

# Literacy Skills Teacher's Guide for Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince

by  
J.K. Rowling

## Book Information

J.K. Rowling, Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince  
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As classes continue for sixth-year students at Hogwarts, Harry Potter searches for the full and complex story of the boy who became Lord Voldemort, thereby finding what may be his only vulnerability. Book #6

**Award:** ALA Best Book for Young Adults; Booklist Editors' Choice; Mythopoeic Fantasy Award for Children's Literature; Oppenheim Toy Portfolio Gold/Platinum Award; Quill Book Awards; YALSA Top Ten

**Topics:** Fantasy/Imagination, Magic; Good and Evil, Good and Evil (All); People, Royalty; Popular Groupings, Middle Grades Popular Authors/Starred Reviews; Recommended Reading, Coop. Children's Book Center; Recommended Reading, YALSA Teens' Top Ten; Series, Harry Potter

## Main Characters

Albus Dumbledore Headmaster of Hogwarts and leader of the Order of the Phoenix; he is considered to be the most powerful wizard in the world

Arthur Weasley Ron's father, who works at the Ministry of Magic and is a member of the Order of the Phoenix

Bill Weasley Ron's older brother who is engaged to Fleur Delacour; he is injured by the werewolf Greyback

Cormac McLaggen a Gryffindor student, Ron's rival for the position of Keeper on the Gryffindor Quidditch team

Dean Thomas a Gryffindor student and Ginny Weasley's boyfriend

Dobby a house-elf freed by Harry, who now works at Hogwarts; Harry asks him to follow Draco Malfoy

Draco Malfoy a student in Slytherin House and Harry's worst enemy; Harry suspects Draco is now a Death Eater like his father

Fenrir Greyback a werewolf who injured Bill Weasley

Fleur Delacour Bill Weasley's fiancée

Fred and George Weasley Ron's older twin brothers who opened a joke shop in Diagon Alley

Ginny Weasley a student in Gryffindor House and Ron's popular younger sister; Harry develops a crush on her

Hagrid a half-giant who is the groundskeeper of Hogwarts and a teacher there

Harry Potter the 16-year-old hero of the book; Harry is the subject of a prophecy that he and Voldemort must one day face each other in battle

Hepzibah Smith an old woman who, when smitten by the young Tom Riddle, shows him her secret treasures: Hufflepuff's cup and Slytherin's locket; Riddle later kills her and steals the treasures

Hermione Granger a Muggle-born witch and one of Harry's best friends; she is developing feelings for Ron Weasley

Hokey a house-elf belonging to Hepzibah Smith; Riddle modified her memory, and she took the blame for Hepzibah's death

Horace Slughorn the newly recruited Professor of Potions at Hogwarts; Slughorn is obsessed with making the acquaintance of potentially powerful and influential young wizards

Katie Bell a seventh-year Hogwarts student and a Chaser for the Gryffindor Quidditch team; Katie is cursed by a mysterious necklace given to her in the bathroom of the Three Broomsticks

Kreacher a house-elf who belonged to the Black family and now belongs to Harry; Harry tells him to spy on Draco Malfoy

Lavender Brown a Gryffindor student and Ron's new girlfriend

Lord Voldemort the powerful Dark Wizard who killed Harry's parents and tried to kill Harry; Voldemort has divided his soul into seven pieces, making him immortal and soulless

Luna Lovegood a student in Ravenclaw House; she is often mocked for her strange ideas and behaviors but is a good-hearted person

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**Marvolo Gaunt** Lord Voldemort's grandfather who comes from a very ancient wizarding family

**Merope Gaunt** Lord Voldemort's mother, who died shortly after his birth

**Minerva McGonagall** the Head of House for Gryffindor, the Hogwarts Transfiguration teacher, the Deputy Headmistress of Hogwarts, and a member of the Order of the Phoenix

**Molly Weasley** Ron's mother and a member of the Order of the Phoenix

**Morfin Gaunt** the half-mad son of Marvolo Gaunt who can speak to snakes; he takes the blame when his nephew Lord Voldemort kills the whole Riddle family

