Summer Assignments

Heroes and Fiends Students
Episcopal Collegiate School

Required: Read *The Hobbit* by J. R. R. Tolkien (ISBN 9780547928227)

Tolkien's *The Hobbit, or There and Back Again* is a foundational text of modern fantasy, but it also belongs to a tradition of heroic literature that goes back to *Beowulf* and Norse myth. As such, it will serve as a useful introduction to our course on literature about heroes and monsters. As you read, consider how this text invites you to think about who you are, and how you can develop a voice that is truly your own rather than one handed to you by the world around you.

Recommended:

- **Annotate with care.** As you read this novel, think about the questions below:
  - What purpose do monsters serve in literature, film, art, and life?
  - What is a hero, and what does it mean to be heroic?
  - How are cultural values (heroic ideals) expressed in literature through monsters and their relationships with humans?
  - How are words "magic"?

Questions? Email David Adkins at dadkins@episcopalcollegiate.org