

# DISCUSSION GUIDE

Presented by the

# Harry Potter

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## Introduction to the Harry Potter Books

In 1997 Joanne Rowling, a single parent living in Edinburgh, Scotland, published her first book. Her story about an eleven-year-old orphaned boy who discovers his heritage of wizardry took the world by storm. Published as a children's book, it was embraced by readers of all ages, who found the engaging humor and gentle parody of the real world to be enjoyable and thought provoking.

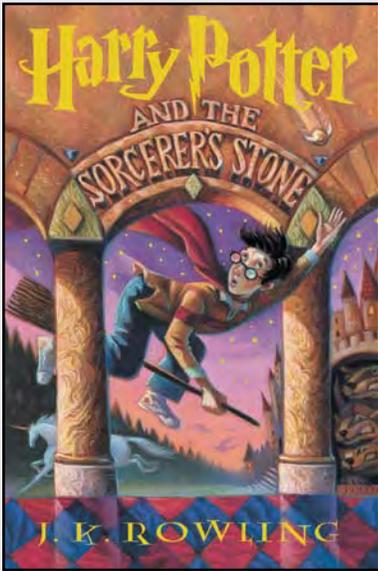
Rowling had planned, from the beginning, to tell the story in a series of seven books. The initial success of the first title (published in England as *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone* and in America as *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone*) guaranteed that she would be able to continue the story

as she wished. Fans camped out overnight and lined up at bookstores in record numbers as each new installment in the series appeared.

This discussion guide is designed to help readers explore some of the deeper meanings underlying Rowling's world of wizardry and magic. Incorporating elements of fantasy, mystery, humor, and friendship, the series has wide appeal for readers of all ages. On the surface the books are great adventure tales, but like all great fantasy literature, they also deal with universal human values, longings, wishes, and choices.



YEAR 1  
**HARRY POTTER**  
AND THE SORCERER'S STONE



Harry Potter has been raised by his horrible relatives, Uncle Vernon and Aunt Petunia, who treat him with disdain while lavishing attention on their spoiled son, Dudley. On the eve of his eleventh birthday, Harry receives news that changes his life: He is being summoned to attend the Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry. Harry is astonished to learn that his deceased parents, James and Lily Potter, were both wizards, and that they died trying to protect infant Harry from a Dark wizard named Voldemort. He also discovers, much to his own discomfort, that he is famous in the Wizarding world; Voldemort's attack on Harry has not only left a lightning-shaped scar on Harry's forehead, but has taken away Voldemort's power as well.

At school Harry soon makes both friends and enemies with equal ease. Ron Weasley becomes Harry's sidekick, and Hermione Granger, who at first appears to be a boring know-it-all, quickly proves that she is a fast friend too, and the three become a team. Draco Malfoy, a bully and a bigot, along with his cronies, Crabbe and Goyle, become Harry's enemies. Involved with classes, teachers, and Quidditch, an aerial sport played on broomsticks, Harry is also intrigued by the mystery of a hidden object, guarded by a three-headed dog. The attempt to solve the mystery with his friends brings Harry face-to-face with his nemesis, Voldemort, in the disguise of someone he least suspects.

### Discussion Questions for *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone*

1. Why does Dumbledore decide to have Harry grow up with the Dursleys rather than with one of the wizard families? How does Harry's experience with his relatives build his character?
2. Why does it take so long for Harry's wand to choose him when he visits Diagon Alley? What is special about his wand? Why does Ollivander say, "The wand chooses the wizard"? (p. 85)
3. When Harry first meets Malfoy, he reminds him of Dudley. How are these two alike? How are they different?
4. Why do Harry and Ron dislike Hermione in the beginning? How does their friendship with her grow? What qualities and strengths does each of them bring to their adventures?
5. Why does Dumbledore give Harry the Cloak of Invisibility? Why is the Cloak so important to Harry?
6. Discuss the importance of the Mirror of Erised and the meaning of its name. Dumbledore tells Harry: "It shows us nothing more or less than the deepest, most desperate desire of our hearts . . . However, this mirror will give us neither knowledge or truth." (p. 213) What does he mean by this? What would you see if you looked in the mirror?
7. Why do you think Harry and Professor Snape dislike each other so much?

8. Professor Quirrell tells Harry: “There is no good and evil, there is only power, and those too weak to seek it . . . .” (p. 291) Discuss whether you agree or disagree with this statement. How do you see this idea at work in our own world?

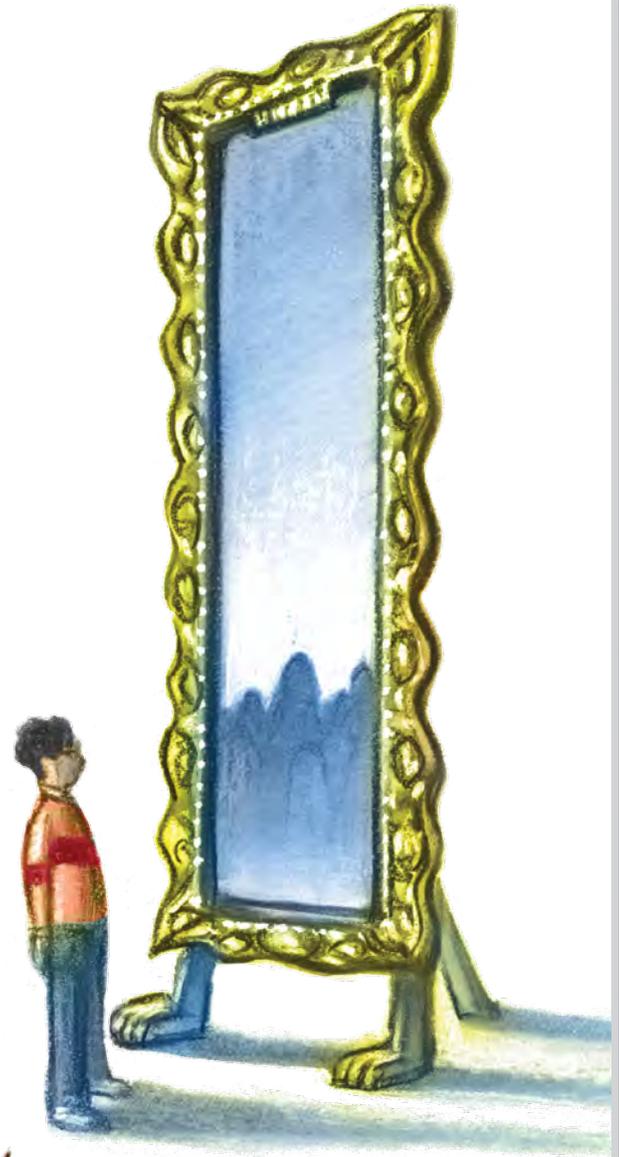
9. Dumbledore tells Harry to “Always use the proper name for things. Fear of a name increases fear of the thing itself.” (p. 298) What does he mean by this? Why is it important to name a thing that you fear?

