



THE LORD OF THE RINGS (TRILOGY)

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Introduction

The Lord of the Rings is a series of three epic fantasy adventure films directed by Peter Jackson, based on the novel written by J. R. R. Tolkien. The films are subtitled *The Fellowship of the Ring* (2001), *The Two Towers* (2002), and *The Return of the King* (2003). Produced and distributed by New Line Cinema with the co-production of WingNut Films, it is an international venture between New Zealand and the United States. The films feature an ensemble cast including Elijah Wood, Ian McKellen, Liv Tyler, Viggo Mortensen, Sean Astin, Cate Blanchett, John Rhys-Davies, Christopher Lee, Billy Boyd, Dominic Monaghan, Orlando Bloom, Hugo Weaving, Andy Serkis and Sean Bean.

Set in the fictional world of Middle-earth¹, the films follow the hobbit Frodo Baggins as he and the Fellowship embark on a quest to destroy the One Ring, to ensure the destruction of its maker, the Dark Lord Sauron. The Fellowship eventually splits up and Frodo continues the quest with his loyal companion Sam and the treacherous Gollum. Meanwhile, Aragorn, heir in exile to the throne of Gondor, along with Legolas, Gimli, Boromir, Merry, Pippin and the wizard Gandalf, unite to save the Free Peoples of Middle-earth from the forces of Sauron and rally them in the War of the Ring to aid Frodo by distracting Sauron's attention.

The three films were shot simultaneously and entirely in Jackson's native New Zealand from 11 October 1999 until 22 December 2000, with pick-up shots done from 2001 to 2004. It was one of the biggest and most ambitious film projects ever undertaken, with a budget of \$281 million. The first film in the series premiered at the Odeon Leicester Square in London on 10 December 2001; the second film premiered at the Ziegfeld Theatre in New York City on 5 December 2002; the third film premiered at the Embassy Theatre in Wellington on 1 December 2003. An extended edition of each film was released on home video a year after its release in cinemas. The Lord of the Rings is widely regarded as one of the greatest and most influential film series ever made. It was a major financial success and is among the highest-grossing film series of all time with \$2.991 billion in worldwide receipts. Each film was critically acclaimed, with high

¹ Middle-earth is the fictional setting of much of the English writer J. R. R. Tolkien's fantasy.

praise for their innovative special effects, acting, set design, musical score and emotional depth, and heavily awarded, the series winning 17 out of its 30 Academy Award nominations.

In 2021, *The Fellowship of the Ring* was selected for preservation in the United States National Film Registry by the Library of Congress for being "culturally, historically, or aesthetically significant".

Films

The Fellowship of the Ring

In the Second Age of Middle-earth, the lords of Elves, Dwarves, and Men are given Rings of Power. Unbeknownst to them, the Dark Lord Sauron forges the One Ring in Mount Doom, instilling into it a great part of his power, in order to dominate the other Rings so he might conquer Middle-earth. A final alliance of Men and Elves battles Sauron's forces in Mordor. Isildur of Gondor severs Sauron's finger and the Ring with it, thereby vanquishing Sauron and returning him to spirit form. With Sauron's first defeat, the Third Age of Middle-earth begins. The Ring's influence corrupts Isildur, who takes it for himself and is later killed by Orcs. The Ring is lost in a river for 2,500 years until it is found by Gollum, who owns it for over four and a half centuries. The ring abandons Gollum and it is subsequently found by a hobbit named Bilbo Baggins, who is unaware of its history.

Sixty years later, Bilbo celebrates his 111th birthday in the Shire, reuniting with his old friend, the wizard Gandalf the Grey. Bilbo departs the Shire for one last adventure, and he leaves his inheritance, including the Ring, to his nephew Frodo. Gandalf investigates the Ring, discovers its true nature, and learns that Gollum was captured and tortured by Sauron's Orcs, revealing two words during his interrogation: "Shire" and "Baggins." Gandalf returns and warns Frodo to leave the Shire. As Frodo departs with his friend, gardener Samwise Gamgee, Gandalf rides to Isengard to meet with the wizard Saruman, but discovers his alliance with Sauron, who has dispatched his nine undead Nazgûl servants to find Frodo.

Frodo and Sam are joined by fellow hobbits Merry and Pippin, and they evade the Nazgûl before arriving in Bree, where they are meant to meet Gandalf. However, Gandalf never arrives, having been taken prisoner by Saruman. The hobbits are then aided by a Ranger named Strider, who promises to escort them to Rivendell; however, they are ambushed by the Nazgûl on Weathertop, and their leader, the Witch-King, stabs Frodo with a Morgul blade. Arwen, an Elf and Strider's beloved, locates Strider and rescues Frodo, summoning flood-waters that sweep the Nazgûl away. She takes him to Rivendell, where he is healed by the Elves. Frodo meets with Gandalf, who escaped Isengard on a Great Eagle. That night, Strider reunites with Arwen, and they affirm their love for each other.

Facing the threat of both Sauron and Saruman, Arwen's father, Lord Elrond, decides against keeping the Ring in Rivendell. He holds a council of Elves, Men, and Dwarves, also attended by Frodo and Gandalf, that decides the Ring must be destroyed in the fires of Mount Doom. Frodo volunteers to take the Ring, accompanied by Gandalf, Sam, Merry, Pippin, Elf Legolas, Dwarf Gimli, Boromir of Gondor, and Strider—who is actually Aragorn, Isildur's heir and the rightful King of Gondor. Bilbo, now living in Rivendell, gives Frodo his sword Sting, and a chainmail shirt made of mithril.

