



# Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone

by J.K. Rowling

Teacher's Guide

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LIVING LITERATURE SERIES

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## Synopsis

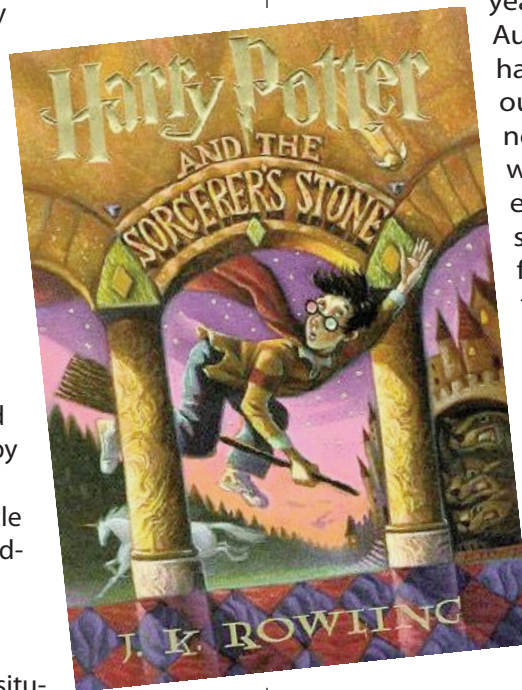
### Chapter 1: The Boy Who Lived

The solidly middle-class Dursleys of Number Four, Privet Drive thoroughly disapprove of anything strange and mysterious. For this reason, they have had no contact for several years with Mrs. Dursley's odd sister and brother-in-law, the Potters, or their baby, Harry. One strange day, owls by the hundreds fly all across Great Britain in the day-time, and groups of peculiar people in cloaks whisper excitedly amongst themselves in the streets. The Dursleys fear this may have some connection with the Potters "and their kind"—and they are correct. Outside number four, a tabby cat transforms herself into Professor McGonagall, a "rather severe-looking woman," wearing square glasses, emerald-green robes, and hair pulled into a tight black bun. She is joined by the cloaked, white-bearded, wizard Albus Dumbledore. Soon a motorcycle falls out of the sky, piloted by the wild-haired, bushy-bearded giant Hagrid, who gently holds in his arms a small baby: Harry Potter. Dumbledore, McGonagall, and Hagrid discuss the situation: the supremely evil serial murderer Lord Voldemort, master of dark powers, attacked Harry and his parents the previous night, killing Lily and James Potter but for some reason failing to kill Harry—no one understands how or why, but Harry is the first person ever to survive a magical murder attempt by Voldemort. Instead of killing Harry, the attack somehow broke Voldemort's power—again, the reason is a mystery and the subject of wild speculation—leaving a lightning-shaped wound on Harry's forehead and causing Voldemort to disappear, to the joy of most of the magical world. As a result, Harry has become instantly famous, though he is too young to realize it. For this reason, Dumbledore insists it is best to leave Harry with his only living relatives, the Dursleys, who he believes

will provide Harry with love and shield him from the effects of fame until he is old enough to handle it. Dumbledore overrides McGonagall and Hagrid's misgivings about leaving Harry in a "Muggle" (non-magical) village, and places Baby Harry on the Dursleys' front step, with a letter so the Dursleys can explain everything to Harry when he is older.

### Chapter 2: The Vanishing Glass

Ten years have passed, ten miserable years for Harry during which his Aunt Petunia and Uncle Vernon have extravagantly spoiled the odious, bullying Cousin Dudley and neglected and abused Harry, whose bedroom is a spider-infested cupboard (closet) under the stairs (where he is often confined for punishment); who always has to wear the chubby Dudley's enormous hand-me-downs; and who has never had a birthday party or real presents. During his years with the Dursleys, Harry has not been allowed to ask any questions about his parents; he has been told they were killed in a car crash that left him with the scar on his forehead. The Dursleys get particularly angry whenever anything strange



happens—for instance, when, during a trip to the zoo, Harry discovers he can talk to the boa constrictor and facilitates its escape when he accidentally makes the glass on its cage disappear. Harry is very lonely, but sometimes, on the street, very strange, oddly dressed people seem to know him, and greet him with respect and affection.

### Chapter 3: The Letters from No One

The summer holidays arrive. Dudley and Harry, who are the same age, will be going off to secondary school in September—Dudley to Smeltings, Uncle Vernon's old private school, and Harry to Stonewall High, the local public school. One day, the unheard-of happens: a letter addressed to Harry (at "The Cupboard Under the Stairs")

arrives. Uncle Vernon and Aunt Petunia are extremely perturbed; they confiscate the letter and destroy it without letting Harry read it, then unaccountably move Harry upstairs into Dudley's second bedroom, uncharacteristically disregarding Dudley's tantrums of protest. The next morning, another letter arrives, which Uncle Vernon frantically intercepts; the next day, three more arrive. Each day, more and more letters for Harry arrive, even through the windows and down the chimney. Uncle Vernon is wild to escape the cascades of letters, and piles the family in the car, driving for miles and finally holing up in a broken-down shack on a rock out at sea. When Harry's eleventh birthday arrives at midnight, someone pounds on the door of the shack.

#### Chapter 4: The Keeper of the Keys

Hagrid bursts into the shack and hands Harry another letter. It is an announcement of Harry's acceptance to the eminent Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry. Hagrid is furious to discover that the Dursleys have concealed the truth from Harry all these years: like his parents, Harry is a wizard, and a famous one at that because he survived Voldemort's attack. We learn that Voldemort had been gaining power and attracting followers steadily, until Hogwarts was the only safe place in the wizarding world, but all that ended when he mysteriously disappeared after his failed attack on Harry on Halloween night ten years ago. Now, over Uncle Vernon's vehement objections, Hagrid is going to take Harry to London to get his school supplies. Harry doubts Hagrid's story, convinced there's been a case of mistaken identity, and worries about his ability as a wizard, having lived helplessly with, been abused by, and, it turns out, been lied to by his Muggle relatives all these years.

#### Chapter 5: Diagon Alley

Harry's day in London with Hagrid is remarkable. They go to the magically concealed Diagon Alley for the items on the Hogwarts supply list for first-year students, including work robes, a cauldron (pewter), potion ingredients, a wand (the wand chooses the wizard, as Harry discovers at Ollivander's wand shop), and textbooks such as *The Standard Book of Spells (Grade 1)*. Hagrid also buys Harry a birthday present: his own owl (wizards send mail via owls). The portal into Diagon Alley is the Leaky Cauldron, a wizard pub that Hagrid says is famous. As they pass through, a bemused Harry is mobbed by the star-struck patrons, who treat him as a returning hero. Their first stop in Diagon Alley is Gringotts, the wizard bank run by Goblins deep beneath London, where Harry (who had thought he

was poor) discovers that his parents have left him a small fortune in wizard gold, and Hagrid, on Headmaster Dumbledore's orders, retrieves a small package wrapped in brown paper from another vault. Also in Diagon Alley, Harry meets another first-year, the supercilious and bigoted Draco Malfoy, as well as the timid, stuttering Professor Quirrell, who teaches Defense Against the Dark Arts at Hogwarts.

#### Chapter 6: The Journey from Platform Nine and Three-Quarters

On September 1, the Dursleys drop Harry, his huge trunk, and his caged owl Hedwig at King's Cross Station in London, where Harry is to take the Hogwarts Express from Platform Nine and Three-Quarters. Harry is at a loss; he sees only Platforms Nine and Ten. But he gets help from the Weasley family of red-headed boys: Percy, a Hogwarts prefect (a senior student given authority over the other students); the mischievous twins Fred and George; and Ron, a first-year like Harry. They show Harry how to rush right through the invisible barrier to find the Hogwarts Express. Harry and Ron share a compartment on the train trip to school, with Ron explaining aspects of the wizarding world, like trading cards whose pictures move (Harry gets one with a picture of Dumbledore, listing among his accomplishments his defeat of the dark wizard Grindelwald in 1945 and his partnership in alchemical research with Nicolas Flamel); Bertie Bott's Every Flavor beans (jelly beans that not only have good flavors, but also bad ones like tripe or earwax); and the grand wizard sport of Quidditch (a sort of aerial soccer played on broomsticks). On the train, Harry and Ron also meet the timid Neville Longbottom and the know-it-all Hermione Granger, and have an unpleasant encounter with the bullying, snobbish Malfoy and his cohorts, Crabbe and Goyle. At the end of their journey, the new students are awestruck at their first glimpse of Hogwarts: a vast castle with many turrets and towers, perched atop a high mountain.

