WOLFNOTE SUMMARY OF...

J.K. Rowling

HARRY POTTER AND THE SORCERER’S STONE

CONTEXT
Lord Voldemort, an evil wizard, needs to kill the child of Mr. and Mrs. Potter, for he is special. Harry’s parents die trying to protect him, but Voldemort is unable to kill the baby, and loses his power.
The wizard community takes the orphaned Harry to live with his Uncle and Aunt Dursley. For the next eleven years, Harry endures a horrid childhood at the hands of his Aunt and Uncle, and also being bullied by their son, Dudley.
At the age of eleven, he receives an invitation to attend Hogwarts School of Wizardry and Witchcraft. Although he has not been brought up in a wizard family, he soon finds he has a natural ability for riding a broomstick and he immediately gets a position in his house Quidditch team. He soon becomes a firm favorite of his contemporaries and he lives up to the fame that preceded him.
The Headmaster of Hogwarts, Albus Dumbledore, possesses the Sorcerer’s Stone, which provides the Elixir of Life and turns metal into gold. The stone is protected by several spells and a giant 3-headed dog, but Voldemort has regained some of his power and is determined to steal the stone. He possesses one of the teacher’s bodies in order to achieve this aim.
Harry and some of his fellow first year students discover this plot, but are unable to convince any of the adults to assist. They must face up to Voldemort themselves. Their plan is to capture the stone before he does, so they have to face the perils of the 3-headed dog and the enchantments that surround the stone.
Harry, after losing his friends on the way eventually arrives at the stone’s hiding place, only to be confronted alone by Voldemort. He successfully defeats Voldemort and the future of the stone remains with the forces of good who decide to destroy it.
Voldemort is not destroyed, however, and he may return.

THE AUTHOR
Joanne Kathleen Rowling, born in 1965 in Bristol, England, showed a talent for writing from a very early age. Her first effort was a book called ‘Rabbit’ written when she was just six years old and in her first year at school.
However, it would be through a string of personal events that her sometimes-dormant pen would be regenerated and motivated to produce the Harry Potter series.
Now in her mid thirties, Rowling can look back with pride and satisfaction in respect of her comparative lightning rise to fame.
She obtained her love for writing whilst at Exeter University from where she graduated and became a teacher working in the South-west of England.
The seeds for Harry Potter were sown in the late 1980’s. These were cultivated whilst on a teaching exchange to Baltimore, U.S.A., and finally formatted on her return to England around 1990.
In the early 1990’s she met a Portuguese journalist Jorge Arantes and they had a whirlwind romance, but their marriage only lasted a few months, and in 1993 the pregnant Rowling returned to Great Britain and finally settled in Edinburgh, Scotland. She found herself almost destitute and this was the catalyst to drive her writing.
Harry Potter and a grant from the Scottish Arts Council enabled the first book ‘The Sorcerer’s Stone’ to be finished. It was written on pieces of paper in an Edinburgh café, and the final product won the British Book Awards’ ‘Children’s Book of the Year’ and rave reviews both in Europe and in the U.S.A.
It was inevitable that Harry Potter would hit the silver screen, and this transition has been far more successful than anyone would have thought possible. The 2001 film has been promoted by Warner Bros., produced by David Hayman, and directed by Chris Columbus, and uses a star-studded cast, many of the actors coming from Britain. Rowling has been closely involved with the production of this film.
Her literary prowess has been rewarded in the form of an O.B.E. (Order of the British Empire) from Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth. Despite her fame, Joanne remains modest and is uncomfortable with the public adulation she has received through her books.

CHARACTERS
HARRY POTTER
He is a skinny, bespectacled 11-year old boy who wears his cousin’s cast-off clothes. Voldemort, a wizard who had turned to the dark side, killed Harry’s parents when he was just a baby. Harry is special, and Voldemort was unable to kill him at that time. However, Harry was left with an unusual lightning-bolt shaped scar on his forehead.
He was brought up by his aunt and uncle and was treated dreadfully by them, being forced to live in a cupboard under the stair. Vernon and Petunia Dursley had their own spoilt son, Dudley, who bullied Harry. Harry spent a lonely childhood, but on his 11th birthday, he learned his true identity and was to attend Hogwarts School of Witchcraft, Harry was a wizard.

THE DURSELYS
Uncle Vernon, Aunt Petunia and their son Dudley represent a very dull and normal family who try to ignore Harry’s roots and lie to him about how he was orphaned. While Vernon and Petunia shower their son with all sorts of gifts and privileges, they treat Harry badly, deliberately discriminating against him. Dudley and his gang bully Harry at school. They try to ignore Harry’s gifts, but these are brought to the fore by Hagrid who is charged with ensuring that Harry attends Hogwarts School. Despite this abuse, Harry appears to have some force protecting him.

HAGRID
The grounds man of Hogwarts School, he is Headmaster Dumbledore’s trusted servant. He never finished his time at Hogwarts as he was expelled, and he does on occasion flout the rules. He can be described as a giant, twice as tall as a man and five times as wide. His face is almost completely covered by long shaggy hair and a tangled beard. His official title is Keeper of the Keys and Grounds and Hogwarts. Instead of using a broomstick to fly around, he uses a motorbike. Despite his ominous appearance, he has a heart of gold and immediately feels responsible for Harry’s welfare.

ALBUS DUMBLEDORE
Aged over 150, he is the Headmaster of Hogwarts School, is greatly respected by those around him, and is considered to be the best wizard alive. His power is such that he is able to stand against the dark side and oppose Lord Voldemort.

PROFESSOR MINERVA McGONAGALL
Deputy Head of Hogwarts School, she teaches transfiguration, and is the Head of Harry’s house Gryffindor. She is a strict disciplinarian, and although she is firm she is also fair.

PROFESSOR SEVERUS SNAPE
Professor Snape is the Potions Master at Hogwarts, and shows a distinct dislike for Harry and to a certain extent victimizes him during his first year at Hogwarts. He is the Head of Slytherin house and delights in intimidating the boys and girls in his classes. He tends to favor those who belong to his house.

PROFESSOR QUIRRELL
He teaches Defense against the Dark Arts. He has a pronounced stutter and wears a curious turban. His nervous disposition is attributed to his encounter with vampires in the Black Forest from which he never fully recovered. It is suggested that the strange odor that surrounds him comes from the garlic concealed within his turban.

HERMIONE GRANGER
Like Harry, Hermione comes from a muggle family. She has obtained her knowledge of wizardry through extensive reading. She assists Harry during his first encounter with Hogwarts School. She can be regarded as a swot and she tends to boss Harry and her other contemporaries around. She becomes one of Harry’s valued friends and her knowledge of magic assists him greatly.
RON WEASLEY
He too is a first year student and is the youngest of a long line of Weasleys who have attended, or still
attend Hogwarts School. His main aim is to surpass his older brothers’ reputation and to some extent this is
achieved through his association with Harry. Like Hermione, he also has abilities that assist our hero’s
quest.

NEVILLE
Another first year at Hogwarts, he was a late developer in showing his mystical character. He was brought
up by his grandmother who was a witch. He has an unfortunate accident during his first encounter with a
broomstick. He is rather accident prone. He is loyal to Harry, but his desire to ensure that Harry remains
within the school rules is an occasional hindrance.

DRACO MALFOY, CRABBE AND GOYLE
These three boys all belong to the rival house of Slytherin, and they represent a bullying element of the
school. They try in vain to get Harry into trouble, but until Harry gains in confidence, they remain a threat
to him.

FILCH & HIS CAT MRS. NORRIS
Filch is the school caretaker, but he is more concerned with catching pupils who break the school rules, and
his cat aids him in this task.

GLOSSARY

BROOMSTICK – used by witches and wizards as a means of transport. Like motor cars, the type of
broomstick is a status symbol. Harry is given a Nimbus 2000 with a mahogany handle.

CHOCOLATE FROGS – these sweets contains cards of famous witches and wizards and through these, Harry
finds out about Albus Dumbledore on the train, and later Nicolas Flamel.

CUPBOARD – where Harry lives as a child

DIAGON ALLEY – a secret street in London where you can buy all the necessary equipment in order to be a
pupil at Hogwarts School.

ERISED MIRROR – with the inscription “I show not your face, but your heart’s desire”.

FANG – Hagrid’s faithful hound

FLUFFY – the 3-headed dog guarding the trapdoor

FORBIDDEN FOREST – here Harry is rescued by Firenze

FIRENZE – a centaur (half-man, half-horse)

GRYFFINDOR – Harry’s school house allocated to him by the Sorting Hat. The other houses are Hufflepuff,
Ravenclaw and Slytherin.

HEDWIG – Harry’s snowy owl

INVISIBILITY CLOAK – left to Harry by his father. It becomes a priceless tool in his fight against evil.

KNUT – the lowest denomination of coins used by witches and wizards. 29 knuts = 1 silver sickle, and 17
sickles = 1 gold galleon

MUGGLES – a term used for people who don’t have a single spark of magic in them
NEWSPAPER – the newspaper used by wizards is The Daily Prophet. Harry reads from this paper details concerning the attempted robbery at Gringotts, the Bank of the world of witches and wizards.

OWLS – they replace postmen in the world of witches and wizards, but they do require payment for some of their services.

PLATFORM 9 ¾  - is where you alight the Hogwarts Express in King’s Cross Station in order to travel to Hogwarts School.

QUIDDITCH – is the favorite sport of the wizard world. Teams of seven plays with four balls and three rings, 50 ft. above the ground. Only those most proficient at flying their broomsticks gain entry to the Quidditch teams.

SORTING HAT – all first year students at Hogwarts School have to wear this hat, which analyses their character and determines what house they will be allocated to.

SEEKER – Harry becomes the youngest seeker in the history of Hogwarts. His job is to seek and catch the Golden Snitch, a winged ball, which if successfully carried out, will win the game for the house.

TROLLS – normally trolls come in at a height of 12 ft., but they are very stupid and are no match for a young wizard, especially when he has his wand up the troll’s nose.

UNIFORMS – The list Harry received from Professor McGonagall detailed Harry’s uniform, which comprised 3 sets of plain work robes – black; 1 plain pointed hat – black; 1 pair of protective gloves – dragon hide; 1 winter cloak.

UNICORN – sacred, pure animals that live in the Forbidden Forest. Their tail hairs are used as one of the main ingredients for magic wands.

WANDS – Mr. Ollivander, the wand-maker tells Harry that the wand picks the wizard, not vice versa. Eventually the wand that Harry buys is the brother of the wand that inflicted the scar on his forehead. Ollivander predicts that Harry is destined for great things.
CHAPTER 1 – The Boy Who Lived

Summary

At number 4 Privet Drive lived the very normal Mr. and Mrs. Dursley. Mr. Dursley is a Director of a firm called Grunnings who make drills. The Dursleys have a small son called Dudley, “probably one of the finest boys anywhere”. The Dursleys were happy for they considered they had everything they could ever want. The only blot in their world was the fact that they were related to the Potters, Mrs. Potter being Mrs. Dursley’s sister. The Potters had a small son too, but the Dursleys had never seen him.

“Mr. Dursley hummed as he picked out his most boring tie for work and Mrs. Dursley gossiped away happily as she wrestled a screaming Dudley into his high chair …… a large tawny owl fluttered past the window.” The Dursleys did not know that this was not going to be a normal day. The first sign was a tabby cat standing on the corner of Privet Drive reading a map. Mr. Dursley put this down to a trick of the light and got back to thinking about drills on his way to work. On his way, he noticed people dressed in cloaks, but put this down to a new fashion trend.

