

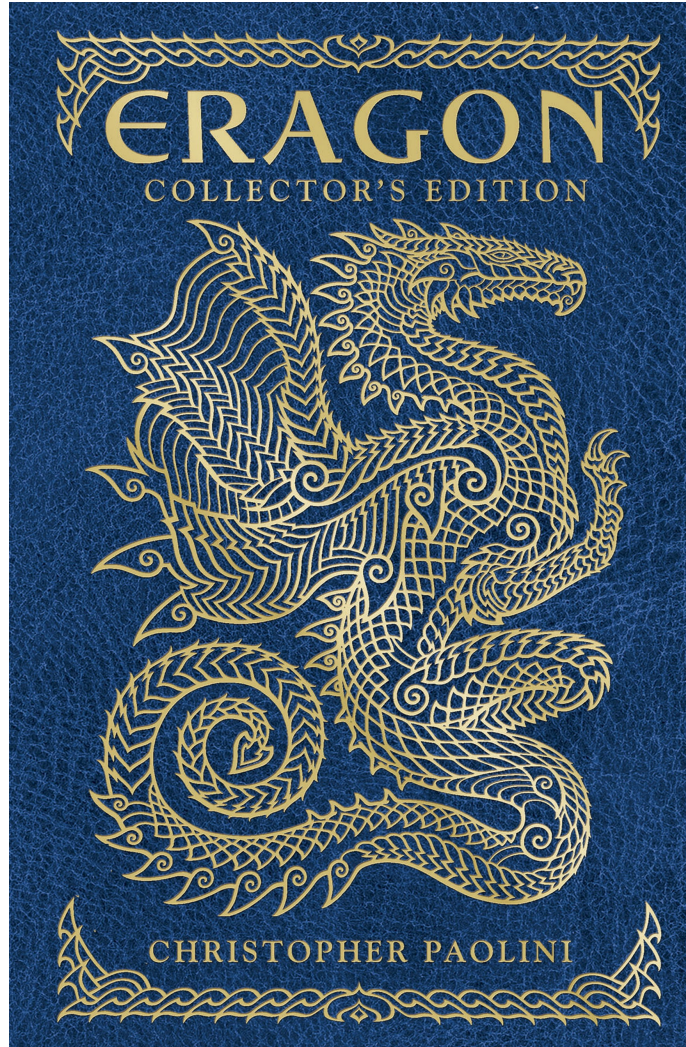
Teachers Guide

Created by Talita Paolini (see more at paolini.net/educators)

Eragon

With only an ancient sword, the brilliant-blue dragon Saphira, and advice from the old storyteller Brom, the young man Eragon sets off on a journey of destiny, magic, ancient glory, and love—a mythic adventure your students won't want to miss.

Eragon, Book 1 of the Inheritance Cycle . . .
where dragons walk the land and dreams come true!



For the Classroom

Get ready to study *Eragon* with these exciting projects!

Create the Mood: Decorate your classroom door with images of the dragon book cover, dragon eggs, fanciful swords, an elven forest, etc.

Follow Eragon: Draw (or have a student draw) a large map of Alagaësia and attach it to a wall. Trace Eragon's journey on the map as you progress through the book.

<http://www.paolini.net/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/MapAlagaesiaPrintOut.pdf>

Character Posters: On the day you introduce *Eragon*, put up posters for the main characters. Example: Eragon, Saphira, Arya, Brom, Joed, Angela, Roran, Katrina, Durza, Murtagh, Nasuada, Ajihad, and Orik. Aside from the name of a character at the top, each poster is blank—a mystery! Encourage students to build the posters as they meet the characters in the story by writing on their attributes (brave, faithful, black hair, short, powerful, etc.) and drawing or gluing on things that represent them.

Dragon Egg: Decorate your classroom with dragon eggs! Try these techniques:

- Layer paper machè over a balloon. Let dry. Then pop the balloon with a pin and paint the exterior. Search paper machè Easter eggs online for more ideas.
- Cut egg shapes from construction paper and decorate.
- Bake and decorate egg-shaped cookies.
- Form the eggs with modeling clay.
- If you are comfortable with students working with tacks, try this activity to make beautiful eggs: <http://www.shurtugal.com/2014/09/19/create-your-own-dragon-egg-with-this-easy-and-inexpensive-dragon-egg-art-project/>

For extra fun, place one or more large eggs in a nest of dried grass or twigs. One day they may even “hatch” into dragons!