The Fellowship of the Ring sets off over the mountain Caradhras, but Saruman summons a storm that forces them to travel through the Mines of Moria. After finding the Dwarves of Moria dead, the Fellowship is attacked by Orcs and a cave troll. They hold them off but are confronted by Durin's Bane: a Balrog residing within the mines. While the others escape, Gandalf fends off the Balrog and casts it into a vast chasm, but the Balrog drags Gandalf down into the darkness with him. The devastated Fellowship reaches Lothlórien, ruled by the Elf-queen Galadriel, who privately informs Frodo that only he can complete the quest and that one of his friends in the Fellowship will try to take the Ring. Meanwhile, Saruman creates an army of Uruk-hai in Isengard to find and kill the Fellowship.

The Fellowship travels by river to Parth Galen. Frodo wanders off and is confronted by Boromir, who tries to take the Ring as Lady Galadriel had predicted. Uruk-hai scouts then ambush the Fellowship, mortally wounding Boromir as he fails to stop them from taking Merry and Pippin as prisoners.

Aragorn arrives and comforts Boromir as he dies, promising to help the people of Gondor in the coming conflict. Fearing the Ring will corrupt his friends, Frodo decides to travel to Mordor alone, but allows Sam to come along, recalling his promise to Gandalf to look after him. As Aragorn, Legolas, and Gimli set out to rescue Merry and Pippin, Frodo and Sam make their way down the mountain pass of Eryn Mui, journeying on to Mordor.

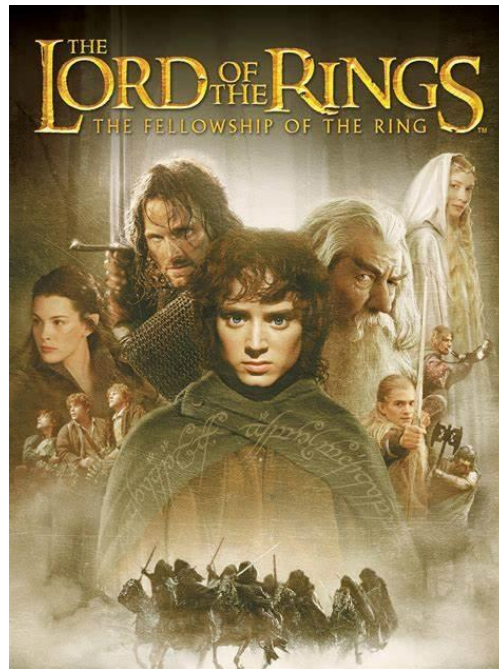


Figure 1- The Fellowship of the Ring (movie poster)

The Two Towers

Awakening from a dream of Gandalf fighting the Balrog in Moria, Frodo Baggins and Samwise Gamgee find themselves lost in the Eryn Mui near Mordor and discover they are being tracked by Gollum, a former bearer of the One Ring. Capturing Gollum, Frodo takes pity and allows him to guide them, reminding Sam that they will need Gollum's help to infiltrate Mordor.

Aragorn, Legolas, and Gimli pursue a band of Uruk-hai to save their companions Merry and Pippin, entering the kingdom of Rohan. The Uruk-hai are ambushed by a group of Rohirrim, allowing the Hobbits to escape into Fangorn Forest. Meeting Aragorn's group, the Rohirrim's leader Éomer explains that he and his men have been exiled by Rohan's king, Théoden, who is under the control of Saruman and his servant Gríma Wormtongue. Éomer believes Merry and Pippin were killed during the raid but leaves the group two horses.

Searching for the Hobbits in Fangorn, Aragorn's group encounters Gandalf, who after his fight against the Balrog was resurrected as Gandalf the White to help save Middle-earth.

Gandalf leads the trio to Rohan's capital, Edoras, where Gandalf frees Théoden from Saruman's control. Aragorn stops Théoden from executing Wormtongue, who flees. Learning of Saruman's plans to destroy Rohan with his Uruk-hai army, Théoden evacuates his citizens to the fortress of The Hornburg at Helm's Deep. Gandalf departs to find Éomer and his followers, hoping they will fight for their restored king. Aragorn befriends Théoden's niece, Éowyn, who becomes infatuated with him. When the refugees travelling to Helm's Deep are attacked by Saruman's Warg-riding Orcs, Aragorn falls from a cliff and is presumed dead. He is found by his horse Brego and rides to Helm's Deep, witnessing Saruman's army marching to the fortress. In Rivendell, Arwen is told by her father Elrond that Aragorn will not return. He reminds her that if she remains in Middle-earth, she will outlive Aragorn by thousands of years, and she reluctantly departs for Valinor. Elrond is contacted by Galadriel of Lothlórien, who convinces him that the Elves should honour their alliance to men, and they dispatch an army of Elves to Helm's Deep.

In Fangorn, Merry and Pippin meet Treebeard, an Ent. Convincing Treebeard that they are allies, they are brought to an Ent Council, where the Ents decide not to take part in the coming war. Pippin asks Treebeard to take them in the direction of Isengard, where they witness the deforestation caused by Saruman's war effort. Enraged, Treebeard and the Ents storm Isengard, trapping Saruman in his tower. Aragorn arrives at Helm's Deep, bringing word that Saruman's army is close and Théoden must prepare for battle despite being vastly outnumbered. The army of Elves from Lothlórien arrives, as does Saruman's army, and a battle ensues. The Uruk-hai breach the outer wall with explosives and during the ensuing charge kill the Elves' commander, Haldir. The defenders retreat into the keep, where Aragorn convinces Théoden to meet the Uruk-hai in one last charge. At dawn, as the defenders are overwhelmed, Gandalf and Éomer arrive with the Rohirrim, turning the tide of the battle. The surviving Uruk-hai flee into Fangorn Forest and are killed by the Ents. Gandalf warns that Sauron will retaliate.

