**Joanne "Jo" Rowling (J. K. Rowling) 1965 –**

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/J._K._Rowling>

   

**Joanne "Jo" Rowling** [OBE](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Order_of_the_British_Empire)[[1]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/J._K._Rowling#cite_note-0) (born 31 July 1965),[[2]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/J._K._Rowling#cite_note-1) who writes under the [pen name](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pen_name) **J. K. Rowling**,[[3]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/J._K._Rowling#cite_note-Red-Nose-Day-BBC-Online-chat-2) is a [British](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_Kingdom) [author](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Author), best known as the creator of the [*Harry Potter*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Harry_Potter) [fantasy](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fantasy) series, the idea for which was conceived whilst on a train trip from [Manchester](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Manchester) to [London](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/London) in 1990. The *Potter* books have gained worldwide attention, won multiple awards, and sold more than 400 million copies.[[4]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/J._K._Rowling#cite_note-3)

Aside from writing the *Potter* novels, Rowling is equally famous for her "rags to riches" life story, in which she progressed from living on welfare to multi-millionaire status within five years. The 2008 [*Sunday Times Rich List*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sunday_Times_Rich_List) estimated Rowling's fortune at £560 million ($1.1 billion), ranking her as the twelfth richest woman in Britain.[[5]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/J._K._Rowling#cite_note-richlist-4) [*Forbes*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Forbes) ranked Rowling as the forty eighth most powerful celebrity of 2007,[[6]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/J._K._Rowling#cite_note-5) and [*Time* magazine](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Time_%28magazine%29) named her as a runner-up for its 2007 [Person of the Year](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Time_Person_of_the_Year), noting the social, moral, and [political inspiration](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Politics_of_Harry_Potter) she has given [her fandom](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Harry_Potter_fandom).[[7]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/J._K._Rowling#cite_note-6) She has become a notable [philanthropist](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Philanthropist), supporting such charities as [Comic Relief](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Comic_Relief_%28charity%29), [One Parent Families](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/One_Parent_Families) and the [Multiple Sclerosis Society of Great Britain](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Multiple_Sclerosis_Society_of_Great_Britain).

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## Name

Although she writes under the [pen name](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pen_name) "J. K. Rowling", pronounced *rolling* (IPA: [/ˈrəʊlɪŋ/](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Help%3AIPA_for_English)),[[8]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/J._K._Rowling%22%20%5Cl%20%22cite_note-bio-7%22%20%5Co%20%22) her name when her first *Harry Potter* book was published was simply "Joanne Rowling". Before publishing her first book, her publisher [Bloomsbury](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bloomsbury_Publishing_Plc) feared that the target audience of young boys might be reluctant to buy books written by a female author. It requested that Rowling use two initials, rather than reveal her first name. As she had no middle name, she chose *K*. for Kathleen as the second initial of her pseudonym, from her paternal grandmother. The name Kathleen has never been part of her real name.[[3]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/J._K._Rowling#cite_note-Red-Nose-Day-BBC-Online-chat-2) Following her marriage, she sometimes uses the name *Joanne Murray* when conducting private matters.[[9]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/J._K._Rowling#cite_note-david-8)[[10]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/J._K._Rowling#cite_note-tatler-9) She calls herself "Jo" and says, "No one ever called me 'Joanne' when I was young, unless they were angry."[[11]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/J._K._Rowling#cite_note-10)