Timeline: Build a timeline of events on the wall as you read through the story.

Discussion Questions

Help students explore the world of Alagaësia and think deeply about the story. As they ponder elements of an invented land, they practice real world critical thinking skills.

Reading Guides: Links to lists of questions for class discussions or writing assignments.

- <http://www.litlovers.com/reading-guides/13-fiction/298-eragon-paolini?start=3>
- https://www.bookbrowse.com/reading_guides/detail/index.cfm/book_number/1284/eragon

Dragon and Rider: Eragon and Saphira are young and inexperienced when they become linked. As a class, make a list of things boy and dragon need to learn to become a skilled Rider team. What strengths do each have? And how do they use these abilities to help each other?

Rules of Magic: Discuss why the author created rules for his system of magic. What would happen if a character had no limitations on his or her powers? Here's what Christopher says:

“When I started writing *Eragon*, I realized that without limits a magician would be all-powerful. So I searched for a way to constrain the magic, first linking its use with a person's physical strength, then inventing a language to control it—reasoning that that would make it more difficult and esoteric to use. If magic could be controlled by the common human language, it would be accessible to more people and too easy for the characters to master.

But realistically, I'm very glad I don't live in a world where magic exists. If magic were real, think about what a scary world we would live in. People could read your mind and influence your actions—for good or for ill—without you ever knowing. Money would be worthless because alchemists could turn lead into gold. It would be impossible to enforce the law when magicians could say a spell to commit crimes on a whim. The real world is a much happier place without magic, but we can enjoy playing “What If” in our imaginations.”

Research Projects

Students strengthen research skills and discover fascinating real-world historical facts when they investigate Eragon's pseudo-medieval land.

Research Dragons: Eastern and Western dragons have different physical, historical, and cultural characteristics. Go to Wikipedia's entry on dragons, then assign groups to read articles linked from there. Instruct each group to put a picture of the type of dragon discussed in their article(s) at the top of a page, then list the associated attributes beneath. Have each group present their findings to the class. What do the various dragons have in common? As a class, make a list of dragon facts for Eastern and Western dragons.

Research a Topic: Divide the class into groups. Have each research and present an illustrated report a topic. Here are some ideas:

- **Bake bread:** Elain is a very good cook. She makes all the bread for her husband, Horst, and her two sons, Albriech and Baldor. When Eragon visits, he always looks forward to eating a thick slice of the tasty bread, warm from the oven. How would Elain have made the bread? Remember, she didn't have instant yeast from a packet!
- **Make soap:** When Eragon bathes in the pool at Tronjheim, he uses a piece of soap that looks somewhat like a rock. How do you think the dwarves made it? They certainly couldn't run out to the grocery store and buy a bar!
- **Forge a sword:** Eragon is given a special sword by Brom. What steps does a smith use to make a blade? How is the weapon finished? Hint: read about forging samurai or Roman swords.
- **Make a book:** Before the printing press, books were copied by hand. Eragon and Joed searched through many volumes when they were looking for the shipping records in Tiern. Find out how these early books were made and what inks, papers, and binding materials were used.
- **Find out about medicinal herbs:** Angela the herbalist uses her knowledge of plants to brew potions for "rich fool lords," but she also uses her skill to heal the sick. Some of our modern drugs were originally derived from plants. Research aspirin: what plant inspired its discovery, when was this plant's use first mentioned, and who helped with its development?
- **Learn about caracals:** When werewolves are in their feline form, they look similar to caracals. Find out more about this creature, where it lives, what it eats, etc.

Think & Write

These wide-ranging topics tap into students' diverse interests. The assignments encourage thoughtful consideration of an issue, which is important for crafting clear, focused prose.

What If? Ask students to imagine they were chosen by a dragon to be a Rider. What would they most look forward to learning and doing together?

Journal: Have students keep a journal while reading *Eragon*. Tell them to jot down their thoughts on why the characters are making certain choices, how they accomplish their goals or fail to reach them, and why specific locations, things, and events move the story forward. Encourage them to note their feelings as they read. Can they relate to the characters' experiences? Which ones? Also have them write down unusual or interesting words that catch their attention.

Obituary: Brom's death is one of the pivotal events of the story. Ask students to think about Brom's life and write his obituary. If a memorial party were held in his honor, who would come, what would they say, and what decorations and food do they think would be appropriate?