Gollum leads Frodo and Sam through the Dead Marshes to the Black Gate, but recommends they enter Mordor by another route. Frodo and Sam are captured by Rangers of Ithilien led by Faramir, brother of the late Boromir. Frodo helps Faramir catch Gollum to save him from being killed by the Rangers. Learning of the One Ring, Faramir takes his captives to Gondor to bring the ring to his father Denethor. Passing through the besieged city of Osgiliath, Frodo tries to explain to Faramir the true nature of the ring, and Sam explains that Boromir was driven mad by its power. A Nazgûl nearly captures Frodo, who falls under the ring's power, fortunately Sam saves him and reminds him that they are fighting for the good still left in Middle-earth. Impressed by Frodo's resolve, Faramir releases them. Gollum decides to betray Frodo and reclaim the Ring by leading the group to "Her" upon arriving at Cirith Ungol.



Figure 2- The Two Towers (movie poster)

The Return of the King

The hobbit Sméagol is fishing with his cousin Déagol, who discovers the One Ring in the river. Sméagol's mind is ensnared by the Ring, and he kills his cousin for it. Increasingly corrupted physically and mentally, he retreats into the Misty Mountains and becomes known as Gollum. Centuries later, during the War of the Ring, Gandalf leads Aragorn, Legolas, Gimli, and King Théoden of Rohan to Isengard, where they reunite with Merry and Pippin. Gandalf retrieves Saruman's palantír, and the group returns to Edoras to celebrate their victory at Helm's Deep. Pippin looks into the palantír, seeing Sauron and a burning tree.

Gandalf deduces that the enemy plans to attack Gondor's capital Minas Tirith; he rides there to warn Gondor's steward Denethor. Pippin, who accompanies him, swears fealty to Denethor, whose now-dead heir Boromir had saved his life; on Gandalf's instruction, he triggers the lighting of the beacons, which call for help from Rohan.

Frodo, who carries the Ring, and Sam continue their journey towards Mordor, unaware that Gollum, now their guide, plans to betray them and take the Ring for himself. The trio witness the Witch-king of Angmar, lord of the nine Nazgûl, setting off towards Gondor with his army of Orcs. Gollum conspires to frame Sam for eating food supplies and desiring the Ring; influenced by the growing power of the Ring, Frodo is taken in by the deception, and orders Sam to go home. Gollum then tricks Frodo into venturing into the lair of the giant spider Shelob. Frodo narrowly escapes and confronts Gollum, who falls down a chasm after a scuffle. Shelob discovers, paralyzes, and binds Frodo, but is wounded and driven away by a returning Sam, who, mourning Frodo's apparent death, takes the Ring. Sam realizes his mistake when a group of Orcs takes Frodo captive, but manages to rescue Frodo as the Orcs fight among themselves. Now inside Mordor, the hobbits continue towards Mount Doom, their destination.

As King Théoden gathers his army, Elrond tells Aragorn that Arwen is dying, having refused to leave Middle-earth. Elrond gives Aragorn Andúril, reforged from the shards of King Elendil's sword Narsil, and urges him to commit to claiming Gondor's throne, to which he is heir. Joined by Legolas and Gimli, Aragorn travels the Paths of the Dead, and pledges to release the ghosts there from their curse should they come to Gondor's aid. Meanwhile, Faramir, who was earlier overwhelmed and driven back to Minas Tirith by the Witch-king, is gravely wounded in a suicide charge; believing his son to be dead, Denethor falls into madness. Gandalf marshals the defenders, but the huge Orc army breaks into the city. Denethor attempts to burn himself and Faramir on a pyre, but Pippin alerts Gandalf and they rescue Faramir. Denethor, set ablaze and in agony, jumps to his death.

Théoden arrives and leads his army against the Orcs. Despite initial success against Orcs in the ensuing battle, they are decimated by the Oliphaunt-riding Haradrim and the Witch-king mortally wounds Théoden; however, his niece

Éowyn slays the Witch-king with Merry's help. Théoden dies in his niece's arms. Aragorn then arrives with his Army of the Dead, who overcome Sauron's forces and win the battle. Their oath fulfilled, the Dead are released from their curse. Aragorn decides to march on Mordor to distract Sauron from Frodo, now extremely weak, and Sam; all of Sauron's remaining forces march to meet Aragorn's diversion, allowing the hobbits to reach Mount Doom. Gollum, who survived his earlier fall, attacks them, but Frodo still manages to enter the mountain. There, he succumbs to the Ring's power, putting it on his finger, but Gollum manages to bite off his finger and reclaim it. They struggle together and both fall off the ledge. Frodo manages to cling on, and is pulled up by Sam, but Gollum falls and dies; the Ring, which fell with him, disintegrates in the lava. Mount Doom erupts as Sauron meets his demise, while Aragorn's army emerges victorious as its enemies flee.

Gandalf rescues the hobbits with the help of eagles, and the surviving Fellowship is happily reunited in Minas Tirith. Aragorn is crowned King of Gondor and marries Arwen. The Hobbits return home to the Shire, where Sam marries Rosie Cotton. A few years later, Frodo departs Middle-earth for the Undying Lands with his uncle Bilbo, Gandalf, and the Elves. He leaves Sam the Red Book of Westmarch, which details their adventures. Sam returns to the Shire, where he embraces Rosie and their children.



