

Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone Study Guide

Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone by J. K. Rowling

(c)2015 BookRags, Inc. All rights reserved.



Contents

Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone Study Guide.....	1
Contents.....	2
Overview.....	4
About the Author.....	6
Plot Summary.....	8
Chapter 1.....	9
Chapter 2.....	11
Chapter 3.....	13
Chapter 4.....	15
Chapter 5.....	17
Chapter 6.....	19
Chapter 7.....	21
Chapter 8.....	23
Chapter 9.....	24
Chapter 10.....	26
Chapter 11.....	28
Chapter 12.....	30
Chapter 13.....	32
Chapter 14.....	33
Chapter 15.....	34
Chapter 16.....	35
Chapter 17.....	37
Characters.....	39
Objects/Places.....	42
Setting.....	44



[Social Sensitivity..... 46](#)

[Literary Qualities..... 48](#)

[Themes..... 50](#)

[Themes/Characters..... 52](#)

[Style..... 54](#)

[Quotes..... 56](#)

[Topics for Discussion..... 58](#)

[Ideas for Reports and Papers..... 60](#)

[Further Study..... 61](#)

[Related Titles..... 61](#)

[Copyright Information..... 61](#)



Overview

The first of the "Harry Potter" books, *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone* introduces readers to Harry Potter on the cusp of his eleventh birthday. Born to a well-respected and much-loved witch and wizard, Harry Potter was orphaned as a baby and left to be taken care of by his Aunt Petunia and Uncle Vernon Dursley, along with their son Dudley.

Harry bears the scars of his parents' fate and his orphaned status both literally and figuratively. The evil wizard Voldemort ("He Who Shall Not Be Named") killed Harry's parents but could not vanquish their son. As a result of the battle, Harry wears a curious, lightning-shaped scar on his forehead—a scar that burns when Harry is in danger or when he wakes up from a repeating nightmare of infant memory. Nevertheless, being the son of a successful magic couple and defeating an evil wizard as a one-year-old babe is not without benefits.

Harry Potter is renowned in the magic world, a child hero. But he is a child hero unaware. In their wisdom, Professors Dumbledore and McGonagall leave Harry on the Dursley's doorstep. The Dursleys are staunch and proud Muggles, non-magic people who live in a flat, gray, and oppressively over-systematized and inconvenient world—the world of present-day Great Britain.

Harry is perceived as a burden and potential embarrassment to the Dursleys. He is told that his parents were killed in a car accident, never shown any photographs of them, and kept ignorant of the magic world and his own possible place in it. Harry Potter cannot explain how he was able to jump on top of the school building when being chased by bullies, nor how he dissolved the glass front of a snake's habitat and conversed with the boa constrictor during Dudley Dursley's birthday outing to the zoo. Indeed, these are the very things that leave him friendless, isolated, and very unheroic in his own (and everyone else's) eyes.

The first ten years of Harry's life bear a resemblance to Wart's, the young King Arthur's, childhood as depicted in T. H. White's *The Once and Future King*. Where White's long-bearded Merlin gives the Wart in fosterage, in *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone*, Rowling's Professor Dumbledore farms Harry out to distant relatives. Where White's young Arthur is treated as a second-class son compared to the up-and-coming Sir Kay, Rowling's child hero is abused and maligned by his aunt and uncle and their spoiled, ridiculous son Dudley. Where White's protagonist is unwittingly trained for kingship by Merlin before he stumbles across the sword in the stone and his heroic self, Rowling's title character is eventually relieved of his unhappy Muggle upbringing by Professor Dumbledore's letter of acceptance to Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry. Noble parentage and inherent heroism are revealed and Rowling's *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone* takes off into a description of the non-Muggle world, the wonderful landscape and lifestyle of Hogwarts school, and the first-year student adventures of Harry and his new friends, Ron Weasley and Hermione Granger. Together, they embark

on a quest for the Sorcerer's Stone, a magical stone that, as they discover, is hidden deep within Hogwarts.

About the Author

Born on July 31, 1965, in Gloucestershire, England, Joanne Kathleen Rowling grew up in rural communities in the southwestern part of that country. Her parents, Peter and Anne Rowling, an engineer and laboratory technician respectively, bought books such as *The Wind in the Willows* to read to their two daughters. Rowling's childhood experiences shaped her future literary creations. She explored the English countryside, visiting castles and historical sites which inspired her imagination. Although she disliked science and mathematics courses, Rowling excelled in literature classes. She penned funny, fantastical tales to amuse her sister, Diana, and friends, especially the Potter siblings whose name she later appropriated for her wizardry novels.

As a teenager, Rowling dreamed of becoming a published author whose books were sold in stores. She kept her ambitions a secret, though, because she feared criticism and discouragement from people who might declare that her writing was weak.

Rowling gradually became more self-confident and was named Head Girl during her final year at school. Studying languages at Exeter University in order to be employable as a bilingual secretary, Rowling graduated with a degree in French and Classics. This scholarly knowledge aided her later clever construction of characters in the Harry Potter books. She also earned college credits while serving as an auxiliary teacher in Paris.

Rowling researched human rights issues for Amnesty International, then relocated to Manchester, England, for other office positions. She worked for a company that manufactured surveillance equipment. The self-professed disorganized Rowling loathed her secretarial duties, often writing instead of working. She wrote fiction for adult readers but did not submit it for publication.

She also often visited her ailing mother, who had been diagnosed with multiple sclerosis a few years earlier. During one of these train trips, Rowling had an epiphany about an orphaned boy wizard named Harry Potter and began inventing characters and settings. After her mother's death in 1990, Rowling decided to teach English as a second language in Oporto, Portugal.

She outlined seven books to chronicle Harry's adventures at the Hogwarts School of Wizardry and Witchcraft and his battle against evil forces. Each book would feature one year of Harry's schooling as he aged from eleven years old to seventeen.

During the search for his identity as he matured, Harry would avenge his parents' murder, discover his family's heritage, and secure sanctuaries where good wizards and witches could thrive. Rowling's careful planning enabled her to place subtle clues that would later prove crucial to characterization and plot development.

Writing in the mornings and teaching in the afternoon and at night, Rowling met and married journalist Jorge Arantes. Their daughter Jessica was born in August 1993.



Several months later, Rowling divorced Arantes and moved with Jessica to Edinburgh, Scotland, where her sister, Diana, lived. Diana urged Rowling to finish the first Harry Potter novel. The media has emphasized that Rowling was on public assistance during this time, and Rowling clarifies that she was initially unable to find work that paid a sufficient salary for her to afford child care. Later, she began teaching in a local school.

Writing for her own entertainment and sense of accomplishment, Rowling did not intend to write a children's book. Agent Christopher Little recognized Rowling's talent and began submitting the book to publishers. Bloomsbury Press bought Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone in 1996. The next year, Scholastic Corporation purchased rights to publish the book in the United States, changing the title's wording to attract American readers. Rowling received a grant from the Scottish Arts Council to complete her second book, Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets. She sold film and merchandising rights to Warner Brothers.

Rowling has received praise from reviewers and readers, winning numerous awards, including the Smarties Prize for her first three books, and topping the bestseller lists. She was named Author of the Year at the British Book Awards in 2000 and received an honorary doctorate from the University of St. Andrews in Scotland.

Rowling has become a celebrity, appearing as a featured reader at such events as the White House Easter egg roll. The Harry Potter books are a catalyst for a cultural phenomenon. Millions of copies in more than thirty languages have been sold in over one hundred countries. Readers of all ages apprehensively wait for new books then voraciously read them. The dark themes explored in the series have caused some conservative groups to attempt to ban the books from classrooms. Rowling responds to such attacks by stating that she does not believe in witchcraft and thinks children deserve to know the realities of evil.



Plot Summary

Harry Potter is the young "Wizard who Lived" in this imaginative tale of wizards, witches, and magic. Voldemort, AKA "you-know-who," is a dark wizard who kills Harry Potter's parents, vanishes, and loses his powers after trying to kill Harry. Infant Harry is left orphaned and carries with him a lightning-bolt-shaped scar on his forehead as a result of the attack on him. This scar distinguishes him from other wizards and people.

Directly after the death of his parents, Harry is sent to live with his non-magical, or Muggle, aunt, uncle, and cousin, the Dursleys. The Dursleys are not happy with this arrangement; his Aunt Petunia and Uncle Vernon were never fond of his parents and, in fact, did everything they could to avoid them. Therefore, they make Harry's life with them for the following 10 years an absolute misery, providing him with only the absolute necessities and nothing more. He is forced to sleep in a small pantry under the stairs and is forced to wear his much larger cousin's hand-me-downs.

Harry's life seems bleak and without hope until a mysterious letter arrives for him one day that frightens the Dursleys so much they allow him to have their son Dudley's "extra bedroom" to sleep in. It is on the dawn of Harry's eleventh birthday that he finds out that he is a wizard, and he has been summoned to attend Hogwarts School of Wizardry and Witchcraft. Harry is in for quite a shock because he had no previous knowledge of his magical history or abilities. His aunt and uncle had decided that it was in their best interests to not tell him. This news is very offensive to the magical, umbrella-wielding giant who has been sent to fetch Harry by Dumbledore, the school's headmaster. Hogwarts' headmaster, it turns out, is the very same wizard who sent Harry to live with his extended family 10 years earlier.

A year of adventure, knowledge, and magic ensues as Harry makes friends for the first time in his life, battles dark forces, and learns about his true magical background and the legendary lightning bolt scar on his forehead. He ultimately must return to the Dursleys at the end of the school term for his own protection, but he is renewed with a bright hope for the future. He also has his second year at Hogwarts to look forward to, making life with the Dursleys a little more tolerable and his life a little more magical.



Chapter 1

Chapter 1 Summary

Chapter 1 outlines the personalities of the Dursleys and presents the reader with Harry Potter, "The Boy who Lived." The Dursleys are an uptight, closed-minded, middle-class family with one son named Dudley. They consider themselves to be beyond reproach and quite upstanding; however, they guard a secret that they believe would ruin their reputations if anyone were to find it out.

Odd occurrences begin happening one day that greatly upset Mr. Dursley to the point of distraction. On his way to work in the morning, he notices that Owls are flying overhead in broad daylight, a cat seems to be reading a newspaper and unusually dressed people are standing around in the streets in alarming numbers. He also overhears a conversation between a group of these oddly dressed people mentioning the name Potter, which sends him into a near panic. He decides that these are all just coincidences and does not tell his wife about what he has seen or heard so as to not alarm her needlessly.

Long after the Dursleys have gone to bed the newspaper-reading cat, perched on a wall outside their home, is joined by a tall man wearing long robes and carrying with him a device that puts out all the street lights. When the two meet, the cat transforms into a severe-looking older woman who turns out to be one Professor McGonagall. The tall man's name is Professor Albus Dumbledore. They discuss the death of two people named Lilly and James Potter and the near death of their infant son Harry. The murderer is the dark wizard named Voldemort, and he has disappeared, causing much celebration among their brethren.

Dumbledore has arrived at the Dursley's home at Number 4, Privet Drive, to bring the infant Harry to live in hiding with them until he is old enough to handle his notoriety. They leave the famous boy who vanquished a deadly and highly feared man on the Dursley's doorstep with a letter of explanation. They wish him well and then vanish from Privet Drive.

Chapter 1 Analysis

The author gives insight into the stingy small mindedness and disillusioned sensibilities of the Dursleys in this chapter. The chapter is full of hints, questions, mystery, and intrigue. It is not outwardly revealed at this stage that the mysterious Dumbledore and the shape-shifting cat are a wizard and a witch. However, it is evident that something magical is going on. Owls are flying in broad daylight, an unusual abundance of shooting stars are falling from the sky, and cats are reading newspapers.

