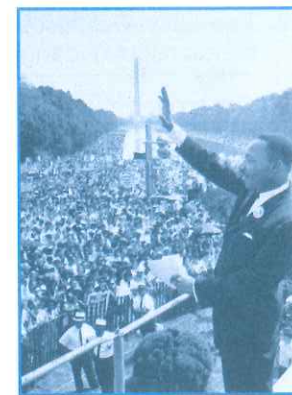
Sometimes the _____ enthusiasm of sports fans can get a little out of hand.

SYNONYMS: unrestrained, unchecked
ANTONYMS: restrained, held in check, muted

Choosing the Right Word

Select the **boldface** word that better completes each sentence. You might refer to the essay on pages 12–13 to see how most of these words are used in context.

- Like the rings a pebble makes when tossed in a pool of water, the good feelings generated by the speech (**diffused, relinquished**) through the crowd.
- To ensure they are not resented, the most powerful nations in the world must be extremely (**circumspect, opinionated**) in their foreign policy.
- Instead of trying to (**admonish, commandeer**) the support of the student body, we must earn it by showing our sincerity and ability.
- An economy in which the marketplace is considered "open" is one in which competition is more or less (**muddled, unbridled**).
- Our city government seems to have (**breached, muddled**) into a first-rate financial crisis.
- The robber barons were a group of nineteenth-century captains of industry who amassed wealth by means that a (**brigand, salvager**) might use.
- The evidence intended to show that some races or nationalities are superior to others proved to be completely (**spurious, cumbersome**).
- The dean (**effaced, admonished**) the members of the team for neglecting their homework assignments.
- In general, she is a confident person, so I'm sure she will be able to (**commandeer, salvage**) a few shreds of self-respect from her humiliating failure.
- His attempts to rid his administration of inefficiency were so (**unbridled, spasmodic**) that he came to be called the "reformer by fits and starts."
- After the fire, investigators searched through the (**debris, dilemma**) for clues that might reveal the cause.
- Since she is so convinced that there is only one right way—her way—I find her too (**circumspect, opinionated**) for my liking.
- My mother broke the (**debris, deadlock**) in the quarrel between my brother and me by saying that neither of us could use the car.
- Developing nations in all parts of the world face the (**perennial, spurious**) problem of gaining a higher level of economic growth.
- The senator refused to (**efface, relinquish**) the floor to any other speaker before he had finished his statement.



Martin Luther King, Jr., delivering his "I Have a Dream" speech, August 28, 1963.

16. If only I could (**predispose, efface**) the memory of the look of shock and disappointment on my mother's face!
17. Even her refusal to dance with him did not seem to make a (**deadlock, breach**) in his gigantic conceit.
18. The nation was faced with a (**dilemma, brigand**) in which either to advance or to retreat might endanger its vital interests.
19. The organization of some government agencies is so (**cumbersome, perennial**) that it is all but impossible to know who is responsible for various activities.
20. How can you expect to succeed at your new job when you are (**diffused, predisposed**) to believe that it is "not right" for you?
21. After we agreed on the lineup of songs, we then (**salvaged, deadlocked**) over the choice of a name for our band.
22. When his precious collection of (**perennials, debris**) was torn up and trampled, the gardener was first heartbroken, then angry.
23. Although he was the world's expert on the subject, his lectures were so (**unbridled, diffuse**) that even his greatest fans grew bored.
24. When we discovered that she had never completed college, we knew that her claims of having once been a lawyer were (**spurious, opinionated**).
25. In spite of weeks of practice, he made a (**breach, muddle**) of his performance.

Synonyms

Choose the word from this unit that is the same or most nearly the same in meaning as the **boldface** word or expression in the phrase. Write that word on the line. Use a dictionary if necessary.

1. warn a child _____
2. a **rambling** and confusing letter _____
3. **make susceptible to** infection _____
4. **worn away** by erosion _____
5. an **uncontrolled** appetite for luxury _____
6. frustrated by **awkward** procedures _____
7. captured by **thieves** _____
8. a **stalemate** in the peace talks _____
9. able to **rescue** cherished mementos _____
10. cleared the **rubble** _____

Antonyms

Choose the word from this unit that is most nearly opposite in meaning to the **boldface** word or expression in the phrase. Write that word on the line. Use a dictionary if necessary.

1. the **tidiness** of her argument _____
2. **jettison** the project _____
3. **preserve** our cultural heritage _____
4. **retained** title to the plot of land _____
5. **commended** my friends for their behavior _____

Completing the Sentence

From the words in this unit, choose the one that best completes each of the following sentences. Write the word in the space provided.