#### Chapter 7: The Sorting Hat

The first-year students are conducted to Hogwarts' Great Hall, where all the other students and faculty are assembled, for the Sorting Ceremony. Each new student, in turn, puts on the talking Sorting Hat, which announces which of the four Hogwarts houses a student will join. Malfoy and his cronies go to Slytherin, for "cunning folk [who] use any means to achieve their ends." Harry, Ron, Hermione, and Neville all join Gryffindor, for "the brave at heart [with] daring, nerve, and chivalry." Professor Dumbledore announces that the third-floor corridor on the right is out of bounds for

everyone this year. Following Percy Weasley out of the Great Hall, the first-years meet Hogwarts' sly resident poltergeist, Peeves, and learn that they must recite the password to the animated Fat Lady in a portrait to gain entrance to their Gryffindor living area in one of the castle towers.

## Chapter 8: The Potions Master

Harry and his friends settle into the Hogwarts routine, getting accustomed to resident ghosts, trying to avoid the nasty caretaker Argus Filch and his patrolling cat Mrs. Norris, and starting their classes: History of Magic, taught by the ghost of Professor Binns; Charms, with the tiny Professor Flitwick; Herbology, with Professor Sprout; Transfiguration, with the strict Professor McGonagall; Defense Against the Dark Arts with the nervous Professor Quirrell, who wears a funny-smelling turban (the Weasley twins insist it's filled with garlic, to ward off vampires); and Potions, with the hook-nosed Professor Snape, who clearly hates Harry for some unknown reason. Everywhere he goes, students whisper about him and strain to get a glimpse of the famous Harry Potter. At Hagrid's groundskeeper's cottage one afternoon, Harry sees a newspaper clipping: A break-in occurred at Gringotts on Harry's birthday; nothing was taken because the vault that was searched had been emptied earlier that same day. Harry guesses the thieves must have been looking for the package Hagrid removed and brought to Hogwarts.

## Chapter 9: The Midnight Duel

Flying lessons begin, with first-year Slytherins and Gryffindors grouped together. While the teacher is momentarily absent, Malfoy snatches Neville's small remembering ball (Remembrall) and flies up on his broomstick; making a daring, swooping dive, Harry catches the plummeting Remembrall, observed by a seemingly furious Professor McGonagall. However, instead of punishing Harry, the professor brings him to Wood, captain of the Gryffindor Quidditch team, and announces that Harry is a gifted natural Quidditch player and would make an excellent Seeker. McGonagall is eager for her house, Gryffindor, to win the cup this year, after being humiliated by Slytherin in last year's tournament. It will be the first time in a hundred years that a first-year plays the Seeker position. Later, under pretext of challenging him to a duel, Malfoy tricks Harry—accompanied by Ron, Hermione, and Neville—into breaking the strict rule against wandering the halls of Hogwarts at night. Scrambling to escape detection by Filch and Mrs. Norris, the trio blunder into the forbidden third-floor corridor, which they discover is guarded by a

monstrous three-headed dog. They frantically flee back to the Gryffindor tower.

## Chapter 10: Halloween

Harry learns how to play Quidditch, in which three Chasers on each team try to score aerial goals by hitting the Quaffle through goal-end hoops, which are guarded by a Keeper; two Beaters beat off the flying Bludgers; and one Seeker tries to catch the tiny, speedy Golden Snitch to end the game. On Halloween, Harry and Ron save Hermione from a troll that has somehow gotten into Hogwarts. The straight-arrow Hermione tells a lie so Harry and Ron will not get into trouble, and the three become best friends.

## Chapter 11: Quidditch

Harry accidentally learns that the three-headed dog has mangled Snape's leg; clearly the professor is trying to find the thing that the dog is guarding. During a Slytherin-Gryffindor Quidditch match, Harry's top-of-the-line broom, a Nimbus Two Thousand, suddenly goes completely out of control, trying to toss him off from high above the ground. Hermione sees Professor Snape with his eyes locked on Harry, muttering nonstop. She distracts Snape, knocking over Professor Quirrell in the process. Harry regains control of his broom and also captures the Snitch, winning the match for Gryffindor. After the game, Hagrid warns Harry, Ron, and Hermione that what his three-headed dog, Fluffy, is guarding is between Dumbledore and Nicolas Flamel and is no concern of theirs.

## Chapter 12: The Mirror of Erised

Harry is thrilled to spend Christmas at Hogwarts with the Weasleys and to actually receive some presents—including an invisibility cloak that once belonged to his father, according to the anonymous gift-giver's note. That night, trying out the cloak, Harry discovers a Hogwarts room with the magical Mirror of Erised—the reflection in it shows the viewer's heart's desire, so Harry sees his parents and grandparents and other family members in the mirror, smiling and waving at him. He returns to the mirror two more nights, ignoring Ron's dire warnings that he will go crazy if he spends too much time there. On the third night, Professor Dumbledore meets him, gently convincing Harry not to dwell on this dream world, and letting him know that the mirror is being moved to a new, secret location.

## Chapter 13: Nicolas Flamel

In a Gryffindor Quidditch match against Hufflepuff, Harry quickly captures the Snitch. This, for the first time

in seven years, puts Gryffindor ahead of Slytherin in the yearly competition for the coveted House Cup, based on points earned (and lost) by house members throughout the year. Harry is proud to have finally earned adulation by his own accomplishments, not by his famous reputation. After the game, Harry overhears Snape browbeating Quirrell about how to gain access to the "Sorcerer's Stone," the item guarded by Hagrid's dog. Meanwhile, Harry, Ron, and Hermione unearth the identity of Nicolas Flamel: He was Dumbledore's alchemy partner and is the only known possessor of the Sorcerer's Stone. The Stone can turn any metal into pure gold, and also produces the Elixir of Life, which will make the drinker immortal (Mr. Flamel is currently 665 years old).

### Chapter 14: Norbert the Norwegian Ridgeback

Hagrid reveals to Harry, Hermione, and Ron that the Stone is guarded by enchantments done by various Hogwarts teachers. He also reveals that he has won just what he's always wanted—a dragon—from a cloaked stranger at the village pub. Norbert the Norwegian Ridgeback, though, is uncontrollable from the moment he hatches. In addition, owning dragons is illegal. So the youngsters arrange for friends of Charlie Weasley (Ron's older brother, who is studying dragons in Romania) to come get Norbert secretly, at midnight, atop the Hogwarts astronomy tower. Malfoy interferes, timid Neville ventures out to try to warn his friends, and Harry and Hermione drop the invisibility cloak after Norbert is taken away. All are caught, by Professor McGonagall and Filch.

### Chapter 15: Forbidden Forest

As punishment, Professor McGonagall deducts 150 points from Gryffindor, and Harry goes from hero to goat. No one will speak to him or his friends, except sneering Slytherins, who mockingly thank him for losing points. As further punishment, Malfoy, Harry, Neville, and Hermione have to accompany Hagrid at night into the forbidden forest, where some powerfully evil thing has been killing innocent unicorns. Separated from the group, Harry and Malfoy discover a hooded creature drinking blood from a dead unicorn. The terrified Malfoy bolts, but Harry remains. The creature attacks him, and he is saved by the centaur, Firenze, who explains why the creature was drinking from the unicorn: unicorn blood has magical life-sustaining qualities, but slaying a unicorn is a monstrous crime that condemns the killer to a cursed half-life; the creature was trying to stay alive long enough to drink the Elixir of Life and return to full power and strength. Harry concludes

that the hooded creature is Voldemort, who is hiding in the forest, waiting for Snape to steal the Stone so he can come fully back to life, and that Voldemort will then return to kill Harry.

### Chapter 16: Through the Trapdoor

Harry, Ron, Hermione, and the rest of the first-years get through their final exams and await the results. Hagrid inadvertently tells Harry how to put Fluffy to sleep, and admits he also told the secret to the cloaked stranger at the pub. Dumbledore, the only person Voldemort has ever feared, is suddenly summoned away by the Ministry of Magic. Harry realizes that Snape will go after the Stone while Dumbledore is gone. That night, he, Ron, and Hermione return to the third-floor corridor and find that someone has been there before them. They use their magical training to move through Hogwarts' dungeons by tranquilizing Fluffy, defeating the magical twining plant Devil's Snare, capturing a flying key, winning a giant living chess game, and correctly choosing enabling potions.

### Chapter 17: The Man with Two Faces

Harry arrives alone at the final chamber: Ron has been injured winning the chess game, and Hermione has gone back for help, sending Harry on. Harry is astonished to find Professor Quirrell, along with the Mirror of Erised. Voldemort, reduced to shadow and vapor, has acquired form by inhabiting Quirrell's body; Voldemort's face appears on the back of Quirrell's head when the teacher removes his turban. Quirrell magically binds Potter with ropes. Quirrell cannot figure out the mirror, but when Harry looks into it—wanting more than anything else to find the Sorcerer's Stone before Quirrell does—the Stone appears in Harry's pocket. Voldemort orders Quirrell to kill Harry and get the Stone. Quirrell raises his hand to perform a killing curse, but Harry grabs Quirrell's face to stop the words. Harry's touch burns Quirrell, ultimately killing him; later, Dumbledore will reveal that Quirrell was burned because Harry's mother's love powerfully protects Harry, and touching someone marked by something so good causes agony to someone as evil as Quirrell or Voldemort. Dumbledore arrives in the nick of time, pulling Harry away as the boy's strength is ebbing; Voldemort vanishes again, while Quirrell lies dead. The Stone is destroyed, by mutual agreement of Dumbledore and Flamel. (Flamel and his wife will die, but then again, they have both lived for over 650 years.) Snape, it turns out, has been trying to protect both the Stone and Harry, even though he does deeply dislike Harry, an outgrowth of the loathing Snape and Harry's father had for each

other during their student days.