**Neville Longbottom** a student in Gryffindor House whose parents had been tortured into insanity by the Death Eaters

**Nymphadora Tonks** a young Auror, a metamorphmagus and a shape-shifter; she is in love with Remus Lupin

**Romilda Vane** a Gryffindor student who pursues a romantic interest in Harry

**Ron Weasley** Harry's best friend, who is developing feelings for Hermione Granger

**Rufus Scrimgeour** Cornelius Fudge's replacement as the Minister of Magic

**Severus Snape** Hogwarts's newest Defense Against the Dark Arts teacher and Head of Slytherin House, former Hogwarts Potions Master, and a member of the Order of the Phoenix

**Tom Riddle** Lord Voldemort's Muggle father, who married Merope Gaunt while under the influence of a love potion and then abandoned her when the potion wore off, leaving her to bear her son alone

**immobilized** stopped or prevented from moving

**incantation** a word formula that is meant to produce magical results

**irksome** annoying and tiring due to long continuance

**obscured** hidden

**procuring** gaining possession of something

**ruefully** in a way that expresses grief or regret

**sodden** soaked or completely wet

**speculation** an idea or belief that is based on incomplete evidence

**suppress** refrain from showing

## Synopsis

The Minister of Magic, Cornelius Fudge, is about to leave office, but before he does, he pays a visit to the Muggle Prime Minister of the United Kingdom. Fudge explains that the violence and murders in the Muggle world are due to the increased activity of Voldemort's Death Eaters. The Prime Minister is then introduced to Fudge's successor, Rufus Scrimgeour.

Miles away, Bellatrix Lestrange and her sister, Narcissa Malfoy, pay a visit to Severus Snape. Snape reveals that his job for the Dark Lord is spying on Dumbledore and the Order of the Phoenix and providing information about their activities. Narcissa asks Snape to make an Unbreakable Vow to her to do all he can to protect her son, Draco, who has been given a dangerous mission by Voldemort. Snape also vows to complete the mission if Draco fails. If he breaks the vow, he will die.

Meanwhile, at the home of the Dursleys in Little Whinging, Harry waits for Albus Dumbledore. Dumbledore is coming to escort Harry to the Weasleys' house, the Burrow, where Harry will stay for the rest of the summer break. When Dumbledore arrives, he does not immediately take Harry and go. He has some business to do with Harry first. Dumbledore reveals that Harry has inherited all of Sirius Black's possessions, including the house at Number 12 Grimmauld Place. He has also inherited

## Vocabulary

**antidote** a remedy that lessens or stops the effects of something harmful

**askew** twisted to one side

**crucial** essential or necessary

**euphoria** powerful feeling of happiness and well-being

**extracted** pulled out or drew forth

**grudgingly** in a reluctant, bitter manner

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the house-elf Kreacher. Kreacher is bound to obey Harry because the Black house now belongs to him. Dumbledore then speaks directly to the Dursleys. He expresses anger at them for mistreating Harry all these years, but asks only that Harry be allowed to return to the Dursley home once more before his seventeenth birthday to keep up the magical protection of his mother's sacrifice. At age 17, Harry will come of age in the magical community, and the protection will no longer hold.

As Harry and Dumbledore leave the Dursleys, Dumbledore reveals one more bit of business they must do together. Dumbledore says he needs Harry's help to persuade retired professor Horace Slughorn to return to Hogwarts as a teacher. Many years ago, Slughorn had been head of Slytherin House at Hogwarts. Slughorn is known for having favorite students, mainly those who come from powerful families and who might be able to help him out in the future. Harry and Dumbledore Apparate to a small village where Slughorn is staying. Though he is at first reluctant, Slughorn finally agrees to come back to Hogwarts to teach. During this visit, Harry notices that Dumbledore has been injured. Dumbledore's hand is blackened and shriveled. Harry asks about it, but Dumbledore declines to explain what has happened.

At last Harry and Dumbledore head for the Burrow. When they arrive, the two speak privately before going into the house. Dumbledore says he will be giving private lessons to Harry during the upcoming school year. He also tells Harry to share more of his secrets with his close friends Ron and Hermione and to carry his Invisibility Cloak with him at all times.

At the Burrow, Harry finds that Hermione is already there and, to his surprise, so is Fleur Delacour, the Beauxbatons champion in the Triwizard Tournament. She and Ron's brother Bill are engaged to be married. Harry, Ron, and Hermione receive their O.W.L. grade results. Harry learns that he was the only one out of the three of them to get an "Outstanding" (the top grade possible) in Defense Against the Dark Arts. Better news is that Harry has

been made Gryffindor Quidditch captain.