In his office, he had his back to the window so didn’t notice owl after owl flying overhead. At lunch time, he went to the bakers and happened to hear some of these cloaked people talking about the Potters, but again Mr. Dursley eventually dismissed this, as Potter was quite a common name. However, there was a slight seed of doubt in Mr. Dursley’s mind.

On his way home, he stumbled into a small man in a violet cloak and apologized profusely. The small cloaked man responded, “Rejoice, for You-Know-Who has gone at last! Even muggles like you should be celebrating.” Dursley looked puzzled. He had never been called a muggle before. He returned home and the tabby cat was now sat on the wall of his garden.

Unlike Mr. Dursley, Mrs. Dursley had had a nice normal day. Mr. Dursley watched the news where it was revealed that owls had been seen all over the country and there had been a downpour of shooting stars. Dursley put together the owls, shooting stars and mysterious people in cloaks and their whisperings about Potters, and decided to ask his wife Petunia if she had heard from her sister. Petunia was horrified, so Dursley dropped the subject.

In bed, Petunia fell asleep quickly, but Dursley was troubled. Outside, the cat still sat on the wall.

At the end of Privet Drive, a cloaked man appeared. His name was Albus Dumbledore. Using a Put-outer he extinguished all the streetlights and approached the cat. The cat turned into a woman called Professor McGonagall. The two agree that the celebrations have got out of hand and that even the muggles have noticed that something strange is going on.

The shooting stars were blamed on Dedalus Diggle down in Kent. Apparently, You-Know-Who whose real name is Voldemort had killed Lily and James Potter as he had killed many before, but he could not kill their young child, Harry, and his power was broken and he was gone. This is astonishing news, and they are not clear how Harry had survived.

Harry is to be brought here to be looked after by the Dursleys, his only other relatives. Harry Potter is in the care of Hagrid who drops out of the sky on a huge motorbike. Hagrid was “almost twice as tall as a normal man and at least five times as wide …… so wild – long tangles of bushy black hair and beard hid most of his face.”

Dumbledore took Harry from Hagrid and placed him on the doorstep with a letter. Harry Potter lay rolled up in his blankets, not knowing that he was special, and that he would be famous. He would be wakened by Mrs. Dursley’s screams in the morning.

Interpretation

This Chapter is a progression from the normal world to a fantasy land of strange beings. We have cats who turn into people, giants who ride motorbikes in the sky, and strange people in cloaks with unusual voices.

At first, Dursley tries to hold onto his normal life by explaining away the strange happenings he witnesses. The turning point for him is portrayed on the T.V. screen and the fact that his dreaded relatives, the Potters who have always been peculiar, are involved in these happenings.

Rowling arouses the curiosity of all those with imagination and she quickly introduces strange elements that will keep the reader entertained and wondering what will happen next. She provides enough to spark the imagination and the reader can work as hard or as easy as he likes, being drawn along on a sea of make-believe.
CHAPTER 2 – The Vanishing Glass

Summary
Ten years further on, and Privet Drive remains largely unaltered. Harry Potter sleeps in a small room under the stair and his Aunt Petunia in her shrill voice is trying to get him to wake. Harry is reluctant to return to the real world as he was having a wonderful dream about a flying motorbike.

Aunt Petunia wants Harry to help with cooking breakfast. It is a special day as it is Dudley’s birthday. Harry shakes the spiders off his socks. He is used to them in his little cupboard. Harry makes his way to the kitchen where the table is covered in Dudley’s birthday presents. Dudley is a bully and an overweight child, and Harry can’t think what use he will make of a racing bike, which is one of his presents.

In contrast, Harry is small and skinny for his age, and he wears a pair of round glasses, “held together with a lot of tape because of all the times Dudley had punched him on the nose”. It doesn’t help Harry’s appearance that he wears Dudley’s old baggy clothes. Harry still sports the thin scar on his forehead shaped like a bolt of lightning, the result of his encounter with Voldemort.

Harry was frying the eggs when Dudley eventually arrived in the kitchen. To his parents he looked like an angel, but to Harry he “looked like a pig in a wig”. Dudley is slightly upset that he has one present less than last year – 37.

Every year on Dudley’s birthday, he is taken out to visit theme parks or zoos, and Harry is left in the care of a neighbor Mrs. Figg, whose house smells of cabbage and is full of photographs of cats she owned. However, this year Harry will have to go with Dudley and his friend because Mrs. Figg has a broken leg.

Harry doesn’t particularly want to go and suggests that they leave him at home, but the Dursleys don’t wish to leave Harry on his own because strange things seem to happen when he is around, and they don’t want to come home to a wrecked house. The Dursleys like a life that is normal, and the fact that when Harry gets his hair cut it grows back to its original length the next day, is a matter of concern for them.

Dudley and his friend Piers bully Harry in the back of the car as they make their way to the zoo. The Dursleys warn Harry to behave himself, for they don’t want anything unusual to happen on this special day. In the reptile house, Dudley and Piers stare at a boa constrictor that lies motionless staring out of the glass. The two bang the glass and make faces at the snake, but it does not respond. The pair soon become bored and move on to the next exhibit. Harry looks at the snake and slowly it comes to ‘life’, raises its head level with Harry’s, and winks. Suddenly Harry is able to communicate with the snake and asks it where it is from. The snake uses his tale and points to the sign next to the glass, “Boa Constrictor, Brazil”. The snake tells Harry he doesn’t know what Brazil is like as it was bred in the zoo. Dudley notices that the snake has come alive and pushes Harry to the floor so he can have a closer look at the snake, but the glass has disappeared and the huge boa constrictor uncoils itself out onto the floor. People scream and run for the exits. As the snake passes Harry, it says, “Brazil, here I come. Thankss, amigo.”

The Dursleys blame Harry for the incident and when they arrive home, he is sent to his cupboard with nothing to eat. Some time later, Harry wishes he had a watch to see if it was safe to emerge for some food. Harry has spent 10 miserable years in the Dursley household. He has been told that his parents died in a car crash, but he doubts this. He has a distant memory of a “blinding flash of green light and a burning pain on his forehead”.

Harry has always felt himself to be different. He is now used to complete strangers acknowledging him in the street. Usually they are dressed strangely with cloaks or odd hats. The strange thing about these people is that they seem to vanish whenever Harry tries to get a closer look at them. He also remembers a time at school when he was being bullied by Dudley’s gang and suddenly he found himself on top of the school building, much to the dismay of the Head Teacher.

Interpretation
Rowling continues an interesting blend of mystery and humour in this Chapter.

There are various examples of this humour, in particular the description of Mrs. Figg and her cat photographs. Although Harry is sorry to hear of her broken leg, he then remembers, “it would be a whole year before he had to look at Tibbles, Snowy, Mr. Paws and Tufty again”. Another example is the scene with the snake, and the panic and disarray caused to the Dursleys’ family and friend.

However, there is also an ominous element in this Chapter concerning the cruel treatment of Harry by his Aunt and Uncle and their son, the obnoxious Dudley.

There is also reference to bullying at school, and the suggestion that Dudley’s gang terrorized other children as well as Harry. You would think that Dudley would have some loyalty to his cousin, but clearly the example set by his parents leads him to think that he can contribute to the cruelty meted out to Harry. It doesn’t help Harry’s case that he has to wear Dudley’s cast-off clothes and the fact that he is slight in stature and wears taped-up glasses.
There is reference to Harry’s connection with the mystical world covered in the first Chapter. He dreams about flying motorbikes and he remembers the blinding flash of green light aimed at him by Voldemort. We also have the impression that Harry is being watched over, and is easily recognised by members of this secret society.

It is also becoming obvious to the reader that Harry has strange powers, but he clearly does not fully appreciate these. He can climb buildings, talk to animals, and there is some force that protects him from experiencing things that he dislikes. This is illustrated when Aunt Petunia tries to fit a particularly unattractive item of clothing over Harry's head and it just seems to get smaller and smaller. His hair also grows back overnight, after being cut.

CHAPTER 3 – The Letters from No One

Summary
Harry had to endure a long period of punishment after the snake incident at the zoo. By the time he was allowed out of the cupboard again, the school summer holidays had started.

Dudley was up to his usual antics of breaking his expensive birthday presents and getting full use out of his racing bike, knocking down Mrs. Figg in the process.

Harry tried to stay away from Dudley’s gang who were all big and stupid, Dudley being the “biggest and stupidest of the lot”.

In September Dudley would start school at Uncle Vernon’s old school, Smeltings. Harry was enrolled at the local comprehensive Stonewall High. Harry was quite pleased at being separated from Dudley.

Whilst the Dursleys lavished money on Dudley getting him kitted out for the start of school, Harry was to receive old clothes died to the correct color for the Stonewall High uniform. Part of Dudley’s uniform was a knobbly stick and he was already making full use of this implement.

Harry was beginning to have second thoughts about his first day at Stonewall High. His uniform would be "like he was wearing bits of old elephant skin”.

One day when the mail arrived there was a letter for Harry addressed “Mr. H. Potter, The Cupboard under the Stairs, 4 Privet Drive, Littlewhinging, Surrey.” Harry was not allowed to see the contents, and Aunt Petunia was aghast at these. Harry shouted that he wanted his letter, but Uncle Vernon hurled abuse at him. Aunt Petunia was concerned that “they”, whoever they were, were watching the house. Uncle Vernon made the decision to ignore the letter.

Then something strange happened. Uncle Vernon decided that, as Harry was now getting bigger, he should move to Dudley’s second bedroom, much to Dudley’s dismay. He went into a tantrum, concerned that he would not have room for all his toys.

Next day, another letter arrived for Harry addressed “Mr. H. Potter, The Smallest Bedroom, 4 Privet Drive ……” Now the Dursleys knew they were being watched, but Uncle Vernon had a plan, but so did Harry. Harry decided he would intercept the postman before he reached the house. So, at first light, he crept down the stair only to stand on his Uncle Vernon who was sleeping on the doormat in a sleeping bag. Uncle Vernon then nailed up the letterbox.

Next day, no fewer than twelve letters arrived for Harry. They had been pushed under the door, rammed into the door sides and some forced through the small window in the downstairs toilet.

The next day, twenty four letters arrived, some arrived via the milkman rolled up inside with the eggs, and Aunt Petunia shredded these in her food mixer.

The next day was Sunday, so there would be no mail, but Uncle Vernon underestimated his opponents. Whilst he was setting the fire, something whizzed down the chimney and hit him on the back of the head, followed by about forty letters that pelted him like bullets. Uncle Vernon’s next plan was to run. They packed a few belongings and drove away in the car. They eventually arrived at a hotel.

Next day, the landlady handed them a letter addressed to “Mr. H. Potter, Room 17, Railview Hotel”. It was clear that Uncle Vernon was under severe stress and he took his family to a small island on which was perched “the most miserable little shack you could imagine”. The weather forecast was for a storm that night, which made Uncle Vernon feel cut-off and secure. The family tried to sleep in the shack as the storm rolled outside. In the middle of the night they woke from their fitful sleep to hear someone knocking at the door.

Interpretation
During this chapter the Dursleys completely lose it, due to the bombardment of letters addressed to Harry. The supernatural society has been keeping a watch on Harry and they know his every move, and the situation that he lives in.
The Dursleys try to control the situation, but they fail to realize that they cannot outwit this hidden force, and their behavior ends up being totally irrational, and they find themselves on a deserted island faced with an unknown presence knocking at their door in the middle of a storm at night.