10. What explanation does Dumbledore give Harry for the protection he received during Voldemort’s attack when he was a baby? What does he mean when he says: “. . . to have been loved so deeply, even though the person who loved us is gone, will give us some protection forever”? (p. 299) How does this protection keep Harry safe even in the most difficult circumstances?

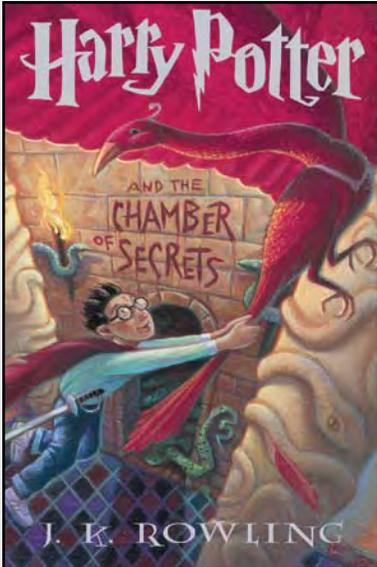
11. While finding their way to the Sorcerer’s Stone, what strengths do Harry, Ron, and Hermione each contribute to solving the puzzles? Were you surprised when Quirrell turned out to be the one who was after the Sorcerer’s Stone? Was there anything in the plot that led you to suspect him?

12. J. K. Rowling has great fun creating names of people, places, and spells in this story. How does a name give us clues to a character’s personality? The following are just a few suggestions of names to explore:

Severus Snape  
Professor Quirrell  
Argus Filch  
Professor Sprout  
Draco Malfoy  
Voldemort  
Minerva McGonagall  
Albus Dumbledore



YEAR 2  
**HARRY POTTER**  
AND THE CHAMBER OF SECRETS



Harry escapes a dismal summer with his relatives when Ron Weasley and his twin brothers, George and Fred, fly their father's bewitched Ford Anglia to the Dursleys' and take Harry back to their home, The Burrow. When Harry and Ron are unable to get through the barrier at Platform Nine and Three-quarters, they use the magic car to fly them to school. Crashing into the Whomping Willow on the school grounds, they start the term in big trouble for breaking school rules.

Soon Harry, Ron, and Hermione become involved in larger problems. Harry hears a sinister voice in the walls while students, especially those with Muggle blood, are being attacked. Writing on a wall declares that "The Chamber Is Open" and the "Heir of Slytherin" is responsible for the attacks. Hermione is rendered petrified, but not before she is able to leave clues to help Harry and Ron find the hidden chamber.

A mysterious diary, tales about past troubles at Hogwarts involving Hagrid and another student named Tom Riddle, a giant spider in the Forbidden Forest, and the disappearance of Ron's younger sister Ginny all lead to a stunning climax. Harry and Ron discover the entrance to the Chamber of Secrets, but Harry alone must rescue Ginny and escape the evil force that lurks there.

### **Discussion Questions for *Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets***

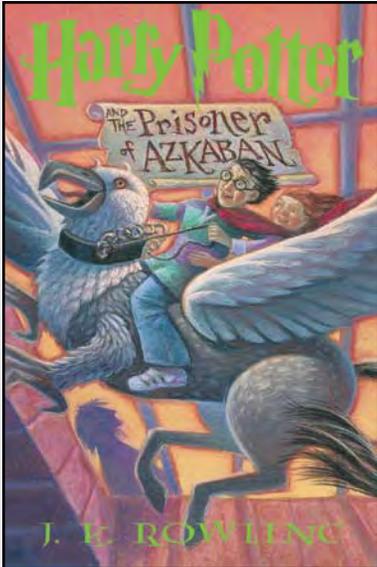
1. Should Ron and Harry have taken the car to Hogwarts?  
How else could they have gotten to school?
2. Why is it important for the students to know the legends as well as the history of Hogwarts? Discuss Hermione's question to Professor Binns: "Please, sir, don't legends always have a basis in fact?" (p. 149) How does knowing the history of the founding of Hogwarts help the students understand the present?
3. What does Hermione do in this book that seems out of character for her? Why is she willing to risk getting caught breaking the rules? What strengths does she contribute to solving the mystery of the Chamber of Secrets?