Too Modern? *Eragon*'s world is less technologically advanced than ours, so Christopher was careful not to mention things that hadn't been invented. He also tried to avoid everyday words and phrases that are modern inventions, such as "short-order" and "end-of-the-line." Have students make a list of things a writer might be tempted to put into the story but that would not be appropriate for that time and place.

Two Points of View: Ask students to pick two characters from a scene in *Eragon* and pretend that later that day those two are writing in their diaries. Think about how each would have experienced the event, then write the two entries, describing the scene from the different points of view.

Write a Letter: Ask students to write a short essay on one of the following themes:

- Write a letter to Eragon, telling him about your life and how it is similar to and different from his.
- Pretend that you are Angela the herbalist. Write a letter to a friend, describing Eragon's visit to your shop.
- Write Eragon a note of encouragement during his difficult journey.
- Pretend that you are a dwarven child who sees Saphira arrive at Farthen Dûr. Write to a friend about the experience.

- Imagine that you are Eragon in Tronjheim. Write a letter to your cousin, Roran, explaining where you are and what has happened.

Yes or No: Introduce this by saying, “So you want to be a dragon Rider? Before you make that decision (or any major life choice) it’s helpful to make a chart showing the pros and cons of that path.” Instruct students to draw a line down the middle of a sheet of paper, then write Pro and Con at the top to create two columns.

Ask them to close their eyes and think about the fun they will have flying on a dragon. How will their life change if they pursue that path? What work will they have to do and what sacrifices will they have to make to reach their goal?

Next have them imagine the powers they will wield once they *are* dragon Riders. After discussing that for a bit, turn their attention to the numerous responsibilities that go with those powers. As ideas come, have them write words and phrases on their chart. End the lesson by having them consider their lists and come to a conclusion. Would *you* want to be a Rider?

Where Would You Live? Ask students to think about where they would like to live in Alagaësia. Why? What would they do there? What kind of house would they live in? Have them put their thoughts into a short essay.

Fill Your Pack: Tell students to imagine that they (not the whole class as a group, but each individual) are leaving Carvahall with Eragon and Brom in search of the Ra’zac. What would they put in their pack for the journey? Remind them that they will have to carry it for many, many miles. It will feel heavier with each step, so they should take only what is absolutely necessary.

Newspaper Article: Students imagine that they are reporters for the school newspaper when Eragon and Saphira unexpectedly land in their town. Why did they come? What will happen? How will people react? Pretend the young reporters get a chance to interview the Rider and dragon, then have them write an article about the events of that extraordinary day.

Invitation: Ask students to invite someone from Alagaësia to dinner. Who would they like to share a meal with? Why? What would they eat? What would they discuss? Ask them to write (and decorate) an invitation to one of the characters, making sure to include an enticing reason for him or her to come.

Math

Math is important . . . even to the inhabitants of Alagaësia! Challenge students to invent their own math problems set in Eragon's world. Here are a few to get them started.

How Long is the Scarf? If Gertrude knits 3 inches on a scarf in 15 minutes, how long will it take her to knit a 3 foot long scarf? (Answer: 3 hours)

How Many Fish? Saphira finds a school of 100 fish in Leona Lake. She corners a quarter of them, then 3 slipped away. How many are left for her to eat? (Answer: 22)

How Many Pies? Elaine's apple pies are famous in Carvehall. She slices them into six pieces and tops them with freshly whipped cream. At one meal, Albreich—who was very hungry—eats 4 pieces. His brother, Baldor, eats half that number. Horst eats 3 pieces and Elaine eats one. Eragon and Roran, who are guests, each eat one piece. How many pies are consumed? (Answer: 2)

Brom's Travels: Brom traveled far and wide before settling down in Carvehall. He could walk 15 miles on a good day. Approximately how many days would it take him to walk 100 miles? (Answer: 7)

Dwarven Amulets: The dwarves love to carve stone and gems into jewelry. Find out how many items this family of artisans makes in a week, given they work six hours, six days per week. Each pair of earrings counts as two items.