Partway through his stay at the Burrow, Harry goes with the Weasleys and Hermione to Diagon Alley to shop for school supplies. While there, they visit Weasleys' Wizard Wheezes, Fred and George's new joke shop. Harry, Ron, and Hermione see Draco Malfoy and follow him to Borgin and Burkes, a Dark Magic shop in Knockturn Alley. Using Fred and George's Extendable Ears to eavesdrop, they hear Malfoy tell Mr. Borgin to repair one item and keep another item safe. Malfoy threatens Borgin in order to ensure secrecy about what they are doing. While Harry, Ron, and Hermione aren't able to figure out what this means, Harry suspects Draco is a Death Eater and decides to keep a close eye on him at Hogwarts.

At the Welcome Feast on the first night back at Hogwarts, it is announced that Snape is the new Defense Against the Dark Arts instructor, and Slughorn will be teaching the Potions class. Slughorn is happy to accept Harry into his N.E.W.T.-level Potions class, so Harry can continue his studies to qualify for Auror training. Because Harry and Ron did not purchase Potions books in Diagon Alley, Slughorn lends them old textbooks until they can buy their own. Harry's copy is marked on the bottom of the back cover, "This book is the Property of the Half-Blood Prince." The talented former owner's notes help Harry excel in the class, but the identity of the Half-Blood Prince remains a mystery. To Hermione's dismay, Harry (who had always struggled in Snape's Potions classes) becomes the top student in Potions because of the Half-Blood Prince.

After the first week of school, Harry begins his private lessons with Dumbledore. Dumbledore uses his Pensieve to explore memories he has obtained from others about Voldemort's past. In the course of these lessons, Dumbledore reveals that he believes Voldemort has splintered his soul into six fragments called Horcruxes so he may become immortal. A seventh piece of his soul he left in his own body. Two Horcruxes, Tom Riddle's diary and a ring belonging to Riddle's grandfather Marvolo Gaunt,

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have already been destroyed. Dumbledore suspects Voldemort made other Horcruxes out of objects that had once belonged to Hufflepuff, Ravenclaw, or Gryffindor, the founders of Hogwarts. He believes that Voldemort's snake, Nagini, is also a Horcrux. He tells Harry that in order to defeat Voldemort, all these Horcruxes must be found and destroyed.

Partway through the school year, Ron starts dating Lavender Brown, and Hermione becomes jealous. Hermione and Ron bicker and stop speaking to one another. On a student trip to Hogsmeade, Gryffindor student Katie Bell is cursed while carrying an opal necklace, but no one seems to know where the necklace came from. In a separate incident, Ron accidentally drinks poisoned mead that was meant for Dumbledore. Harry saves him using an antidote he had learned of in Slughorn's Potions class. Hermione is so upset over Ron's near death that she and Ron reconcile. Ron soon breaks it off with Lavender. Meanwhile, Harry realizes his true feelings for Ginny Weasley, although she is dating Dean Thomas.

Harry uses the Marauder's Map to keep track of Draco throughout the school year but often cannot find him on the map. Harry gives the house-elves Kreacher and Dobby the job of following Malfoy around the clock. Through their reports, Harry realizes that when he cannot see Draco on the map, Draco is in the Room of Requirement. This room transforms into whatever the user needs.

One day, Harry finds Malfoy sobbing in a boys' bathroom. They argue and hurl curses at each other. Harry casts a curse that he learned from the notes in the Half-Blood Prince's Potions textbook. The spell inflicts huge gashes across Malfoy's body. Snape arrives and saves Malfoy. Snape demands that Harry give him his Potions book, but Harry is able to switch his book for Ron's copy and hide the Half-Blood Prince's book in the Room of Requirement. Harry must serve detention with Snape every Saturday for the rest of the school year, which causes him to miss the Quidditch finals. Nonetheless, Gryffindor wins the Cup, and during the victory celebration, Harry reveals his feelings for

Ginny, and they begin dating.