The Dursleys discrimination against Harry also reaches its peak in this Chapter. Dudley is to go to a private school where he will wear a uniform of maroon tailcoats, orange knickerbockers and a flat straw hat or boater. In contrast, Harry is to attend the local comprehensive, wearing dyed clothes to pass as school uniform.

Harry is still very much subjugated by the Dursleys. He is curious to know who wishes to write to him, but he has no rights in this household and is being kept in the dark concerning his birthright.

CHAPTER 4 – Keeper of the Keys

Summary

Uncle Vernon faces the door with a rifle in his hands. The door falls inwards, clean off its hinges, and standing in the doorway was a giant, twice the height of a man “hidden by a long, shaggy mane of hair and a wild, tangled beard, but you could make out his eyes, glinting like black beetles under all the hair”. The giant squeezed his way into the hut. The giant knew Harry, saying the last time he saw him he was only a baby, but he has his mother’s eyes.

Uncle Vernon threatened the giant, but he responded, “Ah, shut up, Dursley, yeh great prune.” The giant took the gun, bent it into a knot and threw it into the corner. Uncle Vernon squeaked like a mouse.

The giant introduced himself as Rubeus Hagrid, Keeper of the Keys and Grounds at Hogwarts. The giant asked for a cup of tea and went to the fireplace, and within seconds there was a roaring fire. Hagrid explained that Hogwarts was a school and that Harry was expected to attend at the start of term.

The Dursleys had revived somewhat and opposed this, saying he was going to the local comprehensive. Hagrid was appalled that apparently the Dursleys had told Harry nothing about his parents, and that Harry was destined to be part of a totally different world – his parents’ world. The giant was able to tell him more about his parents than the Dursleys ever had. Harry’s parents were famous and so was Harry. The Dursleys tried to stop the giant, but now they were being bullied by Hagrid. Hagrid reached inside his large coat and pulled out a letter addressed to “Mr. H. Potter, The Floor, Hut on the Rock, The Sea”. The letter was from “Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry, Headmaster Albus Dumbledore.”

“Dear Mr. Potter,

We are pleased to inform you that you have a place at Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry. Please find enclosed a list of all necessary books and equipment. Term begins on 1st September. We await your owl by no later than 31st July.

Yours sincerely,

Minerva McGonagall,
Deputy Head Mistress.”

Harry was intrigued by the sentence that they awaited his owl. This prompted the absent-minded Hagrid, and he opened his overcoat and pulled out “a real, live, rather ruffled looking owl”. He gave the owl a note that said that he would take Harry to buy his things tomorrow. The owl was released to travel to Hogwarts School.

The Dursleys were still trying to stand against this tide of events, but Hagrid grunted that no muggle could stop Harry now.

Then Hagrid supplied some more information for Harry. His parents were a witch and a wizard and therefore Harry was a wizard. His parents were not killed in a car crash, but were killed by Voldemort. When Voldemort tried to kill Harry he couldn’t. He lost his power, but Harry gained the scar on his forehead.

Uncle Vernon admitted that there was something strange about Harry, but nothing that a good beating wouldn’t cure and so far as Harry’s parents were concerned, they were “weirdo’s”.

Hagrid lost his temper and drew forth a battered pink umbrella from inside his coat. He pointed it at Dudley with the intention of turning him into a pig, but because he was probably so much like a pig anyway, the only change in his appearance was a curly tail protruding from his trousers.

The Dursleys were quiet after this.

However, Harry was still convinced that there had been some sort of mistake. If he was a wizard, why hadn’t he turned Dudley and his Aunt and Uncle into something like warty toads? Hagrid explains that he will be shown his powers when he attends school. Harry had always noticed that when he was angry or frightened strange things would happen to protect him. Hagrid asked Harry not to mention to anyone at
Hogwarts about him using his umbrella to change Dudley into a pig. Hagrid explains that he is not to use his powers because he was expelled from the school.

Interpretation
This Chapter marks the final transfer for Harry from the normal world to the world of wizards and magic. He learns from Hagrid, a larger than life character that he is a wizard - not that he may become a wizard, but that he is a wizard, albeit untrained. He further learns that his parents had these magical powers, and that his future lies with the magical world of wizards and giants.

Physically Hagrid is an awesome sight, but we quickly learn that he is good, generous and cares for Harry greatly.

The reader may suspect that Hagrid will be Harry’s guardian, certainly in the short term.

Rowling’s humour continues to be at the fore in this Chapter, and we finally see the Dursleys getting their just desserts. After all, they are only muggles.

The reader also has to be prepared for the unexpected, and nothing can be taken for granted. We are being bombarded with aspects of a totally alien world as imagined by Rowling. The blend between the unusual and the comic elements make this an interesting and entertaining read.

CHAPTER 5 – Diagon Alley

Summary
Someone else was trying to get into the hut the next morning. Hagrid was sound asleep, so Harry opened the door and in swooped an owl carrying a newspaper that was dropped on top of Hagrid. The owl then proceeded to attack Hagrid’s coat. Harry managed to wake the giant who told Harry to pay the owl for delivering the paper. Eventually Harry found some strange-looking coins known as knuts. The owl flew out of the window after placing 5 knuts in the small leather pouch that he carried.

Hagrid tells Harry to be quick, for they have to go to London to get the items on the list from the school. Harry was reluctant because he could not see the Dursleys paying for the items required, and he had no money, but Hagrid reassured him that his parents had left him well provided for. Hagrid explains that they will have to travel to Gringotts, the wizards’ bank. He explains that this is the safest bank in the world as it is run by Goblins, and nobody messes with them.

The pair exit the hut and take the Dursleys’ boat back to shore. Harry asks Hagrid how he arrived on the island, and he tells Harry that he flew, but they will have to use conventional methods, as he is not allowed to use magic in front of Harry. As they walk through the town to the railway station, everyone stops and stares at Hagrid. This intensifies when they board the train, as Hagrid seems to fill the compartment.

Harry now looks at the second piece of paper he received with the letter, which details what he has to bring with him to the school - items such as his uniform, which includes black robes and pointed hats, a set of books on topics such as casting spells, magical herbs and dark forces, a guide to self protection. He is also to find a wand and cauldron, plus an animal, which can either be an owl, cat or toad.

Harry still wonders if this is all a dream and he will wake up, but he is excited at going to London – a place he has never been to.

Squeezed in between a bookshop and a record shop is a shabby pub called The Leaky Cauldron. None of the muggles seem to notice it – they just walk past, but Hagrid and Harry enter and they soon recognize Harry and take it in turns to shake his hand, some of them more than once. Harry meets one of his future teachers at Hogwarts, Professor Quirrell who will teach Harry about defense against the dark arts. The Professor who wears a turban at all times from which a strange smell emanates, also has a pronounced stutter brought on when he went on a one-year’s fieldwork in Europe. Hagrid tells Harry he has never been the same since he returned.

Hagrid then points his umbrella at a brick in the middle of the wall and a small hole appears, growing wider and wider. They pass through the archway, which closes behind them, and they enter Diagon Alley, a cobbled street full of shops selling cauldrons, clothes, animals and so forth. At the end of the street is a large snowy white building that is Gringotts Bank. The pair enters the bank, which is full of Goblins filling in ledgers and dealing with customers. They find a free Goblin and Hagrid requests to take some money out of Mr. Harry Potter’s safe. Hagrid produces the key to the safe. They are then escorted by a Goblin called Griphook who takes them from the main lobby of the bank into a cave where they board a small cart that runs on railway tracks. The cart seems to know where it is going and it hurts them deep into the bowels of the earth at tremendous speed, causing the giant to feel queasy. Eventually the cart stops and they arrive at Harry’s safe. The Goblin unlocks the door and Harry gasps at the sight of the mounds of gold, silver and bronze coins in his safe. Gold coins are called galleons, silver coins are sickles, and the bronze coins are...
knuts. Harry takes enough coins to last him for two terms and Hagrid advises him that they have to go to the school’s safe as he has business to do for the Headmaster. The cart hurls them through more passages past an underground lake till they arrive at the next safe. Hagrid enters and picks up a little grubby brown paper package and hides it in his coat. They now return to the surface, but Hagrid has to recuperate in The Leaky Cauldron and leaves Harry to go to Madam Malkin’s shop to obtain his uniform. Malkin knows the boy is bound for Hogwarts school. She already has another boy standing on a stool being fitted with his robe. The other boy, who seems to know exactly what to expect at the school, quizzes Harry leaving him insecure. Harry doesn’t reveal to the other boy that he has been brought up in a muggle family, especially when the boy airs his view that such children from muggle families shouldn’t be allowed into the school. When he meets up with Hagrid again, he regains his confidence, when Hagrid confirms that he is from a proper family, and not muggles. With the uniform obtained, Harry gets the books he needs and Hagrid has to almost drag Harry away from the shop because he would like a book that would enable him to put a spell on Dudley. By the way, it’s Harry’s birthday today, and it is the best that he has ever had. Hagrid decides to give him a present in the form of the animal that he has to take to the school. Hagrid suggests an owl because they are very useful at delivering messages and fetching newspapers. Harry ends up with a beautiful snowy owl that is fast asleep. All that remains now is to obtain a magic wand. They go to “Ollivanders, Makers of Fine Wands since 382 B.C.” The owner of the shop explains to Harry that wands can be made from various types of wood, but in their core is a magical substance made up of “unicorn hairs, phoenix tail feathers, and the heart-strings of dragons”. Mr. Ollivander can recount every wand he has sold and to whom. He remembers Harry’s parents obtaining theirs as if it was yesterday, and he also sold the wand that inflicted Harry with the scar on his forehead. Ollivander has numerous wands and he gives them to Harry to try, but no sooner does Harry hold the wand than Ollivander snatches it back. He soon has a large pile of rejected wands. He advises Harry that it is the wand that chooses the wizard. Ollivander then finds an unusual wand that is made out of holly and contains phoenix feather and is 11” in length. As soon as Harry takes the wand, he feels sudden warmth in his fingers and “a stream of red and gold sparks shoot from the end like a firework, throwing dancing spots of light on the walls”. Hagrid and Ollivander are delighted. Ollivander advises Harry that this wand’s brother gave him the scar. It is time for Harry to return home and Hagrid takes him to the railway station. Before they separate, Hagrid gives him his ticket for Hogwarts. On it, it says “1st September at King’s Cross”. If you have any problems, Hagrid says, send me a letter with your owl. She’ll know where to find me. Interpretation The reader is bombarded with numerous facts and it is important to distinguish between key factors that will have a bearing on the plot and those that just merely give a background to this world and help with the description. There are two important elements that should be noted at this stage. Firstly there is the package that Hagrid obtains from the vault, and secondly, Harry’s encounter with the boy in Madam Malkin’s shop, ‘Robes for All Occasions’. This boy undermines Harry’s confidence and their paths will cross later when Harry goes to Hogwarts School. The reader, however, is given lots of small items of information, which clearly show that Harry is something special, and that is why he is the hero of this story. CHAPTER 6 – Platform 9 ¾ Summary Harry still has a month to go before he can take the train to his new school and the time passes slowly. However, he is now treated with respect, or even fear, by the Dursleys, especially Dudley. Harry now had a companion in the form of his owl, and he decided to call her Hedwig. He also was absorbed by reading his schoolbooks and he would lie at night on his bed with the windows open so his owl could come and go as she pleased. At last 1st September approached, and Harry had to make arrangements to travel into King’s Cross, so he asked his uncle for a lift. He agreed to do this because they were going into town that day anyway in order to take Dudley to hospital to have his pigtail removed. The Dursleys still regarded the whole witchcraft business as utter madness, especially when they saw Harry’s ticket showing the train would leave from Platform 9 ¾.
At last 1st September arrived and Uncle Vernon and Aunt Petunia deposited Harry with the trunk at King's Cross Station. They left him to make his own way to the platform. Harry could find no Platform 9 ¾, and a guard told him that there was no train due to leave at 11.00 o'clock, so he stood between Platforms 9 and 10 receiving odd looks from passers-by, mainly curious about his large owl. Close by, there was a woman with four boys all with red hair, each of them having a trunk like Harry. Harry heard them talking about Platform 9 ¾. The woman was saying goodbye to her boys and then Harry lost sight of them as a group of tourists passed between them. When he looked again he noticed that the boys had gone, leaving the woman on her own. Harry approached the woman and asked for directions. She responded, ”Hullo dear. First time at Hogwarts? Ron’s new too.” Harry spotted the last of her sons, a small boy with red hair and freckles. The woman told Harry that all he had to do was walk straight at the barrier between Platforms 9 and 10, not to stop, and not to be frightened. Harry pushed the trolley that had his trunk towards the barrier expecting to crash, but when he opened his eyes, he was next to a scarlet steam engine with coaches packed with people. There were lots of boys saying ‘goodbye’ and the scene is set thus,

“Smoke from the engine drifted over the heads of the chattering crowd, while cats of every color wound here and there between their legs. Owls hooted to each other in a disgruntled sort of way over the babble and the scraping of heavy trunks.”