## Background

Rowling was born to Peter James Rowling and Anne Rowling (née Volant) on 31 July 1965 in [Yate](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Yate), [Gloucestershire](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gloucestershire), [England](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/England), 10 miles (16.1 km) northeast of [Bristol](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bristol).[[12]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/J._K._Rowling#cite_note-rowling-bio-11) Her sister Dianne (Di) was born at their home on 28 June 1967[[13]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/J._K._Rowling#cite_note-12) when Rowling was 23 months old.[[12]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/J._K._Rowling#cite_note-rowling-bio-11) The family moved to the nearby village [Winterbourne](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Winterbourne%2C_Gloucestershire) when Rowling was four. She attended [St Michael's Primary School](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/St_Michael%27s_Primary_School),[[14]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/J._K._Rowling#cite_note-13) a school founded almost 200 years ago by famed [abolitionist](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Abolitionist) [William Wilberforce](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/William_Wilberforce)[[15]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/J._K._Rowling#cite_note-14) and education reformer [Hannah More](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hannah_More). Her elderly headmaster at St. Michael's, Alfred Dunn, was claimed as the inspiration for the *Harry Potter* character [Albus Dumbledore](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Albus_Dumbledore).[[16]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/J._K._Rowling#cite_note-15)[[17]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/J._K._Rowling#cite_note-16)

As a child, Rowling enjoyed writing fantasy stories, which she often read to her sister. "I can still remember me telling her a story in which she fell down a rabbit hole and was fed strawberries by the rabbit family inside it," she recalls, "Certainly the first story I ever wrote down (when I was five or six) was about a rabbit called Rabbit. He got the measles and was visited by his friends, including a giant bee called Miss Bee."[[8]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/J._K._Rowling#cite_note-bio-7)

At the age of nine, Rowling moved to the Gloucestershire village of [Tutshill](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tutshill), close to [Chepstow](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chepstow), [Wales](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wales).[[12]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/J._K._Rowling#cite_note-rowling-bio-11) When she was a young teenager, her great aunt, who Rowling said "taught classics and approved of a thirst for knowledge, even of a questionable kind", gave her a very old copy of [Jessica Mitford](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jessica_Mitford)'s autobiography, [*Hons and Rebels*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hons_and_Rebels)*.*[[18]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/J._K._Rowling#cite_note-hons-17) Mitford became Rowling's heroine, and Rowling subsequently read all of her books.[[19]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/J._K._Rowling#cite_note-harryandme-18)

She attended secondary school at [Wyedean School and College](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wyedean_School_and_College). Rowling has said of her adolescence, "[Hermione](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hermione_Granger) is loosely based on me. She's a caricature of me when I was eleven, which I'm not particularly proud of."[[20]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/J._K._Rowling#cite_note-19) Sean Harris, her best friend in the [Upper Sixth](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sixth_form) owned a turquoise [Ford Anglia](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ford_Anglia#Anglia_105E), which she says inspired the one in her books. "Ron Weasley isn't a living portrait of Sean, but he really is very Sean-ish."[[21]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/J._K._Rowling#cite_note-20) Of her musical tastes of the time, she said "My favourite group in the world is [The Smiths](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Smiths). And when I was going through a punky phase, it was [The Clash](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Clash)."[[22]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/J._K._Rowling#cite_note-21) Rowling read for a BA in [French](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/French_language) and [Classics](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Classics) at the [University of Exeter](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/University_of_Exeter), which she says was a "bit of a shock" as she "was expecting to be amongst lots of similar people– thinking radical thoughts." Once she made friends with "some like-minded people" she says she began to enjoy herself.[[23]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/J._K._Rowling#cite_note-fraser34-22) With a year of study in [Paris](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Paris), Rowling moved to [London](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/London) to work as a researcher and bilingual secretary for [Amnesty International](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Amnesty_International).[[24]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/J._K._Rowling#cite_note-23)

In 1990, while she was on a four-hour-delayed train trip from [Manchester](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Manchester) to London, the idea for a story of a young boy attending a school of wizardry "came fully formed" into her mind.[[25]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/J._K._Rowling#cite_note-loer-24) "I really don't know where the idea came from", she told the [*Boston Globe*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Boston_Globe), "It started with Harry, then all these characters and situations came flooding into my head."[[25]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/J._K._Rowling#cite_note-loer-24)[[12]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/J._K._Rowling#cite_note-rowling-bio-11) When she had reached her [Clapham Junction](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Clapham_Junction) flat, she began to write immediately.[[12]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/J._K._Rowling#cite_note-rowling-bio-11)[[26]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/J._K._Rowling#cite_note-25)

