

# Educational System in Harry Potter Novels

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Studij: Dvopredmetni sveučilišni preddiplomski studij engleskoga jezika i  
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**Obrazovni sustav u romanima o Harryu Potteru**

Završni rad

doc. dr. sc Ljubica Matek

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## Abstract

J.K. Rowling has started her *Harry Potter* book series with the first book titled *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone* which was published in 1997. After that she has published six other *Harry Potter* novels, all of which have become best-sellers. The books gained an incredible amount of attention from both children and adults, which has led to numerous book awards, book translations and adaptations, with the first movie being released in 2001. The novels focus on the adventures and friendship of Harry Potter and his best friends Ron Weasley and Hermione Granger and its popularity lies in the fact that Rowling was able to write stories that are relatable to children as the stories deal with friendship, family, growing up, overcoming obstacles, falling in love and so on. One of the most important parts of a child's life is going to school and so the main setting of the novels is Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry. This paper will focus on education in the *Harry Potter* novels in order to show that, despite taking part in a fantasy universe, the educational system is modelled after real-life system in Britain. Hogwarts offers the same opportunities to its students like regular British schools do. Both are preparing their students for their futures.

**Keywords:** *Harry Potter*, Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry, British boarding schools, career path

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## Introduction

The *Harry Potter* book and movie series has gained immense popularity all over the world. With the books selling more than 500 million copies, the *Harry Potter* book series has become the world's bestselling book series of all time. The story talks about a young boy named Harry Potter and his life after he had found out that he is a wizard. Harry goes to Hogwarts to learn about magic, where he meets his new best friends, Ron Weasley and Hermione Granger, who follow him on his everyday adventures. The book is cherished not only by children, but by young adults who have read the novels growing up. Because the school system offered in Hogwarts resembles the one in British boarding schools, the books created the so-called "Harry Potter effect" which has helped break the negative stereotype of British boarding schools. Children that have read Rowling's novel became intrigued by the storyline. They started seeing boarding schools as places of excitement and adventures where they could find new friends and this paper aims to show that the imagined school for wizards is similar to the regular British school. Apart from the magic, Hogwarts is more or less a normal educational institution. The students attend classes, participate in activities, and have exams and homework.

The paper consists of three parts: Hogwarts, Curriculum and After Hogwarts. The first part of the paper will focus on the history of Hogwarts, the comparison of Hogwarts and a British boarding school, the enrolment process and the explanation of the Hogwarts Houses. The first part of the paper will also explain the meaning of the "Harry Potter effect" and the "boarding school syndrome". The second part of the paper focuses on the curriculum. It will compare the British GCSEs and A-levels with Hogwarts' O.W.L. and N.E.W.T. exams. The paper will further analyse Hogwarts subjects and their possible equivalents. The third part of the paper will give an insight of possible career paths a Hogwarts student can take after his or her graduation.

## 1. Hogwarts

This chapter will give an in depth look into the history of the Hogwarts building as well as the educational system. The thesis framework is built out of the differences and similarities between Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry and the British educational system. The similarities between Hogwarts and a British boarding school can be found in the enrolment process, curriculum and the process of choosing a career path. Since there are no universities in the Magical world of witches and wizards, it is important that the readers of the Harry Potter novels get an insight into the educational system of Hogwarts so that they could understand the life choices of the characters. The novels belong to the genre of children's literature. As the name itself says, children's literature is written for children but today children's literature is read by adults as well. Children's literature is written in a way that can be easily understood by children. It is supposed to help children develop their cognitive and emotional skills. The Harry Potter book series is the first children's literature series that has received enormous attention both from children and adults. The book series started a so-called "Harry Potter effect" which will be explained in chapter 1.2. *Hogwarts as a boarding school*. Children's literature helps spark a love for reading in young children. These books are written in a way that will help children develop their imagination and partially prepare them to deal with various situations that may happen to them in life (death of a loved one, a fight with a friend, falling in love, and so on). J.K. Rowling has created a world of magic and adventure which has helped draw the attention of children. A lot of children and young adults identify with the main characters and therefore they develop some kind of emotional connection with the books. Although the book series deals with the themes of friendship, the supernatural, and the fight between the good and evil, the series also touches upon trauma, death and the problems of adolescents which makes the book series even more attractive to young adult readers.