Harry saw the ginger-headed boys again, two were twins called Fred and George Weasley. The oldest brother was Percy and he had been made a prefect at Hogwarts, and he was showing off his new gown with the letter ‘P’ on it. In fact there were two even older Weasleys who had gone through Hogwarts, Bill and Charlie, and they now had suitable professions. The train was due to leave and eventually Harry struggled with his trunk and found an empty compartment on the train. However, word soon got round that Harry Potter was on the train and his peace would soon be interrupted.

As the train set off, many parents shouted to their young ones to send loads of owls to keep them informed.

Soon the youngest Weasley boy, Ron, joined Harry in his compartment, followed by Fred and George, who introduced themselves to Harry. They wanted to see Harry’s scar on his forehead. Harry obtained a history of the Weasley family and he asked whether all their family were wizards, and they confirmed this except for a distant cousin who was an accountant, but they don’t talk about him. Harry thought that Ron was very lucky to be part of a family of wizards, but Ron is not so sure because he had a lot to live up to. Harry told Ron about his recent experiences and how badly the Dursleys treated him and this seemed to cheer Ron up.

Harry had been secretly worrying about how well he would do at the school, and he suspected that he would be bottom of the class.

A trolley arrived with lots of food and sweets and for the first time in his life, Harry actually had money to spend on himself, so he bought a wide range of food such as every flavour beans, chocolate frogs, pumpkin pasties, liquorice wands etc. These he shared with Ron. The chocolate frogs were interesting and inside the wrapping were cards, and most boys collected these. On the cards were pictures of famous wizards etc., and Harry’s card had a picture of Albus Dumbledore. The card read, “Albus Dumbledore, currently Headmaster of Hogwarts, considered by many the greatest wizard of modern times, Professor Dumbledore is particularly famous for his defeat of the dark wizard Grindelwald in 1945”

He turned the card over to find the picture of the Professor had disappeared.

The all flavour beans were exciting as well, some were delicious and some were horrible, living up to their name.

The train passed through the typical English countryside of neat fields and hedgerows, but this started to give way to more wooded country with twisting rivers and dark green hills. Ron’s animal was a rat called Scabbers. All he did was sleep. Ron was fed up with his boring pet and tried to change him from grey to yellow using a spell, but it didn’t work.

The entrance of Hermione Granger shattered the two boys’ peace. She had come to see Harry Potter as she had already read about him in some of her books, much to Harry’s amazement, and she told him that he appears in Modern Magical History and Great Wizarding Events of the 20th Century. The conversation soon turned to what houses they would be in when they arrived at Hogwarts. There were four houses in all, Gryffindor considered by many to be the best, Ravenclaw, Hufflepuff, and finally, Slytherin, the last house being infamous for having Voldemort pass through its ranks. Harry heard that there had been an attempt to rob the high security vault at Gringotts, and it must have been by a powerful, dark wizard, but apparently nothing was taken. The conversation then went on to the...
game of Quidditch, which is far, far better than football. Teams consist of seven players who fly around on broomsticks chasing balls and trying to score points by placing the balls through hoops.

Another tearful boy, Neville, entered the room looking for his toad, but he soon departed. The boy that Harry had met in Madam Malkin’s Robe Shop came into the compartment and he continued his obnoxious behavior. Two bodyguards called Crabbe and Goyle accompanied him. He introduced himself as Draco Malfoy. He started to belittle the Weasley family and indicated that Harry should make friends with him. Then he tried to steal some of the food, and Ron’s rat bit him. He left, giving Harry a veiled threat that he should not associate with the likes of Hagrid and the Weasleys.

Hermione reminded the boys that they should get ready because they will soon be arriving at the school, and so they put their robes on.

The train arrived at a small station and there stood Hagrid telling all 1st year’s to follow him. He led them from the station down a narrow path to the edge of a great black lake. On the other side was a mountain on which stood a large castle with many towers. They were ordered to embark on a flotilla of small boats that awaited them. The boats took them across the lake and into a cave passing right underneath the castle. They arrived at an underground harbor and they clambered onto the quay. Hagrid reunited Neville with his toad.

Interpretation
This Chapter represents the final transition by Harry from the normal world to the world of wizards – from the Dursleys house to Hogwarts School. This is highlighted by the change in the countryside as the express travels from neat fields and hedgerows to tangled forests and mountains.

You should now be accustomed to a world of strange things, owls and magic wands, strange food and peculiar sports, and larger than life characters.

We recall at the very start of the book how Aunt Petunia did not like to talk about their strange relatives – Harry’s parents. We now have this turned on its head and from a different perspective when we learn that the Weasleys do not talk about their odd cousin who is an accountant and who is ‘normal’.

Most of this Chapter is taken up with the activities on the train and initially, the centre of attraction is a giant tarantula that one of the boys has, but this changes to Harry Potter as he is quite a celebrity in the world of wizards. He has his name in print in famous books about wizardry, and this has bee spotted by Hermione Granger. The older boys and girls seem to know more about Harry than he does himself, and you will note that he is the only one who speaks of Voldemort by name, showing his naivety.

Rowling adds to the authenticity of this mysterious world by going into great depth concerning the everyday life of this society, which provides the building blocks and fabric of the whole story. She achieves this through her descriptive writing.

Another important fact to note is the reference to the attempted robbery at Gringotts.

Other key features are the house system at the school, and the game of Quidditch.

The reader may have thought that Harry had escaped Dudley and his gang, but we are introduced to another set of potential bullies in the form of Malfoy, Crabbe and Goyle.

No doubt we can all recall our first day at a new school and can certainly sympathize with the way that Harry feels, but this is no ordinary school that he is going to – it is a school where you are trained to use your magical powers, and Harry is very apprehensive because he feels he is at a distinct disadvantage, having not been brought up in a family of wizards, but in a family that tried to suppress Harry’s background.

The reader should now have gathered that this will be a battle between good and evil, and Harry represents all that is good in this world of wizards, and that is why the villain Voldemort, tried to kill him when he was a baby, as the grown-up and educated Harry could be a formidable opponent to him.

You will note that in the biography card about Albus Dumbledore, that he defeated the dark wizard Grindelwald in 1945. Coincidentally, this was when the 2nd World War finished with the defeat of the evil Hitler. Just as these battles were vital in regard to the freedom of the world, so perhaps would any future battle Harry might have with Voldemort.

We also draw from this that although the world of wizards is far removed from that of muggles, there are parallels and they are intrinsically linked to one-another.

The reader feels part of this adventure because he can put himself in Harry’s shoes. At the start of the book, he was much like any other 11 year old boy, and he views the change in setting with astonished eyes and we share his experience with the aid of Rowling’s descriptive writing.

CHAPTER 7 – The Sorting Hat

Summary
Professor McGonagall greeted the first year’s. She was dressed in an emerald green robe. She advised them that they would be taken into the main hall for the start of term banquet, but before they could eat, they would all be sorted into one of the four houses. She stressed the importance of the house system, for the house would be their family, and they would eat, sleep and attend classes together. At the end of the year, a cup is awarded to the best house and points are earned for your house according to the pupil’s behavior and performance. The first year’s also encountered spirits that haunted the school and they learned that each house had its own ghosts.

They were taken into the main hall which was lit by thousands of candles floating in the air. There were four long tables, one for each house, and a top table where the teachers sat. The first year’s were lined up and Professor McGonagall came towards them with a rather battered hat. The hat spoke, much to the amazement of some of the first year’s. Professor McGonagall called the first year’s in turn and they sat on a small stool and the hat was placed on them and the hat then shouted out the house they have been assigned to. Sometimes this was done immediately, other times the hat appeared to think before decided which house to allocated the pupil to. The hat assigned pupils according to their attributes. Gryffindor was where the brave at heart were assigned. Hufflepuff was for the just and loyal. Ravenclaw was for the learned. Slytherin was for the cunning folk. Nearly all the first year’s had been allocated houses and Harry was one of the last pupils remaining. When his name was called the room was filled with whispers. Everyone strained to get a good view, and wondered what the hat would decide. The hat was placed over Harry’s head and he heard a small voice say, “Difficult. Very difficult. Plenty of courage, I see. Not a bad mind, either. There’s talent, oh my goodness, yes – and a nice thirst to prove yourself. Now that’s interesting. So where shall I put you? Not Slytherin. Better be Gryffindor.” The last word was shouted and the Gryffindor table erupted. Harry was quite pleased because he would be in the same house as Ron.

The Headmaster stood up and welcomed all the pupils to a new year. The boys sat down and suddenly the empty dishes in front of them were now piled with food.

Close by was a ghost who looked sad because he could not participate in the feast. He introduced himself as Sir Nicholas, but his nickname was ‘Nearly Headless’. He was upset that his house had not won the cup in six years. This had gone to the Slytherin house, and he was having a terrible time with the Slytherin ghost who was called ‘The Bloody Baron’.

Neville was also a member of the same house, so Harry would have at least two good friends. He later learnt that all the Weasleys were in the same house.

Harry then noticed that one of the teachers was scrutinizing him, and suddenly he got a sharp hot pain right across the scar on his forehead. It didn't last long, but Harry had the feeling that this teacher, Professor Snape, hated him.

The Headmaster stood up again and told the pupils that he hoped they would enjoy their year, and reminded them that the forest in the grounds is forbidden, and also the third floor corridor on the right-hand side. He also said that magic should not be used between classes in the corridors, as this upsets the caretaker, Mr. Filch. He then invited all pupils to sing the school song in any tune they liked. The pupils duly complied and the Weasleys were the last to finish as they were singing the song to a very slow funeral match.

Percy Weasley the prefect escorted the first year’s to the dormitory. As they passed the long corridors, they noticed that the people in the portraits were moving and whispering to one another. The school was full of secret passageways, moving staircases and ghosts passing through walls. They also had an encounter with a poltergeist called ‘Peeves’. At last they came to a portrait of a "very fat woman in a pink silk dress. Password? She said”. Once this had been supplied, the portrait swung forward to reveal a circular hole in the wall. They were taken through the Gryffindor Common Room, up a spiral staircase to their bedroom containing four-poster beds. Harry was soon asleep, but he had a disturbing dream where a voice told him he must transfer to Slytherin house.