4. Why do you think Harry is able to understand and speak Parseltongue? Why doesn't he know when he is speaking it?
5. Discuss the significance of Fawkes the phoenix. What is a phoenix? Why is this one so important to Dumbledore? What is the significance of the name Fawkes?
6. When they are in Dumbledore's office and Dumbledore asks Harry if he wants to tell him anything, Harry says no, even though many things are bothering him. Would you have told the headmaster your concerns and asked for his advice? Why is Harry reluctant to ask for help?
7. Who is Tom Riddle? Why did he keep a diary? How is he able to make Ginny Weasley do what he wants her to do?
8. Dobby says he has always known about Harry Potter's greatness, but not his goodness. What does Dobby mean? What is the difference between "greatness" and "goodness"? What role does Dobby play in this story?
9. Discuss the character of Gilderoy Lockhart. Why do most of the teachers dislike him? Why is losing his memory a fitting punishment for Lockhart?
10. In the first book we learned that both Harry's and Voldemort's wands contain a phoenix feather from the same bird. What further connections between Harry and Voldemort do we learn about in *Chamber of Secrets*? What are the important differences between Harry and Riddle?
11. Rowling introduces new characters and names in this second book: Gilderoy Lockhart, Tom Riddle, Dobby, Moaning Myrtle. How does the name fit the personality of each of these characters? What do you learn about the history and mythology of the legendary creatures and plants in this story – the Basilisk, the phoenix, and the Mandrake – that helps you understand their significance in the plot?
12. What does Dumbledore mean when he says to Harry: "It is our choices, Harry, that show what we truly are, far more than our abilities." (p. 333) What choices does Harry make that define his character?



YEAR 5  
**HARRY POTTER**  
AND THE PRISONER OF AZKABAN



The Wizarding world is concerned for Harry Potter's safety when Sirius Black, an escapee from the prison of Azkaban, is believed to be hunting him. Dementors (Azkaban guards) are stationed around Hogwarts as the term begins, and Harry experiences an overwhelming sense of despair and blacks out whenever they are near him. The new Defense Against the Dark Arts teacher, Remus Lupin, takes a special interest in Harry, as does the Divination teacher, Sybill Trelawney, who seems determined to predict his early death.

Harry learns more about his father's career at Hogwarts, and many of his father's friends from that time come forward to help him: Remus Lupin, who has a deep secret, and Sirius Black, who was wrongly imprisoned and is actually Harry's godfather, are the allies who save Harry from the real traitor, Peter Pettigrew. Hermione's secret Time-Turner, which has allowed her to attend more than the usual load of classes, becomes a key to helping Sirius escape capture, and Harry learns one of the most valuable spells of all: how to invoke the Patronus charm that allows him to banish Dementors and his own deepest fears.

### Discussion Questions for *Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban*

1. What does Aunt Marge say that provokes Harry to risk using magic outside of school? Why does he react so hastily by leaving the house? How has Harry's attitude changed toward his relatives?
2. Why does the Minister of Magic take a personal interest in Harry's welfare when he arrives at the Leaky Cauldron, and why does this surprise Harry?
3. Why do the Dementors affect Harry so strongly? Discuss their method of controlling the prisoners in Azkaban. Why is Dumbledore opposed to the Ministry's use of Dementors? What is the effect of the Dementors' "kiss"?
4. Harry and his friends have three new teachers this year. Compare what they learn in Hagrid's Care of Magical Creatures class, Lupin's Defense Against the Dark Arts class, and Trelawney's Divination class. What are the skills that each teacher brings to his or her subject, and what skills do the students learn best from each of them?



5. Sirius Black has been a prisoner in Azkaban for twelve years. Peter Pettigrew has spent those years hiding in the body of a rat. How have these years affected each of them? How did Sirius survive in Azkaban, and how was he able to escape? What does this tell us about his character?
6. Why is Scabbers a good name for Ron's rat? Why is a rat a suitable animal form for Pettigrew to assume? Discuss how all the Animagus forms suit their characters: Prongs, Padfoot, and Wormtail. How does an Animagus differ from a werewolf?
7. What does Lupin's lesson on Boggarts teach about how to face our deepest fears? When Harry tells Lupin his Boggart would take the form of a Dementor, Lupin says, "That suggests that what you fear most of all is – fear. Very wise, Harry." (p. 155) What does he mean? Why is Lupin the only other person besides Dumbledore who will say Voldemort's name?

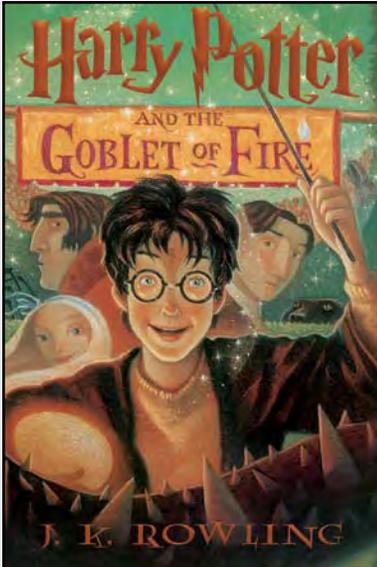


8. What does the word *Patronus* suggest? Why does the Patronus only appear if you are concentrating very hard on a happy thought? Why is each one "unique to the wizard who conjures it"? (p. 237) For Harry to summon his Patronus, he tries several memories. What do we learn about Harry's character during this process? Which memory from your own life could you use to summon a Patronus?
9. What is the most important thing that Harry learns about his father from Lupin? What does Lupin mean when he tells Harry, "James would have been highly disappointed if his son had never found any of the secret passages out of the castle." (pp. 424–425)