## 1.1. The history of Hogwarts

Hogwarts is the main setting of the *Harry Potter* novels because most of the novel's action happens at the Hogwarts castle, or at the grounds near Hogwarts. Since the majority of readers of these novels are themselves students, it is easy for them to identify with the protagonists who go through the same or very similar situations as they do. Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry was founded by four greatest witches and wizards of the time: Godric Gryffindor, Rowena Ravenclaw, Helga Hufflepuff and Salazar Slytherin (*Chamber of Secrets* 150). The four Hogwarts founders "shared a wish, a hope, a dream, they hatched a daring plan to educate young sorcerers thus Hogwarts School began" (*Goblet of Fire* 177). The founders were "united by a common goal, they had the selfsame yearning, to make the world's best magic school and pass along their learning" (*Order of the Phoenix* 204). In order to keep Hogwarts safe and Muggles oblivious of the fact that something as magic, wizards and witches exists, the school was concealed with a great number of charms and spells: "If a Muggle looks at it, all they see is a mouldering old ruin with a sign over the entrance saying DANGER, DO NOT ENTER, UNSAFE" (*Goblet of Fire* 166). The Great Lake and the Forbidden Forest are also part of the school ground. First-year students reach Hogwarts by sailing boats on the Great Lake. The Forbidden Forest is strictly off limits for students of all years, because of the many dangers it holds hidden. The Hogwarts castle is a complex building with numerous rooms, corridors, staircases and passageways, most of which are enchanted:

There were a hundred and forty-two staircases at Hogwarts: wide, sweeping ones; narrow, rickety ones; some that led somewhere different on a Friday; some with a vanishing step halfway up that you had to remember to jump. Then there were doors that wouldn't open unless you asked politely, or tickled them in exactly the right place, and doors that weren't really doors at all, but solid walls just pretending. It was also very hard to remember where anything was, because it all seemed to move around a lot. The people in the portraits kept going to visit each other, and Harry was sure the coats of armor could walk. (*Sorcerer's Stone* 131)

Because of the moving staircases and the vanishing rooms, it is impossible for anyone to draw a floor plan or map of Hogwarts. If one looks past the magic, one could say that Hogwarts is more or less a school like any other. It has rooms for different subjects just like classrooms, a

Quidditch pitch which is an equivalent to a football field. The school has a library, a cafeteria, teachers and prefects.

In the movie adaptation of the novels, Hogwarts is shown as a replica of the Christ Church college situated in Oxford, England and the Alnwick Castle situated in the English county of Northumberland. The movie adaptations of *The Philosopher's Stone* and *The Chamber of Secrets* feature the grand staircase and the magnificent Great Hall of the Christ Church college. The Alnwick Castle, built in the late eleventh century, has served as another magnificent filming location for *The Philosopher's Stone* and *The Chamber of Secrets*. The Outer Bailey can be recognized as the spot where Harry and the other students learned to fly their broomsticks and the Lion Arch can be recognized as the passageway Harry and his friends took to go to Hagrid's cabin and the Forbidden Forest.

## 1.2. Hogwarts as a boarding school

Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry can be compared to a British boarding school. A boarding school is a school which offers not only education but also an accommodation to its students. Students that are enrolled in a boarding school stay there during the whole school year, however most boarding schools in the United Kingdom close down during long holidays, so the students are sent home to their parents or guardians. Some boarding schools are either boys' boarding schools or girls' boarding schools while others are co-educational boarding schools. Another categorization of boarding schools is the one into independent private schools and state schools. Even though private boarding schools are considered to be better than state boarding schools, they still receive a lot of criticism for being elitist and for segregating children.

Just like a British boarding school, Hogwarts has residential houses: Gryffindor, Hufflepuff, Ravenclaw and Slytherin and each house has a head teacher that is responsible for the students of their house. Hogwarts is a co-educational boarding school which means that both girls and boys can attend it. Each house has a boys' and girls' dormitory which is connected with a shared common room. Boarding schools have a dress code. In the United Kingdom, students of a boarding school are required to wear the school uniform until their school activities are finished. They are not allowed to change their hair colour or shave their hair. Girls are allowed to have one earring in each ear, while other kinds of piercings are forbidden ("Dress Code"). Hogwarts students are also required to follow a dress code. They need to have three sets of plain work robes, one plain pointed hat for day wear, one pair of protective gloves and one winter cloak (*Philosopher's Stone* 51). Unlike British boarding schools, Hogwarts stays open even during the long holiday season allowing the students to stay at their dormitory:

It was true that Harry wasn't going back to Privet Drive for Christmas. Professor McGonagall had come around the week before, making a list of students who would be staying for the holidays, and Harry had signed up at once. He didn't feel sorry for himself at all; this would probably be the best Christmas he'd ever had. (*Sorcerer's Stone* 195)

A boarding school should be a safe and friendly environment. It should encourage students to make new friendships and make them feel like they are at home. The Hogwarts houses can be

looked at as a family system. Each student is put in a specific house for a reason and being part of a certain house creates a feeling of belonging. Harry was not the only one who felt that Hogwarts was his home. Even Lord Voldemort in his early days has considered Hogwarts as the place “where he had been happiest and the first and only place he had felt at home” (*Half-Blood Prince* 431). The tuition at state schools in the United Kingdom is free, but the boarding is not. The boarding costs at a state school are around £11,790 per year (“Fees”). The cost of tuition and boarding at a private boarding school can range from £20, 000 to £30,000 per year (“Private education ‘costs £286,000’ on average”). Since not a lot of people can afford a private boarding school for their children, those boarding schools are considered elitist. There were speculations about how much boarding at Hogwarts would cost and people estimated that the cost would be more than £43, 000 per year (Alter). In July of 2015, J.K. Rowling has clarified the question of Hogwarts tuition costs by tweeting: “There’s no tuition fee! The Ministry of Magic covers the cost of all magical education!” (@jk\_rowling). Since the tuition at Hogwarts is free, it offers an opportunity for everyone who wants to learn about magic to enrol, regardless of their Wizarding social class and socioeconomic status.

