

English Literature Activities



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Harry Potter and the Goblet of fire

The villagers of Little Hangleton still called it “the Riddle House,” even though it had been many years since the Riddle family had lived there. It stood on a hill overlooking the village, some of its windows boarded, tiles missing from its roof, and ivy spreading unchecked over its face.

Once a fine-looking manor, and easily the largest and grandest building for miles around, the Riddle House was now damp, **derelict**, and unoccupied. The Little Hangletons all agreed that the old house was “creepy.”

Half a century ago, something strange and horrible had happened there, something that the older inhabitants of the village still liked to discuss when topics for gossip were **scarce**. The story had been picked over so many times, and had been embroidered in so many places, that nobody was quite sure what the truth was anymore.

Every version of the tale, however, started in the same place: Fifty years before, at daybreak on a fine summer’s morning, when the Riddle House had still been well kept and impressive, a maid had entered the drawing room to find all three Riddles dead. The maid had run screaming down the hill into the village and roused as many people as she could.

“Lying there with their eyes wide open! Cold as ice! Still in their dinner things!”

The police were **summoned**, and the whole of Little Hangleton had seethed with shocked curiosity and ill-disguised excitement. Nobody wasted their breath pretending to feel very sad about the Riddles, for they had been most unpopular. Elderly Mr. and Mrs. Riddle had been rich, snobbish, and rude, and their grown-up son, Tom, had been, if anything, worse. All the villagers cared about was the identity of their murderer — for **plainly**, three apparently healthy people did not all drop dead of natural causes on the same night.

The Hanged Man, the village pub, did a roaring trade that night; the whole village seemed to have turned out to discuss the murders. They were rewarded for leaving their firesides when the Riddles’ cook arrived dramatically in their midst and announced to the suddenly silent pub that a man called Frank Bryce had just been arrested.

“Frank!” cried several people. “Never!”

Frank Bryce was the Riddles’ gardener. He lived alone in a run-down cottage on the grounds of the Riddle House.



Frank had come back from the war with a very stiff leg and a great dislike of crowds and loud noises, and had been working for the Riddles ever since.

There was a rush to buy the cook drinks and hear more details.

“Always thought he was odd,” she told the eagerly listening villagers, after her fourth sherry. “Unfriendly, like. I’m sure if I’ve offered him a cuppa once, I’ve offered it a hundred times. Never wanted to mix, he didn’t.”

“Ah, now,” said a woman at the bar, “he had a hard war, Frank. He likes the quiet life. That’s no reason to —”

“Who else had a key to the back door, then?” barked the cook.

“There’s been a **spare** key hanging in the gardener’s cottage as far back as I can remember! Nobody forced the door last night! No broken windows! All Frank had to do was creep up to the big house while we were all sleeping. . . .”

The villagers exchanged dark looks.

“I always thought he had a **nasty** look about him, right enough,” grunted a man at the bar.

“War turned him funny, if you ask me,” said the landlord.

“Told you I wouldn’t like to get on the wrong side of Frank, didn’t I, Dot?” said an excited woman in the corner.

“Horrible **temper**,” said Dot, nodding fervently. “I remember, when he was a kid . . .”

By the following morning, hardly anyone in Little Hangleton doubted that Frank Bryce had killed the Riddles. But over in the neighboring town of Great Hangleton, in the dark and dingy police station, Frank was stubbornly repeating, again and again, that he was innocent, and that the only person he had seen near the house on the day of the Riddles’ deaths had been a teenage boy, a stranger, dark-haired and pale. Nobody else in the village had seen any such boy, and the police were quite sure that Frank had invented him.

Then, just when things were looking very serious for Frank, the report on the Riddles’ bodies came back and changed everything.

The police had never read an odder report. A team of doctors had examined the bodies and had concluded that none of the Riddles had been poisoned, stabbed, shot, strangled, **suffocated**, or (as far as they could tell) harmed at all. In fact (the report continued, in a tone of unmistakable **bewilderment**), the Riddles all appeared to be in perfect health — apart from the fact that they were all dead. The doctors did note (as though determined to find something wrong with the bodies) that each of the Riddles had a look of terror upon his or her face — but as the frustrated police said, whoever heard of three people being frightened to death?



As there was no proof that the Riddles had been murdered at all, the police were forced to let Frank go. The Riddles were buried in the Little Hangleton churchyard, and their graves remained objects of curiosity for a while. To everyone's surprise, and **amid** a cloud of suspicion, Frank Bryce returned to his cottage on the grounds of the Riddle House.

“As far as I'm concerned, he killed them, and I don't care what the police say,” said Dot in the Hanged Man. “And if he had any **decency**, he'd leave here, knowing as how we knows he did it.”

But Frank did not leave. He stayed to tend the garden for the next family who lived in the Riddle House, and then the next — for neither family stayed long. Perhaps it was partly because of Frank that the new owners said there was a nasty feeling about the place, which, in the absence of inhabitants, started to fall into disrepair.



