Hobbit Words and Their Human Equivalents

**Attercop**: Another name for a spider (derogatory connotation).

**Athelas**: Also known as kingsfoil, this is an herb of Middle-earth known for its healing properties. It's the Middle-earth equivalent of Neosporin, aspirin, and chicken noodle soup all rolled into one.

**Balrog**: Fiery demonic beings of Middle-earth, often armed with flaming whips. Bad news no matter if you live in Middle-earth or the “real” world... a demon’s a demon.

**Bannocks**: A flat cake typically cooked on a griddle. Yep, they’re pancakes.

**Battle of the Five Armies**: This final battle depicted in *The Hobbit* was a fight waged by armies of men, elves, dwarves and eagles against the goblins and wargs. The whole thing started with the men and elves arguing with the dwarves over claims to Smaug’s treasure. The next thing you know all of them come under the attack of goblins riding giant wolves. The best modern-day comparison is a typical Thanksgiving dinner with extended family.

**The Black Breath**: A serious medical condition caused by contact with a Ringwraith. It’s like getting “the cooties” from an unpopular kid in grade school you, only it’s real and more like The Plague.

**Bowls**: A hobbit game similar to bowling.

**Burglar**: In Middle-earth, a burglar is a treasure hunter who uses stealth in order to avoid dangerous situations. In human culture, the word has a negative connotation, generally meaning *thief*. Even in
Middle-earth the term *burglar* is rather distasteful to hobbits because of their aversion to adventure.

**CAVE TROLLS:** A breed of trolls specialized for dwelling in tunnels and caverns.

**CONEY:** Another word for a rabbit.

**CRAM:** A type of dwarven bread used in Middle-earth for long travels. Similar to hardtack, which is a type of biscuit or cracker that has a long shelf life and was often used by sailors or the military. *Cram* is the cause of many broken teeth.

**DWARVES:** Dwarves are short, hardworking folk. Typically miners by trade, dwarves are experts at hard work such as digging and building. In human culture, dwarves would be tradesmen—contractors, carpenters, plumbers, and the like. Useful people to have around, dwarves.

**ELVES:** The elves of Middle-earth are wise and beautiful beings. The elves hold the secrets of the West, are immortal, and generally have their shit together. In human culture, elves would be the celebrities, models, rock stars, and the Hollywood elite—the in-crowd, so to speak.

**ENTS:** An ancient race of anthropomorphic treelike creatures who dwell in the forests of Middle-earth. They are patient and cautious. They take their time to make a decision about anything. In your day-to-day life, dealings with hippies or granolas might be similar to conversing with Ents.

**FALLOHIDES:** A subrace of hobbits who are tall (for hobbits) and fair-haired with a light complexion. In today's world, Fallohides would be the hobbit elite (as far as that goes for hobbits, which is nothing compared to elves).

**FAUNT:** A young hobbit (two to five years in age). A faunt is the hobbit equivalent of a toddler.

**FELLOWSHIP:** A fellowship is generally a group of friends or allies who band together in support of a common cause. They swear oaths and make lofty rallying speeches. Today's equivalent of a fellowship would likely be an LLC or a group of shareholders.

**GOBLINS:** Violent creatures who live in dark places, often underground. In human culture, goblins would likely be criminals who live in the sewers and subway tunnels. Also see “Orcs.”

**HALFLING:** Another term for a hobbit. The term is in reference to their size, which is roughly half the size of humans. It's not recommended to use this term in human culture to refer to anyone, no matter their size, as it would likely be offensive.

**HALFLING'S LEAF:** A slang term for pipeweed, the tobacco cultivated by hobbits.

**HARFOOTS:** A subrace of hobbits who are the smallest in stature of the hobbits. Not that there's anything wrong with that.

**HELM'S DEEP:** The site of one of the largest and most important battles in *The Lord of the Rings*. Not to be mistaken for a typical Saturday at your local grocery store.

**HOBBITS:** In Middle-earth a hobgoblin may refer to a larger and stronger breed of goblin or orc. See also “Uruk-hai.”

**HOBBIT HOLE:** This refers to a hobbit’s home—usually a comfortable home built into the side of a hill. Hobbit holes are quite cozy and well furnished. In human culture, many energy-efficient homes, such as adobe houses, are similar in idea to the hobbit-hole.
**IMP**: The offspring of a creature such as a goblin or an orc. In the human world, imps can often been found running unsupervised through your local International House of Pancakes.

**KINGSFOIL**: A healing herb. See Athelas.

**LEMBAS**: An elven bread, similar to hardtack or the dwarves’ cram, only tastier and more nutritious. As you know from comparing shortbread cookies to the fudge stripe variety, elves can make anything taste better.

**LONGBOTTOM LEAF**: A variety of pipeweed grown in a region of the Shire known as Longbottom.

**MATHOMS**: A hobbit word for a regifted gift. Did you ever play the holiday gift exchange game where you keep selecting gifts until no one ends up with what they wanted, and then everyone takes it to the next holiday party they have to go to? It’s pretty much exactly that.

**MINCE-PIES**: Hobbits are fond of hearty food such as these pies filled with chopped meat. In today’s harried world, a chicken potpie might be a fair comparison.