However, in December of that year, Rowling’s mother succumbed to a ten-year battle with [multiple sclerosis](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Multiple_sclerosis).[[12]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/J._K._Rowling#cite_note-rowling-bio-11) Rowling commented, "I was writing *Harry Potter* at the moment my mother died. I had never told her about *Harry Potter*."[[10]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/J._K._Rowling#cite_note-tatler-9) Rowling said this death heavily affected her writing[[27]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/J._K._Rowling%22%20%5Cl%20%22cite_note-26%22%20%5Co%20%22)[[10]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/J._K._Rowling#cite_note-tatler-9) and that she introduced much more detail about Harry's loss in the first book, because she knew about how it felt.[[28]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/J._K._Rowling#cite_note-27)

Rowling then moved to [Porto](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Porto), [Portugal](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Portugal) to teach English as a foreign language.[[19]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/J._K._Rowling#cite_note-harryandme-18) While there, on 16 October 1992, she married Portuguese television journalist Jorge Arantes. Their one child, Jessica Isabel Rowling Arantes (named after [Jessica Mitford](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jessica_Mitford)), was born on 27 July 1993 in Portugal.[[29]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/J._K._Rowling#cite_note-Scotsman-28) They separated in November 1993.[[29]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/J._K._Rowling#cite_note-Scotsman-28)[[30]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/J._K._Rowling#cite_note-29) In December 1994, Rowling and her daughter moved to be near her sister in [Edinburgh](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Edinburgh), [Scotland](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Scotland).[[12]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/J._K._Rowling#cite_note-rowling-bio-11) During this period Rowling was diagnosed with clinical depression, and contemplated suicide.[[31]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/J._K._Rowling#cite_note-cnn23mar08-30) It was the feeling of her illness which brought her the idea of [Dementors](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dementors), soulless creatures featured in *Harry Potter*.[[32]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/J._K._Rowling#cite_note-31)

Unemployed and living on state benefits, Rowling completed her first novel in many cafés, especially Nicolson's Café,[[33]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/J._K._Rowling#cite_note-dole-32) whenever she could get Jessica to fall asleep.[[12]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/J._K._Rowling#cite_note-rowling-bio-11)[[34]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/J._K._Rowling#cite_note-hpandme-33) In a 2001 BBC interview, Rowling denied the rumour that she wrote in local cafés to escape from her unheated flat, remarking, "I am not stupid enough to rent an unheated flat in Edinburgh in midwinter. It had heating." Instead, as she stated on the American TV program [*A&E Biography*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/A%26E_Biography), one of the reasons she wrote in cafés was because taking her baby out for a walk was the best way to make her fall asleep.[[34]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/J._K._Rowling#cite_note-hpandme-33)

## *Harry Potter*

### *Harry Potter* books

*Main article:* [*Harry Potter*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Harry_Potter)