10. Discuss the feelings that Harry has when he discovers the truth about Sirius Black. Why does Harry stop Sirius and Lupin from killing Pettigrew? Why did Harry's feelings change from his earlier wish to hunt down Sirius Black for revenge?
11. Why is Snape so unwilling to hear anything good about Sirius Black or Remus Lupin? Why does he continue to be mean to Harry, Ron, and Hermione?
12. Discuss Hermione's role in saving Sirius and Buckbeak. Why is the Time-Turner necessary in helping Sirius escape? Why is it so important that Harry and Hermione not be seen when they go back in time?
13. What does Dumbledore mean when he says to Harry: "You think the dead we loved ever truly leave us? You think that we don't recall them more clearly than ever in times of great trouble?" (p. 427) What is the importance of Harry learning to produce the Patronus?
14. Consider some of the new names in this book and discuss what the names suggest about the characters:
  - Cornelius Fudge
  - Sirius Black
  - Remus Lupin
  - Wormtail (Peter Pettigrew)
  - Sybill Trelawney



YEAR 4  
**HARRY POTTER**  
AND THE GOBLET OF FIRE



Harry becomes aware of a wider Wizarding world in this volume, as he attends the Quidditch World Cup with the Weasleys, and becomes involved in the Triwizard Tournament at Hogwarts, competing against students from other schools. Hermione becomes obsessed with the condition of the house-elves after witnessing the treatment of Winky by Ministry official Crouch, and starts an organization to help them.

The new Defense Against the Dark Arts teacher, Alastor “Mad-Eye” Moody, teaches his students about Unforgivable Curses, while Harry struggles to master skills for the three tasks that constitute the Triwizard Tournament, a competition he did not enter willingly. At the end of the third task, he is transported by Dark magic to a graveyard where the Death Eaters have gathered to witness the rejuvenation of Lord Voldemort. Escaping against all odds, Harry returns to Hogwarts with the body of his fellow competitor, Cedric Diggory, discovers the true identity of Moody, and delivers the ominous news that Voldemort has regained his power.

### **Discussion Questions for *Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire***

1. The previous volumes have all opened at the Dursley home, but this book starts somewhere else. How did that change the tone of the story for you? Why do you think Rowling departed from the way she had started the other books?
2. Much of the humor, as well as the feeling of authenticity, in the Harry Potter series comes from the juxtaposition of our world and the Wizarding world. What are some of the humorous comparisons in *Goblet of Fire*, both in and out of Hogwarts? Compare the Quidditch World Cup and the Triwizard Tournament to sporting events in our world. What are some of the serious connections between things in our world and the more sinister aspects of those events as illustrated in the books?
3. Why can't younger wizards learn to “Apparate” and get from one place to another quickly? Why do they have to use a “Portkey”? Is there any advantage to the Portkey? What are the advantages and disadvantages of using Floo powder to get from one place to another?



4. How are the students from Beauxbatons and Durmstrang distinct from the students at Hogwarts? What difficulties might there be in developing friendships between the schools? Compare the relationships among teachers from the three schools to those among the students.
5. What is the effect on the students and staff when Harry's name comes out of the Goblet of Fire? How does the relationship between Harry and Cedric develop through the three tasks of the tournament? Why does Harry take time to free others besides Ron during the second task?



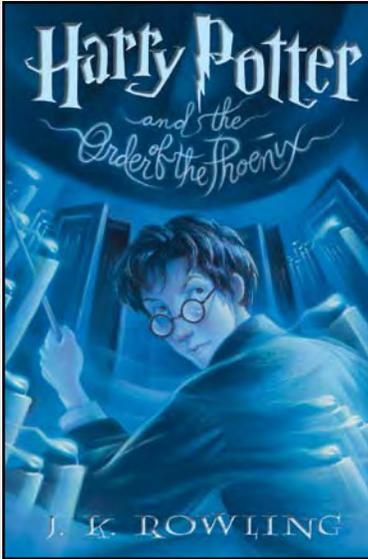
6. Magical objects that have been used for good, or simple mischief, by Harry in earlier volumes are used for darker reasons in this book. How does this change the tone of the story? How does Barty Crouch, disguised as Moody, use the Invisibility Cloak and the Marauder's Map? What clues are there in the story that would lead you to suspect that Mad-Eye Moody was not the person he appeared to be? Why could Dumbledore not detect this deception? Why is Snape convinced that instead of the true culprit, it is the students who are stealing his ingredients for Polyjuice Potion?
7. What is the significance of Hermione's campaign for the welfare of the house-elves? Why is she adamant about improving their conditions? Why do the house-elves resist her efforts? Discuss what Sirius Black means when he says: "If you want to know what a man's like, take a good look at how he treats his inferiors, not his equals." (p. 525)
8. One of the most annoying characters in the series is Rita Skeeter, the journalist. What does she do to alienate Harry and Hermione? Why is it so important to Hermione to get revenge on Rita? What skills does Hermione possess that make it possible for her to do so?
9. Harry has his first experience with Dumbledore's Pensieve in this volume, a device through which he learns many important facts from the past. The first time he (inadvertently) enters the Pensieve, Dumbledore tells

him, "Curiosity is not a sin . . . But we should exercise caution with our curiosity . . . yes, indeed . . ." (p. 598) What does he mean by this? When does Harry not exercise caution?

10. When Harry faces Voldemort, his will takes over and he refuses to answer the questions Voldemort asks. Harry is determined not to die cringing, but to stand up to Voldemort the way his father did. What events and experiences have helped Harry develop this courage?
11. What do you believe causes the connection between Harry's wand and Voldemort's? How do the shadow figures that emerge from the connection between the wands help Harry escape? Why does Voldemort need Harry's blood to regain his body?
12. Is Harry learning to become a great wizard, or is he just lucky to escape the forces that arise against him? What skills has he gained in this volume? Do you believe that Harry is living out a destiny or acting of his own free will?
13. In the hospital wing after Harry returns from the graveyard, Dumbledore says to Snape: "Severus . . . you know what I must ask you to do. If you are ready . . . if you are prepared . . ." (p. 713) What do you think Dumbledore is asking him to do? Why does Dumbledore trust Snape without reservation?
14. Why does Cornelius Fudge refuse to believe that Voldemort has returned? Why does he refuse to believe Harry's story? The final chapter is entitled "The Beginning." What does that tell you about the events that happened in this volume and the events to come?
15. Consider some of the new characters in this volume. What do their names tell us about their personalities?
  - Rita Skeeter
  - Bartemius Crouch
  - Ludo Bagman
  - Viktor Krum
  - Fleur Delacour
  - Cedric Diggory
  - Madame Maxime
  - Igor Karkaroff