Figure 3- The Return of the King (movie poster)

Casting

Jackson began abstract discussions on casting during the development of the scripts with Miramax. Jackson, Walsh and Boyens compiled a casting wishlist, which included Cate Blanchett for Galadriel and Ian Holm for Bilbo.[3] Wondering whether Patrick Stewart would be right for the part of Gandalf, Philippa Boyens drew a tape of him performing opposite Ian McKellen, only to suggest the latter to Jackson. McKellen became Jackson's first choice for Gandalf. Christopher Lee sent Jackson a photograph of him in a wizard's costume, wanting to play Gandalf, but Jackson decided he would be a perfect Saruman, instead.

Miramax wanted a recognizable name for Gandalf, and suggested Max von Sydow or Paul Scofield and, wanting an American star, even mentioned Morgan Freeman. When New Line took over, they suggested Christopher Plummer or Sean Connery for the part (both declined) and put a veto against Richard Harris when his name came up. When von Sydow inquired for the part later, his agent told him they were looking for an English actor.

While casting, Jackson looked for backup options for the various parts, including Lucy Lawless and Nicole Kidman for Galadriel; Anthony Hopkins or Sylvester McCoy (eventually recast as Radagast) for Bilbo; Paul Scofield, Jeremy Irons, Malcolm McDowell or Tim Curry for Saruman. For Gandalf, they looked into Tom Baker, Tom Wilkinson, Sam Neil, Bernard Hill (who was instead cast as Theoden) and Peter O'Toole, and into several older actors who auditioned for other parts, such as Patrick McGoohan and Anthony Hopkins.

Miramax and Jackson discussed Sir Daniel Day-Lewis for Aragorn, starting "fanciful internet speculation" that Day-Lewis was approached for the part numerous times, although Jackson eventually inquired about him. Jackson cast Stuart Townsend, whom the studio deemed too young. After shooting began, Jackson agreed and decided to recast the role. They approached Viggo Mortensen, but also spoke to Russell Crowe (who auditioned for Boromir previously), as a backup choice.

Patrick McGoohan, their first choice for Denethor, proved "quite grumpy" when they met, and they instead looked into Donald Sutherland and John Rhys-Davies, and ultimately cast John Noble. Davies was recast as Gimli, instead of

Billy Connolly (later cast as Dain), Robert Trebor and Timothy Spall. In conversations with Miramax, Liam Neeson's name came up for Boromir, but he declined. Daniel Craig auditioned. New Line suggested Nicolas Cage, but the filmmakers declined and cast Sean Bean.

Main Cast

Table 1- Characters and cast

Character	Actor
Frodo Baggins	Elijah Wood
Aragorn	Viggo Mortensen
Boromir	Sean Bean
Meriadoc "Merry" Brandybuck	Dominic Monaghan
Samwise Gamgee	Sean Astin
Gandalf	Ian McKellen
Gimli	John Rhys-Davies
Legolas	Orlando Bloom
Peregrin "Pippin" Took	Billy Boyd
Galadriel	Cate Blanchett
Elrond	Hugo Weaving
Arwen	Liv Tyler
Gollum/Sméagol	Andy Serkis
Saruman	Christopher Lee



Figure 4- Main cast

Development

Previous attempts

Previous attempts to film Tolkien's works were made by William Snyder, Peter Shaffer and John Boorman. These attempts resulted in a couple of unproduced scripts, concept art and an animated short. Other filmmakers and producers to have had an interest in adapting Tolkien are said to include Walt Disney, Al Brodax, Forrest Ackerman, Denis O'Dell (who considered Richard Lester to direct, but instead approached David Lean, Stanley Kubrick and Michelangelo Antonioni) and George Lucas. The rights to adapt Tolkien's works passed through the hands of several studios, having been briefly leased to Rembrandt Films before being sold perpetually to United Artists. In 1976, UA passed the rights to *The Lord of the Rings* (and a part of the rights to *The Hobbit*) to Fantasy Films.

In 1977, an animated adaptation of *The Hobbit* was produced as a TV special by Rankin and Bass, and in 1978 Ralph Bakshi made an animated feature of the first half of *The Lord of the Rings*. While profitable, the film did not make enough money to automatically warrant the sequel which would close the story, and an argument with producer Saul Zaentz led Bakshi to abandon the project. Rankin/Bass then followed in 1980 with an animated TV adaptation of *The Return of the King*. Several other Tolkienesque fantasy films were produced at the time, including Jim Henson and Frank Oz's *The Dark Crystal* and Lucas's *Willow*.

At the time that Bakshi's film aired, a teenager Peter Jackson hadn't read the book, but "heard the name", and went to see the film: "I liked the early part—it had some quaint sequences in Hobbiton, a creepy encounter with the Black Rider on the road, and a few quite good battle scenes—but then, about half way through, the storytelling became very disjointed and disorientating and I really didn't understand what was going on. However, what it did do was to make me want to read the book—if only to find out what happened!" Jackson bought a tie-in paperback edition. He later read *The Hobbit* and *The Silmarillion*, and listened to the 1981 BBC radio adaptation. Assuming someone will one day adapt it to a live-action film, Jackson read on some previous attempts to bring the piece to the screen. He hadn't watched the Rankin and Bass TV Specials.

Pitch to Miramax

In 1995, while completing post-production on *The Frighteners*, Jackson and Fran Walsh discussed making an original fantasy film, but couldn't think of a scenario that wasn't Tolkien-esque, and eventually decided to look up the film rights. They went to Harvey Weinstein from Miramax, who got the rights from Saul Zaentz. Jackson knew it would take multiple films to do Tolkien justice, but initially pitched a single trilogy: one film based on *The Hobbit* and, if that would prove successful, two *Lord of the Rings* films shot back-to-back. Jackson began rereading *The Hobbit*, looking at illustrations and commissioning concept art from the book, but the rights eventually proved unattainable, having been split between Zaentz and United Artists. Weinstein tried to buy the studio's share of the rights, but was unsuccessful.