At the year-end school feast, Slytherin appears to have won the House Cup again—until Dumbledore awards additional points to Harry, Hermione, Ron, and Neville for their exploits, putting Gryffindor over the top. With the school term over, the students return to King's Cross Station on the Hogwarts Express. Harry thinks this could be a fun summer—after all, Uncle Vernon, Aunt Petunia, and the odious Dudley don't know Hogwarts students are forbidden to use magic at home.

## Timeline

<b>Harry is a baby</b>	Voldemort kills Lily and James Potter when Harry is fifteen months old, then magically disappears after his attack on Harry fails to kill the boy but leaves him with a lightning-shaped scar on his forehead.
<b>Next 10 years</b>	Harry lives miserably with the Dursleys, who hide his magical heritage from him.
<b>Harry is 11</b>	Harry learns he's been admitted to Hogwarts; Hagrid gets Harry ready to attend.
<b>September 1</b>	Harry begins his first year at Hogwarts.
<b>Halloween</b>	Harry and Ron save Hermione from a troll that invades Hogwarts.
<b>November</b>	Harry as Seeker wins a Quidditch match for Gryffindor against Slytherin.
<b>Christmas</b>	Harry and the Weasleys enjoy the holidays at Hogwarts; Harry gets the invisibility cloak and finds the Mirror of Erised.
<b>Second term</b>	Harry and Hermione get rid of Hagrid's dragon, losing major points for Gryffindor when they are caught in the halls after hours. In the Forbidden Forest, Quirrell/Voldemort kills a unicorn and attacks Harry, who is rescued by Firenze the Centaur.

### Post-exam week

Harry, Ron, and Hermione go after the Sorcerer's Stone; Harry fights Quirrell/Voldemort and secures the Stone with Dumbledore's help; Voldemort disappears again. Harry returns to the Dursleys for the summer.

### End of term

## Biographical Sketch

Joanne Rowling was born July 31<sup>st</sup> in Chipping Sodbury, Gloucestershire, England, the elder of two daughters. As a child she wrote stories and told them to her sister, and attended a grammar school founded by the famed reformer and abolitionist William Wilberforce. She studied French and Classics at Exeter University, studied in Paris for a year, and then took a job as a researcher and bilingual secretary for Amnesty International in London, where she was self-described as "the worst secretary ever." In 1990, while on a train from Manchester to London that was delayed for four hours, she got the idea, "fully formed," for a young boy studying to be a wizard. At the end of that year, her mother died from complications of multiple sclerosis, and the loss, Rowling says, strongly influenced the Potter books, prompting her to write much more about Harry's losses.



After her mother's death, Potter moved to Portugal to teach English, and met and married Portuguese journalist Jorge Arantes. Their daughter, Jessica, was born in 1993, and they divorced shortly afterward. Now a single mother, Rowling moved to Edinburgh, Scotland, to be near her sister. She went on public assistance and wrote in cafes when she could get her daughter to fall asleep in her stroller; she was able to finish her novel after receiving a grant from the Scottish Arts Council. After twelve rejections, the novel *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone* (eventually published in the United States as *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone*), was accepted by Bloomsbury in London for an advance of roughly \$4,000. By this time working as a French teacher, Rowling received enough money to quit that job the following year, 1995, when Scholastic Books paid more than \$100,000 for the U.S. publishing rights, a sum that the now-wealthy Rowling has said thrilled and astonished her at the time.

Bloomsbury released the novel in June 1997 under the name J.K. Rowling (her publisher told her to use initials as the book would sell better if readers thought she was male; she used the middle initial "K." in honor of her grandmother, since Rowling herself has no middle name). The book became an instant commercial and critical success, winning a Smarties Prize and The British Book Awards Children's Book of the Year. Scholastic released it as *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone* in September 1998 to similar success. Every book of the seven-volume series has topped the *New York Times'* bestseller list (in fact, the *Times* famously created a separate children's best-seller list to accommodate the series), and Rowling has won an Anthony Award, the British Book Awards Children's Book of the Year, a Hugo Award, a Gram Stoker Award, and a Whitbread Award for Best Children's Book, among others.

Now extremely wealthy—with a net worth of an estimated \$1 billion, Rowling was named by *Forbes* magazine in 2007 as the second-richest female entertainer in the world (after Oprah)—Rowling has become a noted philanthropist, giving to a wide variety of causes, including the Multiple Sclerosis Society of Great Britain and numerous children's charities. Her last four Harry Potter books have been consecutively the fastest-selling books in history; *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows* currently holds the record. The series has sold nearly 400 million copies and been translated into 65 languages.

Rowling currently resides in Scotland with her family, which includes her second husband, Scottish physician Neil Murray, whom she married in 2000; her daughter, Jessica; and her son and daughter with Murray.

## Critic's Corner

As anyone who follows publishing news and young people's literature knows, *Harry Potter* is a worldwide phenomenon. Since the beginning, *Harry Potter* has been at the top of both British and U.S. best-seller lists—for adults as well as children. Over 2 million copies of Harry's adventures have been sold in more than 115 countries, and Internet sales of British editions in the U.S. before publication of the U.S. editions has ignited much concern over territorial publishing rights. Young readers identify strongly with Harry and his friends; "they're just like us," readers say, except that their world is also full of magic. Readers of all ages respond to the novels' vivid characterizations, tight and suspenseful plotting, timeless themes, inspired use of names, and deft humor.

Critics have been equally enthusiastic; *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone* led the way by winning the British Children's Book of the Year Award and the Smarties Book Prize. *Book World* admired the way Rowling "zestily mixes humor, suspense, and action," and the *National Review* said, "The writing is vivid and of high quality." *Booklist* called it "a brilliantly imagined and beautifully written fantasy" that combines school story and magical elements to produce "the humor, charm, and, well, delight of [Rowling's] utterly captivating story." *Horn Book* characterized the novel as a "charming and readable romp with a most sympathetic hero and filled with delightful magic details." *Maclean's* noted another significant element of this and the other *Harry Potter* novels: "The book strikes as deeply as the most timeless fairy tales." Perhaps predictably, the magical pull of the books for young readers as well as the magical content have produced some backlash against what some religious leaders have perceived as an anti-Christian, pro-occult slant, a criticism that ignores the series' obvious debt to the works of C.S. Lewis and J.R.R. Tolkien, whom Rowling has consistently cited as influences. And religious criticism died down considerably after the publication of the seventh and final book, *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows* (2007), when Rowling, a member of the Church of Scotland, admitted what many readers had already suspected: that the series is at least partly a Christian allegory, with its obvious themes of good versus evil, love versus hate, moral responsibility, redemption through sacrifice, and death and resurrection.

## Other Works by J.K. Rowling

*Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets* (2), 1998  
*Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban* (3), 1999  
*Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire* (4), 2000  
*Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix* (5), 2003  
*Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince* (6), 2005  
*Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows* (7), 2007

### Other

*Fantastic Beasts and Where to Find Them*, 2001  
*Quiddich Through the Ages*, 2001

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*Time*, April 12, 1999, p. 86; July 26, 1999, p. 7.

*Time for Kids*, September 17, 1999, p. 4; September 24, 1999, p. 2.

Wilgoren, Jodi. "Don't Give Us Little Wizards, the Anti-Potter Parents Cry." *New York Times*, November 1, 1999, pp. A1, A21.

