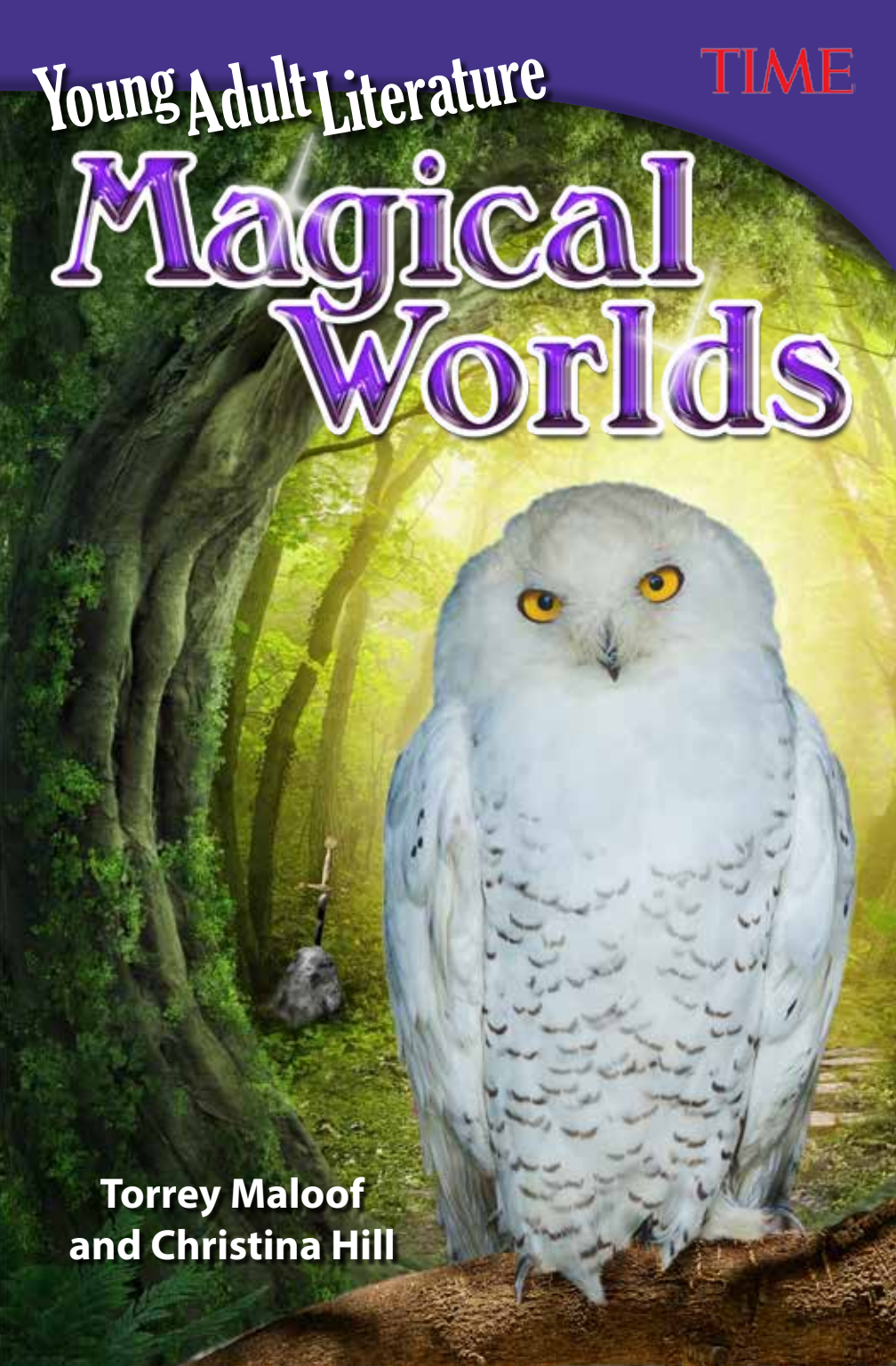
Young Adult Literature

TIME

Magical Worlds



Torrey Maloof
and Christina Hill

For teachers' inspection ONLY

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A Powerful Spell

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Why is the magical world so mighty and alluring? How does it cast such a powerful spell over readers? Magical **realms** are exciting and adventurous. They can also feel comforting and strangely familiar. Each story provides an escape from the stresses of everyday life. Reading fantasy novels allows readers to enter unique worlds. These worlds are full of curiosities and enchantments. And yet, even in these mystical realms, there is a sense of familiarity. At their hearts, despite the fantasy settings, these books tell deeply human stories.

Young adult readers connect well with magical worlds. On the surface, these worlds are nothing like their own. But readers see elements of themselves in the magical characters. This is even true when the characters are witches or wizards! Teenagers identify with the struggles and problems the **protagonists** face. They can relate to the challenging circumstances, even if the circumstances involve fighting a monster or flying on a broomstick. Young adults who are facing their own challenges can sink into the characters' worlds. The books may even help them feel as though they are facing their challenges with new friends.

Why is it so easy to connect to these new worlds and characters? Could it simply be . . . magic?

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One of the First!

One of the earliest magical realms is Camelot. Many parts of the Camelot stories contain historical facts. This makes some people believe they are real. The line between fantasy and reality often blurs as stories are told over time.



Before CGI technology created Gollum, he lived on the pages of J. R. R. Tolkien's books.