Boarding schools can be attended by international students who possess a visa (“Boarding schools”). Hogwarts can be attended by Pure-blooded, as well as Muggle-born witches and wizards. Hogwarts is not the only school for witches and wizards. In *Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire* Draco mentions how he almost attended Durmstrang instead of Hogwarts:

Father actually considered sending me to Durmstrang rather than Hogwarts, you know. He knows the headmaster, you see. Well, you know his opinion of Dumbledore – the man’s such a Muddblood-lover – and Durmstrang doesn’t admit that sort of riffraff. But mother didn’t like the idea of me going to school so far away. (*The Goblet of Fire* 165)

Students attending Hogwarts must follow the school rules and policy, otherwise they will be punished. There are different types of punishment given depending on the degree of the rule breaking: confiscation of possessions, house point deduction, detention, removal of privileges, parent or guardian notification, suspension and expulsion (“Discipline at Hogwarts”). House point deduction is the most common punishment. It is also unfair, because it does not only affect the student that has committed a wrongdoing, but it affects the whole house.

The *Harry Potter* novels had a significant impact on British boarding schools. After the books got released, the enrolment into boarding schools increased. Nick Ward, chairman of the Boarding School Association of Great Britain and headmaster of the Royal Hospital School in Holbrook, Suffolk, named this phenomenon “the Harry Potter effect.” Ward said, “I think it takes more than a young boy being a wizard to make up someone’s mind, but one thing the books have done is promote to children the idea that boarding schools can be exciting places” (“Harry Potter’s Strange Secret of Hogwarts”).

In contrast to the “Harry Potter effect”, there is the “Boarding School Syndrome”. In her book, *Boarding School Syndrome: The Psychological Trauma of the ‘Privileged’ Child*, Dr Joy Schaverien explained how younger boarders get negatively affected by having to leave home at such an early age. Leaving home at an early age may result in anxiety, depression, feeling of isolation, and low self-esteem. Those are all symptoms of the “boarding school syndrome” (Partridge). The characters of the *Harry Potter* novels did not experience the “boarding school syndrome” because students start attending Hogwarts when they become 11 years old. At this age it is very unlikely that students would be affected by the “boarding school syndrome” and, moreover, the students of Hogwarts seem to be very excited about the opportunity to study magic and wizardry which reduces their stress and anxiety of separation. The idea that going away to school may be positive and exciting may help the readers cope with their own stress concerning education away from home.

### 1.3. Enrolment and Hogwarts Houses

Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry is a school for children who have shown signs of magic from an early age. On the Pottermore website, J.K. Rowling describes the process by which the students are selected for Hogwarts. In the post, she explains the existence of the Quill of Acceptance and the Book of Admittance. The quill and the book are kept in a small locked tower. The Quill of Acceptance and the Book of Admittance are responsible for the student selection process (“The Quill of Acceptance”).

According to Rowling, the Book of Admittance refuses to have a name written in it until it receives enough evidence of the child's magical ability. The child whose name gets written in the Book of Admittance will receive a Hogwarts acceptance letter when he or she turns eleven years old. The letter contains a note of acceptance from the Deputy Headmaster or Headmistress of Hogwarts, a list of required textbooks and materials for the school year (*Sorcerer's Stone* 51). Pure-blooded witches and wizards get their letters delivered by an owl, whereas Muggle-born witches and wizards get their letters delivered by a Hogwarts professor who explains everything about magic and Hogwarts to the children and their parents or guardians. Harry Potter received his letter during his summer holidays by regular Muggle post, because his uncle and aunt knew about Hogwarts. The school knows if a child has read his or her letter, and in Harry's case his uncle refused to give him his letter so the house got swamped with letters delivered by owls:

Something came whizzing down the kitchen chimney as he spoke and caught him sharply on the back of the head. Next moment, thirty or forty letters came pelting out of the fireplace like bullets. The Dursleys ducked, but Harry leapt into the air trying to catch one. (*Sorcerer's Stone* 41)

In the end the school had to send Rubeus Hagrid, the Keeper of Keys and Grounds at Hogwarts, to deliver the letter to Harry.