## Objectives

### General Objectives

1. To understand the historical background of the ancient practice of alchemy and the quest to create or discover the Philosopher's ("Sorcerer's") Stone
2. To understand the elements of the coming-of-age novel

3. To discuss elements of emotional and physical abuse of children by caregivers
4. To examine the importance in our lives of friendship, loyalty, family ties, and a knowledge of family history
5. To distinguish between elements of realism and elements of fantasy in the novel
6. To examine the universal theme of good versus evil in a variety of familiar media
7. To analyze the ways in which a person can be motivated to move beyond his or her fears and meet challenges to the best of his or her ability
8. To identify common elements of the classic fairy tale in the novel and why these appeal so strongly to young readers

### Specific Objectives

1. To understand who Voldemort is, what evil things he has done, why he has disappeared, why he is desperately seeking the Stone, and why he is twice unable to kill Harry
2. To comprehend why Dumbledore brings Harry to live with the Dursleys and to identify the various ways in which the Dursleys make Harry's life miserable, and why they do
3. To trace the ways in which Harry's life and sense of self improve greatly during his first year at Hogwarts
4. To note the ways in which Harry and his friends use their personal characteristics, plus their friendship and loyalty to each other and their house, to meet successfully the challenges of their first year at Hogwarts
5. To learn about the characteristics of various magical creatures in the novel, such as goblins and trolls and dragons
6. To become familiar with the various magical subjects that Harry and his friends study, such as Herbology, Charms, and Potions, as well as other magical aspects of life at Hogwarts
7. To identify values and personal characteristics that the novel promotes and others that the novel depicts as undesirable and then, in this context, to discuss the objections some people voice about the *Harry Potter* books
8. To analyze ways in which the author develops and sustains suspense in the novel and also leads readers, along with Harry, into an incorrect guess of the villain's identity
9. To interpret the novel as an expression of the classic theme of good versus evil

## Literary Terms and Applications

To enhance students' appreciation and understanding of the novel, present them with these terms:

**British boys' school story:** a traditional genre that traces a boy's experiences during one or more years at a typical British private boarding school (a "public school" in British terminology). Elements of the genre in this novel include the list of instructions on what to bring to school, the special school train, school uniforms, arbitrary rules, eccentric teachers, snobbery and bullying, sports competitions, and the forming of friendships and rivalries. Of course, the realism of the school life experiences is tweaked in every respect by the pervasive existence of magic and magical beings at Hogwarts and by the course of study, which is completely devoted to learning wizardly skills and knowledge.

**Coming-of-age novel:** a work of fiction in which the main character moves into and/or through adolescence and develops at least the beginnings of maturity. In this novel, Harry escapes the trap of his miserable childhood with the Dursleys, discovers an individual identity, develops personal friendships, and learns to choose his actions based on what he believes is right.

**Fairy tale:** a short tale involving creatures such as witches, ghosts, giants, talking animals, and often, princes, princesses, and evil stepmothers; the tale deals with universal problems, especially those that preoccupy and disturb children, and shows a way to emerge victorious. Like many fairy tales, this novel tells the story of a child who loses his parents and falls helplessly under the control of uncaring and abusive step-parents; who suffers from blatant favoritism toward step-siblings; whose true family history and/or identity is concealed; who sees no way out of his predicament but nevertheless finds a miraculous escape route and discovers a new identity, with his abusive relatives ultimately forced to recognize his superiority.

**Fantasy:** a fictional work that departs radically from a realistic depiction of the world as we know it. In a fantasy, readers are expected to accept the seemingly impossible (in this novel, the existence of a wizard world characterized by everyday magical occurrences and practices), although the tale presents logical and meaningful characterizations (this novel's young readers commonly remark of the characters, "They're just like us!"), and, often, everyday activities (adjusting to life at a British boarding school, complete with thrilling sports matches, eccentric teachers, and lists of what to bring—wizard's cloaks, for example, with obligatory name tags).

**Theme:** a controlling idea expressed through a work's events. This novel contains interconnected expressions

of the themes of betrayal and loyalty, love and loss, loneliness, the search for identity, good versus evil, and courage.

## The Importance of Setting

The first three chapters of the novel are set primarily at Number Four, Privet Drive, the very standard middle-class home of the Dursley family. Here, Harry's bedroom is a spider-infested cupboard under the stairs, even though there are two spare bedrooms upstairs. When Uncle Vernon flees Privet Drive in an attempt to escape the avalanche of letters for Harry, the family ends up in a miserable shack on a rock out to sea; it is here that Hagrid appears to tell Harry about his wizard heritage. Hagrid then takes Harry to London for a day of stocking up on the required Hogwarts school supplies at magic-supply stores in the magical street called Diagon Alley. Hagrid and Harry also visit the wizard bank of Gringotts, whose vaults lie far, far beneath London. Harry boards the Hogwarts Express at London's King's Cross station.

From the end of Chapter 6 through Chapter 17, the setting is Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry, a vast, medieval-style castle with many towers and turrets set atop a high mountain next to a lake. Hogwarts is full of shifting staircases and corridors, classrooms and dungeons, common rooms and dormitories, ghosts and portraits whose subjects often leave their frames, and a Great Hall where school meals and banquets are held. Outside the walls of Hogwarts are the Quidditch playing field, where Harry earns admiration as a skilled Seeker; the cottage of Hagrid, the school groundskeeper and Harry's steadfast friend; and the forbidden forest, where unicorns, centaurs, and dreadfully dangerous creatures roam. In the climactic quest for the Stone, Harry and his friends drop down through a trap door and make their way through the Hogwarts dungeons. As the novel closes, Harry returns to King's Cross station and prepares to spend the summer holidays back with the Dursleys.

## Cross-Curricular Sources

### Fiction

Lloyd Alexander, *The Arkadians* and *The Black Cauldron*  
Hans Christian Anderson, *The Complete Fairy Tales*  
Avi, *Tom, Babette, and Simon: Three Tales of Transformation*  
James Barrie, *Peter Pan*  
L. Frank Baum, *The Wizard of Oz*  
Lewis Carroll, *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* and *Through the Looking Glass*  
Susan Cooper, *The Dark Is Rising*



Roald Dahl, *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory*, *James and the Giant Peach*, *Matilda*, and *The Witches*  
Ian Fleming, *Chitty-Chitty-Bang-Bang*  
Esther Friesner, *Wishing Season*  
Neil Gaiman, *Neverwhere*  
Robert Heinlein, *Citizen of the Galaxy*; *Have Spacesuit, Will Travel*; and *Red Planet*  
Norton Juster, *The Phantom Tollbooth*  
Ursula Le Guin, *A Wizard of Earthsea*  
Annette Curtis Klause, *Alien Secrets*  
Madeleine L'Engle, *A Wrinkle in Time*  
C.S. Lewis, *The Chronicles of Narnia* series  
George Lucas, et al., the *Star Wars* trilogy  
Robert Silverberg, ed., *Legends: Stories by the Masters of Modern Fantasy*  
J.R.R. Tolkien, *The Hobbit* and the *Lord of the Rings* trilogy  
John Rowe Townsend, *The Persuading Stick*  
T.H. White, *The Sword and the Stone*

#### Nonfiction

Stephen Biesty, *Cross-Sections Castle*  
R. Allen Brown, *The Architecture of Castles: A Visual Guide*  
Conrad Claims, *Medieval Castles*  
Jean Craighead George, *The Moon of the Owls*  
Bernd Heinrich, *An Owl in the House: A Naturalist's Diary*  
Myra Cohn Livingston, ed., *If the Owl Calls Again: A Collection of Owl Poems*  
David Macauley, *Castle*  
Cathi Dunn Macrae, *Presenting Young Adult Fantasy Fiction*  
Charles Sullivan, ed., *Imaginary Animals* (poems)

#### Reference

Bruno Bettelheim, *The Uses of Enchantment*  
Sheila Egoff, *Worlds Within: Children's Fantasy from the Middle Ages to Today*  
C.S. Lewis, *Of Other Worlds: Essays and Stories*  
Pat Pflieger and Helen M. Hill, eds., *A Reference Guide to Modern Fantasy for Children*  
Marshall B. Tymms, et al., *Fantasy Literature: A Core Collection and Reference Guide*  
Jane Yolen, *Touch Magic: Fantasy, Faerie, and Folklore in the Literature of Childhood*

#### Computer Software

*Castle Explorer* (Dorling Kindersley/DK Multimedia)  
*Curious Creatures* (Curriculum Associates)  
*Junior DIScovering Authors 2.0* (Gale Group)

#### Internet Sites

"Castles of Britain" (Castles Unlimited site), [www.castles-of-britain.com/](http://www.castles-of-britain.com/)

"Castles on the Web", [www.castlesontheweb.com/](http://www.castlesontheweb.com/)  
"Harry Potter's Realm of Wizardry," [www.HarryPotterRealm.com](http://www.HarryPotterRealm.com)  
"Harry Potter Net," [www.harrypotternet.co.uk/](http://www.harrypotternet.co.uk/)  
"Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry," [www.geocities.com/hwarts/](http://www.geocities.com/hwarts/)  
J.K. Rowling's Official Site, [www.jkrowling.com](http://www.jkrowling.com)

#### Video

*Castle* with David Macauley (Unicorn)  
*Creatures Fantastic: Creatures of the Night* (Dorling Kindersley)  
*Grumpuss: The World Premiere Benefit Performance* (Otherworld Entertainment)  
*Magic for Beginners* (Brian Richards Entertainment)  
*Spotted in the Woods* (Green TV/Video Project)  
*Student Workshop: Making Decisions, Solving Problems* (Sunburst)