With *The Hobbit* postponed for a later prequel, Jackson proceeded with making two or more *Lord of the Rings* films: "We pitched the idea of three films and Miramax didn't really want to take that risk, but we agreed on two." He began writing the scripts with Walsh and Stephen Sinclair, storyboard with Christian Rivers and discussing casting ideas with the Weinsteins. Meanwhile, Weta Digital began software development for the digital effects required, and WETA Workshop were producing props and concept art. Sinclair later dropped from the project, but Jackson felt that some of his contributions survived into the finished scripts, particularly the middle film, *The Two Towers*, for which he is credited.

Move to New Line

However, as the scripts took shape, it became clear that the budget required would exceed Miramax's capabilities. The Weinsteins suggested cutting the project to one film. Jackson inquired whether it could be around four-hours in duration, but Miramax insisted on two hours, suggesting major cuts to the story, which Jackson refused. Harvey Weinstein threatened to replace Jackson with screenwriter Hossein Amini and directors John Madden or Quentin Tarantino. Jackson believes this was an empty threat to get him to concede to making a one-film version himself.

Harvey eventually relented to putting the project on a turnaround, but the onerous conditions were meant to prevent the project from being taken up by

another studio. Jackson got an audience with New Line CEO Robert Shaye, who accepted the project, but requested that it be expanded into a trilogy. When deciding on a project, a production company never does so on a whim. New Line had many promising reasons that the trilogy would be successful which led them to sign on. Final Cut rights were shared contractually between Jackson and Bob Shaye, but there was never any interference in Jackson's cut.

Production

Jackson began storyboarding and screenwriting the series with Christian Rivers, Fran Walsh and Philippa Boyens in 1997 and assigned his crew to begin designing Middle-earth at the same time. Jackson, Walsh and Boyens did not write each film to correspond exactly to its respective book, opting instead to write a three-part adaptation with some sequences missing, some sequences created from scratch, and some sequences moved from one area to another regardless of its placement in the books. To allow the story to be clearer for viewers, Jackson takes a more chronological approach to the story than Tolkien's complex interlacing of storylines. During shooting, the screenplays continued to evolve, in part due to contributions from cast members looking to further explore their characters.

Earlier versions of the script included additional characters like Fatty Bolger, Glorfindel, Elladan, Elrohir, Erkenbrand, Imrahil and Forlong. At one point, Jackson even considered reintroducing Tom Bombadil in a cameo. Gimli was going to swear throughout the films, and Arwen would join the Fellowship in Rohan and share a nude scene with Aragorn in the pools of the Glittering Caves.

Jackson hired long-time collaborator Richard Taylor to lead Weta Workshop on five major design elements: armour, weapons, prosthetic makeup, creatures and miniatures. At New Line's request, animation supervisor Jim Rygiel replaced Weta Digital's Mark Stetson. In November 1997, famed Tolkien illustrators Alan Lee and John Howe joined the project; most of the imagery in the films is based on their various illustrations, but Jackson also relied on the work of Ted Nasmith, who later had to turn down an offer to join Alan and John. Jackson wanted realistic designs in the style of historical epics rather than fantasy films, citing *Braveheart* as an inspiration. "It might be clearer if I described it as an

historical film. Something very different to *Dark Crystal* or *Labyrinth*. Imagine something like *Braveheart*, but with a little of the visual magic of *Legend*. [...] It should have the historical authority of *Braveheart*, rather than the meaningless fantasy mumbo-jumbo of *Willow*.

Production designer Grant Major was charged with the task of converting Lee and Howe's designs into architecture, creating models of the sets, while Dan Hennah worked as art director, scouting locations and organizing the building of sets. Ngila Dickson collaborated with Richard Taylor on producing costumes, while Peter King and Peter Owen designed makeup and hair. Most of these crew members (and others) returned to work on *The Hobbit*².



Figure 5- Hobbiton, New Zealand

Jackson and cinematographer Andrew Lesnie considered shooting in large format like 65 mm film and/or to master the films at 4K, but both were cost-prohibitive and couldn't be done on New Zealand soil. They decided to shoot on fine-grain Super 35 mm film and subject the films to rigorous digital grading. Principal photography for all three films was conducted concurrently in many locations within New Zealand's conservation areas and national parks. Filming took place between 11 October 1999 and 22 December 2000. Pick-up shoots were conducted annually from 2001 to 2004. The series was shot at over 150 different locations, with seven different units shooting, as well as soundstages around Wellington and Queenstown.

Along with Jackson directing the whole production, other unit directors included John Mahaffie, Geoff Murphy, Fran Walsh, Barrie M. Osborne, Rick Porras and any other assistant director, producer, or writer available. Miniature

² The Hobbit is a film series consisting of three high fantasy adventure films directed by Peter Jackson.

Photography took place throughout the entire period, amounting to over 1,000 shooting days.

