

Exploring the Book

CHAPTERS 1-7

WHAT HAPPENS

Harry loses his temper when Aunt Marge speaks disparagingly of his parents. He runs away from the Dursleys and is picked up by the Knight Bus, an emergency transport for stranded witches and wizards. He learns that Sirius Black, a prisoner in Azkaban fortress, has escaped. According to the conductor, Black murdered 13 people and was a supporter of Voldemort. At Diagon Alley, Cornelius Fudge, the Minister of Magic, arranges for Harry to stay at the Leaky Cauldron pub. Soon, his friends Hermione and the Weasleys join him. Harry overhears Mr. and Mrs. Weasley say that Black wants him dead. On the train to school, Harry and his friends sit with the new Defense Against the Dark Arts teacher, Professor Lupin. The train suddenly stops, the lights go out, and a dementor appears at the door. Harry hears screaming and passes out. At Hogwarts, the students learn that dementors are guarding the school from Black. In Hagrid's class, Malfoy is scratched by a hippogriff named Buckbeak. In Lupin's class, the students learn to use a charm against a boggart.



QUESTIONS TO TALK ABOUT

COMPREHENSION AND RECALL

1. Why does Harry try to blackmail Uncle Vernon about permission to go to Hogsmeade? (*It's the only way he'll get his uncle to sign.*)
2. Why can't Harry control himself in front of Aunt Marge? (*She says mean and untrue things about his parents.*)
3. Why does Mr. Weasley think Black is after Harry? (*Harry stopped Voldemort; Mr. Weasley thinks Black wants Voldemort back in power.*)

HIGHER-LEVEL THINKING SKILLS

4. Why does Harry want to do his summer homework? (*Possible: It connects him with Hogwarts; he likes school.*)
5. Why is Fudge willing to bend the rule about underage wizard magic for Harry but not the one about Hogsmeade? (*Possible: He believes Harry is in danger.*)
6. How is Harry's reaction to the dementor different from his friends' reactions? (*They are all cold, scared, and upset, but Harry goes rigid and faints. He also hears voices.*)
7. Why doesn't Hermione like Professor Trelawney? (*Hermione likes facts from books; facts can take her only so far in Divination.*)
8. Why do you think Professor Lupin doesn't give Harry a chance to face the boggart? (*Answers will vary. He may be protecting Harry.*)

LITERARY ELEMENTS

9. Character: How does Harry show his feelings for Hagrid? (*He volunteers to go first with Buckbeak. He and his friends comfort Hagrid after Draco is hurt; they say they'll stand up for him.*)

PERSONAL RESPONSE

10. Laughter is the best way to repel a boggart. What else is laughter good for? Why do you think so?

11. What shape would the boggart take for you? How do you usually face this fear?

12. Harry and his friends miss the Sorting. Suppose you were there. Which house would the hat send you to? Why?

CROSS-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

MATH: *Gringotts Gold*

Have students assign a monetary value to each of the coins that Harry Potter and his wizard friends use: gold Galleons, silver Sickles, and bronze Knuts. Then have students price some of the things for sale in Diagon Alley, such as the books, Gobstones, and the Firebolt. Students can then work in pairs to make up problems for classmates to solve.

ART: *The Best Broom*

Review different types of ads with students; for example some ads use statistics to wow consumers, others use testimonials, some use the bandwagon approach (everyone's doing it, so should you), and still others use snob appeal. Encourage students to find examples of different types of ads in magazines. Then challenge students to create a magazine ad for a Firebolt.

WRITING: *Monster Minibooks*

Remind students that Hagrid assigns students the *Monster Book of Monsters* to read for his Care of Magical Creatures class. Encourage students to use their imagination to write a monster story in minibook form. Suggest that they illustrate their books.



TEACHER TIP

At the beginning of the book, Harry is so determined to do his homework that he reads in bed under the covers with a flashlight. Use this example to initiate a discussion of homework strategies. Ask students where they prefer to do their work. What motivates them to do it?

Name: _____

Prickly Problems and Fanciful Solutions



Harry and his friends face some interesting problems in the book. Often the solutions are amazing and magical. Write the solution for each of the problems on the chart.

Problem

Solution

1. Harry runs away from the Dursleys and has nowhere to go.



2. Harry faints when a dementor comes into the train compartment.



3. Harry doesn't have permission to go to Hogsmeade.



4. Snape gets the Marauder Map from Harry.



5. The dementors surround Harry and Hermione as they try to save Black.



6. Buckbeak has been executed, and there's no chance of overturning Black's sentence.