A few weeks later, Harry receives a message from Dumbledore asking Harry to go to his office. On the way, Harry runs into Professor Trelawney, the person who unknowingly made the prophecy about Harry and Voldemort. From her, Harry learns that it was Snape who passed the prophecy to Voldemort, which ultimately led to James's and Lily Potter's deaths. Harry confronts Dumbledore, but Dumbledore insists that he trusts Snape. Dumbledore, meanwhile, has located another Horcrux, Slytherin's locket, and asks Harry to help him destroy it. Before he leaves, Harry asks Ron and Hermione to gather the other members of Dumbledore's Army to patrol the halls. He feels certain that Malfoy will try something while he and Dumbledore are gone, so he gives Ron and Hermione his bottle of lucky potion to protect themselves and their friends.

Harry and Dumbledore Apparate to a cave by the sea. Dumbledore tells Harry that this is the same cave in which young Tom Riddle had terrorized two children. The director of the orphanage where Riddle grew up had told Dumbledore about the incident. In the cave, they must overcome a number of traps set by Voldemort before they can retrieve the locket. The locket is hidden in a basin filled with a poisonous potion. In order to get the locket out of the basin, Dumbledore drinks the potion and is considerably weakened as a result. Harry and Dumbledore manage to get the locket and escape from the cave.

Dumbledore and Harry return to Hogsmeade and see the Dark Mark hanging over the Astronomy Tower at Hogwarts. The Dark Mark is always cast into the sky by Death Eaters when they have killed someone. Harry and Dumbledore fly on borrowed broomsticks to the top of the tower. Dumbledore tells Harry to put on the Invisibility Cloak. They hear someone coming, and Dumbledore casts a freezing spell on Harry, who is then unable to move or speak. Seconds later, Draco Malfoy bursts through the door at the top of the stairway leading to the tower. He shouts the disarming spell and disarms Dumbledore.

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Draco admits he was behind the cursed necklace and the poison that Ron drank.

He also reveals that he has helped Death Eaters enter Hogwarts secretly by means of a pair of Vanishing Cabinets. One cabinet is in the Room of Requirement and the other is in Borgin and Burkes Dark Magic shop. The Death Eaters can enter the cabinet in the shop and emerge from the other inside the Room of Requirement. Draco says that Voldemort has ordered him to kill Dumbledore. If Draco does not carry out those orders, Voldemort will murder Draco's family. Dumbledore offers to help Draco and his whole family hide from Voldemort. As Draco lowers his wand, Death Eaters arrive on the tower. They urge Draco to kill Dumbledore. When he still hesitates, some of them want to do it themselves, but others stop them, saying Voldemort had said Draco must do it.

Still paralyzed underneath the cloak, Harry hears the battle raging below between Death Eaters and the Order of the Phoenix and a few students from Dumbledore's Army. Snape arrives on the tower, raises his wand, and kills Dumbledore by using the Avada Kedavra curse. The impact hurls Dumbledore's body over the tower wall.

When Dumbledore dies, Harry is released from the paralyzing spell. Harry runs through the still-raging battle, chasing after Snape and Malfoy. Malfoy escapes as Snape and Harry duel. During the duel, Snape reveals that he is the Half-Blood Prince. Snape Disapparates and escapes. Harry finds Dumbledore's body on the lawn below the tower. He retrieves the locket and realizes that it is not a Horcrux. Inside the locket is a note written to Voldemort from someone with the initials R.A.B. This R.A.B. has stolen the real Horcrux and intends to destroy it. Harry is distraught that Dumbledore weakened himself for nothing.

The injuries from the battle at Hogwarts are light. The only person seriously injured is Bill Weasley, who was attacked by Fenrir Greyback, the werewolf. After Snape's escape, Hermione discovers that Snape's parents were Eileen Prince (a pureblood)

and Tobias Snape (a Muggle). The Potions book had previously belonged to Snape's mother.

The school year ends with lessons suspended and examinations postponed. Many students stay to attend Dumbledore's funeral. Dumbledore is to be buried in a white marble tomb on the grounds of Hogwarts. Professor McGonagall is appointed Hogwarts interim headmistress, and Professor Slughorn replaces Snape as the head of Slytherin House. Harry ends his relationship with Ginny because he feels that Voldemort will use her and other people he loves against him. The book concludes with Harry telling Ron and Hermione that he will not return to school next year but will search for the remaining Horcruxes. As true friends, Ron and Hermione vow to accompany him.

## Open-Ended Questions

Use these open-ended questions as the basis for class discussions, student presentations, or extended writing assignments.