Weta Digital developed new technologies to allow for the groundbreaking digital effects required for the trilogy, including the development of the MASSIVE software to generate intelligent crowds for battle scenes, and advancing the art of motion capture, which was used on bipedal creatures like the Cave Troll or Gollum. With Jackson's future films, motion-capture technology came to be pushed so far that it became referred to as "digital makeup", although it was later clarified that during The Lord of the Rings period, it was still fairly reliant on the CG animators. Each film had the benefit of a full year of post-production time before its respective December release, often finishing in October–November, with the crew immediately going to work on the next film. Jackson originally wanted to edit all three films with Jamie Selkirk, but this proved too much work. The next idea was to have John Gilbert, Michael Horton and Selkirk, respectively, editing the three films simultaneously, but after a month that proved too difficult for Jackson, and the films were edited in consecutive years, although Selkirk continued to act as "Supervising Editor" on the first two entries. Daily rushes would often last up to four hours, and by the time The Fellowship of the Ring had been released, assembly cuts of the other two films (4½ hours each) were already prepared. In total, 1,828 km (six million feet) of film was edited down to the 11 hours and 26 minutes (686 minutes) of extended running time.

Director

Sir Peter Robert Jackson ONZ KNZM (born 31 October 1961) is a New Zealand film director, screenwriter, and film producer. He is best known as the director, writer, and producer of the Lord of the Rings trilogy (2001–2003) and the Hobbit trilogy (2012–2014), both of which are adapted from the novels of the same name by J. R. R. Tolkien. Other notable films include the critically lauded drama Heavenly Creatures (1994), the horror comedy The Frighteners (1996), the epic monster remake film King Kong (2005), the World War I documentary film They Shall Not Grow Old (2018), and the documentary The Beatles: Get Back (2021). He is the third-highest-grossing film director of all-time, his films having made over \$6.5 billion worldwide.

Jackson began his career with the "splatstick" horror comedy *Bad Taste* (1987) and the black comedy *Meet the Feebles* (1989) before filming the zombie comedy *Braindead* (1992). He shared a nomination for Academy Award for Best Original Screenplay with his partner Fran Walsh for *Heavenly Creatures*, which brought him to mainstream prominence in the film industry. Jackson has been awarded three Academy Awards for *The Lord of the Rings: The Return of the King* (2003), including the award for Best Director. His other awards include a Golden Globe, four Saturn Awards and three BAFTAs among others.

His production company is WingNut Films, and his most regular collaborators are co-writers and producers Walsh and Philippa Boyens. Jackson was made a Companion of the New Zealand Order of Merit in 2002. He was later knighted (as a Knight Companion of the order) by Anand Satyanand, the Governor-General of New Zealand, at a ceremony in Wellington in April 2010. In December 2014, Jackson was awarded a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame. Jackson won the rights to film Tolkien's epic in 1997 after meeting with producer Saul Zaentz. Originally working with Miramax Films towards a two-film production, Jackson was later pressured to render the story as a single film, and finally overcame a tight deadline by making a last-minute deal with New Line, who were keen on a trilogy.

Principal photography stretched from 11 October 1999 to 22 December 2000 with extensive location filming across New Zealand. With the benefit of extended post-production and extra periods of shooting before each film's release, the series met with huge success and sent Jackson's popularity soaring. *The Return of the King* itself met with huge critical acclaim, winning all eleven Oscars it was nominated for, including Best Picture³ and Best Director⁴. The film was the first of the fantasy film genre to win the award for Best Picture and was the second sequel to win Best Picture (the first being *The Godfather Part II*). Jackson's mother, Joan, died three days before the release of the first movie in the trilogy, *The Fellowship of the Ring*. There was a special showing of the film after her funeral.

³ The Academy Award for Best Picture is one of the Academy Awards presented annually by the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences (AMPAS) since the awards debuted in 1929.

⁴ The Academy Award for Best Director (officially known as the Academy Award of Merit for Directing) is an award presented annually by the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences (AMPAS).

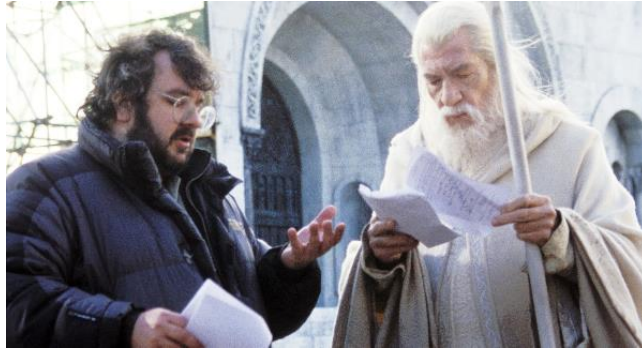


Figure 6- Behind the scenes

Music

Howard Shore composed, orchestrated, conducted and produced the trilogy's music. Shore visited the set in 1999, and composed a version of the Shire theme and Frodo's Theme before Jackson began shooting. In August 2000 he visited the set again, and watched the assembly cuts of *The Fellowship of the Ring* and *The Return of the King*. In the music, Shore included many (85 to 110) leitmotifs to represent various characters, cultures and places—the largest catalogue of leitmotifs in the history of cinema, surpassing, for comparison, that of the entire *Star Wars* film series. For example, there are multiple leitmotifs just for the hobbits and the Shire. Although the first film had some of its score recorded in Wellington, virtually all of the trilogy's score was recorded in Watford Town Hall and mixed at Abbey Road Studios. Jackson planned to advise the score for six weeks each year in London, though for *The Two Towers* he stayed for twelve.

The score is primarily played by the London Philharmonic Orchestra, ranging from 93 to 120 players throughout the recording. London Voices, the London Oratory School Schola boy choir, and many artists such as Ben Del Maestro, Sheila Chandra, Enya, Renée Fleming, James Galway, Annie Lennox and Emiliana Torrini contributed. Even actors Billy Boyd, Viggo Mortensen, Liv Tyler, Miranda Otto (extended cuts only for the latter two) and Peter Jackson (for a single gong sound in the second film) contributed to the score. Fran Walsh and Philippa Boyens served as librettists, writing lyrics to various music and songs, which David Salo translated into Tolkien's languages.