**MITHRIL**: An incredibly strong lightweight material often made into chain mail armor. *Mithril* is like the Kevlar of Middle-earth.

**MOON LETTERS**: Elvish runes that can be seen only when the moon shines upon them. A human equivalent might be writing something in invisible ink to be decoded with lemon juice.

**MORDOR**: As the dwelling place of the Dark Lord Sauron, Mordor is a barren land covered with rock, ash and little vegetation. It’s a hive of villainy, debauchery, and lies. Imagine if you combined Las Vegas, Washington D.C., and Hell into one and then threw in a couple of volcanoes. The result would be Mordor.

**NAZGUL**: Also known as Ringwraiths. These were men who succumbed to the power of the Dark Lord Sauron when presented with Rings of Power. The rings corrupted their minds and they became obsessed with attaining the one true ring. Today one might akin the Nazgul to politicians in a primary race, blindly seeking a seat of power, speaking lies, and making frightening desperate attempts to grasp a power they shouldn’t be allowed to wield.

**NECROMANCER**: A dark wizard. One who practices dark arts. The modern-day human equivalent is probably a CEO of a technology company.

**NINEPINS**: A hobbit game similar to bowling.

**NÚMENOREANS**: Men from a distant land who introduced tobacco to the hobbits. Today men who peddle tobacco are still targeting little people (first hobbits, now tweens and teens) in an attempt to get them hooked on the nasty habit. Some things never change.

**OLD TOBY**: A variety of pipeweed.

**OGRES**: Monstrous giants who are fond of feasting on flesh. Today’s ogres prefer combo meals from drive-through windows.

**ORCS**: Similar to goblins, orcs are large violent creatures. In human culture you might think of orcs as street thugs who travel in groups looking for victims.

**PALANTIRI**: These are magical “seeing stones” of Middle-earth. Similar to a crystal ball, they are used to see other parts of the world or to communicate with (or influence) those who also have a palantiri. Today we accomplish the same thing with Skype.
**QUOITS:** A hobbit game similar to horseshoes or cornhole.

**RANGERS:** Men who patrolled the wilderness armed with swords, spears, and bows. They typically wore earth tones and dark cloaks. Today you can still find Rangers at your local renaissance fair.

**RINGS OF POWER:** Magical rings created by Sauron and gifted to Elves, Dwarves and Men with One Ring with the power to rule all others. These gifts of power tempted the wearers and brought the races of Middle-earth under the throng of Sauron. At first the rings seemed good and were able to do really cool things, but eventually they began to corrupt anyone who used them, driving them to obsession and insanity. You know, kind of like a smart phone.

**RINGWRAITHS:** Men driven insane under the throng of the rings of power. Also known as the Nazgul.

**RIVENDALE:** An Elf community often thought to be the most hospitable and wonderful place in Middle-earth. Kind of like a Middle-earth Disney World. Only maybe without the rides. Or the long lines.

**SEED-CAKE:** A dense cake of bread with one or more varieties of seeds baked into it. Today’s equivalent might be an “everything” bagel.

**SHIRE, THE:** The Shire is home to the hobbits. More than just a place to live, the Shire is a place of significance. Think of your own childhood home, or a special place where you felt most relaxed and comfortable, and you’ll have an idea of how the hobbits regard the Shire. We should all be so lucky as to live in such a place.

**SKIN-CHANGER:** A person who can turn into another creature, such as a bear. In *The Hobbit*, Bilbo and the dwarves are allowed to stay with Beorn, a skin-changer who shows his guests hospitality in return for hearing their tale of adventure. Today people might think of a skin-changer as a were-creature (such as a werewolf, or the Native American skin-walker).

**SOUTHERN STAR:** A variety of pipeweed.

**STONE GIANTS:** Large, unintelligent creatures that hurl massive stones at one another for fun. Stone giants today would likely be pro wrestlers.

**STONE TROLLS:** A breed of trolls that turn to stone in direct sunlight. Unfortunately this probably doesn’t apply to the trolls you know.

**STOORS:** A subrace of hobbits who are stocky and broad chested. In today’s world, Stoors would be considered the blue-collar class of hobbits.

**TOMNODDY:** A foolish being. The equivalent of calling someone a “big dummy.”

**TROLLS:** Trolls are large, dull creatures. They have plenty of physical strength but aren’t very clever. They are typically crude and loud. In human culture they aren’t much different. You’ve probably met your share of trolls in noisy pubs, at sporting events, or on their smartphones at the movies.

**THE UNDYING LANDS:** This is a sort of promised land for elves where they would spend their immortal lives, usually after already having lived a long life in Middle-earth. It’s like a retirement community for elves.

**URUK-HAI:** An advanced breed of orcs or goblins. If orcs are the thugs of MiddleEarth, you might think of the Uruk-hai as a well-organized street gang.

**VIOLS:** Stringed musical instruments, similar to violins.
**WARGS:** Large wolves that are sometimes ridden by orcs or goblins.

**WATER-SKIN:** A leather bag made to hold water—the Middle-earth equivalent of a water bottle or canteen.

**WIGHTS:** Wraiths or ghostlike creatures of Middle-earth.

**WORM:** (Also Wyrm). Another word for *dragon* (derogatory).