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Chapter-by-Chapter Study Guide



Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone

by J. K. Rowling

- Learning objectives
- Study Guide with short-answer questions
- Background information
- Vocabulary in context
- Multiple-choice test
- Essay questions
- Literary terms



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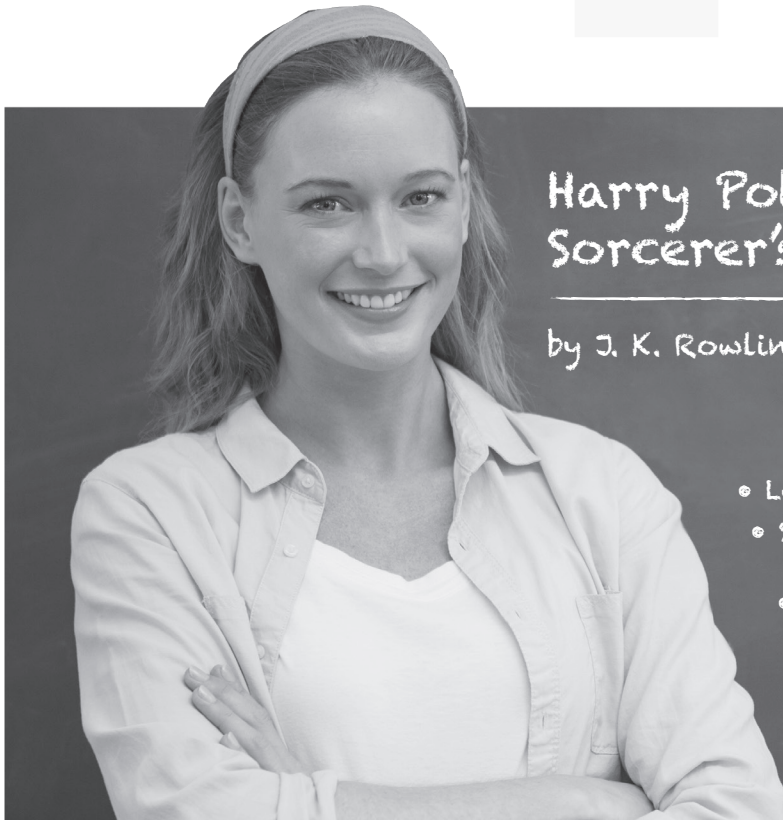
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ISBN: 978-1-58049-434-2

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Item No: 300452

Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone

Objectives

By the end of this Unit, the student will be able to:

1. define allusion, simile, dialect, pun, protagonist, antagonist, archetype, foreshadowing, irony, theme, foil, and tone, and find examples of each in *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone*.
2. define the vocabulary words listed in the study guide.
3. discuss Rowling's extensive use of wordplay and what it adds to the novel.
4. write character sketches of Harry, Hermione, Ron, Snape, Hagrid, and McGonagall.
5. discuss the importance of teamwork over individual heroism as it applies to *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone*.
6. evaluate Harry as an archetypal hero and compare him to similar heroes in film and fiction.
7. compare and contrast Muggle and magical society.
8. discuss the novel in relation to the following quote from one of its characters, Professor Quirrell: "There is no good and evil, there is only power, and those too weak to see it."
9. discuss both Draco Malfoy and Dudley Dursley as foils for Harry's character.
10. discuss the crippling or dangerous effect of unchecked desire or longing as it relates to Hagrid, the Mirror of Erised, and Voldemort/Quirrell.

Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone

Questions for Essay and Discussion

1. Harry is almost a teenager before he learns of his destiny and sets off into a world of new adventures and challenges. A long tradition of heroes in literature and film share this circumstance: Theseus and Luke Skywalker, for two. What others can you think of? Why do you think this particular kind of hero—this “archetype”—has appealed to so many generations throughout history?
2. Compare and contrast Muggle and magical society. What social problems and prejudices do they have in common? Is one more fair than the other? Support your answer with details from the book.
3. Aside from the obvious (that he longs for his parents and has no intention of using the Sorcerer's Stone), what do the images Harry sees in the Mirror of Erised tell us about his character? What images might Malfoy or Dudley see? What might Hagrid or Hermione?
4. Discuss the issues of rule-breaking and going against authority as they are presented in the novel. What happens when Harry breaks a rule for a selfish reason (such as sneaking out to meet Malfoy for a wizard's duel in order not to be seen as a coward)? What happens when he breaks a rule for a selfless reason? What seems to be Rowling's overall stance on obeying rules and authority figures?
5. At first glance, Hermione's qualities suggest that she should have been sorted into Ravenclaw. Do you think she displays more Gryffindor-like than Ravenclaw-ish qualities over the course of the novel? Support your answer with details from the text.
6. Professor Quirrell says, “There is no good and evil, there is only power, and those too weak to see it.” Do you think the novel supports or refutes Quirrell's claim? Support your answer with details from the text.
7. Discuss Rowling's frequent use of wordplay in *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone*. How does it help in setting the novel's tone and creating its settings?
8. What purpose do minor characters such as Peeves, Nearly Headless Nick, and the Bloody Baron serve in *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone*? Why do you think Rowling included them?
9. Discuss the ways in which Hogwarts castle itself can be considered a character in the novel. How does it help and hinder its human occupants?
10. While Harry is the hero of the novel, he is not—unlike some heroes—above help. Discuss the value of teamwork as it applies to *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone*, using specific examples from the book.

Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone

Chapter One: The Boy Who Lived

Vocabulary

chortled – laughed heartily
faltered – stammered; hesitated
gingerly – very carefully

1. When describing the Potters, Rowling coins the term “UnDursleyish.” From what you know so far of the Dursleys, how would you define “UnDursleyish”?

2. Mr. Dursley sees a cat reading a map and a street sign. Why does he dismiss this sight as “a trick of the light”?

3. At first, Mr. Dursley assumes that the rash of people wearing strange clothes is due to “some stupid new fashion.” What makes him reconsider?

4. What makes Mr. Dursley stop dead in his tracks on his way back from the bakery?

4. Why do you think Uncle Vernon suddenly decides to give Harry Dudley's second bedroom?

5. Explain the irony—that is, the amusing contradiction—in the below passage:

“Oh, these people's minds work in strange ways, Petunia, they're not like you and me,' said Uncle Vernon, trying to knock in a nail with a piece of fruitcake Aunt Petunia had just brought him.”

6. How does Uncle Vernon finally attempt to make sure that no more letters will find their way to Harry?

7. What happens at the very second that Harry turns eleven?

Chapter Eight: The Potions Master

Vocabulary

cheek – inappropriate boldness; rudeness
ensnaring – trapping; capturing
pelt – to throw with the intention of hitting one's mark

1. Argus Filch is the caretaker of Hogwarts and is always on the lookout for misbehaving students. Like Minerva McGonagall's, Argus Filch's first name is an allusion—this time to Greek mythology. Find out who Argus is named after and comment on why you think Rowling chose this name for the caretaker.

2. Why does Professor Quirrell wear a turban?

3. Which professor is the head of Slytherin house? Which heads up Gryffindor?

4. What is the Sorcerer's Stone capable of?

5. In addition to the rest of the Gryffindor team's concern that Snape will not be a fair referee, what has Harry worried about the upcoming Quidditch game?

6. Who does Harry see Snape having a secret conversation with in the forest?

7. What does the safety of the Sorcerer's Stone seem to depend on now?
