

Information Sheet

My full name is Joanne Kathleen Rowling. I added 'Kathleen', which was the name of my paternal grandmother, because my UK publishers wanted me to use my initials when they published 'Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone'. This was an attempt to conceal my gender, as they thought 'Harry Potter' was a book that might appeal to boys, but that the fact that a woman had written it might put boys off. I have no idea whether they were right or not, but the ploy did not receive a very long trial, as it quickly became obvious that 'J K' was a woman from her press photographs.

All my life I have wanted to be a writer. I experimented with many different stories, and wrote parts of several novels, before the idea for 'Harry Potter' came to me on a train journey from Manchester to London in 1990. I had never felt so excited about a story before, but never for an instant did I have an inkling of what Harry Potter would become. I simply knew that it was something I would love to write, and as I sat there on the train, pen-less for once in my life, I gave myself over to imagining the details of a nameless school for wizardry, most of which found their way into the published books.

By the time I finished writing the final, seventh book in the series, I had been living with Harry for seventeen years. Saying goodbye has been very difficult, but the world in which I have lived for so long remains inside me, and nearly every day I meet somebody who wants to talk to me about it. Nothing could make me happier than to think that so many people know Hogwarts as well as I do, and have strolled around the Ministry of Magic, Diagon Alley and the Quidditch Pitch along with me. Every writer's life influences their work, but not many books change their author's life forever, as Harry Potter did for me.

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Unfortunately, due to the enormous size of my weekly postbag, and my existing charitable and work commitments, I regret that I am unable to:

- **sign copies of the Harry Potter books sent to my office.**
PLEASE DO NOT SEND BOOKS TO BE AUTOGRAPHED
- **answer individual questions or comment on specific topics**
- **send out autographs and signed photographs**
- **look at/read/comment on writing/stories/ideas/artwork sent to me**

**For a good range of Frequently Asked Questions,
plus much additional information about Harry Potter,
visit my website jkrowling.com**

Here, however, are some of the most commonly asked:

1. Which character is your favourite?

Harry, although I believe I am unusual in this, Ron is generally more popular (I love him too, though). Now that I have finished writing the books, the character I would most like to meet for dinner is Dumbledore. We would have a lot to discuss, and I would love his advice; I think that everyone would like a Dumbledore in their lives.

2. Where do you get your ideas?

I wish I knew where ideas came from, because I would go and live there. It is a mystery to me where it all comes from, but I'm quite pleased I don't know; it might spoil the fun if I did.

3. Where do you get the names?

I collect unusual names; I have got them from maps (Snape and Dursley), saints (Hedwig) and war memorials (Lockhart). Some of the names in the book mean something - Dumbledore is an old English word for 'bumble bee', and I gave it to Dumbledore because I imagine him humming to himself a lot. I also invent names; Malfoy, Flitwick and Quidditch are all made up.

4. Will there ever be another Harry Potter novel?

I have always refused to say 'never' to this question, because I think it would be foolish to rule out something I might want to do in a few years time. However, I have no immediate plans to write another novel, and I do think that I have rounded off Harry's story in the seven published books.

5. What about the Encyclopaedia?

For a long time I have been promising an Encyclopaedia of Harry's world, and I have started work on this now. It is likely to be a time-consuming job, but when finished I shall donate all royalties to charity.

6. What are you writing now?

I am working on another children's book, though I am enjoying not having a deadline and am keen to take my time!

7. What advice would you give to young writers?

When writing I think a good starting point is what you know - for instance, your own feelings, or subjects you know a lot about. The most important thing is to READ as much as you can. This will teach you to recognise good writing, and by analysing what you like best, you can find out how to improve your own writing.

8. What was your favourite childhood book?

The Little White Horse, by Elizabeth Goudge. The tone is perfect; a seamless mix of the fairytale and the real. It also has a plain heroine, which delighted me beyond words as a child, because I was a very plain little girl and I hadn't met many heroines who weren't breathtakingly pretty.