YEAR 5  
**HARRY POTTER**  
AND THE ORDER OF THE PHOENIX



At the end of summer, Harry is forced to conjure his Patronus outside of school, to protect himself and his cousin Dudley from Dementors. Harry is then summoned to appear before the Wizengamot, his first trip to the Ministry of Magic. While the Order of the Phoenix, using headquarters at the home of Harry's godfather Sirius Black, works against the forces of the rejuvenated Voldemort, the Ministry refuses to credit the return of this arch-villain, removes Dumbledore as headmaster of Hogwarts, and installs Dolores Umbridge, who runs the school by strict and arbitrary rules and unusually cruel punishments.

Hermione rallies a group of students to take secret lessons in Defense Against the Dark Arts from Harry; they call themselves Dumbledore's Army. Harry is disturbed by increasingly vivid images he experiences unwillingly through the eyes of Voldemort and finds it difficult to absorb the lessons in Occlumency, which he takes with Professor Snape to learn to shut his mind. Finally, one of his visions leads Harry and several members of the D.A. to the Ministry of Magic. Lured into a trap by Voldemort and his Death Eaters, they battle to save a prophecy that tells of the connection between Voldemort and Harry.

### **Discussion Questions for *Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix***

1. Why is it necessary for so many wizards to accompany Harry to the headquarters of the Order of the Phoenix? Describe Harry's mood when he learns about the Order and the fact that no one has told him about it. What does he feel when he learns that Ron and Hermione have been made prefects? Compare his mood to that of his godfather Sirius. How are Sirius and Harry alike, and how are they different?
2. What does Harry learn about the Ministry when he attends his disciplinary hearing? Why have Fudge's feelings toward Harry changed so drastically from the beginning of *Prisoner of Azkaban*? Why is Fudge so antagonistic toward Dumbledore?
3. How is the trip on the Hogwarts Express different for Harry this year? Why can Harry see the Thestrals that he couldn't see before? What is the significance of meeting Luna Lovegood at this point in the story? What dimension does Luna bring to the story? The Sorting Hat does more than Sorting this year; why does it recite the history of the school and issue a warning?
4. How does Dolores Umbridge's teaching style differ from the others who have taught Defense Against the Dark Arts? Discuss Hermione's comment after Umbridge's banquet speech: "It explained a lot . . . . It means the Ministry's interfering at Hogwarts." (p. 214) Compare Harry's difficulties with Umbridge to his difficulties with Snape, both inside and outside the classroom.

5. Why won't Harry tell his teachers about the dreams and visions he is having? Compare Harry's visions to the fake dreams he and Ron concoct for Divination. Why can't he use his real dreams in class? Why does he hesitate to go to Dumbledore until he sees Arthur Weasley in mortal danger?



6. How does Harry know that Hermione is serious about him teaching a secret club for students who want to learn defensive spells? Who helps him find the space for the club? Who names the D.A.? How does the D.A. help Harry overcome his feeling of isolation from the others? What is the importance of the D.A. for its members?

7. What is the most dangerous aspect of Umbridge's character? What is the effect of her rise to power from professor to High Inquisitor to Headmaster on both students and staff? How does her behavior relate to the warnings of the Sorting Hat at the opening banquet? How do the events at Hogwarts mirror what is going on in the Wizarding world outside the school?

8. What is Harry's greatest fear about the dreams he is having? Why does Dumbledore keep his distance from Harry throughout this book, until the end? What does Snape mean when he says, "Time and space matter in magic, Potter." (p. 531) Why does Dumbledore insist that Snape be the one to teach Harry Occlumency, and why is this skill so difficult for Harry to learn? Compare Snape's lessons in Occlumency to Lupin's lessons for producing a Patronus in *Prisoner of Azkaban*. Why was Harry able to learn from Lupin and not from Snape?

9. What do Harry, Ron, and Hermione learn from their visit to St. Mungo's Hospital? The visit to see Mr. Weasley is a prime example of the way in which Rowling interweaves humor and pathos throughout the series. How does she do it in this scene?

10. Discuss the significance of what Harry learns about his father and Sirius, Lupin, and Pettigrew from Snape's memory in the Pensieve. How does this knowledge affect Harry? What does this tell us about Harry's character? Compare the relationships of James and his

friends in their school days to those of Ron, Hermione, and Harry. How are they similar and how are they different?

11. How do the upcoming O.W.L. exams affect the mood of Harry and the others in their fifth year at Hogwarts? Do the exams truly measure the knowledge they will need in their careers? What is Rowling saying about the value of learning from books and of personal experience? What examples of the importance of each can you find illustrated in the plot?

12. Harry thinks to himself that if he could have chosen any members of the D.A. to accompany him, Ron, and Hermione to the Department of Mysteries, it would not have been Ginny, Neville, and Luna. Why does each of them want to come, and what does each of them have to contribute to the journey and the battle that takes place there?