A couple is dead, and their infant son is left alive and is responsible for the elimination of a dark force, making him honored and famous. He is sent to live under unusual and

precarious circumstances with three people who are sure not to want him. In short, the reader is given a handful of enticing breadcrumbs to follow into the next chapter.



Chapter 2

Chapter 2 Summary

The start of Chapter 2 takes the reader into the future; it is almost 10 years since Harry was dropped off on the Dursleys' doorstep. The reader meets Dudley on his tenth birthday with Harry close behind in age. Dudley is a spoiled, overindulged child who is overweight and quite a bully. He is very upset that he has received only 36 gifts for his birthday this year, which is two less than the previous year. He manipulates his parents into making up the difference, and they are glad to oblige. Conversely, Harry is berated and forced to sleep in a cupboard under the stairs in small quarters with an abundance of spiders for company.

The family is about to depart for Dudley's annual birthday outing, when Harry's Aunt Petunia finds out that the "sitter" cannot take Harry for the day as planned. They are forced to bring him along. Harry is delighted at this prospect, not because he relishes spending time with the Dursleys but rather because he is rarely allowed to go anywhere except school and his cupboard. His Uncle Vernon warns Harry quite vehemently that nothing better go wrong on the outing. Harry promises, but it is related to the reader that odd things seem to happen around Harry when he is frightened or bullied even beyond his limits, which, due to necessity, are very broad.

Dudley's fellow bully friend, Piers, joins them on their outing, and they all head to the zoo. The day is going rather well for Harry; he even gets to have one of Dudley's left-over ice cream cones until they reach the Snake House. Harry begins conversing with a snake that Dudley had been trying to wake up and had lost interest in. When his friend Piers notices that the snake has not only awakened but seems to be communicating with Harry, he calls Dudley over. Dudley promptly shoves his cousin out of the way knocking him to the ground, and suddenly the Boa is loose and headed back to his home in Brazil. Of course, everyone in the snake house is very shaken by this, and Uncle Vernon is sure that Harry is behind it. Harry is subsequently banned to his cupboard indefinitely.

Chapter 2 Analysis

It is clear that Harry is badly mistreated and largely ignored by his relations. They feel that he is a nuisance and a burden to them, and while his aunt and uncle don't physically hit him, they seem to do everything else to make him feel unloved and insignificant. Dudley is fond of beating up on his slightly younger cousin and takes great joy in making his life miserable. This is not only encouraged by his parents, but his behavior is fashioned after their own treatment of him.

It is obvious in this chapter that "odd" things happen when Harry is upset. It is also clear that as he is growing older, his discontent with the Dursleys' treatment of him is wearing



him down. He is beginning to lose hope that anyone will come and save him from the Dursleys even though he fantasized when he was younger that it could happen. He has no one in his life who cares for him or treats him with kindness, except for the seemingly odd occurrences of strangers waving to him, addressing him, and then vanishing at unexpected intervals throughout his life.



Chapter 3

Chapter 3 Summary

It is now summer vacation, after which Harry and Dudley will start secondary school. They will part company, however, since Dudley will be attending a private school while Harry will be going to the ominous public school. Shortly before the start of the school term, a letter arrives addressed to Harry Potter, at "The Cupboard Under the Stairs, 4 Privet Drive, Little Whinging, Surrey." This is very curious because Harry never receives mail. It is made of heavy parchment, and there is no stamp. Before he gets a chance to open the letter, however, his Uncle Vernon snatches it from him and reads it. It visibly upsets him and he disposes of it immediately without telling Harry what it says. The address upsets his Aunt and Uncle enough to move him out of the cupboard and into Dudley's "extra" bedroom. They are afraid that someone is obviously spying on them and must know about their bad treatment of Harry.

The next day another letter arrives, same as the last except now addressed to Harry Potter, in "The Smallest Bedroom" on Privet Drive. Again his Uncle destroys the letter without allowing Harry to read it. The letters keep coming, first 12 and then 24 of the same. His Uncle stays home from work just to retrieve and destroy the letters. He nails up the doors and windows in an effort to keep them out.

Finally, Sunday comes, and Harry's Uncle thinks he's in the clear when 40 or so letters begin shooting out of the chimney. Harry and Dudley have to be physically carried out of the room and the door locked before they are able to retrieve any of the letters. Dudley is curious to see what is in the letters, also, but his parents are loath for him to read them. Finally, Mr. Dursley cracks and gets everyone into the car to shake off the letter senders. He drags them all to a horrid little shack, sitting on a rock in the sea, which can be reached only by rowboat.

It is, coincidentally, the eve of Harry's tenth (tenth or eleventh?) birthday. He sits up while the rest sleep. He is waiting for the clock to strike midnight. He is also very excited about the letters and cannot sleep. At the stroke of 12, there is a booming knock on the door of the shack.

Chapter 3 Analysis

There are obviously no limits to what Harry's uncle and aunt will do to keep Harry from receiving and reading the letters addressed to him. They are very frightened of, and angered by, the messages contained in them. It is clear that no matter what the letters say, the Dursleys believe that they will somehow change their lives for the worse if Harry is to have knowledge of them.

Something wonderful and unexpected has finally happened in Harry's life. Someone cares enough about him out in the world to be tirelessly persistent in their efforts to



contact him. They also seem to have been watching him and know where he sleeps. This newfound knowledge has Harry standing up for himself for the first time in his life. He knows something of great import is happening and makes great efforts on his own behalf to get the letter from his uncle. It is also the dawn of his eleventh (tenth or eleventh?) birthday, and he senses something magical coming his way.



Chapter 4

Chapter 4 Summary

Uncle Vernon hears the knocking on the door and arms himself with a gun. He refuses to open the door, and it is promptly knocked off its hinges by a very large, shaggy haired man. The man wishes Harry a happy birthday, tells Harry he looks like his parents and introduces himself as Hagrid. He is the "Keeper of the Keys and Grounds at Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry."

Hagrid is shocked to find out that Harry has no idea what he is talking about and has never heard of the place. He is furious with the Dursleys for not explaining to Harry his history. He tells Harry, to Uncle Vernon's ignored protests, that Harry is a very famous wizard and that his parents were also both wizards. Harry is stunned by this news. Hagrid then pulls out a duplicate of "the letter" and hands it to Harry. It is an acceptance letter to Hogwarts for the term beginning that very September.

Harry's Uncle tells Hagrid that Harry is not going, and that he forbids it. Questions begin to fill Harry's head with all this news. He becomes angry that his Aunt and Uncle never told him the truth, and they reply that he is abnormal just as his Aunt's sister Lily and her freak husband James were. Hagrid tells Harry that they were not freaks that they were wonderful and that they were killed by Voldemort. He then tells Harry how the curse that killed his parents somehow backfired on Voldemort when he tried to use it on Harry. This was what gave him his unusual scar on his forehead.

While digesting all this, Harry begins to think about all the "odd" things that have happened over the years when he was frightened or upset. He realizes that it all may be true, and he might just be a wizard. Hagrid tells Harry to get some sleep because they have a lot to do tomorrow to prepare him for the school term.

Chapter 4 Analysis

Harry has found out for the first time in his life that he is special. He learns that his parents were not only good people but highly respected wizards, and that they did not die in a car crash as he had been told but had been killed by the most powerful dark wizard in the magical world, Voldemort.

He reflects the disbelief of someone who has been told he has just won the lottery. After being beaten down and poorly treated his whole life, his self-esteem has suffered, to say the least. This makes the prospect of discovering his real identity even harder to accept.

He also understands why the Dursleys have treated him so badly all his life. Being the close-minded and ignorant people that they are, they despise the fact that his mother and father were magical. Also, his Aunt Petunia was obviously very jealous of her sister

and their parents' admiration of her achievements. She has lived in self-righteous indignation all these years feeling that her sister got what she deserved because she became involved in developing her magical talents. Harry's new life is about to begin.



Chapter 5

Chapter 5 Summary

Harry awakes the next morning thinking it was all a dream until he sees Hagrid asleep on the couch. His happiness is overwhelming. Hagrid gets up pulls breakfast out of his coat and tells Harry they must be going to Gringotts Bank to fetch the money his parents left him when they died. They leave the shack and head on their way.

Harry asks Hagrid questions and is given answers about their world all the way to the bank. Hagrid tells Harry to get out his school list of things he must purchase for the term. They enter a porthole to the bank via a pub called the Leaky Cauldron. Many of the customers recognize Harry at once and begin to surround him in curious admiration.

They enter Diagon Alley through a wall in back of the pub. This place is the equivalent of a Muggle, or non-magical persons, strip mall. Diagon Alley is filled with various storefronts selling magical merchandise. It also has an entry to the Gringotts Bank. They enter the bank run by Goblins and head to Harry's vault deep beneath the ground. It is filled with more money than Harry could ever imagine possible. They make a withdrawal and Hagrid asks their Goblin guide to take them to another vault. He has business to take care of for Professor Dumbledore. Hagrid picks up a small package from a very well-guarded vault, and they head out of the bank and back into the streets of Diagon Alley.

Hagrid leaves Harry at the Robe Shop so that he can get his uniform while he heads back to the Leaky Cauldron for a drink. Harry is shown to a footstool next to a pale boy who is already being measured for his uniform. The boy is rather snobbish and Harry immediately does not like him. The boy reminds him of a slim Dudley. Before the two have a chance to exchange names the Keeper of the shop tells Harry he is done and that he can go.

The two next go to Ollivander's Wand Shop and Harry begins the complicated task of being selected by a wand. After many false tries, the wand that is just right for him turns out to be the twin of Voldemort's and the same wand that gave him his scar.

Hagrid and Harry finish their shopping and part at the train station. He is to go back to the Dursleys until the first of September. Hagrid gives him a train ticket and directions to where he is to catch the train to Hogwarts. Then Hagrid vanishes.

Chapter 5 Analysis

Harry is introduced to a little of the wizard's life. He has a lot of information thrown at him all at once but seems to be taking it all in stride. Even though he is fascinated and delighted over his new circumstances, he quickly finds out that people like the Dursleys exist even in this wonderful new world he is about to become a part of. An interesting

twist is that his wand is the twin of the one that killed his parents and scarred him for life.



Chapter 6

Chapter 6 Summary

Harry's last month before school with the Dursleys is uncomfortable. They simply pretend he doesn't exist, but they keep their distance, and that is an improvement. Harry spends most of the time in his room going over his new books with his new owl, purchased at Diagon Alley for company. He has named her Hedwig.

Finally, the first day of September arrives, and Harry is given a grudging ride from the Dursleys to the train station. He has quite a bit of trouble locating platform nine and three-quarters. He is starting to feel lost when he overhears a large, red-haired family saying the word Muggle. He follows them and watches as, one by one; three older boys disappear between the platforms. He asks the woman in their group for help and she introduces him to her son Ron, who is also a first-year student. She then kindly explains how to enter the platform.

He makes it to the train, and with the help of two of the boys he saw earlier, gets his luggage on board. The twins notice his scar and ask him if he is *the* Harry Potter. Rather embarrassed, he says "Yes," and as the boys are called back off the train by their mother, he finds himself an empty compartment to sit in. He watches the red-haired wizard family outside the window saying goodbye.

Ron boards the train and enters Harry's compartment. They begin a stilted conversation, with Ron in awe of Harry and Harry in awe of Ron and his wonderful, magical family. The snobby boy from the Robe shop suddenly enters the compartment with two large friends. He asks Harry if it's true that he is Harry Potter. When this is affirmed the boy introduces himself as Draco Malfoy. A fight ensues between Draco and his friends and Ron and Harry, ending with Draco leaving the compartment in a huff.

They arrive at Hogwarts and are taken by boat across a large lake to the castle that is to be their school for the term.