In 1995, Rowling finished her manuscript for [*Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Harry_Potter_and_the_Philosopher%27s_Stone) on an old manual typewriter.[[35]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/J._K._Rowling#cite_note-34) Upon the enthusiastic response of Bryony Evans, a reader who had been asked to review the book’s first three chapters, the Fulham-based [Christopher Little Literary Agents](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Christopher_Little_Literary_Agents) agreed to represent Rowling in her quest for a publisher. The book was submitted to twelve publishing houses, all of which rejected the manuscript.[[29]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/J._K._Rowling#cite_note-Scotsman-28) A year later she was finally given the green light (and a £1500 advance) by or Barry Cunningham from [Bloomsbury](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bloomsbury_Publishing), a small British publishing house in London, England.[[36]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/J._K._Rowling#cite_note-35)[[29]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/J._K._Rowling#cite_note-Scotsman-28) The decision to publish Rowling's book apparently owes much to Alice Newton, the eight-year-old daughter of Bloomsbury’s chairman, who was given the first chapter to review by her father and immediately demanded the next.[[37]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/J._K._Rowling#cite_note-Eight_year_old_saves_Potter-36) Although Bloomsbury agreed to publish the book, Cunningham says that he advised Rowling to get a day job, since she had little chance of making money in children’s books.[[38]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/J._K._Rowling#cite_note-37) Soon after, in 1997, Rowling received an £8000 grant from the [Scottish Arts Council](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Scottish_Arts_Council) to enable her to continue writing.[[39]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/J._K._Rowling#cite_note-38) The following spring, an auction was held in the United States for the rights to publish the novel, and was won by [Scholastic Inc.](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Scholastic_Corporation), for $105,000. Rowling has said she “nearly died” when she heard the news.[[40]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/J._K._Rowling#cite_note-39)

In June 1997, Bloomsbury published *Philosopher’s Stone* with an initial print-run of 1000 copies, five hundred of which were distributed to libraries. Today, such copies are valued between £16,000 and £25,000.[[41]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/J._K._Rowling#cite_note-40) Five months later, the book won its first award, a [Nestlé Smarties Book Prize](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nestl%C3%A9_Smarties_Book_Prize). In February, the novel won the prestigious [British Book Award](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/British_Book_Awards) for [Children’s Book of the Year](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/British_Children%27s_Book_of_the_Year), and later, the Children’s Book Award. Its sequel, [*Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Harry_Potter_and_the_Chamber_of_Secrets), was published in July, 1998.[[42]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/J._K._Rowling#cite_note-41) In October 1998, Scholastic published *Philosopher’s Stone* in the US under the title of *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer’s Stone*: a change Rowling claims she now regrets and would have fought if she had been in a better position at the time.[[3]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/J._K._Rowling#cite_note-Red-Nose-Day-BBC-Online-chat-2)

In December 1999, the third novel, [*Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Harry_Potter_and_the_Prisoner_of_Azkaban), won the Smarties Prize, making Rowling the first person to win the award three times running.[[43]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/J._K._Rowling#cite_note-42) She later withdrew the fourth *Harry Potter* novel from contention to allow other books a fair chance. In January 2000, *Prisoner of Azkaban* won the inaugural [Whitbread Children’s Book of the Year award](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/1999_Whitbread_Awards), though it lost the Book of the Year prize to [Seamus Heaney](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Seamus_Heaney)’s translation of [*Beowulf*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Beowulf).[[44]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/J._K._Rowling#cite_note-43)

The fourth book, [*Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Harry_Potter_and_the_Goblet_of_Fire)*,* was released simultaneously in the UK and the US on 8 July 2000, and broke sales records in both countries. Some 372,775 copies of the book were sold in its first day in the UK, almost equalling the number *Prisoner of Azkaban* sold during its first year.[[45]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/J._K._Rowling#cite_note-culture-44) In the US, the book sold three million copies in its first 48 hours, smashing all literary sales records.[[45]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/J._K._Rowling#cite_note-culture-44) Rowling admitted that she had had a moment of crisis while writing the novel; "Halfway through writing Four, I realised there was a serious fault with the plot ... I've had some of my blackest moments with this book ... One chapter I rewrote 13 times, though no-one who has read it can spot which one or know the pain it caused me."[[46]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/J._K._Rowling#cite_note-45) Rowling was named author of the year in the 2000 British Book Awards.[[47]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/J._K._Rowling#cite_note-46)

A wait of three years occurred between the release of *Goblet of Fire* and the fifth *Harry Potter* novel, [*Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Harry_Potter_and_the_Order_of_the_Phoenix). This gap led to press speculation that Rowling had developed [writer's block](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Writer%27s_block), speculations she fervently denied.[[48]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/J._K._Rowling#cite_note-47) Rowling later admitted that writing the book was a chore. "I think Phoenix could have been shorter", she told [Lev Grossman](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lev_Grossman), "I knew that, and I ran out of time and energy toward the end."[[49]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/J._K._Rowling#cite_note-48)

