

A Chronological Middle-Earth Reading List

by Nick Senger Teen Literacy Specialist (updated for own use by member Amon Rudh to include new issues and personal preference regarding some additional volumes.) The original version without which this could not have been created is [here](#)

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Introduction

This reading list is a guide for those who want to read Tolkien's works in the order in which they took place in Middle-Earth, rather than in the order Tolkien originally wrote them. The reading order is NOT recommended for those who have never read any of Tolkien's works before. The reader should have already read *The Hobbit*, *The Lord of the Rings* and *The Silmarillion* at least once before attempting this list.

Books Needed:

- The Silmarillion
- The History of Middle-earth, Volume 1
- The History of Middle-earth, Volumes 2
- The History of Middle-earth, Volumes 3
- Unfinished Tales
- The Children of Húrin
- Beren and Luthien
- The Fall of Gondolin
- The Fall of Numenor
- The History of the Hobbit
- The Reader's Guide to Lord of the Rings
- Bilbo's Last Song
- The Hobbit
- The Lord of the Rings
- The Nature of Middle Earth

Recommended:

- The Atlas of Middle-earth by Karen Wynn Fonstad
- The Complete Guide to Middle-earth by Robert Foster
- Tales from the Perilous Realm
- The Letters of Tolkien

The Reading List

1. "Ainulindalë" and "Valaquenta" from *The Silmarillion*
2. "Quenta Silmarillion" from *The Silmarillion* Chapters 1-19
3. "The Lay of Leithian" from *The Lays of Beleriand* (v. 3 of *The Histories of Middle-earth*) (extension of part of Chapter 19 of *The Silmarillion*)

4. Beren and Luthien
5. The Silmarillion Chapters 20-21
6. "Narn i Hîn Húrin" from Unfinished Tales (extension of Chapter 21 of The Silmarillion)
7. The Children of Hurin
8. The Silmarillion Chapters 22-23
9. "Of Tuor and His Coming To Gondolin" from Unfinished Tales (extension of part of Chapter 23 of The Silmarillion)
10. The Fall of Gondolin
11. "Akallabeth" from The Silmarillion
12. Appendix A: The Numenorean Kings - Numenor, from The Lord of the Rings
13. Part Two of Unfinished Tales
14. The Fall of Numenor
15. "Tal-Elmar" from The Peoples of Middle-earth (v. 12 of The Histories of Middle-earth)
16. "The Numenorean Chapters" of The Lost Road (v. 5 of The Histories of Middle-earth)
17. "Of the Rings of Power and the Third Age" from The Silmarillion
18. "The Disaster of the Gladden Fields" from Unfinished Tales
19. Appendix A: The Numenorean Kings – The Realms in Exile, from The Lord of the Rings (the line from Isildur to Aragorn II)
20. Appendix A: The Numenorean Kings – Eriador, Arnor and the Heirs of Isildur, from The Lord of the Rings (a history of the northern kingdoms)
21. Appendix A: The Numenorean Kings – Gondor and the Heirs of Anarion, from The Lord of the Rings (a history of the southern kingdom)
22. "Cirion and Eorl" from Unfinished Tales
23. Appendix A: The House of Eorl, from The Lord of the Rings (the history of the Kings of the Mark of Rohan)
24. Appendix A: The Numenorean Kings – The Tale of Arwen and Aragorn, from The Lord of the Rings
25. "The Istari," "The Palantiri," and "The Druedan," from Unfinished Tales, in that order
26. Appendix A: Durin's Folk, from The Lord of the Rings
27. The Hobbit
28. The History of the Hobbit
29. "The Quest of Erebor," from Unfinished Tales
30. The Fellowship of the Ring (optional extra Tales From the Perilous Realm, particularly the section The Adventures of Tom Bombadil)

31. The Two Towers
32. The Return of the King
33. Bilbo's Last Song
34. The Lord of the Rings Reader's Companion
35. "The Hunt for the Ring" and "The Battle of the Fords of Isen", from Unfinished Tales (refers to things taking place during The Lord of the Rings)
36. The Epilogue to The Lord of the Rings, from The End of the Third Age / Sauron Defeated (v. 9 of The Histories of Middle-earth)
37. The Nature of Middle Earth
38. The Letters of Tolkien