Chapter 6 Analysis

Harry is fascinated by Ron and his family. Being without a loving family his whole life, he is drawn by their closeness and obvious love for one another. Likewise, Ron is fascinated by Harry. He is, after all, the most famous wizard to ever live. This mutual admiration and a similar outlook on life make the two fast friends. The confrontation with Malfoy seals the friendship since they are of a like mind in their opinion of the boy.

This is the first glimmer of a friendship that Harry has ever had in his life. Ron's obvious lack of finances does not put Harry off at all. He has spent his whole life having to do without until just recently. He is generous with his new found ability to purchase candy at will, and he is excited to simply be sharing this new joy with someone. Ron is a bit

touchy about his financial situation until he realizes that Harry couldn't care less about how much money Ron does or does not have. The reader can see that a great friendship has started on the train to Hogwarts.



Chapter 7

Chapter 7 Summary

The first year students are led into a small chamber to wait before they are to start their sorting ceremony and enjoy their first Hogwarts dinner feast. The Sorting Ceremony decides which house of Hogwarts they will be put into for their duration at the school. The first-year students wait some time in the chamber until they are led into the Great Hall.

Once in the hall they stand in a line before a stool upon which sits an old, tattered wizard's hat. They are each called, one by one, in alphabetical order to the stool. Each student puts on the hat in turn, and the hat declares out loud to the entire student body and faculty the house of which that student is to be a member.

There are four houses in Hogwarts, each with its own strengths. The Gryffindors are brave, the Hufflepuffs are honest and hard working, the Ravenclaws are witty and smart, and the Slytherins are cunning and ambitious.

The hat begins sorting the students into their proper houses. Ron and Hermione, a bossy girl they met on the train ride to the school, are placed in Gryffindor. Draco Malfoy is placed in Slytherin, as are his two friends. Finally, Harry has his turn and the hat seems to have a difficult time deciding between Gryffindor and Slytherin. The hat talks so that only Harry can hear. The hat can read Harry's thoughts, which seem to be against the idea of Slytherin, and the hat finally declares aloud that he is to be placed in Gryffindor.

The hat finishes with the rest of the students, and the feast begins. They eat from the wide array of foods that appear in front of them. After everyone is full, the Headmaster, Dumbledore, makes some announcements. Tryouts for Quidditch, a wizarding game, will be held in 2 weeks' time, and the forest at the edge of the school is off limits, as is the third-floor corridor on the right-hand side. After the announcements, it is time for them to leave the Great Hall for their dormitories and get some sleep.

The first years are all led to their respective dorms by the head student of their houses. The main dorm has a large, cozy common room. They all enter, and the boys and girls of Gryffindor head to their separate rooms. They are all very tired, and Harry and Ron fall asleep immediately upon getting into bed.

Chapter 7 Analysis

Harry is very upset with the prospect of having to join Slytherin. He has heard that they are snobbish and elite. They also have a reputation for high achievement and dark magic. He also knows that Ron and his twin brothers will be living in Gryffindor, and since Ron is his first and only friend, he does not want to be separated from him. Still,

the hat seems to consider the idea seriously and sways only when Harry seems fiercely against it.

Harry is somewhat frightened and overwhelmed by all the new things he is experiencing, but he is not any more nervous than any of the other students, even with the added burden of all of Hogwarts obviously knowing about his famous past. He is handling things well.



Chapter 8

Chapter 8 Summary

Harry's first day of classes starts with an abundance of attention from other students whispering about him and pointing him out to each other as he moves through the halls with Ron to get to classes. Learning the way around the school is very difficult because of its magical nature and multitude of levels, staircases, and rooms.

The caretaker of the school, Angus Filch, has a terrible reputation with the students as being very mean and nasty. His cat, Mrs. Norris, is his aide in catching students up to no good.

Harry and Ron's classes consist of History of Magic, Charms, Transfiguration, Herbology, Defense Against the Dark Arts, and Potions. Their Potions teacher, Professor Snape, is rather mean-looking, and he is the head Professor of Slytherin House. Professor McGonagall is the head of Gryffindor and also their Transfiguration professor.

Professor Snape seems to have something against Harry and treats him badly during Potions class. Snape goes out of his way to embarrass him. It is a difficult first week for all of them. Harry discovers a bright spot during the week when he and Ron get to visit with Hagrid at his house on the grounds. While there, they read Hagrid's copy of the "Daily Prophet" the wizarding community's newspaper. They find out that a break-in has occurred at Gringotts Bank, the most well-secured bank in the world. However, the goblins who run the bank insist that nothing was taken because the vault the thieves attempted to rob had been emptied earlier that day. The paper believes it is the work of Dark witches or wizards.

Chapter 8 Analysis

Harry is very conscious of the fact that Professor Snape seems to have a personal grudge against him, but no one seems to agree with him. Hagrid and Ron both agree that Snape is mean to all the students, and that he should not worry about it. Harry is sure that Hagrid knows more about why Snape does not like him, but Hagrid is not telling what he knows. It does seem to the reader as well that Snape has some mysterious problem with Harry, and it seems like a hint of more to come.

Harry realizes that the attempted robbery at Gringotts coincides with the day that he and Hagrid were there, and the vault that was broken into is the same one from which Hagrid took something for Professor Dumbledore.

Harry wonders about this coincidence and ponders what could have been in the vault. There is also a hint here that something more is to come as a result of the mysterious item.



Chapter 9

Chapter 9 Summary

During Harry's first broom-flying lesson, Neville, who is the first to try riding the school brooms, falls off and breaks his wrist. The instructor, Madam Hooch, must take him to the hospital wing. She tells the class to stay put until she returns and cautions them to not touch the brooms.

Neville had dropped his "Rememberall," a ball sent by his Grandmother earlier that day to remind him of things he forgets. Malfoy sees it on the ground, picks it up, and, being the mean-spirited kid he is, decides to hide it from Neville. Harry confronts him and tells him to hand it over for safe-keeping. Malfoy, knowing that Harry does not know how to fly and wanting to show off his own skills, snatches a broom with the intention of hiding the Rememberall in a tree. Malfoy is shocked when Harry jumps on a broom and follows him.

Harry is a natural on the broom and quickly figures out how to maneuver it. He catches up to Malfoy, who is afraid that Harry will knock him off his broom. Malfoy throws the ball into the air and then takes off for the ground. Harry is forced to dive for the ball so that it does not hit the ground and break. Just as he catches it, he hears his name being shouted by Professor McGonagall. She seems very angry and tells him to follow her.

He is sure he is going to be expelled from school, but instead she takes him inside to meet the Captain of the Gryffindor Quidditch team, Oliver Wood. She tells Wood that Harry is to be Gryffindor's new Seeker. She saw him dive for the Rememberall and was amazed at his speed catching the ball and his natural flying talent. She will break the first-year rule, which does not allow new students to play Quidditch until their second year. She is apparently a huge fan of the game and tired of being beaten at it by Slytherin House.

Malfoy is angry with Harry for humiliating him in the air earlier and challenges him to a wizards' duel at midnight. Harry accepts, but Hermione overhears this and warns him against it. Harry and Ron, who is his second, won't change their minds. Hermione decides to follow them to keep them out of trouble. Neville, who is returning from the hospital and catches them leaving is also brought along. The group nearly gets caught by the groundskeeper, Filch, and runs to hide in a room with a locked door. Hermione pops the lock with a spell, and they quickly close the door. When they turn around, they are confronted by a very large, three headed watchdog that looks very hungry. They flee the room and make it back to their dorms unharmed and not caught. Hermione points out that the dog was standing on a trap door, and that the room they were in was in the forbidden wing.



Chapter 9 Analysis

It has been a wonderful day for Harry in that he finally finds something at Hogwarts for which he is naturally gifted. Harry feels that he lags behind the other students because of his lack of magical knowledge, and this discovery boosts his self-esteem and makes him feel special and proud. It is partly because of this that he stands up to Malfoy and accepts his duel. He also realizes that the locked room must be the place where the mysterious item taken from Gringotts must be hidden. A group of four friends has formed, Harry, Ron, Hermione, and Neville.



Chapter 10

Chapter 10 Summary

It is obvious that Harry and his friends were set up by Malfoy to be caught out of their dorm at midnight. Malfoy is shocked and disappointed that they have not been caught and expelled. Hermione will not speak to Harry or Ron after they nearly got her expelled.

Harry and Ron wonder about what could be in the package that was obviously being hidden in the forbidden wing. They believe that it must be very important if the three-headed dog is guarding it. They also ponder how to get back at Malfoy for his trick.

They get their revenge on Malfoy when a week later, a long package arrives for Harry. The package contains a note telling him that it is a new Nimbus Two Thousand, given to him by Professor McGonagall. He is to use it for Quidditch and meet the team captain, Oliver Wood, that very night on the Quidditch field for training and practice. Even though Harry does not open the package, Malfoy and his crew know right away that it is a broom. He tells Harry that he will be expelled for sure because first years are not allowed to have them. Malfoy is very jealous and confused to find out that Harry was given the broom by Professor McGonagall.

Harry meets Wood at the field that night and gets a crash course in Quidditch and the role of the Seeker, the position he is to play. He is to catch a winged golden ball called a Snitch, which flies very quickly through the air during the game. It is very, very difficult, but if he does catch it, their side automatically wins the game. Wood is amazed at Harry's flying ability and is very delighted to have him on the team; they need a win.

Later the next day after Charms class, Ron insults Hermione and she overhears him. She runs past them in tears and hides in the girls' bathroom. The boys continue on to Halloween dinner and are shocked when Professor Quirrell, their Defense Against the Dark Arts teacher, bursts into the hall telling everyone that there is a Troll in Hogwarts. The students are sent to their dorms, and Ron and Harry duck out to investigate. When they see the Troll, they lock it in the girls' bathroom. They hear a scream and realize that Hermione is now locked in there with the Troll. The boys try to rescue her and end up killing the Troll. McGonagall and Snape hear the noise, burst into the bathroom, and see the boys. The boys are in very big trouble until Hermione steps out and takes the blame for their being there, saying that they saved her, and it was not their fault.

Chapter 10 Analysis

Harry and Ron finally get some satisfaction by flaunting the new broom in front of Malfoy. Harry falls quickly in love with the game of Quidditch and enjoys flying more than anything he has ever done in his life. He has found his place in the world. Wood seems to think that Harry is so good that they might win the Cup back from Slytherin.

Hermione changes Harry and Ron's minds about her being a bossy know-it-all when she keeps them from getting in trouble by lying for them to McGonagall and Snape. She also appreciates them more because they saved her from the Troll.



Chapter 11

Chapter 11 Summary

It is now November, and Quidditch season has started. The weather has turned bitterly cold. Harry is to play his first match after intensive training, and if Gryffindor wins, they will be in second place for the school championship. They are to play Slytherin House.

Hermione has become Harry and Ron's close companion since the troll incident. She has warmed up considerably and helps the two with their homework. Professor Snape has acquired a mysterious limp and is giving them as hard a time as ever. Harry discovers that it is the three-headed dog that caused the limp, but what Snape has been doing near the dog is still not clear.

The day of the big game arrives, and it is a clear, but cold, afternoon. It is a fierce game featuring considerable cheating by the Slytherin side. Suddenly, Harry's broom starts behaving oddly, nearly throwing him off by jerking from side to side. All attempts he makes to steady the broom make it worse, and it begins to roll and knock him off. As he hangs on to the handle for dear life, Hermione scans the crowd with Hagrid's binoculars. She sees Snape mumbling under his breath and jumps from her seat and heads towards the professor.