Interpretation

The boys are sorted into the houses according to their characteristics, but the hat clearly had problems with Harry. However, he ended up with his friends and not with the bullies, who as you might guess, are in the Slytherin house.

The other important factor in this Chapter is Professor Snape, who would appear to be a potential adversary for Harry.

The poem recited by the hat is interesting as it uses a play on words relating to different types of headgear.
There is clearly a dark side to this tale, but at present this is more than subdued by the comical elements in the storyline. This dark side will probably have something to do with the areas deemed as out of bounds.

CHAPTER 8 – The Potions Master
Summary
Harry is still the centre of attraction at the school and now everybody knows what he looks like after the banquet. However, his main problem and that of the other first year’s is navigating round the rambling school, which contains 142 staircases that seem to move when you’re not watching, and ghosts and poltergeists that are intent on mischief-making.
Also, the caretaker Filch and his cat called Mrs. Norris are always on the lookout for anyone who breaks the rules and they seem to be everywhere are once because they know all the secret passageways and shortcuts.
Harry soon realizes that he has a lot to learn, such as the movements in the night sky which he studies every Wednesday at midnight with the aid of a telescope, strange plants and fungi, the history of magic which is the only class taught by a ghost Professor Binns, the use of charms, and transfiguration, the latter being taught by Professor McGonagall, a very strict teacher, not one to cross. She is also the head of Harry’s house.
Hermione Granger is also in the same house as Harry and she was the only one at the end of the transfiguration lesson who was able to turn her match into a needle. Harry meets Professor Quirrell again, who teaches defense against the dark arts. Harry enjoys his work until the lesson on potions, which is taken by Professor Snape who is the head of Slytherin house, and it is a class where they share the lesson with the Slytherin pupils.

Every morning at breakfast in the great hall owls fly in through the open windows bringing letters and packages for the boys. So far Hedwig had brought Harry nothing, which had not gone unnoticed. Then one day, Harry receives a note from Hagrid inviting him for tea. This was for Friday right after his potions lesson. Harry was glad he had this to look forward to because he was victimized by Professor Snape in the class, who asked him questions that he clearly did not have the answers to, and he lost 2 points for his house. He now knew that Snape hated him, and Malfoy and his henchmen enjoyed seeing Harry squirm in the class.
Harry took Ron to visit Hagrid who had a big huge dog called Fang, but he was as friendly as his master. Harry learns from Hagrid that the break-in at Gringotts took place on the same day that they were there. Harry considers that perhaps the robbers were looking for what Hagrid had collected, and he remembered Hagrid saying that there was only one place safer than Gringotts Bank, and that was Hogwarts School.

Interpretation
Important points of the plot are developed here. We have the hatred between Snape and Harry, and we also have details concerning the robbery at Gringotts.
Evidently, Hagrid was sent to the high security vault to retrieve the small package. He is obviously a trusted member of staff at the school, and highly thought of by the Headmaster.
Rowling is adept at creating atmosphere throughout the book. The description of the school and Snape’s classroom is typical and instantly provides the reader with a graphic picture of the scene. “Potions lessons took place down in one of the dungeons. It was colder here than up in the main castle and would have been quite creepy enough without the pickled animals floating in glass jars all around the walls.”
Generally speaking, you have the feeling that the school and its inhabitants are in a 50’s/60’s time-warp. You first get this feeling when you realize that the Hogwarts Express is a steam train.

CHAPTER 9 – The Midnight Duel
Summary
The first year’s were to receive flying lessons and to Harry’s dismay the Gryffindor and Slytherin pupils would learn together.
First year’s were not allowed to have broomsticks of their own, but that didn’t stop them practicing at home and Malfoy had already been boasting about his prowess, and Harry dreaded making a fool of himself in front of the rest of the boys, most of whom had already tried flying. Most of those in the wizard community enjoyed the game of Quidditch, and this was a main talking point, and Harry felt he would be excluded because he knew so little about flying on a broomstick. The only other pupil who didn’t seem to have any
experience was Neville, which was understandable as he was always having accidents 'even with both feet on the ground'.

The teacher was Madam Hooch and she told them to stand by brooms, which were laid out in lines on the grass. She told them to stick out their right hand and call to their broom, "Up". Much to Harry's surprise, the broom responded, while most of the others stayed motionless or rolled sideways. Harry thought it was all about confidence. Once the class had mastered this, Madam Hooch described how to take off. Neville couldn't wait, and was soon flying out of control and he fell on the grass in a heap breaking both his wrists. Madam Hooch told the boys to remain where they were while she took Neville to the hospital wing.

The Slytherin boys laughed at Neville's mishap. Malfoy noticed that a glass ball full of white snow, an ornament had fallen out of Neville's pocket. He decided he would place this on top of a tree and taking his broomstick, he flew away. Before Harry knew what he was doing, he had taken off after Malfoy. He was filled with "a rush of fierce joy. He realized he had found something he could do without being taught". He was now on at least equal terms with Malfoy, who was amazed at Harry's abilities on the broom. Harry threatened Malfoy that he would knock him off unless he returned the glass ball. Instead, he threw it away, but Harry sped off after it and caught it before it hit the ground. This had been witnessed by Professor McGonagall who shouted at Harry and dragged him off, much to Malfoy's delight.

A series of bad thoughts flashed through Harry's mind, but he was sure he would be expelled. The Professor took him into an empty classroom and a fifth year boy called Wood joined them. Wood was the Captain of the house Quidditch team and the Professor advised Wood that she had found the team a seeker. She explained that Harry was a natural. They would have to bend the rules to allow a first year to play in the team, but the Professor would speak to the Headmaster concerning this. Harry learned that Fred and George Weasley were also on the team and they welcomed Harry on board. Harry now felt that he was a true member of the school.

Later, he ran into Malfoy and his friends and Malfoy challenged Harry to a wizard's duel, and Ron accepted on Harry's behalf, saying that he would be Harry's second. It was agreed they would meet in the trophy room at midnight.

Hermione Granger had heard the conversation, and told them they must not go because if they were caught they would lose more points for the house.

In the middle of the night Ron and Harry started to leave the Gryffindor Common Room where Hermione confronted them. She was trying to persuade them not to go and she followed them out of the round door. When she turned to re-enter, she noticed that the fat lady had left the picture, so she was trapped outside. They came across Neville whose broken wrists had been cured, but he had forgotten the password to get in. The four made their way to the trophy room, but they soon realized it was a trap because they could hear Fitch and Mrs. Norris waiting for them, but they were lost. It didn't help that Peeves, the poltergeist discovered them and shouting out 'Students, out of bed'.

The four kept running until they came to a locked door. Hermione took Harry's wand and unlocked the door. They entered and closed the door behind them. They were in the forbidden corridor, and facing them was a monstrous dog with three heads. "Three pairs of rolling, mad eyes; three noses, twitching and quivering in their direction; three drooling mouths, saliva hanging in slippery ropes from yellowish fangs." They decided to exit quickly expecting to meet Fitch, but he wasn't there. More by luck than design they made their way back to the Common Room and Ron said, "If any dog needs exercise, that one does." Then Hermione brought to their attention that the dog didn't chase them. Its job was to sit on the trapdoor that the rest hadn't noticed. Harry realized the significance of this. The dog was guarding something - what Hagrid had obtained from Gringotts Bank.

Interpretation
This Chapter marks a turning point for Harry. He realizes that he does have powers, and he has a natural ability in being able to fly a broomstick. This is a central element and will enable him to become an important member of his house and the school. The inference is that he will be a good Quidditch player. The mystery concerning the package deepens. Is the dog guarding this item, and what is its significance? The tension in this Chapter has been slowly increasing and Rowling achieves this by her description of the chase at midnight through the school culminating in the face-to-face meeting with the dog. Our gang of four escapes, and the tension is immediately released through Ron's comic line concerning the dog needing exercise.

CHAPTER 10 – Halloween
Summary
Malfoy was amazed that his plan had not worked when he saw Harry and Ron still at school next day.
About a week later at breakfast, the owls flooded in as normal with their letters and packages for the boys. What was unusual this morning was that 6 large screech owls carried a long thin package that was dropped right in front of Harry, knocking his breakfast on the floor. A further owl dropped a letter on top of the parcel. Harry opened the letter that advised him not to open the parcel in public as it contained his new broomstick, a Nimbus 2000. Harry and Ron left the hall to open the package, and Harry was amazed that he had one of the best broomsticks you could hope to own, and Professor McGonagall had sent it to him. Hermione was not pleased when she learned the news, as she didn't think he should be rewarded for breaking school rules. The Nimbus 2000 was made of the finest mahogany and its name was written in gold near the top. Its tail was comprised of neat straight twigs.

Oliver Wood, the Gryffindor Quidditch Captain had arranged to meet Harry for a training session. It was approaching dusk. The purpose was to advise Harry about the rules of the game. There are 7 players on each team. 3 are called chasers. Their job is to look out for a bright red ball called a quaffle and throw it to one another and try and get it through one of the 3 opposing hoops. Doing so scores 10 points. There is another player on each side who is called a keeper. His job is to prevent the other team scoring. There are another 2 players called beaters who carry a small club and their job is to try and prevent the black balls called bludgers knocking their players off their brooms. The bludgers, which are slightly smaller than the quaffle, rocket around the playing area. Oliver showed Harry the bludgers that were being restrained inside the equipment box. They have a mind of their own. The 7th player is called a seeker and that was to be Harry's position. The seeker looks for the last ball of the game, which is called the Golden Snitch. It is only the size of a golf ball and is bright gold with little fluttering silver wings. It is hard to see. However, if the seeker can catch it before the opposing team's seeker, he scores an extra 150 points, which usually means his team has won.

Harry was to attend three training sessions a week with the rest of his team, and together with all his homework, time soon passed and Halloween had arrived.

Harry was now enjoying his schoolwork apart from his lessons with Snape, and he was beginning to master the basics of his trade. However, he was not in the same league as Hermione regarding the casting of spells and making objects fly. She was still very bossy, and Ron did not like her much, and as he was telling Harry about her bad behavior she overheard, and ran crying to the girls' toilets.

When the Halloween Banquet started in the great hall, she was still missing, but the banquet was interrupted by an alarm concerning the entrance of a mountain troll into the school. The prefects were told to quickly take the first year's back to their dormitories, but Harry and Ron slipped away in order to look for Hermione in the girls' toilet. On their way there, they noticed Snape heading for the forbidden corridor and wondered why he was not with the other teachers dealing with the troll. As they arrived at the girls' toilets, they met "a horrible sight. Twelve feet tall, its skin was dull, granite grey, its great lumpy body like a boulder with its small bald head perched on the top like a coconut. It had short legs, thick as tree trunks with flat, horny feet. The smell coming from it was incredible. It was holding a huge wooden club, which dragged along the floor because its arms were so long." The troll passed through a doorway and Harry closed the door behind it and locked it in. To their horror on hearing Hermione scream, they realized they had locked her in the girls' toilets. They entered the toilets to see Hermione transfixed against the far wall with the troll advancing towards her. Between them, Harry and Ron confused the dim-witted troll and Ron used a spell in order to lift the club that the troll was carrying above its head and then released it so that it fell on the troll's small head and knocked him out.

All this time, the troll had been roaring and Professor McGonagall, responding to the noise, burst into the toilets closely followed by Snape. Hermione had now regained her senses and she took the blame for the incident by saying she had decided to try and capture the troll herself. Ron and Harry were amazed that she had lied to a teacher, and 5 points were taken from Gryffindor house for this escapade, but Ron and Harry were awarded 5 points each for their bravery.