The sixth book, [*Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Harry_Potter_and_the_Half-Blood_Prince), was released on 16 July 2005. It too broke all sales records, selling nine million copies in its first 24 hours of release.[[50]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/J._K._Rowling#cite_note-49) While writing, she told a fan online, "Book six has been planned for years, but before I started writing seriously I spend two months re-visiting the plan and making absolutely sure I knew what I was doing."[[51]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/J._K._Rowling#cite_note-50) She noted on her website that the opening chapter of book six, which features a conversation between the [Minister of Magic](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Minister_of_Magic) and the [British Prime Minister](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/British_Prime_Minister), had been intended as the first chapter first for *Philosopher's Stone*, then *Chamber of Secrets* then *Prisoner of Azkaban*.[[52]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/J._K._Rowling#cite_note-51) In 2006, *Half-Blood Prince* received the [Book of the Year](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/British_Book_of_the_Year) prize at the [British Book Awards](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/British_Book_Awards).[[53]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/J._K._Rowling#cite_note-bba-52)

The title of the seventh and final *Harry Potter* book was revealed 21 December 2006 to be [*Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Harry_Potter_and_the_Deathly_Hallows).[[54]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/J._K._Rowling#cite_note-53) In February 2007 it was reported that Rowling wrote on a bust in her hotel room at the [Balmoral Hotel](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Balmoral_Hotel) in [Edinburgh](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Edinburgh) that she had finished the seventh book in that room on 11 January 2007.[[55]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/J._K._Rowling#cite_note-54) *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows* was released on 21 July 2007 (0:00 [BST](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Western_European_Summer_Time)) and broke its predecessor's record as the fastest-selling book of all time.[[56]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/J._K._Rowling#cite_note-sales-55) It sold 11 million copies in the first day of release in the United Kingdom and United States.[[56]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/J._K._Rowling#cite_note-sales-55) She has said that the last chapter of the book was written "in something like 1990", as part of her earliest work on the entire series.[[57]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/J._K._Rowling#cite_note-last_chapter-56) During a year period when Rowling was completing the last book, she allowed herself to be filmed for a documentary which aired in Britain on [ITV](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/ITV) on 30 December 2007. It was entitled *J K Rowling... A Year In The Life* and showed her returning to her old Edinburgh tenement flat where she lived, and completed the first *Harry Potter* book.[[58]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/J._K._Rowling#cite_note-returns-57) Re-visiting the flat for the first time reduced her to tears, saying it was "really where I turned my life around completely."[[58]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/J._K._Rowling#cite_note-returns-57)

*Harry Potter* is now a global brand worth an estimated £7 billion ([$](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_States_dollar)15 billion),[[59]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/J._K._Rowling%22%20%5Cl%20%22cite_note-58%22%20%5Co%20%22) and the last four *Harry Potter* books have consecutively set records as the fastest-selling books in history.[[60]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/J._K._Rowling#cite_note-59)[[56]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/J._K._Rowling#cite_note-sales-55) The series, totalling 4,195 pages,[[61]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/J._K._Rowling#cite_note-60) has been translated, in whole or in part, into 65 languages.[[62]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/J._K._Rowling#cite_note-61)

The *Harry Potter* books have also gained recognition for sparking an interest in reading among the young at a time when children were thought to be abandoning books for computers and television,[[63]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/J._K._Rowling#cite_note-62) although the series' overall impact on children's reading habits has been questioned.[[64]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/J._K._Rowling#cite_note-63)

### *Harry Potter* films

*Main article:* [*Harry Potter film series*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Harry_Potter_film_series)