Hermione knocks Professor Quirrell out of the way as she rushes to hide behind Snape and produce a spell from her wand that sets Snape's robes on fire. Suddenly Harry gets control of his broom back. As soon as he is able to maneuver, he speeds towards the ground at top speed. Instead of grabbing the Snitch as he intended, it flies into his mouth. He spits it out into his hand and holds it up to the screaming crowd.

This unusual catch does not break any Quidditch rules, however, and Gryffindor wins the game by 170 points to 60. Harry, Ron, and Hermione head to Hagrid's hut after the game, and Hermione tells them it was Snape who put a jinx on his broom. Harry then tells Hagrid about the injury on Snape's leg from the dog. Hagrid drops his tea pot at his shock that the three know about "Fluffy." The group is equally surprised that not only does Hagrid know about the three-headed dog, but that its name is Fluffy.

Harry, Ron, and Hermione seem convinced that Snape is trying to steal what is being guarded by Fluffy and that he is trying to kill Harry. Hagrid vehemently disagrees with them and lets slip that the matter is between Professor Dumbledore and Nicolas Flamel. This is the biggest and most substantial bit of information they have gotten so far.

Chapter 11 Analysis

Someone is trying to kill or at the very least sabotage Harry, but it really isn't clear that it is Snape. A lot of incriminating evidence seems to suggest that he is a dark wizard. Harry, Ron, and Hermione have become a trio, and this is very good for the boys

because she is an excellent witch and can help them out of trouble. Hagrid "slips" and gives the reader, via the characters, a new clue to the mysterious object in the forbidden wing.



Chapter 12

Chapter 12 Summary

The holidays are upon Hogwarts, and Harry chooses to stay at Hogwarts instead of returning to the Dursleys. Ron and his brothers will also be staying since their parents will be visiting their eldest son in Romania. Harry, Ron, and Hermione have been diligently searching every book in the Hogwarts library for information about Nicolas Flamel, the wizard whom Hagrid mentioned, who had some connection to the mysterious package. Hermione leaves for the holidays as do most of the other students, leaving Harry on Ron to their own devices.

On Christmas morning, Harry is surprised to discover he has gotten a rather interesting gift from an anonymous person. Ron recognizes the long flowing material as an invisibility cloak; a very valuable item because it makes anything beneath it disappear completely. The attached note says, "Your father left this in my possession before he died. It is time it was returned to you. Use it well. A very Merry Christmas to you."

Harry had a fabulous Christmas dinner with Ron and his brothers, Fred and George the twins, and Percy who is a "Prefect" at Hogwarts. After they are all full they return to the Gryffindor boys' dorm. Harry and Ron go to their room, and after Ron is asleep, Harry gets the irresistible urge to don the cloak and do some investigating.

Harry heads right to the Restricted Section of the school library. He takes a book down from the shelf, and it begins to shriek and draws the attention of Filch, the groundskeeper, and his cat, Mrs. Norris. Harry barely escapes and overhears Filch telling Snape that someone has visited the restricted section of the library. The two set out in search of the intruder. Harry ducks inside an abandoned classroom.

At the back of the room is a magnificent, inscribed mirror, and Harry walks toward it. As he watches the mirror, he sees a very pretty woman standing behind him waving, smiling, and crying. Beside her stands a tall man with glasses and untidy hair. They resemble Harry. The people in the mirror are his parents. He looks a long time at them, but a noise startles him, and he returns to the dorm.

Harry returns to the room a second and third night, anxious to see his family again. On the third night he sits before the mirror intending to stay all night visiting with his family. He hears a voice from behind him and it is the Headmaster Albus Dumbledore. He tells Harry it is the Mirror of Erised and it shows the person before it his or her deepest desires. It can become an obsession and drive one mad if one stands before it long enough. He then sends Harry to bed with a smile telling him the mirror will be gone come morning.



Chapter 12 Analysis

Harry's deepest desire is to see his parents and nothing else. It seems he has a secret champion in the cloak giver and an admirer and protector in Headmaster Dumbledore. He is becoming a tireless investigator in the pursuit of information about the object in the forbidden wing. But he is getting the dangerous attention of Professor Snape and Filch.



Chapter 13

Chapter 13 Summary

Even though Harry is happy about seeing his parent's images for the first time in his life, he begins having nightmares. The term begins again after the holidays and he is working very hard at Quidditch and his lessons.

One day, Hermione announces that she has found out about Nicolas Flamel. He was a wizard noted for his work in alchemy with his partner, Albus Dumbledore. Flamel is credited with creating the Sorcerer's Stone. The Stone turns metal into gold and produces the Elixir of Life, which makes the drinker immortal. Flamel is 665 years old. They realize that Dumbledore must be keeping the stone safe for Flamel at Hogwarts.

The day of the Quidditch game against Slytherin for the School Cup dawns and Professor Snape will be refereeing the game. The game is crowded and even the Headmaster has come to watch. The game is over before it even starts; Harry catches the Snitch and wins the game in less than 5 minutes. As he goes to celebrate with Ron, he sees a cloaked, hooded figure head toward the forbidden forest. He believes it is Snape up to no good, so he follows the figure.

He peeks through the branches and sees Snape speaking with Professor Quirrell, the Defense Against the Dark Arts teacher. He creeps closer and hears Snape and Quirrell speaking. From the conversation Harry understands that Snape is trying to get Quirrell to figure out how to get past Fluffy the dog, and he is threatening the professor. Quirrell seems frightened of Snape's words. Snape leaves the other professor with a sweep of his cloak.

Harry rushes back to the school and finds Ron and Hermione and tells them what he has overheard. He relays that Snape is trying to coerce Quirrell to help him get the Sorcerer's Stone against his will. He supposes that there are Dark Art spells guarding the stone, and that without Quirrell, Snape would not be able to get to the Stone. The three decide that it is just a matter of time before Quirrell, who is rather meek, cracks under Snape's pressure.

Chapter 13 Analysis

Harry is very proud of winning the game and feels that he has finally done something to prove that he is not just some famous name from some old legacy.

He overhears a conversation between Professor Snape and Professor Quirrell that seems suspicious, but he might be wrong. There are hints here that Harry's dislike of the Potions teacher, Snape, is clouding his thinking.



Chapter 14

Chapter 14 Summary

Weeks pass and Quirrell seems to be losing weight, but he does not seem to have cracked yet. It is 10 weeks to final exams, and Hermione is preparing for the end of the term. Harry, Ron, and Hermione discover that Hagrid is hiding something and investigate.

They find out that Hagrid is hiding a dragon egg. They ask him where he has gotten it, and he admits that he won it in a drunken card game with a stranger. Since Hagrid is a lover of magical creatures and Hogwarts' game keeper, he is delighted with his win, even though ownership of dragons is illegal.

The egg hatches after some time and out comes a Norwegian Ridgeback dragon. Hagrid promptly names him Norbert. The baby dragon bites Ron on the hand and he has to go the hospital wing for treatment. Malfoy overhears Harry, Ron, and Hermione discussing the dragon and think he might report Hagrid, which would get him into serious trouble.

Harry and Hermione convince Hagrid to give the baby dragon to Ron's brother, Charlie, who is in Romania studying dragons. Ron's hand has gotten much worse, and Hagrid, who feels bad about that, realizes that Norbert might be a bit dangerous to keep.

It is up to Hermione and Harry to get Norbert out of the school since Ron has to stay in the Hospital. They manage to outwit Malfoy and get the dragon delivered to Charlie at the top of a Hogwarts tower just in time.

The two are thrilled. They managed to foil Malfoy and get Norbert, the dragon, off safely, avoiding trouble for Hagrid. On their way down the stairs from the tower, they realize that in their excitement they have forgotten the invisibility cloak at the top of the tower steps and are caught by Filch, the groundskeeper.

Chapter 14 Analysis

Chapter 14 seems to be merely a prelude to the next chapter and a method of providing some background for future chapters. It also demonstrates the ability of Harry, Ron, and Hermione to work together and garner results that they would otherwise not have been able to manage on their own.



Chapter 15

Chapter 15 Summary

Filch immediately takes Harry and Hermione down to Professor McGonagall's study. They assume that they are in very serious trouble for being out of their rooms and in the Astronomy tower after midnight. McGonagall enters her study with Neville in tow; she has found him out of his dorm as well. He was looking for Harry and Hermione to warn them about Draco Malfoy trying to get them expelled.

McGonagall takes 50 points *each* from Gryffindor for their escapades. This puts Gryffindor in last place in the competition for top school house. The rest of their house is very angry with them for this indiscretion. They are also to serve detention with Filch. Malfoy who was also out of his room trying to catch them has to serve detention with them.

When Harry, Hermione, Neville, and Draco show up for detention with Filch, they find out they are to go to the Forbidden Forest with Hagrid. They are left in the care of Hagrid. Filch tells them he'll be back at dawn to retrieve them all. Their detention involves helping Hagrid to find a unicorn that has been injured in the forest and try to help it. They are told they will be safe as long as they stay with him and his dog, Fang.

They split up; Harry, Hermione, and Hagrid go one way while Draco, Neville, and Fang go the other. The first group encounters Ronan, a centaur who is friendly with Hagrid. A second centaur named Bane also appears. The centaurs speak with Hagrid for a bit and then go on about their business. Hagrid fetches the other group, and he teams Malfoy, Harry, and Fang this time while he, Hermione, and Neville search in the other direction.

Harry and Malfoy hear a noise and follow. They see a hooded figure crawl toward a dead unicorn on the ground and being drinking the blood. Malfoy and Fang bolt in fear. The figure heads toward Harry and his scar starts to burn. Suddenly, a centaur jumps over Harry's head, saves Harry and chases the figure into the forest. This centaur's name is Firenze and seems to know Harry; he offers him a ride back to Hagrid.

Harry and the rest go back to the school. Harry realizes that the figure could be none other than Voldemort. Weak and barely alive he is drinking unicorn's blood to stay alive in the forest. Harry goes to bed exhausted and worried. Under his blankets he finds the invisibility cloak with a note that reads "Just in Case."

Chapter 15 Analysis

Voldemort is apparently still alive. He is not able to do much and seems very weak. But the pieces of the puzzle are starting to come together. Harry's cloak is returned to him by the mysterious person who seems likely to be Headmaster Dumbledore.



Chapter 16

Chapter 16 Summary

Harry manages to get through his final exams with the fear of Voldemort coming for him and finishing the job of killing him once and for all. Harry worries about the stone constantly now because he knows it grants immortality to the drinker of the elixir that comes from it. He can only imagine what would happen if Voldemort got hold of the stone. Ron and Hermione assure him that with Dumbledore at the school, he is perfectly safe.

It dawns on Harry that Hagrid mentioned he won the dragon in a drunken card game with a "stranger." When he asks Hagrid about the incident Hagrid admits that the stranger did ask him about Fluffy. Harry realizes that Hagrid has been duped into telling the secret of getting past Fluffy. Harry goes to tell Dumbledore about what has happened with Hagrid and the stranger only to find that the Headmaster is away on business. Desperate, he tells Professor McGonagall what he knows about the Sorcerer's Stone, but she dismisses his worries.

Harry decides to take matters into his own hands. Ron and Hermione realize that they must help him since they cannot dissuade him. Harry knows the secret to soothing Fluffy, and the three set out under the cloak for the forbidden wing. When they enter the room where Fluffy resides, they see that someone has gotten there already. Fluffy is sniffing around, the trap door is open, and a golden harp sits at his feet. Harry takes a flute out of his pocket and begins playing until all three are down the trap door into the darkness below. They fall on a plant that binds their legs, but they escape it.

