

DISCUSSION GUIDE

Presented by the

Harry Potter

READING CLUB

YEAR 5 HARRY POTTER AND THE ORDER OF THE PHOENIX



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.

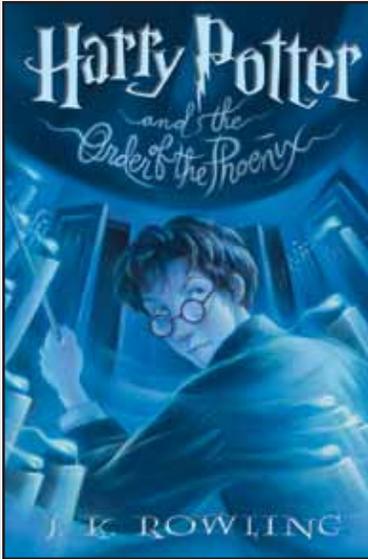
Rowling had planned, from the beginning, to tell the story in a series of seven books. The initial success of the first title (published in England as *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone* and in America as *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone*)

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 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 which 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? 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 relationship of James and his

friends in their school days to that 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 them 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.



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
by Connie Rockman, Youth
Literature Consultant, and editor
of the 8th, 9th, and 10th Books of
Junior Authors and Illustrators.



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