After the students get enrolled into Hogwarts, they get sorted into one of the four Hogwarts Houses. The sorting is performed at the beginning of every school year during the Sorting ceremony with the help of the Sorting hat. The Sorting hat is a magical hat that decides into which Hogwarts house a student belongs. The Sorting hat is placed on a stool in the Great Hall where it first sings a song about the four founders of the Hogwarts houses. After that, the first year students are called up in alphabetical order to come and sit on the



stool and wear the hat. The hat looks at the qualities and values a student has and the qualities and values a student could earn in a certain house and then decides where a student belongs. Sometimes the hat's decision can be influenced by the desires of the student:

Harry gripped the edges of the stool and thought, Not Slytherin, not Slytherin. "Not Slytherin, eh?" said the small voice. "Are you sure? You could be great, you know, it's all here in your head, and Slytherin will help you on the way to greatness, no doubt about that – no? Well, if you're sure – better be GRYFFINDOR!" (*Sorcerer's Stone* 121)

Every Hogwarts House values different qualities. Gryffindor values bravery, daring, nerve and chivalry. Hufflepuff values justice, loyalty, patience and hard work. Ravenclaw values wisdom, wit and intelligence. Slytherin values cunning, ambition and resourcefulness (*Sorcerer's Stone* 118). Every house has its own head professor and house ghost. Gryffindor is headed by professor Minerva McGonagall and Sir Nicholas de Mimsy-Porpington. Hufflepuff is headed by professor Pomona Sprout and the Fat Friar, Ravenclaw by Filius Flitwick and the Grey Lady, and finally, Slytherin by Severus Snape and the Bloody Baron. Every year the four houses compete for the House Cup. The House Cup gets awarded to the house that has earned the most points. The points are given by the teachers and prefects for doing good deeds and answering questions in class. The House also receives points if its Quidditch team wins the competition. Anytime a student misbehaves he would lose house points: "While you are at Hogwarts, your triumphs will earn your House points, while any rule-breaking will lose House points" (*Sorcerer's Stone* 114). At the end of the year, the Great Hall gets decorated with the colours and banners of the Hogwarts House which won the House Cup: "It was decked out in the Slytherin colors of green and silver to celebrate Slytherin's winning the house cup for the seventh year in a row. A huge banner showing the Slytherin serpent covered the wall behind the High Table" (*Sorcerer's Stone* 304). This competition is a great way to motivate students to excel in studying or activities like Quidditch and it brings the students of a Hogwarts House closer together.

The process of enrolment into a British boarding school is different from the one described in the *Harry Potter* novels as it does not contain the "magical" part. The students of a British boarding school are not automatically enrolled when they turn a certain age. They have to research different boarding schools and then choose one they would like to apply to. Sometimes students have to apply two years in advance for a boarding school, because

boarding schools have limited boarding places and not everyone that applies can get accepted. After choosing a boarding school the students are required to take an entrance exam and an interview, which is not the case for Hogwarts students. International students are required to take an English exam and they take English classes after enrolment. After the application procedure the students wait for an acceptance or rejection letter (“UK boarding school admissions tips”). Apart from the enrolment process, the boarding school life at Hogwarts is the same as the one in a British boarding school. The students have lessons, homework, exams, after school activities, meals at the cafeteria and time to socialize with their friends.

## 2. Curriculum

### 2.1. Exams

Exam period is the most stressful time for any student. That is the time when students are concentrated on studying day and night in order to finish their exams with the best grade possible. Most students take these exams seriously because they know that they are the crucial factor that will determine their future. These exams will open many opportunities for them, depending on how well they do. In the United Kingdom students take GCSE exams followed up by A-level exams. Students are required to take both examinations in order to apply for a university. GCSE (*General Certificate of Secondary Education*) exams are taken by students in year 11. They choose for themselves how many GCSEs they want to take. The average number of GCSEs a student takes is 9 (“How Many GCSEs Can You Take (In 2019)?”). Studying for GCSEs is easier than studying for A-levels because it is less time consuming and the students are guided by their teacher which means that they can just study the content provided by their teachers. A-level (*Advanced Level*) exams are taken by students in year 12 and 13. Students usually take 3 or 4 A-level exams (“A Levels”). The students choose their exams depending on their own interests and what exams are required by a certain university. Studying for A-levels is much harder because the students are expected to be independent by then and they are expected to do their own research and find the materials needed for preparing for these exams. GCSEs are graded with numbers from 1 to 9, with 9 being the highest and 1 the lowest grade (Sellgren). A-levels are graded with letters from A\* to E, with A\* being the highest and E the lowest grade (Clark).

Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry has its own examination system. The students at Hogwarts take O.W.L. and N.E.W.T. exams which are equivalent to GCSEs and A-levels in British schools. O.W.L. stands for *Ordinary Wizarding Level (Order of the Phoenix 232)* and is taken by fifth year students. The passing of O.W.L. exams will bring students closer to their desired job position: “OWLs are really important, affect the jobs you can apply for and everything. We get career advice, too, later this year, Bill told me. So you can choose what NEWTs you want to do next year” (*Order of the Phoenix 228*). Since the O.W.L. exams determine the future of the students taking them, many students experience stress and an enormous amount of pressure which can lead to panic attacks, minor breakdowns and even fainting (*Order of the Phoenix 226*). Most O.W.L.s consist of written