Father makes 1 amethyst pendant every two days. Mother makes 2 1/2 leaf-shaped amulets daily. Their son carves 2 pairs of earrings on Monday and Tuesday, then five pairs of smaller ones on each of the other days. The elder daughter makes 16 malachite rondelle beads every two days, while her younger sister makes 4 hematite rings every two days. A nephew is learning the trade by working with the family. He shapes and polishes 3 oval tourmaline beads per hour. (Answer: 234)

Urgals! Suppose that a band of 265 Urgals were traveling to attack a city. One day when they stopped by a river, 35 left to raid a farm, 14 went into the woods to hunt, 7 searched for firewood, and 2 were sent back home to deliver a message. How many Urgals remained in camp? (Answer: 207)

Adjust Angela's Potions: Angela gathers fresh herbs in the months when they are most potent. She hangs them in her shop until they are completely dry, then stores them in glass jars, burlap bags, or wooden boxes. She also barter for exotic spices, barks, and oils from traders in Teirm. Other merchants may sell similar teas, salves, and ointments, but only Angela knows how to transform the raw ingredients into powerful potions.

Angela has developed her own way of measuring ingredients, which goes like this:

- 3 spoonfuls make a handful.
- 6 handfuls fill a mug.
- 12 mugs fill a small bucket
- 8 small buckets fill a burlap sack

Have students look at the original recipe, then size it up or down as instructed.

- Relaxing Tea: Angela sells mug-sized portions of this mix. Starting with a base of half chamomile, help her choose how much of each of the other herbs to add to make a portion for one customer.

(Answers will vary but should total a mugful—six handfuls as Angela measures.)

<u>3 handfuls</u>	chamomile flowers
_____	yarrow
_____	mint
_____	blackberry leaves

- Cough Syrup: This mixture of herbs soothes coughs. Angela mixes the following herbs into honey, then advises customers to mix a spoonful into a warm cup of tea. If she divided the following recipe to make individual portions equal to 3 handfuls, how many portions would she have? (Hint: convert all measurements to handfuls)

(Answer: 234 portions)

1 burlap sack	thyme
1 bucket	slippery elm bark
6 mugs	rosehips
2 mug	horehound
1 mug	dried lemon rind

- Healing Salve: To make this ointment, Angela warms herbs in a jar of olive oil to release their beneficial properties. She then strains the oil and mixes it into melted beeswax in these proportions: three parts olive oil to one part beeswax. Help her increase her recipe eight times.

3 handfuls calendula flowers x 8 = _____ handfuls = (_____ mugs)
1 handful yarrow x 8 = _____ handfuls = (_____ mug + _____ handfuls)
2 spoonfuls comfrey x 8 = _____ spoonfuls = (_____ handfuls + _____ spoonful)
1 spoonful mint x 8 = _____ spoonfuls = (_____ handfuls + _____ spoonfuls)

Answer

3 handfuls calendula flowers x 8 = 24 handfuls = 4 mugs
1 handful yarrow x 8 = 8 handfuls = (1 mug + 2 handfuls)
2 spoonfuls comfrey x 8 = 16 spoonfuls = (5 handfuls + 1 spoonful)
1 spoonfuls mint x 8 = 8 spoonfuls = (2 handfuls + 2 spoonfuls)

Draw

Drawing is an essential skill used in jobs such as fashion, film, and animation. It is also used to communicate ideas in the realms of technology, medicine, mathematics, athletics, and engineering.

Here are some fun activities for the artistically inclined.

Illustrate Events: Break *Eragon* into as many sections as you have students. Write the page or chapter numbers of those sections on slips of paper. Mix them in a box, then have each child draw a slip. Invite them to draw a scene or something symbolic of the events that occur in their assigned pages. Display the drawings in order.

Draw a Map: After Christopher had written several chapters of *Eragon*, he realized that it would be helpful for him—and his readers—to follow Eragon and Saphira’s adventures on a map. So he drew one. Give students three options: draw a map of Alagaësia, draw a map of a town or other location in Alagaësia, or draw a map of an imaginary land of their own invention.

T-Shirt: Ask each child to bring a plain T-shirt to school. Provide fabric markers and encourage students to create their own *Eragon*-themed shirts.

Dwarven Runes: Hand out Dwarven Runes translation sheets and have students practice forming the shapes. Suggest they use the runes to write their names or craft a secret message to a friend. Note that there are no symbols for “p” or “x”, so substitute “b” and “j” respectively. Remember that words are written from right to left.

<http://www.paolini.net/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/DwarfRunesWorksheet.pdf>

My Favorite Character: Invite students to draw a character and then add symbols of things that represent him or her. As a final touch, have them find a description of or a quote from the character and write it on their illustration.