They returned to their dormitory to take part in the Halloween celebrations.

Interpretation
Again the first year's are involved in an exciting episode expertly described by Rowling. At the start of the Chapter Hermione is at odds with Ron and Harry, but towards the end she covers for them and has decided where her loyalties lie, because she is impressed at the way the two boys saved her. Together, the three make a formidable team because they all have their own strengths and weaknesses, and they complement one another. Neville will also have a part to play in their later adventures.

The relationship between Harry and Ron is interesting. Certainly at the start, Ron was able to use his knowledge in support of Harry, and their relationship is similar to that between Ralph and Piggy in Golding's 'Lord of the Flies'. Ralph was the authoritative figure supported by Piggy's intelligence and knowledge.
Harry has come a long way from the nervous, shy first year pupil that came to Hogwarts. He is now more assertive and confident; this being based on his growing knowledge of what is required of him.

CHAPTER 11 – Quidditch
Summary
Winter is now fast approaching and November marks the start of the Quidditch season. Their first match will be against Slytherin, and should they win they would move up to 2nd place in the championship. Although the identity of the Gryffindor seeker was initially a well-kept secret, news broke that it was Harry Potter, thus putting more pressure on our hero.

Harry had acquired knowledge concerning the tactics of the game and learned that he was in the most vulnerable position, and that there were 700 ways of committing a Quidditch foul. It was rare for a death to occur in a Quidditch match.

Hermione was now a firm friend of Harry and Ron.

On the eve of the first match, Harry, Ron and Hermione were out in the courtyard on a bleak day testing a bright blue fire that Hermione had conjured up and which was contained in a jam jar. They were warming themselves when Snape approached them. He was limping. Harry had a Hogwarts book with him, which he should not have taken outside the school. Snape confiscated the book and Harry was penalized 5 points. Harry wondered what was wrong with Snape’s leg. They returned inside and Harry decided to go to the teachers’ Common Room and ask for his book back. He knocked twice on the door, but there was no answer. The door was ajar and he heard Snape telling Filch that he had been bitten by the three-headed dog. He then spotted Potter and shouted furiously at him. Harry immediately deduced that Snape had tried to obtain the object that the three-headed dog was guarding.

Harry did not get much sleep thinking about these events, and he was soon taking the field for the Quidditch match. The referee for the match would be Madam Hooch. The game started and Harry took his position up high seeking the gold ball. Below, his team-mates were making good progress against Slytherin.

Suddenly, Harry spotted the Golden Snitch and set off in pursuit. His broom went out of control, unnoticed by all the spectators, except for Harry’s own fan club of Hagrid, Ron, Hermione and Neville. Hermione suggested that somebody was interfering with Harry’s broomstick, but Hagrid said that only powerful, dark magic could do this. Hermione knew it was Snape and she looked at him and his eyes were focused on Harry who was now hanging on to his broom by one hand. Hermione rushed over to Snape and set light to his robes using her wand. He was so intent on his spell that he did not even notice Hermione, but he soon noticed that he was on fire. Harry regained control of his broomstick, started speeding towards the ground and caught the Snitch in his mouth, thus bringing victory to Gryffindor.

Back at Hagrid’s house after the celebrations, Harry, Hermione and Ron explained to Hagrid their suspicions concerning Snape, but he could not accept it. He was shocked that they had discovered Fluffy, his three-headed dog, and he let it slip that the object that was being guarded had something to do with Nicolas Flamel. He would tell them no more.

Interpretation
Quidditch is a difficult game to describe, being 3-dimensional incorporating 4 different balls and players who have specific jobs to do on the ‘field’, but Rowling manages this and the reader gets a feel for the game, and becomes involved in the spectacle by using their imagination.

We have indications that Snape may be involved with the dark side of magic, and he seems intent on causing harm to Harry who appears to be the main threat to his plans.

It is frustrating that Hagrid doesn’t accept the first year’s story, and it looks as if our heroes are going to have to face up to Snape alone.

CHAPTER 12 – The Mirror of Erised
Summary
Christmas is fast approaching and the weather has turned really cold. The school grounds are under several feet of snow, and the lake has frozen. Very few owls are able to battle through the storms to deliver post. Most pupils will be going home for the holidays, but Harry will be staying at the school together with Ron and the other Weasleys because their parents are going to see their oldest son in Romania.

Harry gets the impression that Professor Snape is observing him very closely as their paths keep crossing. During the weeks since the Quidditch match, Hermione, Harry and Ron have been searching for the name Flamel, without success. If they could only get access to the restricted section of the library, they are sure they would find his name there.
Harry is looking forward to what he hopes will be his happiest Christmas ever, away from the Dursleys. Harry and Ron enjoy having their dormitory practically to themselves, which means they are able to occupy the best armchairs by the fire. Ron starts teaching Harry wizard chess.

Christmas Day arrives and they awake to find a pile of packages at the foot of their beds. Harry receives a hand-made wooden flute from Hagrid and a 50p piece from Uncle Vernon and Aunt Petunia. This fascinates Ron as he is only used to wizard money. The thoughtful Ron had told his mum that Harry would not receive many presents, so Harry receives a famous Weasley jumper from Ron’s mum. She knits the whole family jumpers, and soon the whole Weasley clan is together parading their jumpers. Fred and George have large knitted letters on theirs so that other people can distinguish between them.

Harry also gets a large box of chocolate frogs from Hermione.

That leaves one present to unwrap. Inside is an invisibility cloak and Ron recognizes it immediately and tells Harry that these are very rare and very valuable. With the cloak is an anonymous note that reads, “Your father left this in my possession before he died. It is time it was returned to you. Use it well. A very merry Christmas to you.” Harry tries it on and immediately disappears. Harry decides that he should keep this gift a secret. Only his trusted friend Ron will know of it.

Harry enjoyed the best Christmas dinner he had ever eaten. This comprised a full Christmas menu accompanied by wizard crackers that contained excellent gifts.

At the end of the day, Harry had the best Christmas ever.

He realized now that with the cloak he could go anywhere undetected and he would be able to go to the restricted section of the library and find out who Flamel was. This he did, but the first book he opened let out a bloodcurdling shriek that he could not stop, and so he had to flee the library.

However, on his return to the dormitory he was faced with Filch and Snape blocking his path, so he quickly hid in a disused classroom. When the two had passed, Harry looked around the classroom and noticed a large mirror with an inscription carved on the top, which translated read, “I show not your face, but your heart’s desire”. When he looked into the mirror it was full of people standing behind his reflection, but when he turned round, there was nobody there. Suddenly he realized he was looking at his own family, including his mum and dad. “He had a powerful kind of ache inside him, half joy, half terrible sadness.”

The Potters smiled and waved at Harry and he didn’t know how long he stood and stared at them. Eventually he left and returned to his room.

The next night, he and Ron returned to the mirror both concealed under the cloak. Again Harry saw his family, but when Ron looked in the mirror he saw himself in the future – Head Boy and holding the house Cup.

Harry returned to the mirror again on his own, as Ron thought it was too risky. This time when he arrived Albus Dumbledore was waiting for him. He advised Harry that the mirror shows you what you would like to see - what is contained deep in your heart. For Harry it is his family that he has never seen. For Ron it is surpassing his older brothers. The Headmaster went on to explain that many hundreds of people have enjoyed the pleasure of looking in the mirror, but some had gone mad because of its power, and the Headmaster advises Harry that he should not look into the mirror any more.

Interpretation

This Chapter marks a change of mood in the book. There are fewer comic references and what Rowling has tried to achieve is real emotion in these paragraphs, emphasizing the pleasure Harry obtains from the Christmas festivities, the gifts he receives, and the pleasurable vision obtained from the mirror. He has also cemented his relationship with Ron and Professor Dumbledore is clearly a father figure to Harry as he obviously cares for the orphan.

As we have said before, this book is about the conflict between good and evil. However, Harry also faces an internal conflict as his own mystical education progresses. As prophesied in the inscription, the mirror shows Harry his heart’s desire, i.e. his parents and other members of his family. Dumbledore warns Harry that the mirror will not necessarily show him the truth or provide him with knowledge. Many before have been absorbed by what they have seen in the mirror, and they have gone mad. After three consecutive visits, Dumbledore advises Harry that he should not look into the mirror for a while. Due to his unhappy childhood, Harry now yearns to be connected with the family he sees in the mirror. Clearly Dumbledore felt it was necessary to provide Harry with this connection with the past, but he now encourages him to concentrate on the present and be aware of what dangers lie in the future.

You will note that Erised is DESIRE spelt backwards.

This lesson is vital for Harry when we reach the climax of the story.
CHAPTER 13 – Nicolas Flamel
Summary
Since looking in the mirror, Harry had been plagued with bad dreams and he could well understand Dumbledore’s statement that the mirror could drive you mad.
When Hermione returned from her holidays, Harry updated her on the recent events.
The next game of Quidditch, which was against Hufflepuff house, was fast approaching and the team was horrified to learn that Snape would be the referee. He had specifically asked to do this job as he didn’t normally get involved in matches. The Gryffindor team was convinced that they would lose. The only chance they had to win, was for Harry to do his job and get the Golden Snitch before Snape had the chance to find fault with their play.
Despite all their research in the library, they were no nearer finding out who Flamel was, until Harry ate his last chocolate frog that Hermione had given him. There it was – the card inside was of Nicolas Flamel, the maker of the Sorcerer’s Stone. Flamel was renowned for his alchemy and he made the stone which is able to transform any metal into pure gold, and it also produces the Elixir of Life. Flamel celebrated his ’665th birthday last year and enjoys a quiet life in Devon with his wife, Perenelle who is aged 658’. Now they knew what Fluffy was guarding and how important it was that Snape didn’t get his hands on it.
At the Quidditch match between Hufflepuff and Gryffindor, both teams were ready and Wood told Harry how important it was for him to capture the Snitch first. The whole of the school was present including Dumbledore. This was a good sign as it would certainly restrict Snape. The fan club assembled again, but unfortunately Malfoy, Crabbe and Goyle were also in close attendance. The game started and almost immediately Harry went into a spectacular dive. He pulled out of the dive just before hitting the ground and raised his arm in triumph. He had captured the Snitch. The game had barely lasted 5 minutes. Harry had beaten all records, much to his house-mates’ delight and Dumbledore as well. Snape was bitterly disappointed. Gryffindor was now in the lead.
Harry left the celebrations to gather his thoughts while the rest went in for their meal. He noticed Snape sneaking towards the forbidden forest. Jumping on his broomstick, he decided to follow. He came across Snape and Quirrell. Harry had difficulty hearing the conversation, but it concerned getting past Hagrid’s beast, and had something to do with Quirrell’s spell. Clearly Snape was putting Quirrell under pressure.

Interpretation
The plot is beginning to deepen and become clearer. The object that was taken by Hagrid from Gringotts to the school was the Sorcerer’s Stone that can provide the owner with infinite wealth and eternal life. Apparently, only Harry’s gang realizes that Snape is a threat to the security of the stone that lies beneath the trapdoor guarded by Fluffy. Snape will succeed in obtaining the stone if he can get past Fluffy and break the spells that the other teachers have laid around it. Seemingly Snape knows all these, except for the spell cast by Quirrell.
Harry’s status in the school is enhanced by his exceptional performance in the Quidditch match, clinching victory for his house in record time. Although he has become a hero from the Headmaster down, he has made an enemy of Snape and the Slytherin house.
Even the other two houses Ravenclaw and Hufflepuff want to see Slytherin fail in winning the cup for a 7th time.