exams and practical exams. The duration of the exam period is 2 weeks: “your OWLs are spread over two successive weeks. You will sit the theory papers in the mornings and the practice in the afternoons. Your practical Astronomy examination will, of course, take place at night” (*Order of the Phoenix* 708). O.W.L.s have a letter grading system. There are 6 grades in total, 3 passing grades and 3 failing grades: O - Outstanding, E - Exceeds Expectations, A - Acceptable, P - Poor, D - Dreadful, T – Troll (*Order of the Phoenix* 310). Students that receive an “Outstanding” or “Exceeds Expectations” grade usually continue to the N.E.W.T. level. N.E.W.T. stands for *Nastily Exhausting Wizarding Test* and is taken by students in their seventh year (*Order of the Phoenix* 227). The grading system for N.E.W.T. exams is the same as the one for O.W.L. exams. Many professors require their students to have either an “Outstanding” or “Exceeds Expectations” grade in order to let them in their N.E.W.T. classes: “And I ought to tell you now, Potter, that I do not accept students into my NEWT classes unless they have achieved “Exceeds Expectations” or higher at Ordinary Wizarding Level” (*Order of the Phoenix* 662).

Studying for exams is stressful for every student. Even the top grade students get nervous before an important exam, but nervousness may not be such a bad thing because a lot of students perform better when they are nervous and anxious: “I never feel you perform as well in exams if you’re not a bit nervous” (*Order of the Phoenix* 403). Students tend to have different approaches when it comes to exams. Some of them are like Ron Weasley and give up when they encounter something hard while studying, thinking they will not be able to remember anything (*Sorcerer’s Stone* 229), or they invent facts while writing their exam (*Order of the Phoenix* 400). Some of them are like Ernie Macmillan studying for eight or more hours a day and going around asking others if they are revising (*Order of the Phoenix* 706). And some of them are like Hermione Granger and want to go through the exam questions with their friends after they have finished an exam (*Order of the Phoenix* 712).

When it comes to studying and taking exams, Hogwarts students are the same as the students at any British school. They study alone or in groups, revise the day before an exam and compare their answers after an exam: “Exam week began and an unnatural hush fell over the castle. The third-years emerged from Transfiguration at lunch-time on Monday limp and ashen-faced, comparing results and bemoaning the difficulty of the tasks they had been set” (*Prisoner of Azkaban* 317). Students are often tempted to cheat during an exam. Hogwarts is particularly strict when it comes to cheating and in order to stop anything like that from happening they put anti-cheating charms on the examination papers:

Now, I must warn you that the most stringent anti-cheating charms have been applied to your examination papers. Auto-Answer Quills are banned from the examination hall, as are Remembralls, Detachable Cribbing Cuffs and Self-Correcting Ink. Every year, I am afraid to say, seems to harbour at least one student who thinks that he or she can get around the Wizarding Examinations Authority's rules. (*Order of the Phoenix* 708)

Students that do well on their O.W.L. exams will be accepted into a N.E.W.T. class and if they do well on their N.E.W.T. exams they will have a better chance at getting a desired job position. For example, to get to an Auror position students are required to take a minimum of five NEWTs and get all "Exceeds Expectations" grades. In addition, they have to undergo a series of character and aptitude tests at the Auror office (*Order of the Phoenix* 662). However, not every student wishes to take the N.E.W.T. which is acceptable because it is not obligatory. There are many jobs that accept people who only have O.W.L. grades. Fred and George Weasley decided not to take the N.E.W.T. exams and instead they opened a joke shop:

'We are not going to waste our last year here, though,' said Fred, looking affectionately around at the Great Hall. 'We're going to use it to do a bit of market research, find out exactly what the average Hogwarts student requires from a joke shop, carefully evaluate the results of our research, then produce products to fit the demand.' (*Order of the Phoenix* 227)

Students are expected to make their own decisions about their future. They decide what they would like to do in the future and what tests they want to take in order to accomplish that. It is up to them to study hard and try their best to get the grades that would help them achieve their dreams. When young readers see their beloved protagonists make such decisions, it prepares them to do the same one day in real life.

## 2.2. Hogwarts subjects and their equivalents in the non-fictional world of British education

First-year students must take seven obligatory subjects: Transfiguration, Charms, Potions, History of Magic, Defence Against the Dark Arts, Astronomy and Herbology (*Sorcerer's Stone* 133). The subjects become more complex as students advance into a new school year. At the end of the second year, the students are required to choose additional classes. They can choose from the following: Arithmancy, Muggle Studies, Divination, Study of Ancient Runes and Care of Magical Creatures (*Chamber of Secrets* 252). If time permits them, the students can take as many electives as they want. Hermione Granger managed to attend all elective classes with the help of a *Time-Turner* that was given to her by professor McGonagall:

She had to write all sorts of letters to the Ministry of Magic so I could have one. She had to tell them that I was a model student, and that I'd never, ever use it for anything except my studies... I've been turning it back so I could do hours over again, that's how I've been doing several lessons at once. (*Prisoner of Azkaban* 395)