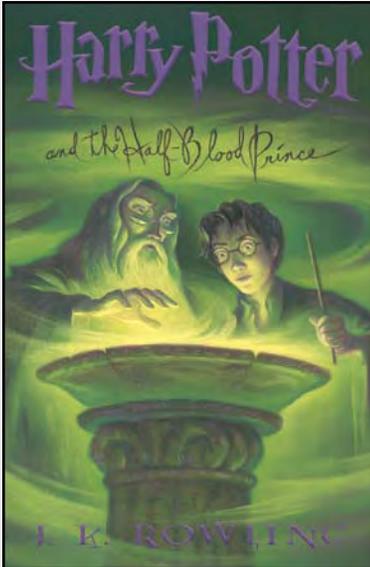
13. What does Lucius Malfoy mean when he says of Harry, "He has a great weakness for heroics; the Dark Lord understands this about him." (p. 782) Why does Harry's Cruciatu Curse not work on Bellatrix, even though he feels such hatred after seeing her kill Sirius? How does he survive when Voldemort tries to possess him in the atrium of the Ministry of Magic?

14. Anger has been a strong emotion for Harry throughout most of this volume. How has his anger served him, and how has it hampered him? Why does Dumbledore allow Harry to rage against him in his office after the battle at the Ministry is over? Discuss Dumbledore's comment, "In the end, it mattered not that you could not close your mind. It was your heart that saved you." (p. 844) How does Harry feel after learning the parts of his story that Dumbledore has held back from him until now?

15. When Harry first visits the Ministry in chapter seven, he notices the Fountain of Magical Brethren, a group of statues that includes a centaur, a house-elf, and a goblin looking up to a witch and a wizard. After the battle Dumbledore tells Harry, "The fountain we destroyed tonight told a lie. We wizards have mistreated and abused our fellows for too long, and we are now reaping our reward." (p. 834) Discuss the theme of prejudice throughout the first five books and how the abuse of others has harmed the wizards.



YEAR 6  
**HARRY POTTER**  
AND THE HALF-BLOOD PRINCE



Dumbledore takes a more active role in Harry's education, personally retrieving him from the Dursleys' home and taking him along to recruit a new teacher for Hogwarts, Professor Slughorn. In Slughorn's Potions class, Harry acquires a second-hand textbook once owned by someone who called himself the Half-Blood Prince, and he uses the notes in the book to his own advantage. Meanwhile, Harry is convinced that Draco Malfoy has become a Death Eater with a secret mission, which he is determined to uncover. But Dumbledore gives Harry a more important task: to retrieve a memory from Slughorn that will illuminate a mystery about Voldemort's past.

Voldemort's return to power has brought about murder and mayhem throughout the country. Dumbledore tries to provide Harry with knowledge he will need to ultimately defeat Voldemort, including glimpses into the past through the Pensieve and the awareness of the possible creation of Horcruxes that Voldemort used to contain pieces of his tattered soul. The story acquires a serious tone; it is now clear that only Harry can rid the world of this villain, as a long-ago prophecy stated: "Neither can live while the other survives."

### **Discussion Questions for *Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince***

1. What is the connection between the Ministry of Magic and the Prime Minister's office in London? Under what circumstances does the Minister of Magic visit the Prime Minister, and why will those visits never be disclosed?
2. Why does Narcissa Malfoy insist that Snape make an Unbreakable Vow to protect Draco? Describe the differences between Narcissa and her sister Bellatrix. Why does Narcissa feel it is necessary for Snape to make the Vow?
3. Why does Dumbledore take Harry with him to convince Slughorn to return to Hogwarts? What is Slughorn's weakness that Dumbledore hopes to exploit, and how does Harry's presence help recruit him? Why does Dumbledore feel it necessary to warn Harry about Slughorn's habit of "collecting" favored students?
4. Why doesn't anyone else share Harry's concern that Draco Malfoy has become a Death Eater? Review the enmity between Harry and Draco that has persisted since their first year at Hogwarts. Why does Harry risk sneaking into Draco's compartment on the train, and is Draco's attack on him more vicious than other attacks in the past?
5. Discuss Harry's assessment of Snape's first Defense Against the Dark Arts class: "It was surely one thing to respect the Dark Arts as a dangerous enemy, another to speak of them, as Snape was doing, with a loving caress in his voice?" (p. 178) Is this an indication of Snape's true feeling, or is it Harry's past perception of Snape that gives him this feeling? Discuss Lupin's comment to Harry that he has inherited an old prejudice against Snape from both James and Sirius. (p. 333)

6. Slughorn introduces students to four potions that play an important role in the story, particularly in this volume: Veritaserum, Polyjuice Potion, Amortentia, and Felix Felicis. Discuss how the name of each describes its properties and how each of these potions (or the knowledge of them) affects the plot in this book. What is Slughorn's answer to why more people don't use Felix Felicis? Discuss his warning about Amortentia, that it produces not love, but obsession.



7. Dumbledore's private lessons with Harry consist mainly of learning about Tom Riddle's history and background. Why is it important for Harry to have this information, even though much of it is conjecture? Compare the story of eleven-year-old Tom Riddle learning that he will attend Hogwarts to Harry's similar experience in *Sorcerer's Stone*. Compare Riddle's experience living in the orphanage to Harry's living with the Dursleys. Why was it easy for Harry to make friends at school, while as Dumbledore tells him "Lord Voldemort has never had a friend, nor do I believe that he has ever wanted one"? (p. 277)

8. Discuss the theme of jealousy that surfaces in this volume as the Hogwarts students become more aware of their emerging feelings. Why does Ron get involved with Lavender? Why does Harry hold back his growing feelings for Ginny? How do Slughorn's private parties for students lead to further feelings of exclusion? How does Harry feel about being more "fanciable" as "The Chosen One" this year, as opposed to his dubious reputation in *Order of the Phoenix*?

9. Harry's borrowed copy of *Advanced Potion-Making* gives him an advantage in the Potions class, but also access to some nasty and dangerous spells. Should he be using this book? Why is Hermione so opposed to him following the notations in the book? Who did you suspect was the "Half-Blood Prince"?