1. The records of our club were in such a(n) _____ that we couldn't even determine which members had paid their dues.
2. The doctor became more and more fearful that her patient's weakened condition would _____ him to pneumonia.
3. The rug was rolled into such a(n) _____ bundle that it took four of us to carry it up the stairs.
4. He is so _____ that he won't even consider the ideas or suggestions offered by other people.
5. The idea of a(n) _____ like Robin Hood who helps the poor appeals strongly to the popular imagination.
6. In order to capture the fleeing criminals, the police _____ our car and raced after the vanishing truck.
7. The water pouring through the _____ in the dam threatened to flood the entire valley.
8. The nurse rushed into the hospital corridor to _____ the visitors who were creating a disturbance.
9. Though all modern scholars accept *Macbeth* as Shakespeare's work, there continue to be _____ allegations that other writers wrote the play.
10. Many a teenager's room is strewn with clothing, sports equipment, and all sorts of _____.

11. I added a few drops of food coloring to the liquid and watched as they slowly _____ through it.
12. Before I make an investment, I study all aspects of the situation in a methodical and _____ manner.
13. Though his partner lost everything, he was able to _____ a few dollars from the wreckage of the bankrupt business.
14. Once Great Britain had given up her vast overseas empire, she found that she had also _____ her position as a world power.
15. A man of towering pride and _____ ambition, he stopped at nothing to achieve his goals as quickly and directly as possible.
16. Since we do not want to replace the plants in our garden every year, we favor _____ over annuals.
17. I have a(n) _____. If I don't get a job, I won't have the money to do what I want; and if I do get a job, I won't have the time.
18. Though my memory is getting dimmer and dimmer with the slow passage of time, I doubt that the exciting events of my childhood will ever be totally _____ from my mind.
19. The two sides in the lawsuit reached a(n) _____ when neither was willing to meet the other partway.
20. Some people are subject to sudden seizures, during which their heads and legs may jerk about in a wild and _____ manner.

Writing: Words in Action

1. Look back at "I'll Wait for the Movie" (pages 12–13). How do the challenges of a filmmaker differ from those of an author? Write a short expository essay in which you explore how some of the major artistic decisions a filmmaker has to make differ from those a novelist has to make. Use at least two details from the passage and three unit words to support your understanding.
2. Do you prefer reading a book to seeing a movie, or do you think that movies tell a story in a more interesting way? In a brief essay, support your opinion with specific examples from your observations, studies, reading (refer to pages 12–13), or personal experience. Write at least three paragraphs, and use three or more words from this unit.

Vocabulary in Context

Literary Text

The following excerpts are from Louisa May Alcott's novels *Little Women* and *Little Men*. Some of the words you have studied in this unit appear in **boldface** type. Complete each statement below the excerpt by circling the letter of the correct answer.

1. Laurie and his friends gallantly threw themselves into the **breach**, bought up the bouquets, encamped before the table, and made that corner the liveliest spot in the room. (*Little Women*)

A **breach** is a(n)

- | | |
|------------|---------|
| a. store | c. lake |
| b. opening | d. task |

2. If Jo had not been otherwise engaged, Laurie's behavior would have amused her, for a faint twinge, not of jealousy, but something like suspicion, caused that gentleman to stand aloof at first, and observe the newcomer with brotherly **circumspection**. (*Little Women*)

Someone who observes with **circumspection** observes

- | | |
|--------------|------------------|
| a. eagerly | c. carefully |
| b. hatefully | d. uncomfortably |

3. "I wouldn't leave a word out of it. You'll spoil it if you do, for the interest of the story is more in the minds than in the actions of the people, and it will be all a **muddle** if you don't explain as you go on," said Meg, who firmly believed that this book was the most remarkable novel ever written. (*Little Women*)

If something is in a **muddle** it is NOT

- | | |
|----------|--------------|
| a. clear | c. useless |
| b. dirty | d. brilliant |

4. When little Vladimir finally **relinquished** her, with assurances that he was "desolated to leave so early," she was ready to rest, and see how her recreant knight had borne his punishment. (*Little Women*)

If someone is **relinquished** she is

- | | |
|-------------|--------------|
| a. let go | c. scolded |
| b. informed | d. conquered |

5. "You must pay a pin apiece, or you can't see the show," said Stuff, who stood by the wheelbarrow in which sat the band, consisting of a pocket-comb blown upon by Ned, and a toy drum beaten **spasmodically** by Rob. (*Little Men*)

Something that is beaten **spasmodically** is beaten

- | | |
|----------------|---------------|
| a. happily | c. skillfully |
| b. erratically | d. quietly |



A scene from the 1994 film version of *Little Women*, with Susan Sarandon as Mrs. March and Winona Ryder as Jo.

Interactive Quiz



Snap the code, or go to vocabularyworkshop.com