### Initial Understanding

Dumbledore thinks it is important for Harry to learn about Voldemort's past. What are some things that Harry learns about Voldemort?

*The memories that Dumbledore and Harry explore are all designed to give Harry a better sense of Voldemort's past and his recurring tendencies. Harry learns from the memories that Voldemort likes to steal things (the other orphans' possessions, Hufflepuff's cup) and that he especially likes to steal things as trophies of significant bits of magic he has done. He learns that Voldemort will kill for revenge as well as for gain. He also learns that Voldemort feels a strong tie to Hogwarts when he tries repeatedly to become a teacher at the school. Voldemort is a loner, preferring to operate alone and not depend on others. This pattern was established very early, starting when the young Tom Riddle tells Dumbledore that he will buy his own school supplies before his first year at Hogwarts. He sees himself as separate from and better than others.*

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## Literary Analysis

Harry is upset with Dumbledore for trusting Snape, but Harry also trusts Snape in similar ways (without knowing it) through his use of what turns out to be Snape's old Potions textbook. How does the Half-Blood Prince of the Potions book reflect Snape's character as seen by Harry?

*The Prince is smart, very clever, and talented. He is also mysterious. It is difficult to tell if he has good intentions or bad. This is parallel to the adult Snape as well—he's clever, capable, and talented, but he's mysterious and perhaps not altogether trustworthy. Because Harry has done well in Potions based on the Prince's commentaries, Harry is inclined to think well of the Prince. As Harry tries out more spells from the book though, it becomes clear that the Prince has a darker side, as does Snape. Hermione is suspicious, but Ron and Harry refuse to believe anything bad about the Prince, even as his spells start getting them into trouble. Harry feels that Dumbledore ignored evidence that Snape is a Dark Wizard, and Harry tries to argue that Snape is not trustworthy. Dumbledore brushes all of Harry's warnings aside. In a similar way, however, Harry is blinded by the fact that he gets a lot of help from the Prince (who was, in fact, Snape) and refuses to hear Hermione's warnings. So in a way, Harry is also trusting Snape in the same way Harry feels that Dumbledore does by ignoring warnings that Snape may not be trustworthy at all.*

## Inferential Comprehension

The Minister of Magic Rufus Scrimgeour says to Harry, "Dumbledore's man through and through, aren't you, Potter?" What does he mean by that?

*Scrimgeour wants Harry to tell the wizarding world that the Ministry is doing a great job of fighting Voldemort and the Death Eaters. Harry, like Dumbledore, believes that telling people the truth about Voldemort is the best approach. Furthermore, he agrees with Dumbledore that the Ministry is going about things the wrong way in arresting people (as in the case of Stan Shunpike) just for the sake of showing progress rather than making sure they actually are Death Eaters. Scrimgeour also wants Harry to admit that he is "The Chosen One" who must defeat Voldemort. But Harry does not want to make a public announcement of this and follows Dumbledore's lead in refusing to admit it. He, like Dumbledore, keeps himself aloof from the Ministry and from Scrimgeour in order to avoid being used or seen as approving of what the Ministry is doing. All this gets in the way of Scrimgeour's goals and plans. For these reasons, Harry is seen by Scrimgeour as "Dumbledore's man" because he agrees with Dumbledore and follows his lead rather than cooperating with the Ministry.*

## Constructing Meaning

Lord Voldemort's name is rarely spoken in the wizarding world because most wizards are too frightened to say it. Voldemort is most often referred to as "You Know Who" or "He Who Must Not Be Named." We see from the memories of Voldemort's childhood that Voldemort becomes irritated when Dumbledore calls him by his given name, Tom Riddle. Why do you think that is so?

*Voldemort thinks his given name is too common. He does not like anything that associates him with other people or that is common or ordinary. Voldemort's father's name is also Tom Riddle. Voldemort is probably angry at his father for deserting his mother when she was pregnant with him and wants to disassociate himself from his father as much as possible.*

