

Exploring the Book

CHAPTERS 1-6

WHAT HAPPENS

Harry Potter arrives at the Dursleys under very peculiar circumstances. Although his aunt and uncle aren't at all happy at having Harry live with them, people all over the country are rejoicing at the "boy who lived." Ten difficult years later, Harry begins to get mysterious letters. Despite Uncle Vernon's efforts to keep the letters from him, Harry finally learns that he has been invited to attend the Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry. He also learns that his parents were renowned wizards who were killed by the evil Voldemort. Accompanied by Hagrid, Harry shops for his schoolbooks and materials, including wizard robes, a wand, and an owl. When Harry finally leaves for school, he meets other new students, including Ron, Hermione, and Neville, on the train.



QUESTIONS TO TALK ABOUT

COMPREHENSION AND RECALL

1. What signs foretell of Harry's arrival at the Dursleys when he's a little boy? (*owls fluttering by in daylight; cat reading map; strangely dressed people acting excited; overheard conversations about Harry; downpour of shooting stars*)



2. Why do his aunt and uncle treat Harry so badly? (*They don't approve of wizards; they think they're abnormal. They favor their own son.*)

3. What are some of the inexplicable things that happen to Harry at the Dursleys? (*His hair grows back the next day after Aunt Petunia cuts it; he is found on the roof of the school when Dudley's gang chases him; he has strange dreams; he frees the snake at the zoo.*)

4. Why does Uncle Vernon take the family to a shack on a rock in the sea? (*He doesn't want Harry's letters to reach them.*)

5. Why does Hagrid get so mad at the Dursleys? (*They haven't given Harry his letters or told him about Hogwarts and his parents.*)

6. How did Harry get a scar on his forehead? (*Voldemort's evil curse touched him there.*)

HIGHER-LEVEL THINKING SKILLS

7. How does Harry feel about Dudley? (*He doesn't like him; Dudley's a bully and very selfish, lazy, and spoiled.*)
8. Why does Uncle Vernon tell Harry he can leave the cupboard under the stairs and sleep in a bedroom? (*He is upset by Harry's letter, which is addressed to him in the cupboard.*)
9. Why don't people want to say Voldemort's name? (*He is so evil; the name recalls dark powers and bad events.*)
10. How does Hagrid feel about Albus Dumbledore? (*He admires him greatly; is very protective of him.*)
11. Why does Harry trust Hagrid even though Hagrid tells him unbelievable things? (*Possible: Hagrid is kind to him.*)
12. Why does Harry find Ron so intriguing? (*He comes from a family of wizards and is familiar with magic.*)

LITERARY ELEMENTS

13. **Character:** What similarities does the author show between Malfoy and Dudley? (*Both are arrogant and can intimidate their parents; both are bullies.*)

PERSONAL RESPONSE

14. How would you feel if you discovered you were a wizard?
15. What do the names of the four Hogwarts houses—Ravenclaw, Hufflepuff, Slytherin, and Gryffindor—suggest to you? Which one would you want to be in? Why?

CROSS-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

ART: *What a Scene*

Invite students to illustrate a favorite scene from the story so far. Students might work in pastels or tempera paint. Encourage students to refer to the text for details of the characters and settings they choose to portray. Have students share their finished illustrations with the class and ask the class to identify the scene.

MUSIC: *Sound Effects*

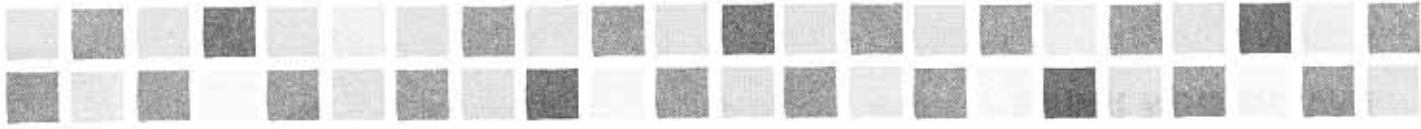
Suggest that students select appropriate music to enhance a scene in the book. For example, they might choose music for an angry scene, a funny scene, or a scary one. Have students explain why they chose the music they did, and, if possible, have them play a tape of the music while they read aloud the scene.

LANGUAGE ARTS: *Words for Wizards*

Point out that part of the fun of the book is that the author uses such clever and funny names. Give the following examples: Leaky Cauldron, Griphook, Flourish and Blotts, Muggles. Ask students what each of these names suggests to them. Why? Talk about why the author might use such names. Then share with the class that the author makes up many names and also collects unusual names. In an interview, she pointed out that Hedwig is the name of a saint and Dumbledore is an Old English word that means "bumblebee."

TEACHER TIP

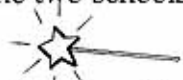
Ask students to look on page 66 at the list of books Harry needs for school. What examples of wordplay can they find?



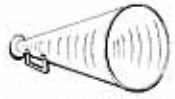
Name: _____

Two Schools of Thought

The Hogwarts School for Witchcraft and Wizardry differs from your school in numerous ways. Fill in the chart to compare the two schools.



Hogwarts



My School

Textbook Titles		
Subjects		
Sports		
Special Events		