After reading the text, decide if the sentences are True or False:

- 1 The Riddle House is described as desolate
- 2 A servant found the members of the family dead some decades ago
- 3 The inhabitants of Little Hangleton were fond of the Riddles
- 5 The majority of the villagers visited the local pub to get more gossip about the mysterious event
- 5 The gardener who was arrested had been living inside the Riddle House
- 6 He is described by the cook of the house as an antisocial personality
- 7 The owner of the pub supported the idea that Frank had been mentally disturbed by the war
- 8 Frank testified that he had seen a teenage boy committing the murders
- 9 The gardener was released from custody due to lack of evidence against him



Have you seen any of the Harry Potter films? If yes, what are the things you like about them? If not, what have you heard about them? You can watch the trailer of this one here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3EGojp4Hh6I>





Match the words in bold from the text with their definitions below:

- to request to appear, send for
- unpleasant or annoying
- surrounded by, in the middle of
- deserted by an owner or keeper, abandoned
- simply
- few, lacking
- a state of mind or emotion, disposition
- the condition of being confused or disoriented
- being in excess of what is needed, extra
- conformity to the prevailing standards of propriety, morality, modesty
- to kill or destroy by preventing access of air or oxygen



Read the text about the writer's life and answer the questions:

J.K. Rowling, born on July 31, 1965, in Yate, Gloucestershire, England, is a distinguished British author renowned for her iconic Harry Potter series. Rowling's early life was marked by a profound love for literature, instilled in her by her mother, who often read to her. She attended the University of Exeter, where she studied French and the Classics. After graduating, Rowling took various jobs, including teaching and working as a researcher, but she always harbored a dream of becoming a writer.



The conception of the Harry Potter series emerged during a train journey from Manchester to London in 1990, when the character of a young boy discovering he is a wizard first took form in her mind. Rowling dedicated the following years to crafting the story, often writing in cafés while her daughter slept beside her. Despite facing numerous rejections from publishers, her persistence eventually paid off when Bloomsbury Publishing accepted her manuscript for "Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone." The book was published in 1997 and quickly garnered widespread acclaim, establishing Rowling as a literary force.

The Harry Potter series comprises seven books, chronicling the life and adventures of Harry Potter, a young boy who discovers he is a wizard on his eleventh birthday. He attends Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry, where he befriends Hermione Granger and Ron



Weasley. Throughout the series, Harry confronts various challenges, particularly his nemesis, the dark wizard Voldemort, who seeks to conquer the wizarding world and eliminate Harry, the only one who can defeat him.

Rowling's writing is characterized by its rich, imaginative world-building and profound exploration of themes such as friendship, courage, identity, and the struggle between good and evil. The characters are intricately developed, with their strengths and weaknesses contributing to the narrative's depth. For instance, Harry embodies bravery and loyalty, while Hermione represents intelligence and resourcefulness. The dynamics of their friendship, along with the loyalty of Ron, form the emotional core of the series.

The series delves into the complexities of adolescence and the importance of personal choices. As Harry matures, he learns that his decisions shape not only his identity but also the fate of those around him. This coming-of-age narrative resonates with readers, making Harry's journey relatable and impactful. Rowling effectively uses the magical elements of the story to address real-life issues, such as prejudice, loss, and the quest for acceptance.

The Harry Potter series has achieved monumental success, selling over 500 million copies worldwide and becoming one of the best-selling book series in history. It has been translated into more than 80 languages, allowing readers from diverse backgrounds to experience the magic of Hogwarts. Additionally, the books have been adapted into a highly successful film franchise, starting with "Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone" (titled "Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone" in the UK) in 2001. The films brought Rowling's vivid imagery and characters to life, further expanding the series' reach and influence.

Beyond the books and films, Rowling has created a vast universe around Harry Potter, including theme parks, merchandise, and stage plays. "Harry Potter and the Cursed Child," a two-part play that premiered in 2016, continues the story of Harry and his friends as adults. The continued interest in the series highlights its cultural significance and the enduring appeal of its themes.

Despite her extraordinary success, Rowling has faced significant challenges, including personal struggles and public controversies. She has been open about her experiences with depression and the difficulties of her early life as a single mother. Furthermore, her views on various social issues have sparked debates, leading to both support and criticism from fans and the public alike.

J.K. Rowling's philanthropic efforts are also noteworthy. She has donated millions to various charities, including her own charity, Lumos, which focuses on supporting disadvantaged children around the world. Her journey from struggling writer to global phenomenon serves as an inspiring narrative of resilience, creativity, and the power of storytelling.

In summary, J.K. Rowling and the Harry Potter series have left an indelible mark on literature and popular culture. Rowling's ability to weave complex themes into an engaging narrative has captivated millions, making her one of the most influential authors of our time. The Harry Potter phenomenon continues to inspire new generations of readers, reminding them of the magic that exists within the world and the importance of love, friendship, and courage.