10. Why does Scrimgeour try to get Harry to act as if he is working with the Ministry during Christmastime? Why is Harry unwilling to do that? Why does Dumbledore also refuse to cooperate with the Ministry, instead pursuing his theories about Voldemort on his own?

11. Why does it take Dumbledore so long to tell Harry where he is going when he leaves Hogwarts? Discuss Harry's anger at the Headmaster for not taking his concerns about Malfoy seriously, and Dumbledore's comment: "Ah, Harry, how often this happens, even between the best of friends! Each of us believes that what he has to say is much more important than anything the other might have to contribute!" (p. 359)

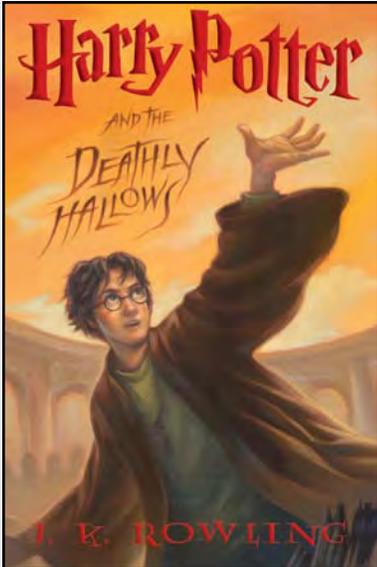
12. How does Harry retrieve the important memory from Slughorn? Did he really need Felix Felicis to get it? Discuss the concept of Horcruxes and how Tom Riddle coaxed the information from Slughorn. What effect has the creation of so many Horcruxes had on Voldemort?

13. What does Dumbledore mean when he tells Harry "Voldemort himself created his worst enemy, just as tyrants everywhere do!" (p. 510) Which tyrants throughout history might this statement describe? How would they compare to Voldemort? Why does Dumbledore believe that the ability to love is the "only protection that can possibly work against the lure of power like Voldemort's"? (p. 511) Why does he refer back to the Mirror of Erised in *Sorcerer's Stone* when he explains this to Harry?

14. At what points in this volume could Harry have used the Felix Felicis potion for his own benefit? Discuss the times he does use it, or pretends to use it. What do these instances tell us about Harry's personality, and his growth in maturity, during this year at Hogwarts?

15. Why does Dumbledore immobilize Harry on the Astronomy Tower? Would Draco have used the Killing Curse on Dumbledore if Snape had not arrived? Why does Draco hesitate to finish the job? Describe the effects on Harry of each of the deaths at the ends of books four, five, and six. How does each affect his resolve to be the one to finish Voldemort?

YEAR 7  
**HARRY POTTER**  
AND THE DEATHLY HALLOWS



Harry leaves the Dursley home for the last time to begin his quest to vanquish Lord Voldemort. Devastated by the death of his mentor, and also angry at the limited information left to him by Dumbledore, he embarks with Ron and Hermione on a long, tortuous journey to find the last of his enemy's Horcruxes so that Voldemort can be killed. The worlds of both wizards and Muggles are subjected to a reign of terror as Voldemort and his Death Eaters gain control of the Ministry and of Hogwarts, and Harry and his friends are constantly on the move to avoid detection.

Along the way, they become aware of an ancient legend that may have a bearing on Harry's ability to defeat Voldemort – the story of three brothers who tried to thwart Death with three objects known as the Deathly Hallows. This is an idea that Harry finds irresistible for a while. But the death of Dobby, the house-elf who rescues them from a desperate situation, helps Harry focus again on the quest to destroy the Horcruxes, and eventually there is only one place left to go – back to Hogwarts. When Harry makes his last and best gesture to bravely surrender himself to Voldemort in order to end the battle of Hogwarts, everything he has worked for reaches a shining climax, allowing goodness to triumph at last.

### **Discussion Questions for *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows***

1. In the first chapter, Voldemort says, "That Potter lives is due more to my errors than to his triumphs." (p. 6) Is this true? What character traits and skills does Harry possess that Voldemort cannot understand or accept?
2. What is Harry's immediate reaction to the article in which he reads about Rita Skeeter's book on Dumbledore? How does this news – and his later readings of parts of the book – affect his feelings for Dumbledore? Why did Dumbledore not share this part of his past with Harry?
3. When Harry leaves the Dursley home with the decoy look-alikes, how do the Death Eaters know which one is the real Harry? What does Lupin mean when he says that Expelliarmus is Harry's "signature" move? What does this tell us about Harry?
4. What are the reactions of Harry, Ron, and Hermione to each of their bequests from Dumbledore's will? Why do these objects turn out to be the perfect gifts for each of them? Why is it important that Bill and Fleur's wedding take place before they leave on their quest? Why is Harry so disturbed to learn at the wedding that Dumbledore's family lived in Godric's Hollow?
5. What causes the change in Kreacher when Harry, Ron, and Hermione return to Grimmauld Place? Why does this location make the perfect hideout for them to start their search? What causes the argument between Harry and Lupin? Why does Harry refuse Lupin's help? Why is he so adamant about searching for the Horcruxes himself, without help from the members of the Order of the Phoenix?

6. Compare Dolores Umbridge's role at Hogwarts in *Order of the Phoenix* to her role at the Ministry in *Deathly Hallows*. How have the Death Eaters gained control of the Ministry, and how do they maintain that control? Compare the takeover of the Ministry to tyrannical regimes that you have studied.
7. Why does Slytherin's locket affect the mood of whoever is wearing it? Did the locket affect Umbridge the same way? Is it the locket that causes Ron to desert Harry and Hermione? Would they have quarreled without its influence? Why is it fitting that Ron be the one to destroy the locket, and why is it so difficult for him to do so? Compare Ron's experience of being taunted by the images from the locket to the way in which Tom Riddle's diary possessed Ginny in *Chamber of Secrets*.



