

DISCUSSION GUIDE

Presented by the

Harry Potter

READING CLUB

YEAR 4 HARRY POTTER AND THE GOBLET OF FIRE



Introduction to the Harry Potter Books

In 1997 Joanne Rowling, a single parent living in Edinburgh, Scotland, published her first book. It was the fulfillment of a dream she'd had since she was a child. 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.

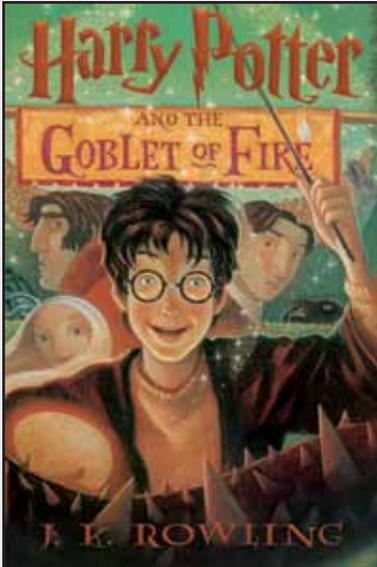
Rowling had planned, from the beginning, to tell the story in a series of seven books. The initial success of the first title (published in England as *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone* and in America as *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone*)

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, sports, 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 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 chilling 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 so 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 determines 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



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 has changed 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.” (<http://www.randomhouse.com/features/pullman/author/carnegie.php>) Discuss this quote in relation to the Harry Potter series. What do you identify as the major themes, that you can identify, 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 Tri-Wizard 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*, p. 709) 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
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