Subjects studied at Hogwarts can, to some degree, be connected with certain sciences and practices. Potions can be compared to Chemistry, because students learn how to mix different kinds of liquids and ingredients to create a potion. The same thing is done by students in Chemistry class in order to make experiments. History of Magic is equivalent to History. Hogwarts students study about Goblin rebellions, Giant wars and other historical events that happened in the Wizarding world. History of Magic is described by the students as the most boring class (*Sorcerer's Stone* 133). Defence Against the Dark Arts (D.A.D.A.) is a class where students learn to defend themselves from the Dark Arts and creatures (*Chamber of Secrets* 101). Although D.A.D.A. does not have an equivalent school subject in British schools, it can be seen as a type of self-defence that is learned in sports such as Krav Maga, Jiu-Jitsu and Aikido. Astronomy is the only subject studied at Hogwarts that has a real equivalent in "real life" studies. In this class students observe the night sky and learn about the names of stars, constellations and planets, as well as their movement (*Sorcerer's Stone* 133). Herbology is a study of magical plants and fungi. The students learn how to take care of those plants and what they are used for (*Sorcerer's Stone* 133). A real life equivalent of Herbology is Botany. Based on the textbook "Numerology and Grammatica" that is used for

Arithmancy, one can say that Arithmancy is equivalent to Numerology. According to Collins dictionary, “Numerology is the study of particular numbers, such as a person’s date of birth, in the belief that they may have a special significance in a person’s life”.

Muggle studies is a class in which students learn about the history of Muggles and their daily lives. Muggle studies is equivalent to Cultural studies. It is interesting to note that Hermione Granger, who has Muggles as parents, was extremely interested in Muggle studies because she thought it was fascinating to study about Muggles from a wizarding point of view (*Prisoner of Azkaban* 57). Divination is a class where the students learn various methods to predict the future. According to professor McGonagall, Divination is one of the most imprecise branches of magic (*Prisoner of Azkaban* 109). Even Hermione Granger who is an eager student refers to it as “guesswork” (*Prisoner of Azkaban* 111). Divination can be compared to fortune telling in the real world. Just like fortune tellers, the students who attend Divination class are required to learn about palmistry, fire omens, crystal balls and other methods used for fortune telling. The Study of Ancient Runes can be an equivalent to a foreign language with a different alphabet system such as Korean (Hangul) and Japanese (Hiragana, Katakana), since Hermione mentions mistranslating a word on one of her exams (*Order of the Phoenix* 715). Care of Magical Creatures is an elective class where students learn about magical creatures and how to treat those creatures. A real life equivalent would be Zoology.

Aside from Astronomy, there is no subject that is taught at Hogwarts that has an exact equivalent in the real world. There are, however, subjects that are similar to our subjects, such as Potions, History of Magic, Muggle studies and the Study of Ancient Runes, and all of them – however fantastic they may be – have the goal to show the readers that every subject has its own purpose and that it is important to learn various things in order to be more successful later on.

## 3. After Hogwarts

### 3.1. Choosing a career path

After finishing the seventh year, the students graduate from Hogwarts. Based on the fact that Harry has started his first year at Hogwarts when he turned eleven years old, Hogwarts graduates are presumably around seventeen and eighteen years old. In the United Kingdom, high school graduates have a chance to continue their studies at a university of their choice, but this is not the case with Hogwarts graduates. Aside from Hogwarts, there are no further educational institutions in the Wizarding world. After finishing their Hogwarts education, the students are supposed to find a job. The job position they can apply for will depend on how well they did on their O.W.L. and N.E.W.T. exams.

This system is similar to the one in the United Kingdom, where students have to get good grades on their GCSEs and A-levels to be able to apply for a university or job position of their choice. Hogwarts students experience the same amount of stress as the regular students in the United Kingdom, and reading about the situations that troubles them, helps the readers (children and young adults) in dealing with stress or making decisions in the real world. The pressure of choosing a career path at a young age is unbearable and a lot of students are afraid of making a wrong choice:

The majority of us do not know what we want to do when we finish education – let alone when we're halfway through. And the few who do know what they want often rethink their choice as they develop and grow. Who I am now isn't who I might be in the future, and education and recruitment system needs to give us the space and time to make the right career choices. (Lane)

There is a variety of jobs in the world of wizards and witches, ranging from a position at the *Ministry of Magic* to owning one's own private business. Young witches and wizards are encouraged to start thinking about their future careers in their second year of studies. They are supposed to pick their elective classes for the next year and those are going to have an impact on their future occupation. Harry and Ron were interested in pursuing a career as an *Auror*, while Hermione was unsure about what she would like to do in the future. Even though Hermione had excellent grades that would help her get any job position she wanted, she was



still indecisive. The only thing she knew was that she wanted to do something worthwhile (*Order of the Phoenix* 228).