#### Secondary Texts

*The Complete Idiot's Guide to Harry Potter*, Tere Stouffer  
*Fact, Fiction, and Folklore in Harry Potter's World: An Unofficial Guide*, George Beahm, et al  
*Harry Potter and Philosophy: If Aristotle Ran Hogwarts*, David Baggett, et al  
*Harry Potter's World: Multidisciplinary Critical Perspectives*, Elizabeth E. Heilman, ed.  
*The Hidden Myths of Harry Potter: Spellbinding Map and Book of Secrets*, David Colbert and Virginia Allyn  
*Looking for God in Harry Potter*, John Granger  
*The Magical World of Harry Potter: A Treasury of Myths, Legends, and Fascinating Facts*, David Colbert  
*The Psychology of Harry Potter*, Neil Mulholland, Ed.  
*Reading Harry Potter: Critical Essays*, Giselle Liza Aratel, Ed.  
*Re-Reading Harry Potter*, Suman Gupta  
*The Science of Harry Potter: How Magic Really Works*, Roger Highfield  
*The Sorcerer's Companion: A Guide to the Magical World of Harry Potter*, Allan Zola Kronzek and Elizabeth Kronzek  
*Unlocking Harry Potter: Five Keys for the Serious Reader*, John Granger  
*The Unofficial Harry Potter Encyclopedia: Harry Potter A-Z*, Kristina Benson  
*The Wizard's Companion: An Unofficial Guide to the Books of J.K. Rowling*, Roger and Laurie Stewart

#### Themes and Motifs

A study of the central issues and situations in *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone* should include these aspects:

**Themes**

- search for identity
- loyalty and betrayal
- love and loss
- courage and self-reliance
- loneliness
- good versus evil
- value of friendship

**Motifs**

- transfiguration, spells, potions, herbology
- broomstick flying
- the sport of Quidditch
- social snobbery
- bullying
- child abuse and favoritism
- whimsical, clever names
- humor
- magical creatures and entities
- eccentric professors
- boarding school life

**Meaning Study**

Below are words, phrases, or sentences that have a particular meaning in the novel. Explain each as it relates to the book. Use the chapter and page numbers given in parentheses to reread the term in context if you wish.

1. Number four, Privet Drive (Chapter 1, p.1)  
*(Privet is an ornamental shrub used widely for hedges. Tree and shrub designations such as Privet, Cedar, Maple, and Oak are common street names, and Drive suggests a small neighborhood-type street. The address suggests that the Dursleys live in a quiet, traditional, middle-income neighborhood.)*
2. ... people were gawking at them on the Underground. ... Up another escalator, out into Paddington station. (Chapter 5, p. 86)  
*(The Underground is London's subway, the city's underground railway. Paddington station is one of London's best-known railway stations [it gave its name to Paddington Bear in that series of books], and this is where Hagrid and Harry emerge from the Underground and where Harry takes the surface train back to the Dursleys.)*
3. Harry would be going off to secondary school. ... Dudley had been accepted at Uncle Vernon's old private school, Smeltings. ... Harry, on the other hand, was going to

Stonewall High, the local public school. (Chapter 3, pp. 31-32)  
*(This description has been rewritten from the British original edition, because the British terms might confuse American readers. In Britain, a public school is what we call a private school in the United States—for example, the famous elite British School, Eton, is a public school with very high tuition whose students are among the most affluent and privileged. In U.S. usage, a public school is open to all residents, without tuition payments, and is supported by public tax money. The local tax-supported school that Harry is slated to attend would be called a comprehensive school in Great Britain; high school is the equivalent in the United States.)*

4. the Leaky Cauldron ... a tiny, grubby-looking pub. (Chapter 5, p. 68)  
*(Rowling makes up delightful names for her characters and places, and this is one of them. A cauldron is a large kettle, and a leaky one is of no practical use. Also, Harry has to buy a pewter cauldron as part of his school supplies, presumably to mix potions in. The Leaky Cauldron is a tiny bar whose entrance is on an ordinary Muggle street but cannot be seen by Muggles, only by wizard folk. The entrance to Diagon Alley, with its magical shops and the wizard bank, Gringotts, is behind the Leaky Cauldron.)*
5. Then they visited the Apothecary. (Chapter 5, p. 80)  
*(An apothecary is a drug store, or pharmacy. Harry goes to the Apothecary in Diagon Alley to buy a "supply of basic potion ingredients" to bring with him as part of his Hogwarts school supplies.)*
6. Eeylops Owl Emporium. (Chapter 5, p. 72)  
*(An emporium is a store that carries a wide variety of merchandise for sale. In this case, Eeylops offers a variety of owl species. Hagrid buys a beautiful snowy owl for Harry—it's the boy's first real birthday present ever. As Hagrid says, owls are "dead useful," because they carry wizard mail for their owner. Harry will bring his owl, Hedwig, to Hogwarts with him as his required animal [the other choice being a toad or a cat]).*
7. Harry spotted Professor Quirrell. He was looking

very peculiar in a large purple turban. (Chapter 7, p. 122)

*(Even among Hogwarts' eccentric wizardly professors, Quirrell looks notably peculiar because he is wearing a turban, a type of headdress made of a cap wound around with a long cloth, usually worn by men in the eastern Mediterranean and southern Asia, especially Muslim men. This unusual piece of headgear is all the more noticeable because it is large, and purple. Later, in Quirrell's Defense Against the Dark Arts class, the students are skeptical of the reason Quirrell gives for wearing the turban, and they notice that a "funny smell" hangs around it (Chapter 8, p. 134). Later, in the novel's climactic scene, Quirrell unwraps the turban to reveal what it has been concealing—the face of Voldemort where the back of Quirrell's head ought to be.)*

8. There was an inscription carved around the top [of the mirror]: Erised stra ehru oyt ube cafru oyt on wohsi. (Chapter 12, p. 207) "You ... have discovered the delights of the Mirror of Erised." (Chapter 12, p. 213)

*(Erised is Desire spelled backwards, and the inscription read back to front says, "I show not your face but your heart's desire." As Dumbledore explains to Harry, the mirror does not show a reflection of the person standing in front of it. Instead, it shows the thing that person wants most in the world. Dumbledore uses this characteristic of the Mirror of Erised as the final enchantment that protects the Stone: Only a person who desires to find the Stone, but not use it, can see the Stone in the mirror and get it.)*

9. The ancient study of alchemy is concerned with making the Sorcerer's Stone, a legendary substance with astonishing powers. The stone will transform any metal into pure gold. It also produces the Elixir of Life, which will make the drinker immortal. (Chapter 13, p. 220)
- (This is historically accurate. Alchemy was a medieval chemical science and speculative philosophy. Its purpose was to find out how to transform base metals into pure gold, to discover a universal cure for disease, and to discover how to keep a person alive forever. The mystical Philosopher's Stone was supposed to make these things possible. The original British edition of this novel used this terminology for the stone and was titled Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone.)*

*The Elixir of Life, produced by the stone, is the liquid that prolongs life indefinitely, and this is what Voldemort must drink to return to bodily form and full strength and power.)*

10. Hagrid was carrying his large crossbow, and a quiver of arrows hung over his shoulder. (Chapter 15, p. 249)
- (The world of wizards employs a lot of magically adapted medieval technology, and Hogwarts seems to be quite a medieval place. Hagrid's weapons are an example of this as well; the crossbow launches arrows or stones by means of a short bow mounted crosswise near the end of a wooden stick; this lethal weapon was in common use in medieval times. The Hogwarts castle itself, lit by candles and heated by fireplaces and full of cold, drafty corridors, is another medieval touch.)*

## Comprehension Study

Answer the following questions in your own words. There is not always a right answer. Your judgment is important, and you should be ready to defend your answers by referring to passages in the book.