In October 1998, [Warner Bros.](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Warner_Bros.) purchased the film rights to the first two novels for a seven-figure sum.[[65]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/J._K._Rowling#cite_note-64) A film version of [*Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Harry_Potter_and_the_Philosopher%27s_Stone_%28film%29) was released on 16 November 2001, and [*Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Harry_Potter_and_the_Chamber_of_Secrets_%28film%29) on 15 November 2002.[[66]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/J._K._Rowling#cite_note-mojo-65) Both were directed by [Chris Columbus](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chris_Columbus_%28filmmaker%29). 4 June 2004 saw the release of the film version of [*Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Harry_Potter_and_the_Prisoner_of_Azkaban_%28film%29), directed by [Alfonso Cuarón](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Alfonso_Cuar%C3%B3n). The fourth film, [*Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Harry_Potter_and_the_Goblet_of_Fire_%28film%29), was directed by another new director, [Mike Newell](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mike_Newell_%28director%29), and released on 18 November 2005. The film of [*Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Harry_Potter_and_the_Order_of_the_Phoenix_%28film%29) was released on 11 July 2007.[[66]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/J._K._Rowling#cite_note-mojo-65) [David Yates](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/David_Yates) directed, and [Michael Goldenberg](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Michael_Goldenberg) wrote the screenplay, having taken over the position from [Steven Kloves](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Steven_Kloves). [*Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Harry_Potter_and_the_Half-Blood_Prince_%28film%29) is in production,[[67]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/J._K._Rowling%22%20%5Cl%20%22cite_note-66%22%20%5Co%20%22) scheduled for release on 17 July 2009.[[68]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/J._K._Rowling#cite_note-67) David Yates will direct again, and Kloves will return to screenwrite it.[[69]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/J._K._Rowling#cite_note-68) In March 2008, Warner Bros. announced that the final instalment of the series, [*Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Harry_Potter_and_the_Deathly_Hallows), would be filmed in two segments, with part one released in November 2010 and part two released in May 2011. Yates would again return to direct both films.[[70]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/J._K._Rowling#cite_note-69)

Warner Bros took considerable notice of Rowling's desires and thoughts when drafting her contract. One of her principal stipulations was the films be shot in Britain with an all-British cast, which has been adhered to strictly.[[71]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/J._K._Rowling#cite_note-70) In an unprecedented move, Rowling also demanded that [Coca-Cola](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Coca-Cola), the victor in the race to [tie in](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tie-in) their products to the film series, donate $18 million to the American charity [Reading is Fundamental](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Reading_is_Fundamental), as well as a number of community charity programs.[[72]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/J._K._Rowling#cite_note-71)

The first four films were scripted by Steve Kloves; Rowling assisted him in the writing process, ensuring that his scripts did not contradict future books in the series. She has said that she told him more about the later books than anybody else (prior to their release), but not everything.[[73]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/J._K._Rowling#cite_note-72) She has also said that she told [Alan Rickman](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Alan_Rickman) ([Severus Snape](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Severus_Snape)) and [Robbie Coltrane](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Robbie_Coltrane) ([Hagrid](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hagrid%22%20%5Co%20%22Hagrid)) certain secrets about their characters before they were revealed in the books.[[74]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/J._K._Rowling#cite_note-73) [Daniel Radcliffe](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Daniel_Radcliffe) ([Harry Potter](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Harry_Potter_%28character%29)) asked her if Harry died at any point in the series; Rowling answered him by saying, "You have a death scene", thereby not explicitly answering the question.[[75]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/J._K._Rowling#cite_note-74) [Steven Spielberg](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Steven_Spielberg) was approached to direct the first film, but dropped out. The press has repeatedly claimed that Rowling played a role in his departure, but Rowling stated that she has no say in who directs the films and would not have vetoed Spielberg if she had.[[76]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/J._K._Rowling#cite_note-75) Rowling's first choice for the director had been [Monty Python](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Monty_Python) member [Terry Gilliam](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Terry_Gilliam), as she is a fan of his work. Warner Bros. wanted a more family friendly film, and eventually they settled on [Chris Columbus](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chris_Columbus_%28filmmaker%29).[[77]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/J._K._Rowling#cite_note-76)