1 What influenced Rowling's early love for literature?

2 How does Rowling use the magical elements of the story to address real-life issues?

3 How does Harry's character develop throughout the series?

4 What does the continued interest in the series say about its themes and characters?

5 How does her journey from a struggling writer to a successful author inspire others?

Harry Potter and the topic of boredom in the classroom

"Easily the most boring lesson was History of Magic, which was the only class taught by a ghost. Professor Binns had been very old indeed when he had fallen asleep in front of the staff-room fire and got up next morning to teach, leaving his body behind him."

Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone, Chapter 8 (The Potions Master)

Professor Binns teaches History of Magic at Hogwarts and is unique as he is the only ghost among the faculty. He enters his classroom through the blackboard and has a semi-transparent, pearly-white look. After living to a great age, Binns died falling asleep in front of the fire in the staff room. Upon waking up the next morning, he simply went off to class, leaving his body behind as if nothing had changed. His classes are remarkable only for their utter dullness. He reads through endless details of goblin uprisings and giant wars and he can literally "bore students to death".



"Professor Binns opened his notes and began to read in a flat drone like an old vacuum cleaner until nearly everyone in the class was in a deep stupor, occasionally coming round long enough to copy down a name or date, then falling asleep again."

A characteristic image of traditional classroom lectures is presented with the character of professor Binns through the Harry Potter universe. Although being taught by a ghost could easily be exciting, in the case of professor Binns it is utterly boring. Is this really what a lecture is all about? Teachers who love to hear themselves talk and students who are entirely passive if even conscious? Or does it have to do only with the subject of History? Education in the 21st century has moved on suggesting more active methods to use in the classroom such as projects, small groups collaborating, discussions, student presentations.



What is your opinion on the subject? Express your ideas in a paragraph providing justifications:

The myths and folktales behind Harry Potter



Read an article on the website of BBC and write in a few lines what impressed you the most justifying your ideas:

<https://www.bbc.com/culture/article/20161122-the-myths-and-folktales-behind-harry-potter>



Text

1. The Riddle House is described as desolate T
2. A servant found the members of the family dead some decades ago T
3. The inhabitants of Little Hangleton were fond of the Riddles F
4. The majority of the villagers visited the local pub to get more gossip about the mysterious event T
5. The gardener who was arrested had been living inside the Riddle House F
6. He is described by the cook of the house as an antisocial personality T
7. The owner of the pub supported the idea that Frank had been mentally disturbed by the war T
8. Frank testified that he had seen a teenage boy committing the murders F
9. The gardener was released from custody due to lack of evidence against him T

Vocabulary from the Text

Summon	to request to appear, send for
Nasty	unpleasant or annoying
Amid	surrounded by, in the middle of
Derelict	deserted by an owner or keeper, abandoned
Plainly	simply
Scarse	few, lacking
Temper	a state of mind or emotion, disposition
Bewilderment	the condition of being confused or disoriented
Spare	being in excess of what is needed, extra
Decency	conformity to the prevailing standards of propriety, morality, modesty
Suffocate	to kill or destroy by preventing access of air or oxygen



Biographical Text

1 What influenced Rowling's early love for literature?

Rowling's early life was marked by a profound love for literature, instilled in her by her mother, who often read to her.

2 How does Rowling use the magical elements of the story to address real-life issues?

Rowling effectively uses the magical elements of the story to address real-life issues, such as prejudice, loss, and the quest for acceptance.

3 How does Harry's character develop throughout the series?

As Harry matures, he learns that his decisions shape not only his identity but also the fate of those around him. This coming-of-age narrative resonates with readers, making Harry's journey relatable and impactful.

4 What does the continued interest in the series say about its themes and characters?

The continued interest in the series highlights its cultural significance and the enduring appeal of its themes.

5 How does her journey from a struggling writer to a successful author inspire others?

Her journey from struggling writer to global phenomenon serves as an inspiring narrative of resilience, creativity, and the power of storytelling.



The book

[Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire](#) is a [fantasy novel](#) written by the British author [J. K. Rowling](#). It is the fourth novel in the [Harry Potter](#) series. It follows [Harry Potter](#), a wizard in his fourth year at [Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry](#), and the mystery surrounding the entry of Harry's name into the Triwizard Tournament, in which he is forced to compete. **(information from Wikipedia).**

The film

[Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire](#) is a 2005 [fantasy film](#) directed by [Mike Newell](#) from a screenplay by [Steve Kloves](#). It is based on the 2000 novel *[Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire](#)* by [J. K. Rowling](#). It is the [sequel](#) to *[Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban](#)* (2004) and the fourth instalment in the [Harry Potter film series](#). The film stars [Daniel Radcliffe](#) as [Harry Potter](#), alongside [Rupert Grint](#) and [Emma Watson](#) as Harry's best friends [Ron Weasley](#) and [Hermione Granger](#) respectively. The story follows Harry's fourth year at [Hogwarts](#) as he is chosen by the [Goblet of Fire](#) to compete in the Triwizard Tournament. **(information from Wikipedia).**

If you are a fan of the Harry Potter universe, you could check out this site:

<https://www.wizardingworld.com/>

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