### Questions 1-4 (Literal Level)

- Who is Lord Voldemort? What has he done to the Potters, and why?  
*(Lord Voldemort is a supremely evil dark wizard who waged war within the wizarding world and who had, until his run-in with the Potters, been winning. He had gathered followers and gained strength and power in order to take control of the world of wizards, and he and his followers had tortured or killed many good witches and wizards along the way, including Lily and James Potter. But when he tried to kill baby Harry, his great powers inexplicably failed him and he disappeared, leaving a lightning-shaped scar on Harry's forehead as a permanent reminder of the attack and its consequences.)*
- How and why has Harry come to live with the Dursleys? What is life like for Harry, living with the Dursleys?  
*(Immediately after Voldemort's attack orphans Harry, Hagrid scuttles the baby away and, on Dumbledore's instructions, brings the child [via flying motorcycle] to Number Four Privet Drive, home of the Dursleys, who are Harry's aunt and uncle and the child's only living relatives. Dumbledore has decided it is best for Harry to*

*grow up among Muggles, away from and unaware of his fame in the wizarding world until he's old enough to handle the knowledge. Dumbledore expects the Dursleys to explain his wizard heritage to Harry as he grows, but Uncle Vernon and Aunt Petunia fear and loathe wizards and wizardry. They tell Harry nothing about his parents or his heritage, suppress and punish any hint of magical ability in Harry, and treat him abysmally. Harry's bedroom is a spider-infested cupboard (closet) under the stairs, he has always had to wear cousin Dudley's enormous hand-me-down clothes, he gets no birthday parties or presents and is not allowed to come along on Dudley's birthday outings, he never gets quite enough to eat (unlike Dudley), he has no protection beyond his own wits from the much larger Dudley's constant bullying, and he receives absolutely no affection or regard from the Dursleys.)*

3. What is the Sorcerer's Stone? How are Albus Dumbledore and Nicolas Flamel connected to it? Why does Voldemort want it desperately? (*The Sorcerer's Stone, or Philosopher's Stone, is a legendary substance that alchemists tried for years to create. It will transform any substance into pure gold, and it also produces the Elixir of Life, which makes whoever drinks it immortal. Dumbledore and Flamel worked together on alchemy, and today Flamel is the only known possessor of the Sorcerer's Stone. To keep the Stone safe, Flamel has stored it at Gringotts, but fearing Voldemort will try to steal it, Flamel has arranged with Dumbledore for the Stone to be moved to Hogwarts, where it is protected by Fluffy the three-headed dog, as well as various enchantments. Voldemort is desperate to get the Stone so he can drink the Elixir of Life and be restored to full bodily form, strength, and power, all of which were drained from him by his unsuccessful attack on baby Harry. [It's clear that the Elixir works, because Flamel and his wife, Perenelle, are currently 665 and 668 years old, respectively.]*)
4. What is Quidditch, and how is it played? What special role does Harry play on his house team? (*Quidditch is the favorite wizard sport; wizards are as passionate about it and its teams as British Muggles are about soccer. It is a sort of*

*aerial soccer, with the players flying around the aerial field on broomsticks. Each team has three Chasers, who attempt to hit the Quaffle ball through one of three hoops at their opponents' goal end; one Keeper for each team attempts to block these shots. Two other balls called Bludgers fly about on their own, attacking players at random. Each team has two Beaters who attempt to protect their teammates from the Bludgers and whack these balls toward their opponents. The last player on each team is the Seeker, whose job is to find the tiny, speedy, elusive Golden Snitch. Only the most skilled, daring, and swift broomstick riders are good enough to be Seekers. Harry's skill from the first moment he rides a broomstick is so apparent, he is made the first first-year student Seeker on a Hogwarts Quidditch team in a century. Harry gets the first taste in his life of adulation/admiration for a personal accomplishment when he catches the Snitch to win the Gryffindor-Slytherin match.)*

**Questions 5-7 (Interpretive Level)**

5. In what ways do Harry's life and sense of self improve tremendously during his first year at Hogwarts? (*During his ten years with the Dursleys, Harry has been treated like "something very nasty that could not understand them, like a slug." He has no chance to develop a sense of self-worth and personal identity. All this changes at Hogwarts. He is recognized by everyone as special because he survived Voldemort's attempt to kill him when he was a baby. At first, Harry feels unworthy of recognition as a wizard because he has grown up as a Muggle with no knowledge of the wizard world. But as the year at Hogwarts progresses, Harry begins to gain some wizardly skills and, for the first time ever, begins to win some friends who value him for his personal qualities such as humor, loyalty, and spirit, qualities the Dursleys never acknowledged in the boy. Harry is thrilled to win admiration for his success as the Gryffindor Seeker, which builds his self-esteem. During his year at Hogwarts, Harry's life finally expands to include friendship, affection, mentoring, appreciation, and encouragement, not to mention adventure and fun. And by learning about his parents and his wizard heritage, Harry achieves a sense of self in the context of family heritage.)*

6. What personal characteristics do Harry, Hermione, Ron, and Neville each have that suit them to be members of Gryffindor house? What characteristics of Malfoy, Crabbe, and Goyle suit them for Slytherin House?  
*(The Sorting Hat says that Gryffindors are "brave at heart [with] daring, nerve, and chivalry." Harry shows his bravery, daring, and nerve in his exploits as the Keeper of the Gryffindor Quidditch team and in his continuing explorations of Hogwarts at night to get the answers to his questions. Ron and Hermione also show bravery, daring, and nerve as they join Harry in these explorations, and the trio truly exemplify these qualities when they go on the highly dangerous quest to find the Stone. Timid Neville seems at first an odd choice for Gryffindor, but he shows his nerve and courage when he goes after Harry and Hermione at night to warn them about Malfoy, and again when he stands up to his friends to try to stop them from going out on their quest for the Stone. All exhibit chivalry in their loyalty to each other and to Hagrid. The Sorting Hat describes Slytherins as "cunning folk [who] use any means to achieve their ends," and that's an apt description of the snobbish, sneaky Malfoy, who lures Harry to the trophy room and sends Filch to find him, eavesdrops and peeps to find out about Hagrid's dragon and tries to use the knowledge he gains to get everyone in trouble, and uses his cronies, Crabbe and Goyle, to bully and suppress other students.)*
7. What elements of magic and wizardry do Harry, Ron, and Hermione learn during their first year at Hogwarts that enable Harry to get from the third-floor corridor to the Sorcerer's Stone and protect it from Quirrell/Voldemort?  
*(From Hagrid, Harry learns to play music in order to put Fluffy the monstrous three-headed dog to sleep, which allows access to the trap door. They use their broom-flying skills to capture the charmed flying key to get through another chamber. They understand from Transfiguration classes that they must become living chess pieces, and Ron's skill at wizard chess enables Harry and Hermione to cross the chess chamber. Hermione's skill at logic enables her to choose the correct potions left by Professor Snape, which gets Harry to the final*

*chamber. There, he uses the understanding Professor Dumbledore gave him about the true nature of reflections in the Mirror of Erised to get the Stone to drop into his pocket.)*

**Questions 8-10 (Critical Level)**

8. What values and personal characteristics does this novel promote? What values and personal characteristics does this novel depict as undesirable? Give examples.  
*(Values and personal characteristics the novel promotes include loyalty, courage, friendship, love, self-reliance, the importance of family, tolerance toward those who are different or less privileged, seeking to do the right thing, and meeting challenges to the best of your ability. Values and personal characteristics depicted as undesirable include snobbery, selfishness, bullying, rudeness, lying, slyness, greed, the desire for power and personal gain above all, emotional cruelty, and hostility toward and abuse of those who are different. Students' examples of these will vary.)*
9. How does the author develop and sustain suspense throughout the novel?  
*(The novel's sustained suspense is one of its most notable features. The suspense begins in Chapter 1, with its mysterious and only partially explained happenings, and the inferences that Harry is special and connected to a strange but unrevealed other world. The suspense about Harry's real nature and background continues to build in the next chapters as the Dursleys make cryptic references to that "dangerous nonsense." Finally, Hagrid arrives on the scene and we learn that Harry is a wizard and is about to go to wizard school. Now we share Harry's anxiety about how he will fit in and learn wizardry. Harry's trip to London with Hagrid starts a new line of suspense: what is the package Hagrid is bringing to Hogwarts? Once Harry is at Hogwarts, the plot revolves around both typical details of boarding-school life [with the delightful and humorous twist of immersion in magic] and speculation about Voldemort and the mysterious package. The suspense builds as Harry has anxiety dreams about Voldemort, speculates about what the thieves were looking for at Gringotts, notices Snape's suspicious behavior, engages in thrilling Quidditch matches, and has hair-raising adventures and near-*

*escapes in his nighttime explorations of Hogwarts' forbidden rooms and corridors with Ron and Hermione. The suspense climaxes in the last three chapters, with the terrifying night in the forbidden forest, the high-risk quest from the third-floor corridor toward the Stone, and Harry's horrifying and nearly deadly struggle for the Stone with Quirrell/Voldemort.)*

10. How does the author point toward Snape as the villain who is after the Stone and away from Quirrell as the real villain? *(Quirrell—falsely, we later find out—acts extremely nervous and timid; he stutters; he acts terrified of the Dark Arts and mention of creatures like vampires and his discovery of a troll inside Hogwarts; he quails when Snape questions him about the Stone and where his loyalties lie—which also seems to reveal Snape as a threat to the Stone and an ally of Voldemort. Also, Snape looks the stereotype of a villain: “greasy black hair, a hooked nose, and sallow skin”—and when he stares sharply at Harry during the opening banquet, Harry’s scar throbs.*

*(Snape treats Harry poisonously during Potions classes. Snape slips off to the third-floor corridor, where he’s attacked by the three-headed dog that’s guarding the trap door leading to the Stone. Snape stares fixedly at Harry, muttering nonstop, during the Quidditch match when Harry’s broom goes out of control, so we assume it’s Snape who’s bewitching the broom [like Hermione, we scarcely notice that she knocks over Quirrell—the real culprit—on her way to stop Snape]. Snape is a biased Quidditch referee, favoring the Slytherins, and he seems to be following Harry around [to protect the boy, we later discover]. With all these false leads, Harry—along with readers—simply assumes that it’s Snape threatening Quirrell in an empty room and that it’s Snape beneath the cloak in the forbidden forest. This makes for a surprise when Harry enters the final chamber on the quest for the Stone and discovers Quirrell.)*

**Questions 11-14 (Creative Level)**

11. Write a letter from Harry to Hermione or Ron describing portions of his summer vacation after his first year at Hogwarts.
12. Without reading ahead in the series, speculate

- on why Hagrid was expelled from Hogwarts.
13. Describe some other magical and wizardly things that are a routine part of life at Hogwarts.
14. Discuss with classmates: What alternative might you suggest to Albus Dumbledore rather than leaving baby Harry to spend his childhood with the Dursleys? What advantages and disadvantages do you find for each alternative?