### After *Harry Potter*

Rowling has stated that she plans to continue writing after the publication of the final *Harry Potter* book, [*Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Harry_Potter_and_the_Deathly_Hallows),[[78]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/J._K._Rowling#cite_note-77) In an interview with [Stephen Fry](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Stephen_Fry) in 2005, Rowling claimed that she would much prefer to write any subsequent books under a pseudonym; however she conceded to [Jeremy Paxman](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jeremy_Paxman) in 2003 that if she did, the press would probably "find out in seconds."[[79]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/J._K._Rowling#cite_note-78) In 2006, Rowling revealed that she had finished writing a few short stories and another children's book (a "political fairy story") about a monster, aimed at a younger audience than *Harry Potter* readers.[[80]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/J._K._Rowling#cite_note-79)

She is not planning to write an eighth *Harry Potter* book, and has stated, "I can't say I'll never write another book about that world just because I think, what do I know, in ten years' time I might want to return to it but I think it's unlikely."[[81]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/J._K._Rowling#cite_note-80) However, Rowling has said she will be writing an encyclopaedia of *Harry Potter'*s [wizarding world](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wizarding_world) consisting of various unpublished material and notes.[[82]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/J._K._Rowling#cite_note-81) Any profits from such a book would be given to charity.[[83]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/J._K._Rowling#cite_note-82) During a news conference at Hollywood's [Kodak Theatre](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kodak_Theatre) in 2007, Rowling, when asked how the encyclopaedia was coming along, said, "It's not coming along, and I haven't started writing it. I never said it was the next thing I'd do."[[84]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/J._K._Rowling#cite_note-83) As of the end of 2007, Rowling has said that the encyclopaedia could take up to ten years to complete, stating "There is no point in doing it unless it is amazing. The last thing I want to do is to rush ­something out".[[58]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/J._K._Rowling#cite_note-returns-57)

In July 2007, Rowling said that she wants to dedicate "lots" of her time to her family, but is currently "sort of writing two things", one for children and the other for adults.[[85]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/J._K._Rowling#cite_note-USAToday200707-84) She did not give any details about the two projects but did state that she was excited because the two book situation reminded her of writing the *Philosopher's Stone*, explaining how she was then writing two books until Harry took over.[[86]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/J._K._Rowling#cite_note-85) She stated in October 2007 that her future work was unlikely to be in the fantasy genre, explaining, "I think probably I've done my fantasy....it would be incredibly difficult to go out and create another world that didn't in some way overlap with Harry's or maybe borrow a little too much from Harry."[[87]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/J._K._Rowling#cite_note-86) In November 2007, Rowling said that she was working on another book, a "half-finished book for children that I think will probably be the next thing I publish."[[88]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/J._K._Rowling#cite_note-87) In March 2008, Rowling confirmed that her "political fairy tale" for children was nearing completion.[[89]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/J._K._Rowling#cite_note-88)

In March 2008, Rowling revealed in interview that she had returned to writing in Edinburgh cafés, intent on composing a new novel for children. "I will continue writing for children because that's what I enjoy," she told [*The Daily Telegraph*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Daily_Telegraph). "I am very good at finding a suitable café; I blend into the crowd and, of course, I don't sit in the middle of the bar staring all around me."[[90]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/J._K._Rowling#cite_note-89)