After the seventh book got released in 2007., J.K. Rowling revealed that Harry and Ron “revolutionized the Auror department” and Harry later became the head of the department, while Hermione got “pretty high up” in the *Department of Magical Law Enforcement* (“J.K. Rowling goes Beyond the Epilogue”). The *Ministry of Magic* consists of seven departments: *Department of Magical Law Enforcement*, *Department of Magical Games and Sports*, *Department of International Magical Cooperation*, *Department of Magical Accidents and Catastrophes*, *Department of Magical Transportation*, *Department of Mysteries* and the *Department for the Regulation and Control of Magical Creatures* (Vanderark). It is very likely that a lot of Hogwarts students end up working for the *Ministry of Magic*. Some students might open their own business like Fred and George Weasley opened their joke shop “Weasley’s Wizard Wheezes” (*Half-Blood Prince* 115). Others might become writers or journalists like Rita Skeeter from the *Daily Prophet*. Some might even get the chance to become Hogwarts professors or professional Quidditch players.

Choosing a career path is not easy, especially when you have to choose from numerous job positions ranging from a position as a bartender at Hogsmeade’s “Three Broomsticks” to becoming a dragon keeper in Romania. Even though ordinary students do not have the opportunity to become dragon keepers or Aurors, they still get to choose from an incredible variety of jobs and Rowling's novels help them put things into perspective and relieve some of the stress they feel. The reason why both Hogwarts and ordinary students get encouraged to study seriously and do well on their exams is so that later they get an opportunity to choose an exciting and interesting career path instead of a mundane one.

### 3.2. Career paths in the Wizarding world

The Wizarding world is full of opportunities for those who decide to work hard and do well. J.K. Rowling has introduced a variety of career paths in her *Harry Potter* novels. Most of those careers are extremely dangerous and only people who have enough skill and bravery can excel in them. By doing this, Rowling encourages the readers to find something they are good at and to further develop that skill because it might be helpful in the future. Rowling has shown that sometimes it takes more than just knowledge to get us through certain problems and situations in life. In the *Harry Potter* series, Hermione is the only character that tries to solve all problems with critical thinking and the knowledge she possesses. Harry, on the other hand, solves problems with his skills and courage. Sometimes it takes both knowledge and skills to get through a problem. Harry, Ron and Hermione are a perfect example of teamwork. They show a perfect interplay between knowledge, skill and courage which helps them get through difficult situations. In the first year, Hermione would have been killed by a troll if it were not for the courage of Harry and Ron (*Sorcerer's Stone* 175). On a different occasion, the boys would have been strangled by a magical plant if it were not for Hermione's knowledge of spells (*Sorcerer's Stone* 278). In this way, J.K. Rowling does not only promote creative thinking but teamwork as well. Both children and young adults can learn that in order to achieve something in life they need to work on themselves.

Harry and Ron were both interested in becoming an *Auror* while discussing what career path they wanted to take (*Order of the Phoenix* 228). *Aurors* are like police officers of the Wizarding world. Their job is to catch Dark wizards (*Goblet of Fire* 161). *Aurors* were allowed to use *Unforgivable curses* in order to stop Voldemort's supporters (*Goblet of Fire* 527). Becoming an *Auror* is not easy. In order to become one, one must get an "Exceeds Expectations" grade in all their N.E.W.T.s (*Order of the Phoenix* 662) and then undergo different kinds of tests and training like "Concealment and Disguise" and "Stealth and Tracking" (*Order of the Phoenix* 52). One of the most famous *Aurors* was Alastor Moddy. During his work as an *Auror* he has sent numerous criminals to Azkaban (*Goblet of Fire* 161). Moddy was the one that has sparked Harry's interest in becoming an *Auror*.

The Wizarding world has their own doctors and nurses called *Healers* and *Medi wizards*. *Healers* can be found working at St Mungo's Hospital for Magical Maladies and Injuries, as well as at different places like the hospital wing of Hogwarts and Quidditch

games. *Healers* are trained to help those suffering from accidents and injuries. They can do incredible things, like growing one's bones. After Harry had a Quidditch accident, professor Lockhart tried to help him with a spell but he accidentally removed Harry's bones. Madam Pomfrey was able to heal Harry with a "Skele-Gro" potion (*Chamber of Secrets* 174).

Many young wizards and witches start working for the *Ministry of Magic*. Percy Weasley is an example of a son following his father's career path. Mr Weasley works for the *Misuse of Muggle Artefacts Office* (*Chamber of Secrets* 221) and Percy Weasley started his career at the *Department of International Magical Cooperation* (*Goblet of Fire* 36). While Ron describes Percy's job as boring and annoying, Percy seems to be really enjoying it to the point that Ron declares that he is obsessed with his work (*Goblet of Fire* 57). Bill Weasley chose an adventurous career path which is the career of a *Curse-Breaker*. The job of a *Curse-Breaker* is to break curses placed on objects or places of living. *Curse-Breakers* work for the Gringotts Wizarding Bank and their job involves a lot of travelling, adventures and danger (*Order of the Phoenix* 657). Bill is working in Egypt, which is why the family decided to go there on summer holiday (*Prisoner of Azkaban* 9). Charlie is another Weasley who has chosen an exciting and dangerous career path. Charlie has gone to Romania to become a *dragon keeper*. Both Bill and Charlie seem to be very good at their jobs, because their jobs are so dangerous that if they did not possess enough skills they would have been killed already.