**Across the Curriculum**

**Art**

1. Design signs for some of the shops in Diagon Alley.
2. Draw a floor plan of the Hogwarts School castle, or create a map or model of the Hogwarts School and its surroundings.
3. Design clothing that students and teachers at Hogwarts would wear.
4. Create the Slytherin or Gryffindor banner.

**Mathematics**

1. Construct a series of math problems involving conversions among the three types of wizard coins—gold Galleons, silver Sickles (17 to a Galleon), and bronze Knuts (29 to a Sickle).
2. Create a chart that details how each Hogwarts house accumulated its total points for the year, as announced at the term-end banquet.

**History and Social Studies**

1. Research and report on the history of alchemy and the search for the Philosopher’s Stone.
2. Create a class display of historical castles, explaining the common features of the typical castle.
3. Study the issue of physical and emotional child abuse, then decide if Mr. and Mrs. Dursley could be criminally charged with abusing Harry. What would be the procedure for this process in your state/locality.
4. What connections to Greek mythology can you make for Fluffy the three-headed dog and Argus Filch the caretaker?
5. Using the book’s date of publication as your starting point, calculate in what years Nicolas Flamel and Perenelle Flamel each were born. List some significant events that happened in each of those years.

### Language Arts

1. Some people condemn the *Harry Potter* books because they depict and do not condemn witchcraft and wizardry and the existence of ghosts. Develop a list of well-known, frequently read books that would be banned if these objections were enforced against them.
2. Rewrite some of Hagrid's dialogue into contemporary American speech.
3. For each word of British slang you find in the novel, translate it into a U.S., Canadian, or other dialect equivalent.
4. Create an illustrated explanatory guide to the many magical creatures and entities mentioned in the novel, such as goblins, trolls, vampires, and unicorns.
5. With classmates, put out an edition of the Hogwarts school newspaper.
6. Practice writing funny descriptions of people using outlandish comparisons in the Rowling style—for example, "Harry often said that Dudley looked like a pig in a wig" or "Uncle Vernon yelled at Harry, his face like a gigantic beet with a mustache."
7. How do the sounds and words of many of the names of individual characters in the novel seem to fit that character's personality and/or position? After answering the question, try making up some Rowling-style names of your own.
8. Discuss in class other books you have read, and films/videos you have seen, that revolve around the theme of good versus evil. What is the outcome of each of these conflicts?

### Music

1. Set the Hogwarts school song and/or the Sorting Hat's song to music—either a tune you compose or an existing tune.

### Psychology

1. Many fairy tales express deep childhood fears and point toward a way of triumphing over them. What are these fears? How does this aspect of fairy tales apply to this novel? What other fairy tales do you recall that express this theme?
2. What do child development guidelines tell us about the effects of spoiling on a child? Putting yourself in the role of a counselor, write a recommendation to the Dursleys explaining why their parenting of Dudley is

misguided, what effects their parenting approach is having on Dudley, and how they should alter their handling of Dudley.

### Science

1. Create an illustrated field guide to owls of the region in which you live. Be sure to include owls mentioned in the novel, if they live in your region, including bar, screech, tawny, brown, and snowy owls.
2. Using a model or a poster, explain how and why stalactites and stalagmites (like those found in Gringotts) form.
3. Create a pamphlet or display explaining how to care for a pet boa constrictor.
4. Report on traditional and current uses of various herbs and other plants, especially those mentioned in the novel, such as dittany and monkshood/aconite/wolfsbane. Include illustrations of the plants.

### Student Involvement Activities

1. Explain the game of chess to classmates and demonstrate how the different pieces move. You and classmates could play a game of living chess, as Ron, Harry, and Hermione had to do.
2. Demonstrate various magic tricks to the class, especially some that resemble some of the wizardly happenings in the novel.
3. Invent the titles and authors of some other Hogwarts textbooks, along the lines of the books on Harry's list on page 80 of the novel.
4. View the film of *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone* and, in a class discussion, compare the film with the novel and your reactions to the film versus the novel.
5. Create a *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone* board game, with the goal of accumulating enough points to win the House Cup.
6. Discuss violence in *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone*. Is the violence justified in the context of the story? Is it excessive? In an era when school violence is feared, should the *Harry Potter* books depict so much school-based violence?
7. Write an official rule book for Quidditch, or invent a unique game of your own, complete with its own rule book.
8. Review the original *Star Wars* trilogy. Do you find any parallels between the *Harry-Voldemort*

connection and the Luke Skywalker-Darth Vader connection? Between Harry's situation and Luke's? Between Dumbledore and Obi-Wan Kenobi?

9. Visit some of the many Harry Potter websites. What do you like or dislike about each site? What other features would you like to find in a site? On your own, with friends or classmates, create your own site.

### Alternate Assessment

1. Construct a map or illustration of Harry's world. Label the various elements and localities on the map, and, on separate sheets, summarize what happens in each place with whom.
2. Explain the significance of each element depicted on the front and back covers of this edition of the novel.
3. Write character sketches of Hogwarts' eccentric adults and describe the relationship of each of these adults with Harry and his friends.
4. Create a guide to the wizard world. Explain the different kinds of magic that Harry and his friends are learning at Hogwarts; note the magical aspects of everyday life at Hogwarts; and construct a glossary of the various magical creatures found there, such as centaurs, unicorns, trolls, and a poltergeist.
5. Support this reader's statement with examples from the novel: "This novel is exactly like real life except it has magic."



## Vocabulary Test

Match each underlined word with its meaning listed below. Write the letter of the meaning in the space next to the sentence number.

- a. guilty distress
- b. crooked
- c. dark skinned
- d. bad humored
- e. nauseous
- f. confused and astonished
- g. drawn back in terror
- h. slipping and sliding
- i. laughed in satisfaction
- j. paralyzed by fear
- k. jumped
- l. without words
- m. searching through
- n. chatter senselessly
- o. gazed in wonder
- p. very small
- q. huge
- r. foul smell
- s. family name
- t. hurtling

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1. Dumbledore was busy rummaging in his cloak, looking for something.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2. In his vast, muscular arms Hagrid was holding a bundle of blankets.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 3. The great snake was uncoiling itself rapidly, slithering out onto the floor.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 4. Piers and Dudley could only gibber, but as far as Harry had seen, the snake hadn't done anything except snap playfully at their heels as it passed.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 5. Next moment, thirty or forty letters came pelting out of the fireplace like bullets.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 6. A braver man than Vernon Dursley would have quailed under the furious look Hagrid now gave him.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 7. The goblin had a swarthy, clever face, a pointed beard, and very long fingers and feet.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 8. "What's your surname, anyway?" Malfoy asked Harry.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 9. Harry examined silver unicorn horns at twenty-one Galleons each and minuscule, glittery-black beetle eyes (five Knuts a scoop).
- \_\_\_\_\_ 10. Owls hooted to one another in a disgruntled sort of way over the babble and the scraping of heavy trunks.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 11. The two Weasley boys gawked at him,

and Harry felt himself turning red.

- \_\_\_\_\_ 12. "What!" Ron looked dumbfounded when Harry admitted he didn't know any Quidditch teams.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 13. "New students!" said the Fat Friar. "About to be Sorted, I suppose?" A few people nodded mutely.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 14. If only the hat had mentioned a house for people who felt a bit queasy, that would have been the one for Harry.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 15. "This way!" Harry mouthed to the others and, petrified, they began to creep down a long gallery full of suits of armor.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 16. "Well, it's true," Harry chortled. "If Malfoy hadn't stolen Neville's Remembrall I wouldn't be on the team."
- \_\_\_\_\_ 17. Professor Quirrell came sprinting into the hall, his turban askew and terror on his face.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 18. Harry sniffed and a stench reached his nostrils, a mixture of old socks and the kind of public toilet no one seems to clean.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 19. "Seize him! SEIZE HIM!" shrieked Voldemort again, and Quirrell lunged, knocking Harry clean off his feet.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 20. "Hagrid!" said Harry, shocked to see Hagrid shaking with grief and remorse, great tears leaking down his beard.