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## Teachable Skills

**Recognizing Setting** Harry and Dumbledore witness, through the Pensieve, Ministry official Bob Ogden's confrontation with the members of the Gaunt family. In that scene, Merope Gaunt's feelings for Tom Riddle Sr. are revealed to her father, Marvolo, by her brother Morfin. Morfin saw her looking out the window at Riddle the day before. The location of the cottage allows voices to be heard from the road. The cottage is also described as being very rundown, a hovel. Have students, individually or in groups, read this scene from the book carefully (it is found in chapter 10: The House of Gaunt). Then have students, based on the descriptions in the book, make some kind of depiction of the Gaunt cottage and surrounding area. Some possibilities might be a map, a drawing or series of drawings, an aerial view-type depiction, or a three-dimensional model. Instruct students to reflect on what the setting says about the characters and/or the effect the setting might have on the characters. They should then use their conclusions as a guide in their depictions of the settings. For example, the dead snake on the door and live snakes in the house reflect the half-mad Morfin's obsession with snakes. The rundown, derelict quality of the house might reflect on the same gone-to-seed quality in Marvolo. The dirtiness and grayness of the house might either reflect on Merope's despair or explain why she is so timid and seemingly hopeless. When students have made their depictions, they should orally or in writing explain their thinking about the characters and indicate details in their depictions of the setting that represent their thinking.

**Understanding Hist./Cultural Factors** In the wizarding world, there are definite social hierarchies. Rowling has crafted the wizarding society along lines of ancestry--purebloods, half-bloods, and Muggle-borns. Then there are Muggles and Squibs and other groups such as house-elves and goblins. Discuss the concept of a hierarchy with the students and then have the students brainstorm a list of all the different

groups in the wizarding hierarchy. Either in smaller groups or as a class, work with students to map this hierarchy, with the most dominant and powerful group at the top working down to the least powerful or most despised groups at the bottom. Such a hierarchy might look like this:  
Pureblood wizards  
Half-blood wizards  
Muggle-born wizards  
Squibs  
Muggles  
Half-giants  
Giants  
Goblins  
Werewolves  
House-elves  
Students, through discussion, may have hierarchies that look slightly different. Discuss the features of each group. On what basis does one qualify for inclusion into one or another group? As a group, sort the main characters into their places in the hierarchy. Does this have anything to do with inherent worth or ability? Hermione is one of the most talented wizards, but she is despised by many because of where she falls in this hierarchy. Discuss other characters and where they fall in the hierarchy. Do the students feel these distinctions are fair? Ask students what similarities they see between the wizarding world and our society and the way it sorts people into social hierarchies, such as rich versus poor. Both the Malfoys and the Weasleys are purebloods, but the Weasleys are looked down on, in part because they are poor. Have students choose a character from *Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince*. Have them do the following analysis of their character: 1) Describe in writing the place of their character in the social hierarchy that the author has created. Explain why the character has been placed in this spot (Hermione is Muggle-born because she has no wizarding parentage; Harry is a Half-blood because he had one pureblood parent and one Muggle-born parent; Snape is half-blood because he had one wizarding parent and one Muggle parent). 2) Discuss where this person would be in a more just hierarchy (based on talent, ability, goodness, courage, etc.) and why. 3) Discuss the feelings of the character toward the social hierarchy. For example, Professor Slughorn is a pureblood, but he bases his judgments of people on their talent, their ambition, or their connections with powerful people. He does not seem to pay attention to the blood-based hierarchies in play in the wizarding world. The Weasleys are pureblood but accept all

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without regard to their purity of blood. 4) Discuss how this affects the way the character functions in the larger wizarding society and/or that character's ability to do well and be happy in life. If you desire, have students make brief oral reports on their analyses and discuss the issues of inclusion and exclusion as a group.

**Identifying Reason** At the end of the book, it is unclear whether Hogwarts will reopen the next school year. Professor Flitwick remarks that the professors will have to consult the school governors. If necessary, explain to the students that the school governors are like a school board and have the power to make major decisions for the school. Ask students to pretend they are the governors. As governors, they must decide whether or not Hogwarts should reopen. Then have students write letters to Professor McGonagall discussing their decisions. Students should list reasons, based on the text, for their decisions to close or not close Hogwarts.

**Responding to Literature** The Felix Felicis potion brings good luck to whoever drinks it. Harry needs good luck to get Professor Slughorn to give him the true memory of his conversation with Voldemort. Have students imagine that they were given a dose of the Felix Felicis potion. Remind students that the Felix Felicis potion cannot be used in organized competitions such as sporting events, elections, or examinations. Have students describe in writing what they would use the potion for. Is there a particular day they would like to repeat with better luck? Or, alternatively, is there a day in the future or a particular situation for which they would like to take the potion?