Not every job in the Wizarding world is life threatening. Being a Hogwarts professor, for example, is not a dangerous career but at the same time it is not a mundane career either because they teach different children and seeing them learn and advance is very satisfying. Moreover, as long as there are troublemaker students, like the Weasley twins, trying to break the school rules and doing tricks and pranks, the work of a Hogwarts professor will never be boring. There was even a rumour going around about the *Defence Against the Dark Arts* position saying that the position was jinxed (*Chamber of Secrets* 115), which makes the job of a teacher even more interesting. One of the most important occupations of the Wizarding world is that of a *Wandmaker*. A *Wandmaker* is a person that makes and sells wands to young witches and wizards. Harry and his friends have bought their wands by Mr Ollivander in his wand shop that has been open since 382 B.C. (*Sorcerer's Stone* 82). *Wandmakers* use different things to make wands, such as unicorn hair, phoenix tail feathers and the heartstrings of dragons (*Sorcerer's Stone* 84). As Mr Ollivander said, a wand chooses the wizard, and not the other way around, so being able to witness which wand is going to choose which wizard or witch is quite exciting and interesting (*Sorcerer's Stone* 82).

A job as a book writer, newspaper columnist or journalist would be perfect for those who like creative writing or reporting. *The Daily Prophet* is an example of a newspaper that witches and wizards read mostly for entertainment. *The Daily Prophet* is known for printing inaccuracies. For instance, the interview Harry did with Rita Skeeter, a journalist of *the Daily Prophet*, has changed everything Harry had said to something sensational and inaccurate (*Goblet of Fire* 306). Witches and wizards look for entertainment, but not every one of them will find it in a book or newspaper. Most of them prefer going to a Quidditch game. Being a *professional Quidditch player* is another interesting occupation. Quidditch is a wizarding sport that is played on broomsticks. J.K. Rowling revealed in an interview that Ginny Weasley decided to pursue a Quidditch career. She played for the Holyhead Harpies after which she became a Quidditch correspondent for *the Daily Prophet* (“J.K. Rowling goes Beyond the Epilogue”).

Like the real world, the Wizarding world is full of opportunities for those who work hard and are passionate about something. Students at Hogwarts are guided by their teachers when the time of choosing their future career path comes. Some might choose to work for the *Ministry of Magic*, and some might choose to open up their own business. Some may even continue a family tradition and follow in their father’s footsteps. Some wizarding occupations can be extremely dangerous, and yet there are many brave witches and wizards who apply for such job positions. A teaching job is the only job position that exists both in the Wizarding and the real world, although many wizarding occupations can be compared to real-life occupations. For example, *Healers* and *Mediowizards* are the doctors and nurses of the Wizarding world and *professional Quidditch players* are the famous sportspersons of the real world.

## Conclusion

If one looks beyond the magic, one can say that Hogwarts is like any other educational institution. Hogwarts has its history, founders, educational personnel and students. It can be seen as a typical boarding school. The four Hogwarts Houses function as a family system and help the students build new friendships. Discipline is very important in every educational institution. Although Hogwarts gives its students a lot of freedom, there are still certain rules and policies that the students have to follow. Every rule breaking will result in a punishment, and every good deed will be awarded. The House Cup competition promotes team spirit and teamwork, which is promoted in every school. Since the *Harry Potter* novels shed a positive light on boarding schools, they have created a so-called “Harry Potter effect” which beats the “boarding school syndrome”. Boarding schools used to be considered as depressing and scary places for young children but Rowling’s *Harry Potter* novels helped to promote boarding schools as exciting and interesting places. The “Harry Potter effect” has caused more children wanting to attend a boarding school, but the enrolment process is not as easy as portrayed in the books. To get accepted into a boarding school, one must fill out many forms and go through interviews. Hogwarts prepares its students straight for a career path because there are no universities in the Wizarding world. Unlike at Hogwarts, the students of British schools can choose if they want to attend university or work after high school. Nevertheless, they still have to take their final exams in order to prepare for the future. Just like British students study for their GCSE and A-level exams, Hogwarts students study for O.W.L. and N.E.W.T. exams. These exams are supposed to help them get a desired job position. Choosing a career path is not easy, that is why a lot of students get counselling. J.K. Rowling has introduced many job occupations in the *Harry Potter* books, many of which can be compared to real life occupations. For example, a Healer is an equivalent of a doctor. The books teach children the meaning of friendship and love, as well as how their actions can have consequences.

In conclusion, the biggest difference between Hogwarts and a British boarding school is magic. Apart from that, Hogwarts functions as a regular boarding school that offers its students both education and a place to stay. It has a typical school system which includes the enrolment process, classes and exams. Hogwarts is supposed to help the students learn how to use and control their magic and prepare them for their future, just like a British school teaches its students how to use their knowledge and talents to achieve their goals and excel in life.

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