## Comprehension Test A

### Part I: Matching (30 points)

Read each character description. In the list below, find the character who matches the description. Write the letter of the character in the space next to the description number. Use each name only once.

- a. Harry Potter
- b. Ron Weasley
- c. Hermione
- d. Norbert
- e. Peeves
- f. Dudley Dursley
- g. Hedwig
- h. Mrs. Norris
- i. Nicolas Flamel
- j. Lily Potter
- k. Voldemort
- l. Albus Dumbledore
- m. Hagrid
- n. Professor Quirrell
- o. Argus Filch

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1. Person who is killed by Voldemort
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2. Know-it-all, go-by-the-rules student
- \_\_\_\_\_ 3. Headmaster of Hogwarts
- \_\_\_\_\_ 4. Master of alchemy and possessor of the Sorcerer's Stone
- \_\_\_\_\_ 5. Caretaker of Hogwarts; doesn't much like the students
- \_\_\_\_\_ 6. A Norwegian Ridgeback dragon
- \_\_\_\_\_ 7. Harry's messenger owl
- \_\_\_\_\_ 8. Student with unruly black hair, glasses, and a scar on his forehead
- \_\_\_\_\_ 9. A wild-haired, bushy-bearded giant
- \_\_\_\_\_ 10. Often called You-Know-Who
- \_\_\_\_\_ 11. Harry's best friend, who's got three brothers at Hogwarts with him
- \_\_\_\_\_ 12. Harry's perfectly dreadful cousin
- \_\_\_\_\_ 13. The caretaker's cat, which prowls the school corridors looking for students who are breaking the rules
- \_\_\_\_\_ 14. Wizard who is helping Voldemort get the Stone
- \_\_\_\_\_ 15. Hogwarts' annoying poltergeist

### Part II: Short Answer (30 points)

Briefly explain each of the following and its importance.

- 1. Muggle
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- 2. Nimbus Two Thousand
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- 3. Sorting Ceremony and Sorting Hat

4. Sorcerer's Stone

5. Forbidden Forest

6. Leaky Cauldron and Diagon Alley

**Part III: Fill-In (20 points)**

Write one or two words in each blank to make each statement true.

1. Hagrid's dog Fluffy is very unusual because he has \_\_\_\_\_.
2. Students get into the Gryffindor living quarters by giving the password to the animated portrait of the \_\_\_\_\_.
3. Nearly Headless Nick and Professor Binns are both this kind of creature or entity: \_\_\_\_\_.
4. Ron and Harry play the board game of \_\_\_\_\_ with living playing pieces.
5. For ten years, Harry's bedroom is a \_\_\_\_\_ under the \_\_\_\_\_.
6. The game of \_\_\_\_\_ includes a Quaffle and two Bludgers.
7. Harry and Ron save Hermione from a huge, horrid \_\_\_\_\_ that gets into Hogwarts on Halloween.
8. As a Christmas gift, Harry receives a magical \_\_\_\_\_ that used to belong to his father.
9. Harry sees his family in the \_\_\_\_\_ of \_\_\_\_\_.
10. On their quest for the Stone in the Hogwarts dungeon, Harry, Hermione, and Ron must catch a flying \_\_\_\_\_.

**Part IV: Essay (20 points)**

Choose two and answer in complete sentences.

1. What do Hogwarts students learn in these classes: Herbology, Charms, Potions, Transfiguration, Flying?
2. What is Harry's life with the Dursleys like? Why do the Dursleys treat Harry this way?
3. Compare Harry Potter with Draco Malfoy.

## Comprehension Test B

### Part I: Matching (30 points)

Read each character description. In the list below, find the character who matches the description. Write the letter of the character in the space next to the description number. Use each name only once.

- a. Harry Potter
- b. Ron Weasley
- c. Hermione
- d. Neville
- e. Scabbers
- f. Draco Malfoy
- g. Firenze
- h. Fluffy
- i. Mrs. Weasley
- j. Aunt Petunia
- k. Voldemort
- l. Albus Dumbledore
- m. Hagrid
- n. Professor Snape
- o. Professor McGonagall

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1. Hagrid's monstrous three-headed dog.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2. Red-headed boy with lots of red-headed brothers.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 3. Person who loathes and fears witches and wizards.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 4. Great wizard who has studied alchemy with Nicolas Flamel.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 5. Timid boy who wins points for bravery.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 6. Hook-nosed person who Harry is sure is trying to steal the Stone.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 7. Centaur who saves Harry in the forbidden forest.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 8. Pet rat who sleeps most of the time.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 9. Hogwarts groundskeeper and a great friend of Harry's.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 10. Severe-looking woman who, in cat form, keeps watch at Number Four Privet Drive on the day Harry arrives there.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 11. Snobbish student who dislikes Harry intensely.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 12. Student who's always warning Harry not to break the rules.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 13. Wizard who goes over to the Dark Side.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 14. Person who knits Harry a sweater as a Christmas gift.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 15. The youngest Seeker on a Hogwarts Quidditch team in a century.

### Part II: Short Answer (30 points)

Briefly define and explain the significance of each of the following.

1. Hogwarts Express and Platform Nine and Three-Quarters
  
2. Quidditch and the Golden Snitch
  
3. Gryffindor and Slytherin

4. Mirror of Erised

5. Four Privet Drive

6. Gringotts

**Part III: Fill-In (20 points)**

Write one or two words in each blank to make each statement true.

1. Quirrell/Voldemort kills several innocent \_\_\_\_\_ in the forbidden forest.
2. Norbert the Norwegian Ridgeback is this type of creature: \_\_\_\_\_.
3. The Hogwarts poltergeist who likes to annoy and interfere with the students is named \_\_\_\_\_.
4. Wizard mail is delivered by \_\_\_\_\_.
5. \_\_\_\_\_ is the wizard word for non-magical people.
6. \_\_\_\_\_ kills Harry's parents.
7. The scar on Harry's forehead has the shape of a(n) \_\_\_\_\_.
8. Professor Quirrell wears a(n) \_\_\_\_\_ on his head, which is an odd choice of head-gear.
9. On their quest for the Stone in the Hogwarts dungeons, Harry, Hermione, and Ron must become part of a living game of \_\_\_\_\_.
10. The last name of Uncle Vernon, Aunt Petunia, and Cousin Dudley is \_\_\_\_\_.

**Part IV: Essay (20 points)**

Choose two and answer in complete sentences.

1. How did Harry get the scar on his forehead, and what is its significance?
2. What is the Sorcerer's Stone, and why is Voldemort so desperate to get it?
3. What does Harry learn during his first year at Hogwarts?

## Answer Key

### VOCABULARY TEST

1. m
2. q
3. h
4. n
5. t
6. g
7. c
8. s
9. p
10. d
11. o
12. f
13. l
14. e
15. j
16. i
17. b
18. r
19. k
20. a

### COMPREHENSION TEST A

#### Part I: Matching (30 points)

1. j
2. c
3. l
4. i
5. o
6. d
7. g
8. a
9. m
10. k
11. b
12. f
13. h
14. n
15. e

#### Part II: Short Answer (30 points)

Answers will vary.

#### Part III: Fill-In (20 points)

1. three heads
2. Fat Lady
3. ghost
4. wizard chess
5. cupboard (under the) stairs
6. Quidditch

7. troll
8. invisibility cloak
9. Mirror (of) Erised
10. key

#### Part IV: Essay (20 points)

Answers will vary.

### COMPREHENSION TEST B

#### Part I: Matching (30 points)

1. h
2. b
3. j
4. l
5. d
6. n
7. g
8. e
9. m
10. o
11. f
12. c
13. k
14. i
15. a

#### Part II: Short Answer (30 points)

Answers will vary.

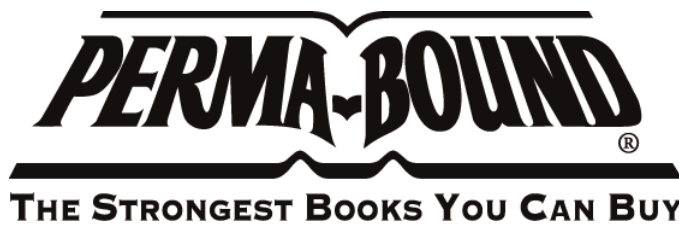
#### Part III: Fill-In (20 points)

1. unicorns
2. dragon
3. Peeves
4. owls
5. Muggle
6. Voldemort
7. lightning bolt
8. turban
9. chess
10. Dursley

#### Part IV: Essay (20 points)

Answers will vary.





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