The third film's end song, "Into the West", was a tribute to a young filmmaker Jackson and Walsh befriended named Cameron Duncan, who died of cancer in 2003.

Shore composed a main theme for the Fellowship rather than many different character themes, and its strength and weaknesses in volume are depicted at different points in the series. On top of that, individual themes were composed to represent different cultures. Infamously, the amount of music Shore had to write every day for the third film increased dramatically to around seven minutes. The music for the series has been voted best movie soundtrack of all time for the six years running, passing *Schindler's List* (1993), *Gladiator* (2000), *Star Wars* (1977) and *Out of Africa* (1985), respectively.

Soundtracks

Table 2- Soundtracks

Title	U.S. release date	Length	Composer	Label
The Fellowship of the Ring: Original Motion Picture Soundtrack	20 November 2001	71:29	Howard Shore	Reprise Records
The Two Towers: Original Motion Picture Soundtrack	10 December 2002	72:46		
The Return of the King: Original Motion Picture Soundtrack	25 November 2003	72:05		

Reception

Accolades

The three films together were nominated for a total of 30 Academy Awards, of which they won 17, both records for any movie trilogy. The Fellowship of the Ring earned 13 nominations, the most of any film at the 74th Academy Awards, winning four; The Two Towers won two awards from six nominations at the 75th Academy Awards; The Return of the King won in every category in which it was nominated at the 76th Academy Awards, setting the current Oscar record for the highest clean sweep, and its 11 Academy Awards wins ties the record held by *Ben-Hur* (1959) and *Titanic* (1997). The Return of the King also became only the second sequel to win the Oscar for Best Picture after *The Godfather Part II* (1974).

Additionally, members of the production crew won the Academy Award for Technical Achievement for the rendering of skin textures on creatures on The

Return of the King,[106] and Stephen Regelous won the Academy Award for Scientific and Engineering Award for the design and development of MASSIVE, "the autonomous agent animation system used for the battle sequences in The Lord of the Rings trilogy."

Each film in the series won the Hugo Award for Best Dramatic Presentation, the MTV Movie Award for Movie of the Year, and the Saturn Award for Best Fantasy Film. The first and third films also won the BAFTA Award for Best Film. The New York Film Critics Circle awarded The Return of the King its Best Picture Award at the 2003 Awards Ceremony, hosted by Andrew Johnston, chair of the organization at that time, who called it "a masterful piece of filmmaking."

Comparisons with the written work

Commentators have compared Jackson's film trilogy with Tolkien's written work, remarking that while both have been extremely successful commercially, they differ in many respects. Critics have admired Jackson's ability to film the long and complex work at all; the beauty of the cinematography, sets and costumes; and the epic scale of his version of Tolkien's story. They have however found the characters and the story greatly weakened by Jackson's emphasis on action and violence at the expense of psychological depth; the loss of Tolkien's emphasis on free will and individual responsibility; and the replacement of Frodo's inner journey by an American monomyth with Aragorn as the hero.

As for whether the film trilogy is faithful to the novel, opinions range from Verlyn Flieger's feeling that a film adaptation is not even worth attempting, Wayne G. Hammond's opinion that the film sacrifices the book's richness of characterization and narrative for violence, thrills and cheap humour, or Christopher Tolkien's view that Jackson's interpretation is unacceptable, to granting, with Jackson and Boyens, that the film version is inevitably different. From that standpoint, critics such as Brian Rosebury and Tom Shippey have described the films as a partial success, giving some of the feeling and capturing some of the key themes of the novel. Yvette Kisor considers that Jackson was unfaithful to many of Tolkien's details, but succeeded in achieving something of the same impact and feelings of providence, eucatastrophe and

interconnectedness. Dimitra Fimi suggests that Jackson was continuing Tolkien's tradition of adapting folklore, incorporating both the fans' views on that folklore and cinematic traditions such as the zombie in the film trilogy to produce its own modern folklore.

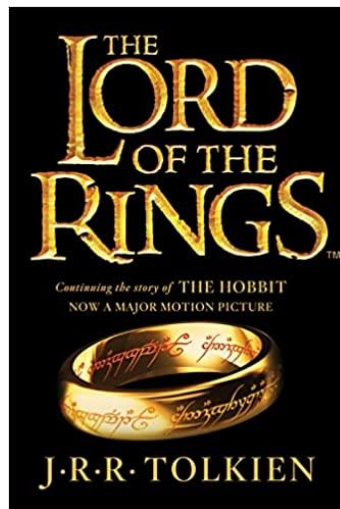


Figure 7- Book

J. R. R. Tolkien

John Ronald Reuel Tolkien CBE FRSL (/ˈruːl ˈtɒlkiːn/, ROOL TOL-keen; 3 January 1892 – 2 September 1973) was an English writer, poet, philologist⁵, and academic, best known as the author of the high fantasy works *The Hobbit* and *The Lord of the Rings*.

From 1925-45, Tolkien was the Rawlinson and Bosworth Professor of Anglo-Saxon and a Fellow of Pembroke College, both at the University of Oxford. He then moved within the same university, to become the Merton Professor of English Language and Literature and Fellow of Merton College, positions he held from 1945 until his retirement in 1959. Tolkien was a close friend of C. S. Lewis, a co-member of the informal literary discussion group *The Inklings*. He was appointed a Commander of the Order of the British Empire by Queen Elizabeth II on 28 March 1972.