They then head down a passageway and into a chamber filled with small, brightly lit birds. They cross the room to find a locked, heavy wooden door. Hermione realizes that the birds are really winged keys. They have to find the correct bird-key that will unlock the door; a difficult task since there are hundreds, and they are all very similar. Once they find the correct key and open the door, they are confronted with a room set up as a giant chessboard. They must play the board correctly to reach the other side of the room. Harry, Ron, and Hermione play the board; Ron sacrifices himself so that Harry can checkmate the King. The Queen grabs Ron and knocks him out cold. With sadness and difficulty, Harry and Hermione win the game and go into the next chamber hoping Ron will be alright.

This room has a logical puzzle that must be figured out. The two figure out the riddle and walk through a wall of fire. On the other side is a man, but it is not Snape or Voldemort. They are astounded to see who it is, however.



Chapter 16 Analysis

Harry knows that somehow he must get involved in keeping Snape from getting the Stone to save his own life. He realizes that he is lucky to have Hermione and Ron with him to get through the traps under Fluffy. The three of them are proving to be very brave and clever students who, as a team, can work wonders together. There is a lot of tension in this chapter because they must figure out the way to the stone.



Chapter 17

Chapter 17 Summary

The man in the last chamber is Professor Quirrell. Harry and Hermione are shocked because he is the last person they expect to see. They find out that Quirrell is not the mild-mannered teacher they thought he was. It was he, not Snape, who tried to knock Harry off the broom during his first Quidditch match to kill him. Snape was mumbling because he was setting a counter curse to stop the jinx, but was not sure who was attacking Harry. The talk in the woods was interpreted incorrectly by Harry. Snape suspected Quirrell was up to something and was prodding him to see how much he knew about the Stone and warned him about his odd actions.

Quirrell tells Harry that Snape does hate Harry; and an old vendetta against Harry's father is the reason why. But Snape never wanted Harry dead and would never betray Albus Dumbledore by trying to steal the Sorcerer's Stone.

Behind Quirrell stands the Mirror of Erised. Quirrell tells Harry that the mirror is the key to finding the stone. Quirrell walks around the mirror as he talks, and Harry discovers that Voldemort is his master and is with him wherever he goes. Quirrell is instructed by Voldemort to use Harry to find the stone. Harry stands before the mirror. As he looks into it, he sees himself holding the stone in his pocket, and at that moment the real Stone drops into Harry's real pocket.

Harry does not tell Quirrell this but makes up what he is seeing in the mirror. Quirrell pushes him out of the way and Harry tries to escape only to hear a shrill voice giving him away. A voice tells Quirrell to remove his turban and when he does Harry sees a face at the back of Quirrell's own head with red eyes and a snake like nose. It is Voldemort, who is sharing Quirrell's body. He tells Harry to give him the stone.

Harry will not give over the stone so Voldemort tell Quirrell to kill Harry. Quirrell tries to strangle Harry but when he does, his hands start to blister and burn. Harry then grabs at Quirrell's face and it too begins to blister. Harry's scar is burning to the point of making him pass out.

When Harry comes to, he sees Albus Dumbledore's face smiling down at him. He is in the Hospital wing of Hogwarts. He has been in the wing for 3 days. It seems that the Headmaster arrived in the chamber just in time to pull Quirrell off his unconscious body. Quirrell and the stone have been destroyed, but Voldemort's spirit escaped.

Dumbledore tells Harry that Quirrell's hands had burned because the love that saved Harry when his mother sacrificed her own life to save him, has a powerful effect on Voldemort. He cannot understand love or the sacrifices made in the name of that powerful emotion. He also tells Harry that it was he who gave him the cloak.



Harry asks about Professor Snape's intense hatred of him. Dumbledore explains that they were enemies the same as Harry and Draco Malfoy are, and that at some point Harry's dad saved Snape's life. Snape could never forgive this and tried very hard to save Harry so that the debt would be paid in full.

Ron and Hermione enter the hospital room, and Headmaster Dumbledore takes his leave. The three discuss the events of the past 3 days, and Harry shares with his friends all that Dumbledore has told him.

Harry is finally released from the hospital in time for the end-of-year feast. The students are told that because of the bravery of several students of Gryffindor, they have accumulated enough points to win the prized House Cup. Harry is beside himself with joy. It is by far the best night of his entire life. In his first year at Hogwarts he has managed to help Gryffindor win the Quidditch Cup for the first time in 7 years and also the House Cup for the first time in just as many years. He has saved the Sorcerer's Stone from falling into the hands of Voldemort, and he discovered new things about his parents and their own bravery. The faculty wishes the students a wonderful summer over very loud shouts of happiness and applause.

The next day, everyone is packed and ready to leave Hogwarts for the summer vacation. Harry and Hermione are invited by Ron to come and stay for a while at the end of summer before the next term. Harry is grateful for the invitation because he must stay with the horrible Dursleys and needs to have something to look forward to.

His friends wish him a happy summer with worried looks on their faces because they see his Uncle Vernon come to pick him up. Harry tells them not to worry; the Dursleys don't know that he can't use magic outside of school.

Chapter 17 Analysis

This last chapter is truly the proverbial "Happy Ending." Harry saves the day and keeps Voldemort from securing eternal life. He has learned the meaning of friendship and is fortunate enough to have secured two very good friends right away. He is brave and fierce and has flourished considerably under the caring influence of those who love him and want the best for him.

It is a message for everyone that no matter how difficult our circumstances become, we can rise above them to have success and happiness. Harry, despite his horrid upbringing, has remained a decent and honorable boy while many others might have used their past as an excuse to do wrong in the world.

The book finishes with an open end and leaves many questions unanswered in the readers' minds, which allows room for further adventures of Harry, Ron, and Hermione to follow.



Characters

Harry Potter

Harry Potter is the main character of the story. He is born a wizard to parents who are also magical, James, a wizard, and Lilly, a witch. His father is killed by Lord Voldemort, a dark wizard. His mother is also killed by Voldemort while trying to protect Harry from him. He is famous in the wizarding world because he has survived Voldemort's spell of death. He is sent to live with his mother's sister and her family upon the death of his parents. They treat Harry terribly for many years, and he is unloved and alone in the world. He finds out he is a wizard on the dawn of his eleventh birthday when he is sent to Hogwarts School of Magic. It is here that he learns about his true past and is shown understanding.

Ron Weasley

Ron becomes Harry's friend on the train ride to Hogwarts School. He comes from a very large family. His twin brothers also attend Hogwarts as does one of his older brothers, Percy. He has six siblings all together, two who have grown up and left home, the three who attend Hogwarts and a younger sister, Ginny, who is too young to go to school yet. His family is very close, and both of his parents are magical. He is rather poor because of the size of his family and his father's low-paying job with the Ministry of Magic. However, they are a happy family, and the love they have for each other is evident. He becomes Harry's closest friend and trusted confidant.

Hermione Granger

Hermione is a very smart and hard-working young witch with Muggle-born parents, who are both dentists. She is initially seen as a know-it-all and annoys Harry and Ron with her stern, owl-like ways. She becomes a friend to the boys after they go through a harrowing experience together, and the three soon become inseparable. She is quite handy since she knows many spells and facts about magic.

Neville Longbottom

Neville is another member of Gryffindor and has become a distant fourth in the central group of three in the story. He pops up to help Harry, Ron, and Hermione on occasion and is a meek and mild boy. He is teased often by other students, particularly Draco Malfoy. He lives with his overbearing witch grandmother because both of his parents are dead, making him an orphan. He and Harry share that common bond.



Draco Malfoy

Draco is Harry's nemesis and a rather nasty and arrogant boy. He is fond of telling everyone that he is a "pure blood" wizard. Both of his parents are magical and obviously very rich and affluent. He is a member of Slytherin House and has two bully friends, Crabby and Goyle who guard him where ever he goes. He lives to make Ron, Harry, and Hermione miserable. He is very jealous of Harry because of his fame, talent, and good luck. His family is reputed to have been "Death Eaters" or Voldemort's followers before he vanished. They came forward after his disappearance claiming a spell was cast on them; however, not many believe this story.

Headmaster Dumbledore

Albus Dumbledore is a very wise, smart, and humorous wizard. He is the head of Hogwarts school. He is the same wizard who takes Harry to live with the Dursleys to keep him safe and uninfluenced by his fame in the wizarding world. Even though he does not appear much in the middle of the story, he casts a strong presence throughout. It is the Headmaster who gives Harry the Invisibility cloak at Christmas. He seems to be guiding and testing Harry along the way through his first year. He also seems to understand how strong and amazing Harry is to have survived Voldemort and the Dursleys.

Professor Snape

Snape is a wizard who is described as a lanky and oily looking malcontent. He is the head of Slytherin House and the Potions teacher. He has a deep dislike for Harry. Harry's father and Snape attended Hogwarts together and had a relationship similar to that of Draco and Harry. He is Harry's prime suspect in his search to find who is trying to steal the Sorcerer's Stone.

Professor Quirrell

The new Defense Against the Dark Arts teacher. He wears a turban on his head at all times and has an awful stutter. He also seems to be very meek and mild in personality, however, Quirrell is not what he seems.

Professor McGonagall

McGonagall is the Head of Gryffindor and the Tabby Cat who sits on the wall outside the Dursleys on the night Harry is left on their doorstep. She is very stern and does not play favorites unless Quidditch is involved.



Hagrid

Hagrid is described as a giant-sized man. He is Hogwarts' Gamekeeper and is fascinated with magical creatures. He loves Harry and is the one who delivered him from his parents' burned house to the Dursleys. He attended Hogwarts also but got into some trouble while there and had his wand taken from him and snapped in two. He is banned from practicing magic ever again, but he manages to do a bit with the aid of an umbrella.

After his expulsion, Dumbledore Hagrid stay at Hogwarts and appoints him Gamekeeper and provides him with his own house on the grounds. He is very loyal to Dumbledore, and likewise, the Headmaster trusts Hagrid completely.

Uncle Vernon

Vernon is Petunia's Muggle husband. Harry's mother was his sister-in-law. He is very stern, rigid, and closed minded. He hates the fact that he must care for Harry and is stingy and mean to him. He does everything he can to keep Harry from becoming a wizard. He hates wizards and witches and sees their lives as strange and frightening.

Aunt Petunia

Petunia is Harry's Aunt. She is his mother's sister. She treats Harry like dirt and also cannot stand to have to raise him. He is a burden to her, and she could not stand her own sister when she was alive. Always jealous of her, she disapproved of her life, and made sure to keep her distance from her and her family. She has overindulged her only son to the point of turning him into a spoiled bully who has no respect or manners.

Dudley

Dudley is the prodigal son of Vernon and Petunia. He is a fat, lazy, spoiled bully who tortures his cousin constantly. Underneath it all, like his father, he is a coward and a fool having no interest in anything but himself and his own gain. He is Harry's nemesis in the Muggle world. He is not very bright.

Lord Voldemort

Voldemort is the dark wizard who killed many in the wizarding community and caused great grief and darkness during his rise to power. He is called "you-know-who" by many who are afraid to say his name out loud. He kills Harry's father, James, and in an attempt to kill Harry, also kills Harry's mother, Lilly. When he turns his spell on Harry, however, the spell rebounds on him and vanquishes him. He leaves Harry with a lightening bolt scar on his forehead.



Objects/Places

The Sorcerer's Stone

The Sorcerer's Stone was created by Albus Dumbledore's partner Nicolas Flamel. It is a small red ball that can turn any metal into gold and also creates an elixir that when drunk grants eternal life to the drinker.

The Mirror of Erised

One who looks into the Mirror of Erised sees his or her deepest desires. The mirror was used to hide the Sorcerer's Stone. To retrieve the stone, the person looking into the mirror has to desire having it but never using it.