CHAPTER 14 – Norbert the Norwegian Ridgeback
Summary
The gang kept their eye on Quirrell, and although he seemed to be getting paler, there was no outward sign that he had cracked.
They felt that the stone was safe, and they considered this to be the case all the while Fluffy guarded the trapdoor, and also with the presence of the Headmaster, Dumbledore.
Harry still remained concerned, but his colleagues were now concentrating on the forthcoming exams, dealing with the piles of homework allocated to them.
One day in the library, Harry was surprised to see Hagrid concealing a book. After he left, Harry went to the section that Hagrid had been to and it was concerning dragons. He remembered Hagrid saying that he has always wanted a dragon, but this was against the law. Wizards were no longer allowed to keep dragons, as this drew the attention of muggles to their way of life. Harry decided to go and visit Hagrid
who was behaving oddly when he arrived. Inside Hagrid’s stiflingly hot hut, Harry couldn’t help notice the large black egg on Hagrid’s fire, and the book Hagrid was reading called ‘Dragon breeding for Pleasure and Profit’. Hagrid had won the egg in a game of cards and was hatching it. Now Harry had something else to worry about – Hagrid concealing an illegal dragon in his hut.

A few days later, Harry got a message from Hagrid announcing that the egg was cracking. As soon as Harry had some free time, he went to Hagrid’s hut to witness the birth of a Norwegian Ridgeback that Hagrid named Norbert.

Hermione and Ron also witnessed the hatching, and they were fascinated by the baby dragon. However, they had been followed by Malfoy and he observed the dragon through a gap in the curtains. Over the next few weeks, the dragon grew at a tremendous rate being fed on brandy and chicken blood. Although small, the dragon was a vicious animal and gave Ron a nasty bite. It was clear that they would soon have to dispose of the dragon, and Ron came up with the idea that his brother Charlie in Romania would be able to take it and return it to the wild. Arrangements were made for the pick-up to be made one Wednesday night from Hogwarts’ highest tower. Hagrid managed to crate the dragon with a supply of dead rats as food, and using the cloak of invisibility, Harry and Hermione smuggled the dragon to the tower. Malfoy had got wind of these arrangements and he too was skulking about the corridors, but was caught by Professor McGonagall and given a detention. He tried to incriminate Harry with the dragon story, but the Professor would not believe him.

Ron was unable to assist them as he was in the hospital wing nursing his severe bite, which he had blamed on a dog.

The pick-up of the dragon was a success, but in returning to their dormitory they had forgotten to use the invisibility cloak and were caught by Filch, and they would also receive a detention when Filch took them to Professor McGonagall.

Interpretation
This Chapter concerning the dragon is a slight diversion from the main plot, although this is not clear to the reader at this stage. It is used as a means for putting Malfoy and the gang on a detention, which they have to share later in the book.

What the Chapter does provide is more background to this mystical world, and it also provides us with more information concerning Hagrid’s complex character. Although he is clearly trusted by Dumbledore and is totally loyal to the school, he also likes to break the rules which would explain his expulsion from Hogwarts school in the first place. It is obvious that the teachers turn a blind-eye to his activities, but Harry and the others spot his unusual behavior and it is not long before they discover that he is trying to hatch a dragon’s egg that he won by gambling at the local Inn. This shows us that he likes all the vices that bring trouble.

CHAPTER 15 – The Forbidden Forest

Summary
The gang were relieved that they had not been discovered in possession of the dragon that had been whisked away by Charlie’s friends seated on four broomsticks from which was suspended a cradle for holding the dragon.

When they were brought before Professor McGonagall, Neville was also there. He had been found wandering about in an attempt to warn Harry about Malfoy’s involvement. The Professor was of the view that Harry had told Malfoy the story about a dragon in order to get him out of bed and into trouble. All three of them would receive detentions and lose 50 points each from their houses. This would undo all the good Harry had achieved at the Quidditch match.

The next day, news got around Gryffindor about the points loss and the gang were shunned by the rest of their house. However, they were very popular with the Slytherins. Harry received the most abuse because he was the most famous.

One day Harry overheard Quirrell in conversation with somebody that he assumed was Snape. He could hear Quirrell saying, “No, no, not again, please”. When Quirrell left the room straightening his turban, he looked on the verge of crying. Harry was convinced that Quirrell had now been broken. All that stood between Snape and the stone was Fluffy. They could not go to Dumbledore because they had no proof.

Those that had been given a detention were given orders to meet Mr. Filch in the entrance hall at 11.00 p.m. Wondering what was in store for them, they met Filch as arranged who took them out of he school towards the forbidden forest and the waiting Hagrid. Malfoy was not the least bit happy about being taken into the forbidden forest by Hagrid. He thought he would be writing lines. Hagrid growled, “Writin lines! What good’s that ter anyone? Yeh’ll do summat useful or yeh’ll get out.”
Hagrid explained that there were dangerous creatures in the forest. He was armed with a crossbow. Their task tonight was to find a wounded unicorn that has laid a trail of silvery blood. They were to find it and put it out of its misery. Hagrid explained that this was not the first unicorn that had been attacked, and they were very difficult creatures to catch as they had powerful magic. Hagrid split them into two parties, Malfoy, Neville and Fang, Hagrid’s dog in one party, and Hermione, Harry and Hagrid in the other. Hagrid’s party soon came across a centaur called Ronan – half man, half horse. He could provide them with little news. He was more concerned with the stars and planets. The groups came back together again, and this time Hagrid swapped Harry and Neville. Harry’s group was soon deep in the forest and they came across a dead unicorn whose blood was being sucked by a hooded figure. Malfoy screamed and fled with Fang, leaving Harry looking on in amazement. The creature left its feeding to challenge Harry, but then it was frightened off by another centaur called Firenze. The centaur explained that unicorn's blood could prolong life, but to kill a unicorn brought a curse, and only someone very desperate would perpetrate such a crime. Firenze recognised Harry as the Potter boy, and Harry realized that he was even famous amongst the forest creatures. Firenze offered Harry a ride, which is a great honor, in order to take him back to his friends. Harry soon realized that the creature drinking the unicorn’s blood must have been Voldemort. Firenze indicated that the stars held an ill omen for Harry, but even centaur's have been known to read the stars wrongly.

After their exciting adventure in the woods, Harry was relieved to get back to the dormitory where he found his cloak of invisibility neatly folded with a note pinned to it, “Just in case”.

Interpretation
We witness a change in mood in the story with the introduction of classical elements such as unicorns and centaurs. This was hinted at previously with the mention of 3-headed dog. This is another creature from Greek mythology, Cerberus, who guarded the entrance of Hades (Hell). The serious mood is created by a subtle reduction in comic elements. The situation appears to be very serious for our hero in that the main adversary would now seem to be Voldemort himself, and perhaps Snape is just his servant. The reader will be concerned as to whether our hero and his friends are ready to face such a foe.

The fact that some evil creature is preying on the innocent unicorns and sucking their blood provides a grim facet to the storyline. What the reader should be asking himself is why Quirrell and Snape were in the forest. They could have met secretly in the school. This is an important factor for the reader to remember.

CHAPTER 16 – Through the Trapdoor
Summary
The exams were now upon the pupils of Hogwarts, but Harry still took time to ensure that Fluffy was on guard.

Certainly, recent events had not been an ideal build up for the exams, but Harry felt he was doing reasonably well. The pupils were provided with new quills for the exams that had been bewitched with anti-cheating spells.

During the Potion Exam, Snape made them very nervous, “breathing down their necks while they tried to remember how to make a forgetfulness potion”.

As well as worrying about the Sorcerer’s Stone, Harry had also been bothered with stabbing pains on his forehead scar since his trip to the forest. Was this an indication that Voldemort was near?

Suddenly, Harry realized the significance of the dragon’s egg. It had been used by the dark side to obtain information from Fluffy. Perhaps the stranger who Hagrid met at the Inn had obtained information concerning Fluffy that would be valuable in order to achieve access to the trapdoor. Harry quizzed Hagrid about his meeting at the Inn and deduced that the way past Fluffy was to play him music. Clearly Snape or Voldemort would now know this. With this information, Harry felt confident about advising Dumbledore concerning his suspicions. He went to see the Headmaster, but Professor McGonagall told Harry that he had been called away on urgent business to the Ministry of Magic.

He then met Snape who warned Harry not to be caught wandering at night, or he would see to it that Harry was expelled. Harry was convinced that tonight an attempt would be made to steal the stone. Harry shared this news with Hermione and Ron and they came to the conclusion that they must try to get to the stone first.

At first Hermione and Ron were reluctant to break school rules yet again, but Harry explained that if the stone was stolen, there would be no school to be expelled from. Using the cloak of invisibility, they started to leave the Common Room, but were confronted by a determined Neville, who didn’t want to see his house losing any more points. In the end, Hermione had to cast a body-bind spell over him before they could leave. The gang negotiated their way to Fluffy avoiding Mrs. Norris and Peeves the poltergeist, to find them
confronting an alert Fluffy. However, nearby was a harp, which indicated that somebody had already put Fluffy to sleep. Using Hagrid’s flute, the dog was soon fast asleep again and they opened the trapdoor to reveal a black void. At the bottom of this long drop was a soft plant that broke their fall, but they soon found themselves bound by ‘snake-like tendrils’. The well-read Hermione recognised this plant as Devil’s Snare, and with the aid of her wand she was soon able to free Harry and Ron. They entered another room that was full of ‘jewel bright birds’ and on the opposite side of the chamber was a heavy wooden door. Harry soon realized that the birds were in fact winged keys and one of these would open the door. Using broomsticks conveniently placed in the room, they chased these keys, but sharp-eyed Harry noticed one key with a crushed wing and captured this to find it was the key that had already been used by whoever had gone before them. They entered the next room and found a huge chessboard and the large stone pieces came to life when they were spoken to. Ron, the chess player, took command of this situation taking the place of one of the black knights, while Hermione and Harry took the places of one of the bishops and castles. The game progressed towards a climax where checkmate was only possible if Ron sacrificed himself. He was knocked out by the white queen, but Harry and Hermione were able to secure checkmate on the white king. This spell was broken and Hermione and Harry had to quickly pass on, not knowing exactly what Ron’s fate had been.

The next room contained a large troll, but he was out cold with a bloody lump on his head.

In the next room there was just a table with seven differently shaped bottles standing in a line. When they approached the table, their exit and their entrance was sealed by flames. To secure passage, they had to solve a riddle that was contained on a piece of paper lying on the table. Hermione solved the riddle by using logic, but she was only able to provide Harry with the exit. She would take the route back, see how Ron was, and then try and send word to Dumbledore to return to Hogwarts. Hermione said farewell to Harry, telling him that he was a great wizard. Harry didn’t believe this, but Hermione told him that it’s not books and cleverness that is important, but friendship and bravery.

Harry entered the last chamber, but what he met wasn’t Snape and it wasn’t Voldemort.

Interpretation
This is perhaps the most exciting Chapter of the book, full of tension, drama and the unexpected. Rowling is in full flow fuelling the reader’s imagination. The attributes of Ron, Hermione and Harry come to the fore, although it is the first two that manage to get Harry to the final chamber, where he will meet his fate. Rowling emphasizes that this is a team effort and that the three working together are much better than one blindly going on his own. The problem that Harry and his friends have had is that they have not been able to see their enemy clearly. Where is Voldemort? Harry thinks he has identified Voldemort’s servants in Snape and Fitch, but when will Voldemort make an entrance. This is a skilful technique by Rowling, for like Harry, the reader is not sure where the enemy is, and what form it will be in. Right at the end of the Chapter, we suspect that there will be a twist in the tale.

