

Harry Potter Lesson Plans

These lesson plans accompany “Harry Potter: Last of the Breed” by Tom Durwood (www.empirestudies.com). Students should read that fairly brief article before tackling the following.

1. Do boys and girls read these stories differently?
2. Cultural critic Hank Green said this about HP:

Rowling's most powerful story isn't the battle of good vs. evil. It's the long and lovely explanation of Voldemort's weakness and Harry's strength.

What does that even mean? Is it true? What are Voldemort's weaknesses? What do you think the HP story is 'really about'?

3. Is the Potterverse a caste society?

Scholars have noted that centaurs and giants are relegated to the margins of Wizarding society, that house-elves seem a lot like house-slaves, that concern for “pure blood” comes up quite a lot in the HP saga, and that werewolves are forced into hiding their true identities. Harry himself is clearly an uncrowned king, known by all before he enters the room.

Do you agree? Please give your own views, complete with three examples that support your thesis and one that argues against it.

4. What was the biggest surprise in one of the seven HP books? Looking back, should you have seen it coming?
5. Something happened recently to you, in your real life, that reminds you of an episode in HP. What was it? How was it the same, how was it different?
6. Careful readers have identified fifteen types of magic that are depicted in the Harry Potter stories.

Name seven.

Please describe them. Do certain characters represent a style of magic?

What makes a good magician?

Is there 'magic' in your own life? Please describe what it is, how it works, and who practices it.

7. Compare Harry with your favorite American hero or heroine. How are they the same? How are they different? How does each character solve problems?

Are heroes and heroines depicted in all cultures pretty much the same, or do Japanese and Mexican and French cultures have different tastes in their protagonists?

8. A story's turning point is that moment of high tension in which the rising action crests, and becomes falling action, leading to the story's eventual resolution.

What is the turning point in 'Deathly Hollows'? In 'Prisoner of Azkaban'? In 'Sorcerer's Stone'?

Please cite the *anagnorisis* in each story – this is the moment of truth, when we realize what the story is really all about ("Luke, I am your father!")?

9. One of your friends or relatives bears a strong resemblance to a HP character. Who is it? How are they the same? How are they different?

10. Compare Voldemort to two other villains. Was Voldemort born evil? Is he as evil as a Marvel villain? Did circumstances gang up against him? Can we forgive him?

11. Which HP character dies too soon – I mean *really* too soon? Which death made you the saddest? Is there another character whom you feel was expendable?

12. Name seven different types of love that we encounter in the Harry Potter stories. Be specific. Which is the strongest?

13. Please rank these first sentences, from most interesting to least. What makes for a good opening sentence?

- a) The snow in the mountains was melting and Bunny had been dead for several weeks before we understood the gravity of our situation.

-- *The Secret History*, by Donna Tartt

- b) Mr. and Mrs. Dursley of number four, Privet Drive, were proud to say that they were perfectly normal, thank you very much.

-- *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone*

- c) We slept in what had once been the gymnasium.

-- *The Handmaid's Tale*, by Margaret Atwood

- d) I'd never given much thought to how I would die – though I'd had reason enough in the last few months – but even if I had, I would not have imagined it like this.

-- Stephanie Meyer, *Twilight*

- e) The two men appeared out of nowhere, a few yards apart in the narrow, moonlit lane.

-- *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows*

BONUS: Write your own first sentence. Switch with the student next to you and write the paragraph that follows their first sentence.

14. Which is the best HP book? Why? What is the one-sentence lesson we can take away from each story?

CAPTURING ESSENCE IN 5 LINES

HP Cinquains

DUE IN 20 MINUTES

What is a cinquain?

At the most basic level a cinquain is a five-line poem or stanza.

The poem has one topic and the details describe the topic's actions and feelings.

Here are two approaches.

Method One

Line 1 - one word for the topic

Line 2 - 2 words to describes your topic

Line 3 - 3 words that describes the actions relating to your topic

Line 4 - 4 words that describes the feelings relating to your topic

Line 5 - one word that is another name for your topic

Method Two

Line 1 - two syllables

Line 2 - four syllables

Line 3 - six syllables

Line 4 - eight syllables

Line 5 - two syllables

Sample:

Sisters
Such lovely cats
Running, jumping, purring
Nibbling lovebites, wakeup timeclock
Houseguests

YOUR ASSIGNMENT: Please write a simple yet brilliant cinquain which evokes your Minerva McGonagall.