Quidditch

Quidditch is the wizarding world's national game. It is played in the air on broomsticks. Each team must score goals and defend its side of the "field." The Snitch is a winged golden ball that flies about the field during game play. The seeker, which is Harry's position, must capture the Snitch to win the game for their side. If the Snitch is captured at any point during the game by the team that is ahead, that team automatically wins since it adds 150 points to its score. Also, if the Snitch is captured by either side before any points are scored, that side automatically wins the game.

Bertie Bott's Beans

Bertie Bott's Every Flavor Beans are jelly beans in every flavor. Some of these include, ear wax, buttered popcorn, vomit, chocolate, toast, baked bean, strawberry, curry, grass, coffee, marmalade, spinach, pepper, liver, and tripe.

Wizard Cards

Wizard Cards are similar to baseball cards. Wizard Cards are collected by kids of the magical world and have famous witches and wizards on them with their picture and name on the front and a bio on the back. They come with Chocolate Frogs.

Chocolate Frogs

Chocolate candy shaped like a frog.



Gringotts Bank

Gringotts is the Bank of the wizarding community. It is run by Goblins and is very safe and secure.

The Forbidden Forest

The forest at the edge of the school grounds that is inhabited by many unknown creatures. Hagrid is very familiar with the forest and those that dwell there.

The Forbidden Wing

This is the section of the school that Headmaster Dumbledore tells the students that they must stay out of for the term. This is where the Sorcerer's Stone is hidden.

The Forbidden Section of the Library

The section of Hogwarts library that is off limits to students, unless given special permission. It contains books on the Dark Arts of magic.

Hogwart's

School of Witchcraft and Wizardry headed by Albus Dumbledore. The school was started by four great wizards and witches. Their names were Gryffindor, Slytherin, Hufflepuff, and Ravenclaw. The four houses of the school are named after the four founders.

Diagon Alley

Wizards and witches' strip mall.

The Leaky Cauldron

Wizards and witches' inn and pub; also the entry way from the Muggle world to Diagon Alley.



Setting

In some ways, Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry is a traditional English boarding school located in the fairy-green countryside well beyond London. The meddlesome caretaker, Mr. Filch, and his cat, Mrs. Norris, carefully monitor the building, and the grounds are well kept by the beloved Keeper of Keys and Grounds (and Hogwarts drop-out) Rubeus Hagrid. During the long-standing tradition of the Sorting Ceremony, first-year Hogwarts students are separated into four houses (Gryffindor, Hufflepuff, Ravenclaw, and Slytherin), each with their own proud history, alumni, and secret traditions. The faculty are respected scholars and authority figures removed from the emotional and interpersonal experiences of their students. The curriculum is carefully structured and deliberately traditional, and residents take classes by year and with students from other houses. Points are given and taken away for academic achievement, behavior and deportation, and athletic competition—all in an effort to win the much-coveted house cup at the end-of-year feast.

And yet, Hogwarts is a world all its own, a non-Muggle world. Students arrive by a train taken from platform nine and threequarters at King's Cross station. During the journey they snack on candies—Bertie Bott's Every Flavor Beans (including "spinach and liver and tripe"), Cauldron Cakes, Licorice Wands, and Pumpkin Pasties—which they have bought with Sickles and Knuts ("[s]eventeen silver Sickles to a Galleon and twenty-nine Knuts to a Sickle"). They amuse themselves by trading cards of famous witches and wizards (Professor Dumbledore among them) from packages of Chocolate Frogs. The campus is located inside a moat and the building is a castle.

The house dormitories are in the four round towers located at the corners of the building and accessed by secret passwords that open portrait holes. The Sorting Ceremony stars a Sorting Cap that reads the new students' minds before assigning them to the appropriate house. Not only do the portraits have a frustrating tendency to visit other paintings in the castle, thereby foiling the adventures of many an erring student, Mr. Filch and Mrs. Norris are not the only "caretakers" to avoid. Peeves the poltergeist will insist on reporting students out of bed after hours, and the other ghosts (Nearly Headless Nick and the Bloody Baron among them) have loyalties to certain houses. The faculty members also have their allegiances— as well as curious (possibly threatening) involvements with the adult, magic world.

Course work is difficult and requires much study, whether dry and boring like History of Magic with Professor Binns, "complex and dangerous" like Transfiguration with Professor McGonagall, or disappointingly uninformative like Defense Against the Dark Arts with Professor Quirrell. The sport of choice is Quidditch, a challenging game "that's sort of like basketball on broomsticks with six hoops."

The Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry in *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone* is set in a comfortingly traditional and delightfully off-beat way—much like the apprentice magic world of the Hogwarts students as compared to the adult magic world for which they are preparing, or like the whole of the magic world as compared to the



Muggle world. Accepted Hogwarts students walk through a wall in order to reach platform nine and three-quarters at King's Cross station. Tapping a brick behind the Leaky Cauldron pub three times with your magic wand will open it to Diagon Alley, the shopping center of the magic world, home to Eeylops Owl Emporium, Ollivanders wand shop, and Gringotts the wizard's bank run by goblins. Diagon Alley is also the only place in London where a prospective student can get everything he or she needs, from the uniform (such as "[o]ne pair of protective gloves [dragon hide or similar]") to course books (like "Magical Drafts and Potions by Arsenius Jigger") and other equipment ("1 cauldron [pewter, standard size 2]"). The Ministry of Magic works to ensure that Muggles remain ignorant of the actuality of the magic world because "'everyone'd be wantin' magic solutions to their problems . . . we're best left alone'." And the commonplace systems of the Muggle world amaze and confound witches and wizards, for example, [p]assersby stared a lot... as they walked through the little town to the station. Harry couldn't blame them . . . he kept pointing at perfectly ordinary things like parking meters and saying loudly, "See that Harry? Things these Muggles dream up, eh?"

The layering of experiences and perspectives in Rowling's text work to keep the reader both grounded and aware. As such, the reader enjoys a setting that has been wonderfully and completely imagined, described, and realized by Rowling in Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone.



Social Sensitivity

In a television interview aired in July of 2000—just prior to the release of the much anticipated fourth Harry Potter book—eminent children's and young adult literature critic and scholar Jack Zipes described Rowling's fiction as formulaic and sexist.

Because Zipes was not given the chance to fully support his thesis within the format of the televised sound bite, any response to his thesis must be based, in part, on conjecture.

Nevertheless, that Rowling's Harry Potter books should be described as formulaic is problematic. The "Harry Potter" books are, after all, a series, and, at least thus far, the action takes place during the academic year.

Aside from some scattered highlights of Harry's summer holidays, the plot of *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone* follows the unchanging rhythm of a highly structured educational calendar. While an academic year provides a useful template by which Rowling may structure her fiction, the description of such a template as formulaic seems unfair and a refusal to acknowledge just how reliant a young adult audience is on the academic calendar—or how useful it is to the plot structure of British fantasy.

Indeed, Lewis Carroll's Alice has her adventures while she is not engaged with her studies in both *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* and *Through the Looking-Glass*, and throughout C. S. Lewis' *The Narnia Chronicles*, his young protagonists travel to and from Narnia while on vacation from school.

In terms of Rowling's potential sexism, it may be likewise argued that, as she follows and departs from a traditional academic structure in her novels, so too does Rowling follow and depart from traditional gender roles. Mrs. Dursley characterizes the standard housewife in the opening pages of *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone*, while Mr. Dursley presents us with a mock-image of the bowler-capped British businessman. But it should be noted that Mrs. and Mr. Dursley are not beloved characters (certainly not characters after whom young readers would be inclined to model themselves), and that other characters do not always line up according to standard expectations of gender: Professor McGonagall is a witch and a teacher to be respected and admired, Madame Hooch coaches the (co-ed) Quidditch team, Hermione Granger is as capable of getting herself out (or in) trouble as Ron Weasley or Harry himself; Professor Dumbledore is a homebody, Professor Quirrell is a weak and fearful wizard, and Hagrid has undeniably strong mothering instincts. Ultimately, that some of Rowling's characters inhabit traditional gender roles while others do not may be the best, and most elegant, argument against the enforcement of those roles.

And yet, the defense of Rowling's fiction as formulaic or sexist does raise some interesting considerations regarding social concerns in *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone*.



Because the novel follows the British school year, there are few—if any—references to non-Christian faiths and practices. Thus, the witches and wizards at Hogwarts celebrate Christmas—even despite their supposedly pagan history. Harry is able to afford Hogwarts because of the large inheritance left to him by his parents, a detail that can serve to example a limited representation of economic stratification. Due to his last name and his red hair, we might assume that Ron Weasley is of Irish descent; such an assumption would then lead us to argue that the depiction Ron's family, poor and well-populated, reveals a prejudice against Irish Catholics in Rowling, Great Britain, or both. Similarly, while several referenced characters represent other races and ethnicities (Lee Jordan, for example, is black), the main protagonists of the novel, the characters in whom readers are most invested, are white.

Considering the anxiety that contemporary audiences and critics have regarding the fair and equal representation of peoples in literature—and particularly in literature for children and young adults—these observations are both legitimate and unavoidable. But, too, readers must consider the transcendent possibilities of fantasy novels.

If one of the benefits of fantasy is to remove the reader from an oppressive social reality, and thereby to offer a lens through which he or she might critique and resolve social injustices, critics cannot expect fantasy to perform the same instructional modeling as contemporary realism. This is not an excuse or a justification, and it is not because fantasy does not mirror and model life as does all literature (and all art). It is because, as a genre, fantasy behaves according to its own history, tradition, and purpose. Though it is appropriate to expect contemporary fantasy to fairly and accurately represent social diversity, a more appropriate concern for fantasy may be how well it models the readers' ability to see themselves within their social system and how convincingly it argues for their deserved equality. That Rowling's *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone* does, indeed, reflect and address social diversity, and that *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone* inspires both young and old readers to see their worlds in new and different ways (ways that may result in social activism and change), offers a strong argument for our acknowledgment of *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone* as fantastic literature worthy of a place in the canon.



Literary Qualities

Whether because they offer a natural metaphor for coming-of-age audiences transitioning into the adult world, or because—either in cause or effect—they are generally considered most appropriate for the developmental phases and developing psyche of the young adult, the canonized classics of British fantasy traditionally feature young adult protagonists. "The Sword in the Stone," book one of T. H. White's aforementioned *The Once and Future King* (1965), searches back through history, legend, and the author's own boyhood, to expand the Arthurian legend by contributing the story of Arthur's young adulthood.

Appropriately, White, a teacher of young adults, expands Arthurian legend by describing what the young Wart learned in his lessons with Merlin in order to explain the genius of Wart's later kingship.

But T. H. White is simply one of the more recent authors to artfully and respectfully redefine the traditional parameters of the fantasy genre. He follows such great masters as Lewis Carroll and C. S. Lewis and such beloved characters as Alice Liddell and Lucy Prevensie. In Lewis Carroll's *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* (1866) and *Through the Looking-Glass* (1872), Carroll describes a series of experiences that mature Alice both emotionally and intellectually in order to prepare her for life as a logical, reasoning, and kind-hearted woman. In the seven books that make up C. S. Lewis's *The Chronicles of Narnia* (1950-1956), Lucy and the Prevensie children (as well as Polly Plumber, Digory Kirke, Eustace Scrubb, and Jill Pole) accomplish a series of moral tasks that underscore Lewis' and the novels' Christian sentiment and earn the characters a place in heaven.