After Tolkien's death, his son Christopher published a series of works based on his father's extensive notes and unpublished manuscripts, including

⁵ Philology is the study of language in oral and written historical sources; it is the intersection of textual criticism, literary criticism, history, and linguistics (with especially strong ties to etymology).

The Silmarillion. These, together with *The Hobbit* and *The Lord of the Rings*, form a connected body of tales, poems, fictional histories, invented languages, and literary essays about a fantasy world called Arda and, within it, Middle-earth. Between 1951 and 1955, Tolkien applied the term *legendarium* to the larger part of these writings.

While many other authors had published works of fantasy before Tolkien, the great success of *The Hobbit* and *The Lord of the Rings* led directly to a popular resurgence of the genre. This has caused Tolkien to be popularly identified as the "father" of modern fantasy literature—or, more precisely, of high fantasy.

The request for a sequel prompted Tolkien to begin what became his most famous work: the epic novel *The Lord of the Rings* (originally published in three volumes in 1954–1955). Tolkien spent more than ten years writing the primary narrative and appendices for *The Lord of the Rings*, during which time he received the constant support of the Inklings, in particular his closest friend C. S. Lewis, the author of *The Chronicles of Narnia*. Both *The Hobbit* and *The Lord of the Rings* are set against the background of *The Silmarillion*, but in a time long after it.

Tolkien at first intended *The Lord of the Rings* to be a children's tale in the style of *The Hobbit*, but it quickly grew darker and more serious in the writing. Though a direct sequel to *The Hobbit*, it addressed an older audience, drawing on the immense backstory of Beleriand that Tolkien had constructed in previous years, and which eventually saw posthumous publication in *The Silmarillion* and other volumes. Tolkien strongly influenced the fantasy genre that grew up after the book's success.

The Lord of the Rings became immensely popular in the 1960s and has remained so ever since, ranking as one of the most popular works of fiction of the 20th century, judged by both sales and reader surveys. In the 2003 "Big Read" survey conducted by the BBC, *The Lord of the Rings* was found to be the UK's "Best-loved Novel". Australians voted *The Lord of the Rings* "My Favourite Book" in a 2004 survey conducted by the Australian ABC. In a 1999 poll of Amazon.com customers, *The Lord of the Rings* was judged to be their favourite "book of the millennium". In 2002 Tolkien was voted the 92nd "greatest Briton"

in a poll conducted by the BBC, and in 2004 he was voted 35th in the SABC3's Great South Africans, the only person to appear in both lists. His popularity is not limited to the English-speaking world: in a 2004 poll inspired by the UK's "Big Read" survey, about 250,000 Germans found *The Lord of the Rings* to be their favorite work of literature.



Figure 8- J. R. R. Tolkien

Home media

The first two films were released on two-disc standard edition DVDs containing previews of the following film. The success of the theatrical cuts brought about four-disc extended editions, with new editing, added special effects and music. Jackson came up with the idea of an extended cut for LaserDisc and DVD formats while in preproduction. He could insert some of the violence that he thought he would have to trim to get a PG-13 rating for the theatre, and he could tailor the pacing to the demands of the small screen, which he said were "completely different". He observed that the extended cuts will be "ultimately seen as the more definitive versions of the films".

The extended cuts of the films and the supplemental special features (labelled "appendices" in homage to the books) were spread over two discs each, and a limited collector's edition was also released featuring sculpted bookends. *The Fellowship of the Ring* was released on 12 November 2002, containing 30 minutes of extra footage. *The Two Towers*, released on 18 November 2003, contains 46 minutes of extra footage. *The Return of the King* was released on 14 December 2004, with 52 minutes more footage. The extended cuts have also played at cinemas, most notably the first two for a 16

December 2003 marathon screening (dubbed "Trilogy Tuesday") culminating in a screening of the third film. In 2006, both versions of each film were released together in a limited edition, which includes a new feature-length documentary for each film (but not the extras from the previous releases).

Warner Bros. released the trilogy's theatrical versions on Blu-ray in a boxed set on 6 April 2010. An extended edition Blu-ray box set was released on 28 June 2011. Each film's extended Blu-ray version is identical to the extended DVD version, including the appendices. In 2014, Blu-ray steelbook editions of the five-disc extended editions were released. The first, *The Fellowship of the Ring*, was released on 24 March 2014. The discs are identical to those found in the previous five-disc Blu-ray set. The Blu-ray releases were criticized for colour timing issues which degraded the look of the films.

The *Lord of the Rings* trilogy was released in Ultra HD Blu-ray in 2020, featuring both the theatrical and extended editions of the films. The films, along with those of *The Hobbit* trilogy, were remastered to give all six films a more consistent colour treatment. Jackson explained that visual effects shots were improved for this release by "[removing] and [painting] out any imperfections," but that they had not been "[upgraded] or [enhanced]". An audio remastering was made as well. A 31-disc collector's set including both versions of all six films in 4K and Blu-ray formats, was released in 2021 for the 20-year anniversary of the first film; this, however, does not include the appendices. As of 2017, *The Lord of the Rings* films had a home media revenue of more than \$2.4 billion.

Table 3- Movie length

Film	Theatrical edition length	Extended edition length
The Fellowship of the Ring	178 minutes (2 hr, 58 min)	208 minutes (3 hr, 28 min)
The Two Towers	179 minutes (2 hr, 59 min)	226 minutes (3 hr, 46 min)
The Return of the King	201 minutes (3 hr, 21 min)	252 minutes (4 hr, 12 min)
Total runtime	558 minutes (9 hr, 18 min)	686 minutes (11 hr, 26 min)