CGI Magic

CGI stands for computer-generated imagery. This technology brings many of the most-loved magical realms and characters in literature to life on the big screen. Of course, all the technology in the world can't hold a candle to your imagination!

There's No Place Like Home

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Literary worlds can be magical. Sometimes, these fictional realms are packed full of **innovative** ideas and **mythical** beings. They are like nothing we have ever seen or imagined. Other times, they may resemble our own world at first glance. But the more you read, the more magical elements you find.

These magical realms are powerful blends of fantasy and reality. The young adults who read these stories often find ways to relate them to their own personal journeys. There are often **metaphorical** bridges in these stories that connect the two worlds. What a perfect setting for teens who are making the difficult transition from childhood to adulthood.

What Is Young Adult Literature?

Young adult literature is a genre aimed specifically at teenagers. While fantasy novels make up a good portion of young adult literature, there are many other subcategories to explore, including mystery, historical, dystopian, and contemporary.

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Enchanted Escapes

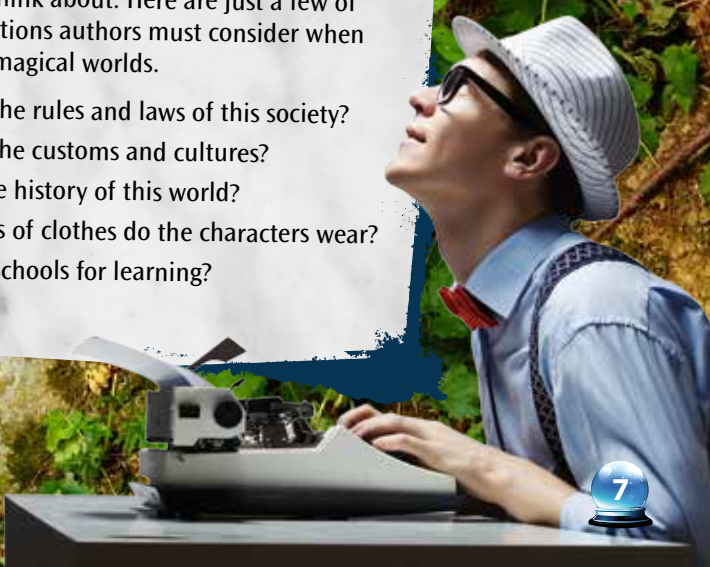
Some magical realms are complete escapes from our world. J. R. R. Tolkien created a large fantasy world for his Lord of the Rings series. His stories take place on a large continent called Middle-earth. The land is full of mythical beings. There are elves, hobbits, and tree-like creatures called ents. The land is detailed and complete. Tolkien even made maps of his magical world!

Magical realms can be set anywhere, from faraway galaxies to **fathoms** below Earth in elaborate underwater kingdoms. No matter the setting, there is imagination, enchantment, and wonder. This is where the power of fantasy stories lies.

To Consider . . .

Authors who create complex magical realms have quite a lot to think about. Here are just a few of the many questions authors must consider when creating their magical worlds.

- What are the rules and laws of this society?
- What are the customs and cultures?
- What is the history of this world?
- What kinds of clothes do the characters wear?
- Are there schools for learning?



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The Hidden Magical World

Magical realms are often connected to real-life locations in literary worlds. In stories, the magical world and real world often overlap in unexpected ways. The magic remains hidden and quiet. This entices readers to think that there may be magic surrounding them as well. They just can't see it.

J. K. Rowling's Harry Potter lives in a nonmagical village outside London, England. He is not aware that a magical realm even exists until he is accepted into Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry. That is because it is hidden from nonmagical folks, or as Potter fans know them, Muggles.

Crossing the Threshold

Sometimes, protagonists can access magical realms from the ordinary world. Usually, they must cross through some sort of **threshold**. The threshold can be anything that allows entry into the magical realm. It can even be an ordinary object.

- Harry Potter travels to his magical school by a train that he boards from the secret platform 9¾.
- The Pevensie children enter Narnia through what appears to be an ordinary wardrobe.
- Alice first enters Wonderland by a dream and later through a mirror.
- Dorothy enters Oz by being swept up in a tornado.
- Bastian enters the land of Fantastica by reading a story and magically becoming part of the plot!

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Isabella "Bella" Swan, from Stephenie Meyer's *Twilight*, lives in the town of Forks, Washington. In that town, teenage vampires and werewolves (or shape-shifters) appear to be normal people. They go to school, date, and fall in love. But the more you read, the more you learn about the hidden world of these mysterious creatures.

This is true in many fantasy stories. As you read, the differences between the ordinary world and the fantasy one become more apparent, even as they are made to feel real through the real-world connections. The more the reader learns, the more real the world becomes. In this way, young readers can connect to these new realms. The reader is lured in through the magical spells they weave.

Frenzy in Forks

After *Twilight* hit the shelves, tourists began **infiltrating** the tiny town of Forks, Washington. The previously quiet community is often swarming with fans who are eager to see the places described in Bella and Edward's world. The visitor center even distributes *Twilight* maps showing places of interest.

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Reader's Guide

1. What makes the setting of the magical realm so important? Why does an author need to pay so much attention to detail?
2. What aspects of magical worlds appeal to young adults? Why are teenagers able to connect with this genre?
3. For what reasons are so many fantasy stories written as trilogies or as series?
4. Which book or series mentioned in this book would you be most likely to read, and why?