In accordance with, and in honor of, this proud literary history, Rowling's *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone* begins the story of Harry Potter, age eleven, apprentice wizard and self-doubting hero—a novel that, and a protagonist who, has been inspired by the motifs of classic British fantasy. Clearly, Rowling aspires to further define, and to excel within, the genre of fantasy. In her general examination of the young hero's mentor and his acquisition of wisdom, Rowling's *Harry Potter* resembles White's young Arthur. Though not privately tutored by Hogwarts headmaster Professor Dumbledore, Harry nevertheless is trained within his school and according to his pedagogic system. And it is at crucial times in the narrative of his training that Harry is given the opportunity to consult with Dumbledore: when he develops a dangerous preoccupation with the Mirror of Erised, when he must negotiate the prudent use of the invisibility cloak, and after he has successfully (and for the second time) defeated "He Who Shall Not Be Named." Additionally, Dumbledore resembles Merlin both personally and physically; he is an avid lover of books and wisdom who wears flowing robes and a long, white beard. This resemblance suggests not only how much White's master wizard has influenced—and continues to influence—audience expectation, but how that influence has determined Rowling's use of classic fantasy motifs.

Rowling also credits Lewis Carroll and C. S. Lewis through her description, and use, of a reflective device and a train ride to achieve passage into a fantastic other-world.



In a manner that suggests a parallel to the rites of passage of young adulthood, Harry Potter boards a train at platform nine and three quarters at King's Cross station. Harry's trip will bring him to the wondrously magical and separate (though whimsically and pointedly parallel) world of Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry. After many railway trips, many happy adventures, and the conclusive suggestion that they might be outgrowing such adventures, the Prevensie children of Lewis' *The Chronicles of Narnia* access the kingdom of heaven when they are killed in a train wreck. In Carroll's *Through the Looking-Glass*, Alice speeds through the countryside of her own parallel world, the reversed world of "nonsense" on the other side of a mirror, while she is engaged in a giant game of chess that she must win in order to return transformed and victorious to the "real," that is adult, world. Harry passes the preparatory "test" of the Mirror of Erised (with a great deal of help and guidance from Professor Dumbledore), gaining the strength and confidence necessary to help him (along with Ron Weasley) face the challenge of the giant chess game towards the end of *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone*. Alice's success in the chess game, involving the maturity required to eschew the paradoxes (bureaucracy) of the Red Queen and her supporters (political, governmental systems), informs Rowling's description of Harry's and Ron's actions during the giant Chess game, as well as our perceptions of them. Chess, a game of logic requiring patience and experience, tests and proves both the capabilities of reason and fantasy, and Harry and his friends must further establish themselves as heroes by exercising both of these capabilities—much in the way the audience does in the act of reading, in the act of entering a reflective art form.

Thus, as a fellow reader and creating author, in book one of the "Harry Potter" series, *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone*, Rowling gives due credit to the precedents of her literary forebears and extends a hand to those writers who may hope to follow.

And the readers and keepers of the tradition of classic, British fantasy, would do well to acknowledge agreement in Rowling's debt as well as the reader's debt to Rowling.



Themes

Good Versus Evil

This theme displays itself throughout the book. The first time it comes up is with the comparison of Harry and Dudley. While Dudley can hardly be considered evil at such a young age, he certainly shows potential for it in the future. Harry, on the other hand, even with his difficult circumstances, including loneliness and lack of attention and affection, remains humble, kind, and honorable. Dudley also seems to lack intelligence and, therefore, humor. Harry seems to possess an intelligence far superior to Dudley's, which is why he is often able to use his sense of humor to take his life in stride and not let it defeat him.

Voldemort is the epitome of evil while Harry's parents are seen as the symbol of goodness. Voldemort seeks to destroy all that is right in the world so that he may obtain power. Harry's parents are self-sacrificing and offer their own lives to save that of their son. It is because of Lilly Potter's love for her son that Voldemort cannot hurt him, and it becomes his ultimate undoing. One who has no propensity for love cannot understand its power, which is stronger than any magical spell.

At home, Harry's evil nemeses is Dudley; at school it is Draco Malfoy. Again, Draco is very young to be considered evil, yet there are levels of evil. Draco has a mean heart and a very cold disposition. It is also obvious, however, that his arrogance hides a cowardly boy beneath who is afraid. His fear and ignorance are what drive him to treat others badly. Unlike Dudley, who is not smart enough to understand that his actions are often quite evil, Draco is intelligent, so he has the ability to think clearly about what he does. He makes the conscious decision to harm others.

The Power of Love

It is the power of love that keeps Harry alive twice during the plot of the book. The first time is when his mother's ultimate love for him not only keeps Voldemort from killing him but vanquishes the Dark Lord with its power.

Later in the book when Quirrell tries to kill Harry, his hands begin to blister whenever he touches him. When Harry reaches out to grab his face, his face starts to blister. Voldemort is possessing Quirrell's body, so it is that ultimate love that remains in Harry that causes Quirrell/Voldemort to be harmed. It is the lack of ability to comprehend love that holds his enemies at bay.

Bravery

Harry, even though he clearly wants to give up to desperation at his living circumstances, hangs in there and tries to see the positive side of things. He has



adapted to his environment and manages to not let it defeat him. There are many incidents within the book that allow this skill, which Harry has learned from living with the Dursleys, to help him surmount obstacles. He is brave in the face of those who seek to diminish him, refusing to be beaten down by their ignorance and hatred.

His bravery reveals itself many times throughout the story. It is more obvious in the more grandiose scenes in the book, such as those with the Troll, Quirrell, Voldemort, and Snape. There are other, however, more subtle acts of bravery displayed in the story. For instance, when he first meets Hagrid, he is frightened by his imposing form, yet he gathers his courage and sees past the fear to allow Hagrid to help him. His reaction to Draco Malfoy at the Robe shop can also be seen as brave. Even though he knows no one except Hagrid and is facing uncertainty, he does not simply go along with Malfoy's obvious prejudice and ignorance to simply make a friend. He knows right away that Draco is someone he has no desire to know better.

Several times it is in the defense of others that he shows his brave spirit. When Malfoy insults Ron, Harry immediately stands up for his friend. Also, when Malfoy attempts to taunt Neville by hiding his Rememberall, he does not think about what he is doing; he simply acts to defend his friend.

Many other characters display bravery in the book as well. First Lilly, Harry's mother, jumps in front of her son to save him. Ron runs with Harry into the girls' bathroom to save Hermione from the troll. Ron also sacrifices himself on the chess board so that Harry can stop the thief of the Sorcerer's Stone. Hermione overcomes her fear of not being perfect and lies to Professor McGonagall to protect her friends. She also helps Harry get Norbert out of the school before Draco can turn Hagrid in. Hermione also accompanies Harry to the very last chamber to help him stop the thief of the stone.



Themes/Characters

Like the setting of the novel, Rowling's themes and characters are both traditional and off-beat. British to the core, the themes and characters of Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone contain a delightful blend of classic fantasy and Victorian sentiment minus the tendency towards what a contemporary audience might consider saccharine.

Ideally—and at their best—both classic British fantasy and Victorian literature enjoy the great themes of love and death, of good and evil. This is true of Rowling's Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone, wherein the title character, our noble hero, having been orphaned and overshadowed by a cruel and ignorant world, continues to battle issues of class and conscience even after he is delivered to a better, more accepting and acceptable, place.

It is this better place, Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry, and the magic world more generally, that inspires and insists Harry learn from his orphaned status—that he grow into his own great person rather than be beaten down for being different and for having fewer "normal" advantages. Understandably preoccupied as the orphan is with death, Harry's hero's adventure suitably involves the quest to find, to recover, and to restore the Sorcerer's Stone by which the Elixir of Life can be manufactured and immortality achieved. It is a dangerous tool in the wrong hands, and Harry risks his own life in order to ensure the quality of the lives of others.

In the end, Harry Potter accepts and promotes what Professor Dumbledore, headmaster of Hogwarts and co-creator of the Sorcerer's Stone, so eloquently explains: "to the well-organized mind, death is but the next great adventure." With this acceptance comes additional emotional support.

Harry's parents are dead, yes, but this is more of a shift in fate than it is an irreparable loss. In her characteristic layering style, Rowling points out that not only have Harry's parents left the gift of Harry behind, but they have left Harry with a gift. At the novel's end, when Harry asks Professor Dumbledore why Quirrell, the evil wizard Voldemort's accomplice, could not touch him, Dumbledore replies: Your mother died to save you. If there's one thing Voldemort cannot understand, it is love. He didn't realize that love as powerful as your mother's for you leaves its own mark. Not a scar, no visible sign ... to have been loved so deeply, even though the person who loved us is gone, will give us some protection forever. It is in your very skin.

Thus Harry is not only scarred literally and figuratively by his orphaned status, he is also, alternatively, positively marked by it. And this is something that we hope the young adult audience, the intended audience for Rowling's Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone, might learn to recognize as a theme in the real magic of their own lives.

It is the students of Hogwarts, the fictional contemporaries and peers of the intended audience, who demonstrate that these great themes—love and death, good and evil—are part and parcel of every life lived. Whether that student be the quintessential bully,



as is Draco Malfoy (and his henchmen Crabbe and Goyle), or the overweight, clumsy, and somewhat untalented but nevertheless good-hearted Neville Longbottom, each individual's psyche and personality is shaped by how they perceive and respond to the great themes in their own lives. In *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone*, Rowling's characters are complex, dimensional, and interesting, because they perceive and respond to the signature notes of these themes in their own lives.

Indeed, the bully Draco Malfoy suffers from feelings of inferiority due, in part, by the success, expectations, and snobbery of his father. Neville Longbottom, raised by his grandmother and unpopular for the resulting lack of style this upbringing has caused, carries his own, similar yet distinct, sense of illegitimacy. Ron Weasley is one of seven children (including five boys ahead of him), all of whom have met with great success while studying at Hogwarts—be it as head boy, Quidditch captain, house prefect, or wildly popular pranksters. Hermione Granger negotiates the stress of being a Type-A overachiever from a Muggle family.

The adults of the magic world, too, are not above the struggle to commandeer their lives and worlds—a facet of Rowling's fiction that may account for the literary success of the *Harry Potter* books in the real, adult world. Professor Snape struggles with the guilt and frustration of not being able to repay his arch-rival, Harry's (now dead) father, for saving his life. Rubeus Hagrid has been shamed by being expelled from Hogwarts, by having had his wand broken in half and forbidden to use magic thereby leaving him an obvious misfit in the Muggle world as well as one marginalized within the non-Muggle world. Even the wise Professor Dumbledore, a near-perfect man and wizard, must come to terms with the foibles and disappointments that color the human experience. When asked what he sees in the Mirror of Erised—a bewitched mirror that not only bears the inscription, "Erised stra ehru oyt ube cafru oyt on wohsi" (I show not your face but your heart's desire), but also reveals Harry's family to him and shows Ron Weasley himself as head boy holding the Quidditch cup—Professor Dumbledore replies: "'I? I see myself holding a pair of thick, woolen socks. . . . One can never have enough socks Another Christmas has come and gone and I didn't get a single pair. People will insist on giving me books!'"

However tongue-in-cheek it may be, Professor Dumbledore's remark nevertheless speaks a greater truth: in recognizing our great ability to want what we do not have, we just might stumble across an appreciation for what we have been given. It is, ultimately, a restatement of what our young protagonist has learned from the loss of his parents and one that benefits both Rowling's characters and audience—young or old.



Style

Point of View

Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone is told in third-person, limited point of view, with the narrator unidentified and invisible and the tone objective. Harry is the character whose thoughts, feelings, and experiences are revealed to the reader. The narrator at some odd points throughout the book is omniscient, telling the reader what Harry is thinking or feeling. The narrator mostly relays events as they happen and also reveals some, but not all, of the thoughts and feelings of the main character Harry Potter. The actions and thoughts of the other characters are relayed to the reader via the conversations among the characters themselves. The actions of the main characters and the narrative descriptions of them tell the reader what type of person the main characters are. The characters and places are not always accounted for by the narrator; sometimes they are described through the eyes of Harry.