8. Discuss the grave inscriptions that Harry and Hermione see in Godric's Hollow: on Kendra and Ariana's grave, "Where your treasure is, there will your heart be also," (p. 325) and on James and Lily's grave, "The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death." (p. 328) What do these inscriptions mean to Harry? What do they mean to you?
9. What is the importance of "The Tale of the Three Brothers"? Why does Xenophilius Lovegood wear the symbol of the Deathly Hallows, and why do so few wizards know the name for the three objects in the tale? When Harry, Ron, and Hermione discuss which is the most important Hallow, they each choose a different one. What does this tell us about them and about the tale?
10. Why does Harry become obsessed with the idea of the Deathly Hallows and especially the Elder Wand? Is it because he knows that Voldemort is searching for the wand? What does Grindelwald mean when he says to Voldemort, ". . . my death will not bring you what you seek . . . There is so much you do not understand." (p. 469) What does Ollivander add to Harry's knowledge of the Elder Wand?

11. Why does Wormtail's silver hand cause his own death when Harry reminds him that he spared his life? Compare Wormtail's death to Dobby's sacrifice while saving Harry and his friends from Malfoy Manor. Why does Harry insist on digging Dobby's grave himself, without using magic? How does Dobby's death affect Harry?
12. What does Griphook mean when he tells Harry he is a strange wizard? How does Harry's friendship with Dobby, and his rescue of Griphook, contribute to his eventual triumph over Voldemort and the Death Eaters? What other experiences in Harry's life have helped him to have an open mind and heart?
13. When Harry reaches Hogwarts, he isn't planning to involve the other students who gather to welcome him back until Hermione tells him, "You don't have to do everything alone." (p. 583) Compare Harry's response to the approaches of Tom Riddle, who confided in no one and operated alone, and Albus Dumbledore, whose brother Aberforth called him a "natural" at secrets.
14. What is the most important thing that Harry learns from the memories that Snape gives him? Why is it important for the dying Snape to share these with Harry? When Dumbledore appears to Harry he asks, "Was I better, ultimately, than Voldemort?" (p. 713) Compare the motives of Dumbledore, Voldemort, and Snape in their early lives and later. What experiences and beliefs shaped each of them?
15. How does Harry survive Voldemort's attack? Why does he decide to lose the Resurrection Stone in the forest and place the Elder Wand back in Dumbledore's grave? What insights has Harry gained during his quest to destroy Voldemort that make him a true hero?



## Talking About the Books

1. Discuss the idea that appears throughout the series of the power of a name. Dumbledore teaches Harry that fear of a name increases fear of the thing itself. Why are so many wizards afraid to say the name Voldemort, and why does Harry insist on using it? When Dumbledore faces Voldemort at the end of *Order of the Phoenix*, and when Harry faces him in the final battle in *Deathly Hallows*, why do they both call him by his given name, Tom Riddle?
2. Describe the growth and maturation of major characters throughout their seven years at Hogwarts. Who do you think changes the most? What experiences and insights contribute to their growth? Which characters – students and/or adults – remind you of people you have known in your own life?
3. Comparing the six Defense Against the Dark Arts teachers Harry encounters, which one do you think was most effective and why? Which classes at Hogwarts prepare the students with skills for their future lives? In *Order of the Phoenix*, Dolores Umbridge tells her class: “I am here to teach you using a Ministry-approved method that does not include inviting students to give their opinions on matters about which they understand very little.” (p. 317) Discuss this point of view in relation to teaching methods of the other professors at Hogwarts and those that you have experienced in your own schooling.
4. Author Philip Pullman, in his 1996 Carnegie Medal acceptance speech, said: “There are some themes, some subjects, too large for adult fiction; they can only be dealt with adequately in a children’s book.” ([randomhouse.com/features/pullman/author/carnegie.php](http://randomhouse.com/features/pullman/author/carnegie.php)) Discuss this quote in relation to the Harry Potter series. What do you identify as its major themes, and why are they best illuminated in a coming-of-age saga?
5. Susan Cooper, author of *The Dark Is Rising* sequence, has written: “Fantasy goes one stage beyond realism; requiring complete intellectual surrender, it asks more of the reader, and at its best may offer more . . . Fantasy is the metaphor through which we discover ourselves.” (Susan Cooper, *Dreams and Wishes: Essays on Writing for Children*, McElderry Books, 1996, pp. 44–45) How does the fantasy element of the Harry Potter series help readers discover more about themselves and others? What insights have you gained from reading these volumes?
6. In Harry Potter’s world, the magic community exists alongside our “real” world and provides a contrast to the institutions that are familiar to us: educational, governmental, medical, and sporting. Compare the Ministry, Hogwarts, St. Mungo’s, Azkaban, the Triwizard Tournament, and the Quidditch World Cup to similar organizations and events in our own world. How do these parallel existences compare to the similar constructions in other books of fantasy?
7. Dumbledore tells Harry: “That which Voldemort does not value, he takes no trouble to comprehend. Of house-elves and children’s tales, of love, loyalty, and innocence, Voldemort knows and understands nothing . . . . That they all have a power beyond his own, a power beyond the reach of any magic, is a truth he has never grasped.” (*Deathly Hallows*, pp. 709–710) Discuss this idea in relation to the truths of your own life. What are the important elements that have shaped your own character?



## Also Available from J. K. Rowling

*Quidditch Through the Ages*, *Fantastic Beasts and Where to Find Them*, and *The Tales of Beedle the Bard*.

Discussion guide prepared  
by Connie Rockman, Youth  
Literature Consultant, and editor  
of the 8<sup>th</sup>, 9<sup>th</sup>, and 10<sup>th</sup> Books of  
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