

Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban

by J. K. Rowling

For twelve years, the dreaded fortress of Azkaban has held an infamous prisoner, Sirius Black, heir apparent to the Dark Lord, Voldemort. Now he has escaped, leaving only two clues as to where he might be headed—Hogwarts and Harry Potter.

THEMES

fantasy, problem-solving, friendship, responsibility, courage, good vs. evil

Young Listener Unabridged Audio

I. PRE-TEACHING

A. Have the class define and discuss these terms:

luminous, stealthy, ominous, massive, eluding, raucous, prototype, replenish, formidable, chaos, pallid, tumultuous, ravenous, brandishing, sinew, placidly, mundane, reprovably, transfixed, aura, crestfallen, disdainful, grimace, suffice, materialize, ogre, animatedly, taunt, stealth, rapt, abashed, sullen, tirade, apprehensive, turbulent, sodden, marauder, minuscule, ludicrous, succulent, enraged, quarry, disoriented, abysmally, uncanny, clairvoyant, euphoria, quagmire, obsession, gingerly

B. Before beginning the story, discuss the following questions with the class:

1. Have you read the other Harry Potter books? What can you tell us about Harry and his friends?
2. Do you wish you could turn into another kind of animal? What kind would you be? Why?
3. Do you like to solve mysteries? What are some mysteries you'd like to solve?

II. PRESENTATION

A. Understanding the Story:

1. Begin with Chapters 1 - 7: What make Sirius Black so dangerous? Why isn't Harry more frightened when he learns Sirius Black wants to kill him? How does Snape show his feelings toward Professor Lupin? Why is being made a teacher important to Hagrid? How does Professor Trelawney react to what she sees in Harry's teacup? What mistake does Malfoy make with the hippogriff? Why is it best to have company when confronting a boggart?
2. Advance to Chapters 8 - 14: Why are Hagrid's classes so dull? Why is Ron mad at Hermione? What has happened while everyone is at the feast? What causes Harry to miss the snitch during the Quidditch match? What causes Harry's reaction to the dementors? How does Harry use the Marauder Map? How did Sirius Black betray Harry's parents? What do the professors think Sirius Black intends to do? Why is Hagrid upset? Why does Professor McGonagall take the Firebolt? What secret desire interrupts Harry's anti-dementor lessons? What is the punishment that awaits Sirius

Black? What happens when Snape finds the Marauder Map?

3. Complete the story with Chapters 15 - 22: What does Harry see on the lawn that night? Where does the tunnel under the Whomping Willow lead? What stops Harry from killing Sirius Black? Why was the Whomping Willow planted? Why did Professor Lupin's friends become *animagi*? In what ways did Professor Lupin betray Dumbledore's trust? Why does Snape hate Professor Lupin and Sirius Black? How did Sirius Black escape from Azkaban? Why won't Harry let Pettigrew be killed? How do Harry and Hermione save Sirius Black and Buckbeak?

B. For Discussion:

1. Find examples of things not being what they seem in the story and discuss.
2. Which of Professor Trelawney's predictions come true? Can she really see into the future? Why or why not?
3. In what ways is Harry secretive? Is his secretiveness justified? Why or why not?
4. Compare the teaching methods of each professor. How are Snape's methods different from Professor Lupin's? Hagrid's from Professor Trelawney's? Who do you feel is the best teacher? Why?
5. Who are Moony, Wormtail, Padfoot, and Prongs? Why did these friends of Professor Lupin learn to change into animal shapes?

III. EXTENDING THE LESSON

Give students the opportunity to work with partners, groups, the whole class, or alone.

INTERDISCIPLINARY CONNECTIONS:

A. Language Arts:

1. Have students write about quarrels with friends like the quarrel between Ron and Hermione.
2. Have students write about their fears. Then have the class discuss ways to overcome fear.
3. Have students write a story about time travel in which something happens that changes the past. Then discuss: If they could make any change in history or in their own lives, what would it be?

4. Have students put together a character list featuring the different traits of the main characters. Harry has many conflicting qualities. Often he is secretive and bent on revenge, other times he is caring and wise. Hermione is overly ambitious. Sirius Black seems evil but turns out to be good.
5. As they listen, have students list the names of the characters and creatures in the story, then make up other fun names for a fantasy they might write. Or they might come up with titles for other books such as *Monster Book of Monsters*, *Invisible Book of Invisibility*, or *Unfogging the Future*.
6. Professor Lupin's name is well chosen because *lupe* means *wolf*. Have students learn the Latin or Greek roots of other words and make a list of all the words that share a common root.
7. Have students listen to the visit to the candy shop at Hogsmeade. What kinds of candy do Ron, Hermione, and Harry find? Have students come to class with the names of popular candy bars. Why are these names chosen? They might then make up some descriptive names for candy bars.

B. Art and Music:

1. Assign a group to select records, tapes, or CDs from the library that serve as appropriate background music to some of the scenes. Scary music such as *Night on Bald Mountain* by Mussorsky, or *Dance Macabre* by Camille Saint-Saens might capture the frightening scenes such as when the dementors appear.
2. Have students make a bulletin board about the story. Draw Hogwarts with its many rooms, Hagrid's house on the grounds, and the dreaded Azkaban, then add the characters and magical creatures to the scene.
3. Have students come up with some fantastic creatures like the hippogriff. They could draw them or make them out of papier maché.

C. Social Studies:

1. Have students research the witch trials in Salem, Massachusetts, or in earlier times in Europe. What causes frenzies like this? They might also learn about the modern "witch hunts" that took place during the 1950s as part of the McCarthy senate hearings.
2. Have students learn about vampires, werewolves, boggarts, or other creatures mentioned in the story. Why have these stories come down to us?

3. Have students work in groups to develop a curriculum for one of the classes at Hogwarts. What might they teach in Divination, Black Arts, or Magical Creatures classes? What other courses might be taught at Hogwarts?
4. Have students find reviews and articles about the Harry Potter books. Why have they become so popular? Why do adults as well as younger readers like them so much?

D. Science and Math:

1. The Harry Potter series is wildly popular. Have students find out how many copies of each book has been sold to date and make a chart. Discuss: What makes a book a bestseller.
2. Have students work out the rules for the Quidditch match. What games might it resemble? How is it played? How are the players able to stay aloft on their broomsticks?
3. Have students think about time travel. Would it ever be scientifically possible for humans to travel into the past? If so, what precautions would need to be put in place?
4. Have students discuss astrology as a science. Why do some people still believe in what their charts say? Is there any truth to this?

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