Yawë Symbol: This symbol of elven trust is carved into Brom’s ring. Arya also has a tattoo of it on her shoulder. Have students draw one for themselves and fashion it into a pendant, using whatever materials are at hand.



Invent a Dragon: Ask students to choose a color and attributes for their dragon, then draw it. Can they convey the creature’s personality in the illustration?

Dramatize

Students gain confidence and strengthen communication skills when they speak aloud to the class. Creating a group presentation gives them practice negotiating and working as a team.

Read and Tell: Instruct students to choose a favorite paragraph and practice reading it clearly and with feeling. Later, have each student stand and read their selection aloud to the class. Ask them to explain why they like that passage.

Become the Character: Have groups choose and act out different scenes, either using the dialogue from the book or paraphrasing the words.

Strengthen the Body: Suggest students learn the yoga pose sequence Sun Salutation (find online), which is similar to the elven exercises Eragon does each morning, then have them invent a series of movements of their own.

Tableau: Have groups choose scenes to portray. Give the actors a few days to gather or make props and practice forming their tableaux, then give each group a chance to present their scene to the class. If the weather is nice, you might do this outside.

Costume Day: Plan an *Eragon* day when students dress as characters from the book. Tell them to learn all they can about that character so they can explain a bit about his or her daily life.

Design & Make

These hands-on projects encourage readers to express their creativity while exploring Alagaësia. In addition to having fun playing in the world, students learn to take an idea and make something from it, which is a valuable business skill.

Invite students to do these projects or invent ones of their own.

Carvahall: Build a model of the village as you imagine it might have looked when Eragon lived there.

Menu Card: Plan a celebratory meal for one of the following events, then design and decorate a menu card for it:

- A harvest banquet made by Elain for her family and friends
- A dwarven mushroom-gathering festival

- A fine meal at Jeod's house
- A celebration of Solembum's birthday, as created by Angela

Card Deck: Make a deck of cards with elves, dwarves, Urgals, and dragons as suits. Have werecats replace the jokers.

“Help Wanted” Poster: Need a sailor, dressmaker, stable boy, scribe, nanny, cook, laundress, blacksmith, or other worker? Design a poster to let people know who you are looking for and what you are offering in return.

Sell It!: In Alagaësia, most items were sold in shops, by traveling salespeople, or person to person. While money was used, barter was also common. Choose either one item or a line of products to sell, then make a poster to let people know about it. Think about how the item will improve the buyer's life. How can you let potential customers know how much better off they will be with your product? Since many folks in Alagaësia can't read, make sure the poster includes illustrations as well as words.

My Sword: Find online images of samurai, Persian, European, and royal swords to see a variety of beautifully crafted weapons. Design and draw your own sword on paper, or decorate and cut one out of cardboard. Do this with a few friends, then make a wall display of your finished art.

Chapter Collage: Choose a chapter, then make a collage representing the important people, things, and events depicted in it.

Coat of Arms: View heraldic coats of arms online and read about what the colors and symbols represent. Now draw a coat of arms or family crest for yourself.

Bookmark: Think of a memorable scene from the book and draw it on a cardboard rectangle to make a bookmark. Alternately, think what exciting images or symbols you could use to make another person curious enough to read the story, then put those on your bookmark.

Diorama: Recreate a place or event from *Eragon* by decorating the inside of a box with cutout characters and scenery.

Web Page: Design a web page and social media banner for a character or business in Alagaësia.

Book Poster: Make a poster (paper or digital) to persuade a friend to read *Eragon*. Choose powerful descriptive words to accompany your images.

Character Poster: Express your creativity by making a poster of your favorite character or scene, using any media you choose.

Have a Party!

Conclude your study unit with an Inheritance Cycle themed party.

It's easy to design a fun celebration with these activities, games, crafts, and foods that highlight the diverse cultures of the elves, humans, dwarves, Urgals, werrecats, and dragons.

www.paolini.net/category/six-races-craft-and-party-ideas/

Share and Get a Signed Photo!

Teachers . . .

Homeschoolers . . .

Librarians . . .

& Fans of All Ages . . .

We love to see your great ideas!

Send us pictures of your projects so we can share them. If you include your physical address, Christopher will thank you with a signed photo and other goodies.

Send to: assistant@paolini.net