Setting

The larger setting of the story is England. Earlier in the book, within this larger structure is the Dursleys' house on Privet Drive. There is also a trip to the zoo, the "rock" out in the sea where Vernon Dursley makes the family go to hide from the letters, and some scenes at the train stations at various points.

Later, but also in the context of "England," Harry goes to Diagon Alley, The Leaky Caldron, and later to Hogwarts Castle. The smaller setting of Hogwarts becomes predominant as the remainder of the story is set in and around the Castle. Much of the action takes place inside the Great Hall, in the classrooms, in the Forbidden Wing, and in the dormitories. There is also some action outside on the Quidditch field, at the top of the astronomy tower, in Hagrid's hut, and in the Forbidden Forest.

The book ends at the train platform or at a train station.

Language and Meaning

The language of the book is extremely easy to read and follow. It is written in a flowing style that both children and adults can enjoy. Although the book was classified as a children's book, all readers of any age who enjoy imaginative, straight-forward story telling will enjoy it. The language, however, is obviously simplified for the originally intended audience.

There are some British phrases and idioms that appear occasionally, but they do not confuse the reader to any extent. The original version published in the United Kingdom was called Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone. Apparently, the American version of the story was changed to suit American tastes, slang, and culture more effectively.

Structure

Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone is divided into 17 chapters. Most are rather short and either explain a point outright or lead the reader to the next chapter for explanation. They all end with enough intrigue to lead the reader to turn the next page.

The paragraphs are short, presumably because the book was written for children aged 8 to 12. This in no way takes away from the book and, in fact, enhances its easy-to-read language. The sentences are generally short and to the point.



Quotes

"Most mysterious. And now over to Jim McGuffin with the weather. Going to be any more showers of owls tonight, Jim?" TV Newscaster, Chapter 1, page 6

"Funny stuff on the news. . . Owls shooting stars. . . and there were a lot of funny-looking people in town today. . ." Vernon Dursley, Chapter 1, page 7

"But you're different. Everyone knows you're the only one You-Know- oh, all right, *Voldemort*, was frightened of." Professor McGonagall addressing Dumbledore, Chapter 1, page 11

"After all he's done . . . all the people he's killed . . . he couldn't kill a little boy? It's just astounding . . . of all the things to stop him . . . but how in the name of heaven did Harry survive?" Professor McGonagall, Chapter 1, page 12

"Little tyke wants his money's worth, just like his father. 'Atta boy Dudley!" Vernon Dursley, Chapter 2, page 22

"I suppose we could take him [Harry] to the zoo." . . "and leave him in the car. . ." Petunia Dursley, Chapter 2, page 23

"Poke him with your Smelting stick, Dudley." Vernon Dursley, Chapter 3, page 33

"But yeh must know about yer mom and dad, I mean, they're *famous*. You're *famous*." Hagrid, Chapter 4, page 50

"Harry—yer a wizard." Hagrid, Chapter 4, page 50

"Shouldn'ta lost me temper, but it didn't work anyway. Meant ter turn him into a pig, but I suppose he was so much like a pig anyway there wasn't much left ter do." Hagrid, Chapter 4, page 59

"Then I'm going to drag them off to look at racing brooms. I don't see why first years can't have their own. I think I'll bully father into getting me one and I'll smuggle it in somehow." Draco Malfoy, Chapter 5, page 77

"It's our sport. Wizard sport. It's like—like soccer in the Muggle world—everyone follows Quidditch-played up in the air on broomsticks and there's four balls—sorta hard ter explain the rules." Hagrid, Chapter 5, page 79

"Hmm, difficult. Very difficult. Plenty of courage, I see. Not a bad mind either. There's talent, oh my goodness, yes—and a nice thirst to prove yourself, now that's interesting. . . So where shall I put you?" The Sorting Hat to Harry, Chapter 7, page 121

"Don't you *care* about Gryffindor, do you *only* care about yourselves, I don't want Slytherin to win the house cup, and you'll lose all the pints I got from Professor



McGonagall for knowing about Switching Spells." Hermione to Harry and Ron, Chapter 9, page 155

"If they hadn't found me, I'd be dead now. Harry struck his wand up its nose and Ron knocked it out with its own club. They didn't have time to come and fetch anyone. It was about to finish me off when they arrived." Hermione, Chapter 10, page 178

"Call him Voldemort, Harry. Always use the proper name for things. Fear of a name increases fear of the thing itself." Dumbledore, Chapter 17, page 298

"Your mother died to save you. If there is one thing Voldemort cannot understand, it is love. He didn't realize that love as powerful as your mother's for you leaves its own mark. Not a scar, no visible sign. . . to have been loved so deeply, even though the person who loved us is gone, will give us some protection forever. It is in your very skin. Quirrell, full of hatred, greed and ambition, sharing his soul with Voldemort, could not touch you for this reason. It was agony to touch a person marked by something so good." Headmaster Dumbledore, Chapter 17, page 299

They don't know we're not allowed to use magic at home. I'm going to have a lot of fun with Dudley this summer. . ." Harry, Chapter 17, page 309



Topics for Discussion

Why did Harry remain decent and honorable through his difficult life? Why did his cousin Dudley who is given attention, love, and all the material things he wants, become a bully and a brat? Compare and discuss.

What would you see if you stood before The Mirror of Erised? Discuss and explain your answer. (If this is too personal a question, as it was for Albus Dumbledore, then simply elaborate on something less significant that you would see in the mirror).

Why do you feel Professor Quirrell allowed Voldemort to possess his body and why would he sacrifice his own life for the Dark Lord?

As a study in writer's imagination, invent a candy that might be found in the wizarding world. Name it and describe it.

Why do you think Hermione works so hard at being a good witch and student?

Name four reasons Harry and Ron seem to get along so well upon meeting each other for the first time.

Choose and discuss two ethical values that J.K. Rowling has woven into her story.

If you had the Sorcerer's Stone and could only choose one of its powers, which would you choose; to turn any metal into gold or to have eternal life? Explain your answer.

Is Professor Snape really a Dark Wizard? Explain your answer.

If you were to play Quidditch what would be your position and why?

If the Sorting Hat were to pick a house for you, which house would it be and why?

1. J. K. Rowling's Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone introduces readers to all sorts of interesting magical objects (the Nimbus 2000, the remembrall, magic wands, mail-delivering owls, live chess sets, the invisibility cloak . . . not to mention the sorcerer's stone). If you could have and use any one of these objects, which object would it be and why? Can you tell a real story about something that happened to you once when that object might have come in handy? How might the story have gone differently if you had had that object?

2. In Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone, readers find out many interesting things about the magic world, and many magic characters think some pretty funny things about Muggles. What if, instead of you visiting them at Hogwarts when you read a Harry Potter book, they were to visit you at school or read about you in a book? What would they see? What classes, teachers, traditions, or sporting events might they find curious? Why?



3. If you were assigned to one of the houses (Griffindor, Hufflepuff, Ravenclaw, and Slytherin) which one would it be? What about your next door neighbor, your teacher, or the principal? What about some of the characters in your favorite television shows? Why?

4. In the "Harry Potter" books, Harry has a scar on his forehead—and a story to go with it. What, if any, scars do you have and what is/are the stories behind them? If, like Harry, you had special powers because of the scar (and based on the story), what would they be?



Ideas for Reports and Papers

1. The Harry Potter books are set in England, but the author, J. K. Rowling, lives in Scotland. What has the relationship between England and Scotland been throughout history?

2. Before shopping at the stores on Diagon Alley, Harry and Hagrid take a short walk through London. Research the city of London and report on what Harry and Hagrid might have seen on their trip. Consider such things as the demographic population of the city, the ethnic populations, principal businesses, historical sites, and architecture.

3. Research the London Underground and the British railway system (especially the Ring's Cross railway station). Which came first, the Underground or the railway? What is the connection between the Underground and the railway? What routes do they follow? Can you find any maps and timetables using the Internet?

4. J. K. Rowling had been a school teacher and was a single mother when she started writing Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone in a neighborhood coffee house. Research the author in order to find out more about her. What kind of insights has she given in interviews? Are there any parallels between the author's life and her text?

5. To date, there are three more "Harry Potter" books: Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets, Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban, and Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire. Read one (or more) of the other "Harry Potter" books and compare it/them to the first book, Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone.

6. In Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone, Harry learns many interesting facts and unusual stories about the game of Quidditch and its history. What sort of interesting facts and unusual stories might you find when learning about one of your favorite sports? What are the similarities and differences between Quidditch and the sport that you researched?

7. In Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone, Hagrid is surprised by such Muggle

Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone
inventions as the parking meter. Who invented the parking meter and why?

What other Muggle inventions might readers take for granted?

8. Research the game of chess in order to explain (and to demonstrate to your class) the game played towards the end of Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone.

Does Ron play well? How might the game have been played differently?

Were there better moves that could have been made?



9. Research the logic puzzle that Hermione solves with the bottled potions in Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone. What kind of logic puzzle is it? Does it have a name? What other kinds of logic puzzles are there? What are their different purposes?

Further Study

Cart, Michael. Review of Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone. Booklist (September 15, 1998). In a glowing review, Cart praises the story of Harry Potter, calling the work "a brilliantly imagined and beautifully written fantasy."

Review of Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone. Kirkus Reviews (September 1, 1998).

Describing the work as a "hugely enjoyable fantasy," the reviewer predicted that Rowling's fantasy novel will appeal to "action-oriented readers."

Winerip, Michael. Review of Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone. New York Times Book Review (February 14, 1999). In a lengthy review, Winerip lauds Rowling's "three-dimensional characters" as well as the "wonderful, sly humor" running throughout the book.

Related Titles

To date, there are four "Harry Potter" books, each successively describing the adventures of one academic year at Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry. The four books include: Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone (1997), Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets (1998), Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban (1999), and Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire (2000). For similar young adult fantasy works by other authors, readers may want to discover T. H. White's *The Once and Future King* (1965), about the teenage years of the legendary King Arthur; Lewis Carroll's *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* (1866) and *Through the Looking-Glass* (1872), a pair of books about the maturation of Alice as she enters womanhood; and C. S. Lewis's *The Chronicles of Narnia* series (1950-1956), a seven volume collection of tales about Lucy and the Prevensie children's adventures as they try to earn a place in heaven.

Copyright Information

Beacham's Encyclopedia of Popular Fiction

Editor
Kirk H. Beetz, Ph.D.

Cover Design
Amanda Mott

Cover Art is "Pierrot," 1947, by William Baziotos Oil on Canvas, 42 1/8 x 36 Donated



by the Alisa Mellon Bruce Fund, ©, 1996 Reproduced with Permission from the Board of Trustees, National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data Beacham's Encyclopedia of Popular Fiction

Includes bibliographical references and index

Summary: A multi-volume compilation of analytical essays on and study activities for the works of authors of popular fiction. Includes biography data, publishing history, and resources for the author of each analyzed work.

ISBN 0-933833-41-5 (Volumes 1-3, Biography Series)

ISBN 0-933833-42-3 (Volumes 1-8, Analyses Series)

ISBN 0-933833-38-5 (Entire set, 11 volumes)

1. Popular literature—Bio-bibliography. 2. Fiction—19th century—Bio-bibliography. 3. Fiction—20th century—Bio-bibliography. I. Beetz, Kirk H., 1952-

Z6514.P7B43 1996[PN56.P55]809.3—dc20 96-20771 CIP

Copyright ©, 1996, by Walton Beacham. All rights to this book are reserved. No part of this work may be used or reproduced in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopy, recording, or in any information or storage and retrieval system, without written permission from the copyright owner, except in the case of brief quotations embodied in critical articles and reviews. For information, write the publisher, Beacham Publishing Corp., P.O. Box 830, Osprey, FL 34229-0830

Printed in the United States of America First Printing, November 1996