Now a cinquain to honor your favorite HP character. We will read it aloud, and the class will guess who it is:

Cinquain about an HP character whom you did not fully understand.

Cinquain about yourself at the time you read a particular Harry Potter book (or saw a Harry Potter movie).

CRITICAL THINKING CHALLENGE

Harry Potter General Knowledge Multiple Choice Quizzes

<https://www.magiquiz.com/quiz/only-a-real-wizard-can-pass-this-ultimate-harry-potter-trivia-quiz/>

Your score: _____

<https://www.beano.com/posts/the-ultimate-harry-potter-quiz>

Your score: _____

CRITICAL THINKING ABOUT YOUR FAVORITE MOVIES

Conflict and Resolution

A good writer establishes two things in a story. First, the main character (protagonist) starts out the story with a **need** or a **conflict** to resolve. The conflict can be an inner conflict or one with an external force. Second, the character must **change** by the end of the story – that is, he or she should show that they have become a different (usually wiser) character by all the trials and tribulations of the adventure.

Do the Harry Potter books follow these rules? Tell me what the main character's need or conflict is at the beginning of each story and how he or she changes over the course of the story. How is Ron Weasley's mother different at the end of the saga than she is at the beginning? Please answer three of the following:

Hermione

Need or conflict at the beginning _____

Who or what helps her change? _____

Resolution _____

At the end _____

Ron Weasley's Mother

Need or conflict at the beginning _____

Who or what helps bring about the character's change? _____

Resolution _____

At the end _____

Other Character (You choose)

Need or conflict at the beginning _____

Who or what helps bring about the character's change? _____

Resolution _____

At the end _____

Open Letter to an HP Character

Please write an open letter to a character in the Potterverse. You might ask them to explain their actions, or feelings. You might inquire as to their motives, or ask what they really thought about another character. You could clear up any questions you have about the plot, ask if they lived happily ever after, that sort of thing.

[illegible]

Sincerely yours,

SAMPLE OPEN LETTER

To Optimus Prime

Dear Optimus Prime,

This is a little awkward talking to a Transformer, but I go to a college where crazy things happen all the time. I hope you're still in that box I put you in. Mommy (yes, I still say "mommy" and there's no shame in that) tends to find toys I don't play with a whole lot and give them away to my destructive cousins, who don't know the meaning of "take care of something you care about."

You can ask the other Transformers who are lying there with you, I take care of you guys. But when it comes to my cousins and other little kids that I meet, I see their toys in pieces (and they're not Legos). An invisible tear forms in my eye when I see that, just seeing a good-looking toy torn apart because that little kid wants your leg to bend this way instead of that way.

I know you, Optimus Prime. You can go through anything. You are the leader of the Autobots. Toy companies love making you big and huge like. I just hope you can last long enough for me till I get back.

Friend and Beloved Owner,

Timothy Balinsat

EN 101

Today is Our Haiku Celebration of Harry Potter

Haiku is a poetic form from the Japanese culture. Haiku combines content, and language in a meaningful, yet compact form. Haiku poets, which you will all soon be, write about everyday things -- nature, feelings, or experiences. Usually they use simple words and grammar. The most common form for Haiku is **three short lines**. The first line usually contains five (5) syllables, the second line seven (7) syllables, and the third line contains five (5) syllables. Haiku doesn't rhyme. A Haiku must "paint" a mental image in the reader's mind. The challenge of Haiku - to put the poem's meaning and imagery in the reader's mind in ONLY 17 syllables over just three (3) lines of poetry. Here are two haikus that demonstrate how quickly things can change:

IRS audit

examiner keeps chuckling

without looking up

emergency room

parents tell their child to say

he fell down the stairs

An artful haiku features a **contrast or comparison**. Reading most haiku, you'll notice they either present one idea for the first two lines and then **switch quickly to something else** or do the same with the first line and last two. A Japanese haiku achieves this shift with what is called a **"kireji" or cutting word**, which cuts the poem into two parts. The idea is to create a leap between the two parts, and to create an intuitive realization from what has been called an "internal comparison." These two parts sometimes create a contrast, sometime a comparison.

Please write a haiku celebrating characters from Harry Potter. Use nature. Your haikus must be clever enough to make your teacher and Haiku master laugh out loud.

Harry

What were your *kirejis*? _____

Draco Malvoy

What were your *kirejis*? _____

Snape

Sybill Trelawny

Your Choice

Your teacher and Haiku master