CHAPTER 17 – The Man with Two Faces
Summary
To Harry’s astonishment, it was Quirrell that awaited him.

Quirrell was happy to work secretly about his scheme whilst Harry suspected Snape of wishing to steal the stone. In fact Snape had found out about Quirrell’s betrayal, and had tried to stop him. It had been Quirrell that had caused Harry’s broom to go out of control, and Hermione had got the wrong man. That is why Snape insisted on being the referee at the next match in order to protect Harry. With Quirrell and Harry in the chamber, was the Mirror of Erised, and clearly the whereabouts of the stone had something to do with the mirror. Quirrell went on to explain that Snape had tried to intimidate him in the forest, but he stood no chance because Quirrell had Lord Voldemort on his side.

Quirrell cast a spell over Harry and he was immediately bound tight with ropes. Quirrell then examined the mirror in order to try and find the stone. Another voice could then be heard, urging Quirrell to use the boy to find the stone.

Harry realized from what Dumbledore had said to him that if he looked in the mirror, he would be able to see the stone’s hiding place. At the same time, the voice realized this too. Quirrell released Harry from the ropes and brought him over to face the mirror. Harry looked at the reflection which put its hand in a pocket and pulled out a blood-red stone. Harry immediately felt something drop into his real pocket. He had the stone. Quirrell asked Harry what he could see and he responded that he could see himself shaking hands with Dumbledore and receiving the House Cup. The voice said, “He lies. He lies”. Then the voice spoke to
Quirrell that he wanted to see Harry face-to-face. Quirrell unwrapped his turban revealing a horror. On the back of his head was another face – that of Voldemort. He was possessing Quirrell's body. In order to intimidate and upset Harry, Voldemort recounted the murder of Harry's parents, and that he had killed his father first and that his mother had given up her life protecting him. "Now give me the stone, unless you want her to have died in vain."

Harry made to escape from the chamber, but Quirrell grabbed him and immediately Harry felt a sharp pain on his forehead. Quirrell howled in agony as well. His hands were blistering where he had touched Harry. The voice of Voldemort was encouraging Quirrell to kill Harry, but the more he came into contact with Harry, the more painful it was. Harry realized this was Quirrell's weakness and he jumped to his feet and clung onto Quirrell for all he was worth. This caused terrible shrieks to come from the writhing Quirrell. Harry fell into blackness.

He awoke in the hospital wing with Albus Dumbledore bending over him. Dumbledore told him that the stone was saved and has in fact been destroyed. Dumbledore was proud of Harry's heroics and had realized on his trip to London that this was a fake, and returned only to meet Hermione's owl and he arrived just in time to save Harry.

The unfortunate part is that Nicolas Flamel will now die, but he and his wife have had a very, very long life. As for Voldemort, he has gone, although he has not been destroyed. He will now be looking for another body to share. He left Quirrell to die. It is hoped that he has been so weakened that he will never be able to regain his power.

Harry had some questions to ask of Dumbledore, the first being why did Voldemort want Harry dead, killing his parents in the process? Dumbledore would not tell him the answer. Perhaps when he is older he will be able to know the truth. Dumbledore went on to confirm that Harry's mother had died to save her child and Voldemort could not comprehend that this power of love given to Harry by his mother is far more powerful than the dark side. Touching this power caused Quirrell's body untold pain. Dumbledore was able to tell Harry that it was he that gave him the invisibility cloak and also that Professor Snape had a deep dislike of Harry's father when they were both at the school together, which was made worse by the fact that Harry's father had saved Snape's life. In a perverse way, Snape felt that he could repay this debt by protecting Harry. Dumbledore suspected that Harry would have a major part to play in protecting the stone, and that is why he arranged for its whereabouts to be linked to the mirror. At the climax of the affair he thought that Harry was the only person who would seek the stone in order to protect it rather than use it, so if Voldemort looked in the mirror, all he would see is he receiving the Elixir of Life and having piles of gold.

Harry's next visitor was Hagrid who blamed himself for the whole escapade, but Harry reassured him that Voldemort would have found a way to get past Fluffy anyway. Hagrid had a present for Harry who was "a handsome leather-covered book ….. full of wizard photographs of his mother and father ….. smiling and waving at him from every page." The pair were very emotional.

Harry recovered enough to attend the end of year feast, and it was widely suspected that Slytherin would win the cup due to the recent penalties suffered by Gryffindor, but Dumbledore had final points to award. Ron received points for the best game of chess played at Hogwarts. Hermione received points for using cool logic, and Harry received points for outstanding courage. This made Slytherin and Gryffindor equal on points. The last award went to Neville for showing courage by standing up to enemies and friends alike. There was great jubilation as Gryffindor accepted the house Cup.

Soon after the exam results were issued, all of the gang were successful and would pass into the second year.

It was now time to leave for the summer holidays and Harry found himself back on Platform 9 ¾ at King's Cross. The Dursleys were there to meet Harry, much the same, except Dudley looked terrified at the sight of Harry. They were also embarrassed about having to carry an owl in a cage in a station full of normal people. All pupils had been told not to use magic during the holidays, but Harry had a mischievous look on his face, because the Dursleys didn't know this.

He was going to have a fun-packed summer.

Interpretation
Rowling uses a standard technique by introducing a twist to her storyline. The villain is not the prime candidate Snape, but the stuttering ineffectual Quirrell. Of course this persona is merely a front, and the real power behind Quirrell is what is concealed under his turban - the face and spirit of Voldemort.

Harry had at one stage felt that Quirrell was the main plank supporting his defense against Snape and his plan to steal the stone.
Rowling describes well the climax to the story which has increased the reader’s anticipation as he/she follows Harry through the chambers to meet the final challenge. As we have long suspected, there is something special about Harry Potter, and he has an inner strength and defense against the evil of Voldemort. As Rowling says, “To have been loved so deeply, even though the person who loved us is gone, will give us some protection for ever”. It is this invisible shield of love that has protected Harry from the evil spirit of Voldemort.

We learn later that Voldemort has not been destroyed. He has merely lost his power, and this leaves the door open for further adventures. The order in which points are awarded by Dumbledore is interesting. It is Neville who is last on the list of awards, and the Headmaster says, “It takes a great deal of bravery to stand up to our enemies, but just as much to stand up to our friends.” Neville receives the just reward for his protective attitude towards Harry.

The scene between Harry and Hagrid in the hospital wing is quite touching, and poignant. There is not much sentimentality in the book, but this exchange of dialogue shows Rowling’s ability in dealing with this emotive issue.

The book finishes with Harry returning to the real world and the Dursleys’ home, but Harry will now be fully equipped to deal with the situation. The fact that the story started in the normal world and now finishes there is known as a framing technique, and is a common ploy used in such works of fantasy e.g. ‘Peter Pan’, and ‘The Lion, The Witch and the Wardrobe’, the only difference being that there are many links between the two worlds.
QUESTIONS FOR STUDY and IDEAS FOR ANSWERS

Q: Harry and his friends worked together as a team to seek out the Sorcerer's Stone. Although it was always going to be Harry that faced the ultimate test, he needed the others to reach the final chamber. What did the members of his team contribute to the success of their mission?

Ideas:
At the start, Harry takes the lead. He is in charge and using the flute he received from Hagrid as a Christmas present, he calms the 3-headed dog, which falls asleep. Heroically, he goes through the trapdoor followed by Ron and Hermione. They are trapped by the Devil’s Snare, and it is Hermione who frees them. Her long hours of study and ploughing through numerous books have borne fruit. She is quickly able to draw on her wide knowledge and free the pair.

When they are faced with finding the right key amongst numerous flying shapes, it is Harry using his seeker skills, obtained through Quidditch training that spots the correct key. This enables the team to progress through to the chess game, and now Ron plays his part by taking charge of the game. As in most games of chess, sacrifices have to be made in order to win the struggle, and unselfishly, Ron sacrifices himself so that Harry and Hermione can continue the quest.

The next problem requires logic and again Hermione comes to the rescue and solves the riddle of the bottles. She states that many a wizard doesn’t have an ounce of logic in them. Harry has to continue on his own, but he is only in this position due to the support from Ron and Hermione. Hermione’s parting words show that she is wise for she tells Harry, “There are more important things than books and cleverness! Friendship and bravery, be careful!”

Q: The key to any good book is the use of succinct or precise phrases that with an economy of words convey to the reader the exact circumstances of any situation. These can be comic, descriptive or thought-provoking. They can also set the scene or change the mood. Provide examples.

Ideas:
“Quidditch referees had been known to vanish and turn up months later in the Sahara Desert” – comic.

“The baby dragon flopped onto the table. It wasn’t exactly pretty …… it looked like a crumpled, black umbrella. Its spiny wings were huge compared to its skinny jet body and it had a long snout with wide nostrils, stumps of horns and bulging orange eyes …… ‘Isn’t he beautiful?’ Hagrid murmured” – descriptive and comic.

“The truth. It is a beautiful and terrible thing, and should therefore be treated with great caution.” – thought-provoking.

“It takes a great deal of bravery to stand up to our enemies, but just as much to stand up to our friends.” – thought-provoking.

“A bush on the edge of the clearing quivered …… then, out of the shadows, a hooded figure came crawling across the ground like some stalking beast …… It reached the unicorn, it lowered its head over the wound in the animal’s side and began to drink its blood.” – tension-building.

“A scarlet steam engine was waiting next to the platform packed with people …… smoke from its engine drifted over the heads of the chattering crowd, while cats of every color wound here and there between their legs. Owls hooted to each other in a disgruntled sort of way over the babble and scraping of heavy trunks.” – setting the scene.

“If any dog needs exercise, that one does.” – changing the mood and comic.

Q: Rowling devised the game of Quidditch as a representation of Harry’s time at Hogwarts School. Please expand.

Ideas:
This 3-dimensional game involves the players streaking about on their broomsticks seeking the different sized balls and trying to score points. Harry’s life at the school also had its ups and downs. His performance in the Quidditch match made him very popular, but then when he was disciplined for breaking school rules and lost house points he became unpopular. His position in the team was that of seeker. It was his job to spot the Golden Snitch. and towards the end of the story he also has to seek the Sorcerer’s Stone.
In the game, he requires his team-mates to divert the opposition and give him freedom to complete his task. In his real struggle against Voldemort he again requires the support of Ron and Hermione so that he can face the final challenge.

Q: Rowling obviously has opinions concerning bullying, and punishing pupils for breaking school rules. What are they?

Ideas:

**Bullying** - Harry faces two sets of bullies in the story - firstly Dudley’s gang and then Malfoy and his two cronies. She reaffirms that bullies only thrive in a gang and that individually they are cowards. In the end, both gang leaders get their comeuppance. Dudley has the indignity of getting a pig’s tail from Hagrid, and it is some weeks before this is surgically removed. No doubt, this will have tempered his bullying tendencies, and no doubt Harry has more delights in store for Dudley when he returns at the end of the book to Privet Drive. So far as Malfoy is concerned, when he is on a broomstick without his henchmen in a one-to-one situation with Harry who is clearly highly skilled in this area, he backs down. Later, in the forbidden forest he shows his cowardice by running away at the sight of Voldemort sucking blood from the unicorn. All the bullies are described in less than glowing terms, and the point Rowling is trying to make is that bullies not only damage those around them, but they damage themselves as well.

**Breaking school rules** - Rowling has clear views concerning the writing of lines as a form of punishment. It is clearly a waste of time and has no constructive purpose. At Hogwarts School the aim is for the detention to produce something positive and not waste time. Again all those breaking the rules share a common task.