## Personal life

*Forbes* has named Rowling as the first person to become a U.S.-dollar billionaire by writing books,[[91]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/J._K._Rowling%22%20%5Cl%20%22cite_note-90%22%20%5Co%20%22) the second-richest female entertainer and the 1,062nd richest person in the world.[[92]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/J._K._Rowling#cite_note-91) When first listed as a billionaire by *Forbes* in 2004, Rowling disputed the calculations and said she had plenty of money, but was not a billionaire.[[93]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/J._K._Rowling#cite_note-92) In addition, the 2008 [*Sunday Times Rich List*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sunday_Times_Rich_List) named Rowling the 144th richest person in Britain.[[5]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/J._K._Rowling#cite_note-richlist-4) In 2001, Rowling purchased a luxurious nineteenth-century [estate house](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Estate_house), [Killiechassie House](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Killiechassie_House), on the banks of the [River Tay](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/River_Tay), near [Aberfeldy](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Aberfeldy%2C_Scotland), in [Perth and Kinross](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Perth_and_Kinross), Scotland.[[94]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/J._K._Rowling#cite_note-93) Rowling also owns a home in [Merchiston](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Merchiston), [Edinburgh](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Edinburgh), and a £4.5 million ($9 million) [Georgian](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Georgian_architecture) house in [Kensington](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kensington), West London,[[95]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/J._K._Rowling#cite_note-dailymail-94) on a street with 24-hour security.[[96]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/J._K._Rowling#cite_note-95)

On 26 December 2001, Rowling married Neil Michael Murray (born 30 June 1971), an [anaesthetist](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Anaesthetist), in a private ceremony at her Aberfeldy home.[[97]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/J._K._Rowling#cite_note-96) This was a second marriage for both Rowling and Murray, as Murray had previously been married to Dr. Fiona Duncan in 1996. Murray and Duncan separated in 1999 and [divorced](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Divorce) in the summer of 2001. Rowling and Murray's son David Gordon Rowling Murray was born on 24 March 2003.[[98]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/J._K._Rowling#cite_note-97) Shortly after Rowling began writing *Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince* she took a break from working on the novel to care for him in his early infancy.[[99]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/J._K._Rowling#cite_note-98) Rowling's youngest child, daughter Mackenzie Jean Rowling Murray, to whom she dedicated [*Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Harry_Potter_and_the_Half-Blood_Prince), was born 23 January 2005.[[100]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/J._K._Rowling#cite_note-99)

Rowling is a member of the [Church of Scotland](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Church_of_Scotland). She once said, "I believe in God, not magic."[[101]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/J._K._Rowling#cite_note-100) Early on she felt that if readers knew of her [Christian](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Christian) beliefs, they would be able to "guess what is coming in the books."[[102]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/J._K._Rowling#cite_note-101) Rowling has stated that she struggles with her own beliefs. In an interview with the [*Today Show*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Today_%28NBC_program%29) in July 2007, she said, "...until we reached Book Seven, views of what happens after death and so on...would give away a lot of what was coming. So ... yes, my belief and my struggling with religious belief and so on I think is quite apparent in this book."[[103]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/J._K._Rowling#cite_note-102)

Rowling commented on her political views when she discussed the [2008 United States presidential election](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_States_presidential_election%2C_2008) with the Spanish-language newspaper [*El País*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/El_Pa%C3%ADs). She said she is obsessed with the United States elections because they will have a profound effect on the rest of the world. As of February 2008, she has said that both [Barack Obama](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Barack_Obama) and [Hillary Clinton](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hillary_Clinton) would be "extraordinary" in the White House. In the same interview, she also said her hero was [Robert F. Kennedy](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Robert_F._Kennedy).[[104]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/J._K._Rowling#cite_note-103)[[105]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/J._K._Rowling#cite_note-104)

Rowling has received honorary degrees from [St Andrews University](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/St_Andrews_University), the [University of Edinburgh](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/University_of_Edinburgh), [Napier University](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Napier_University), and the [University of Aberdeen](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/University_of_Aberdeen).[[106]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/J._K._Rowling#cite_note-105)[[107]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/J._K._Rowling#cite_note-106) On 5 June 2008, Rowling spoke at the [Harvard University](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Harvard_University) commencement ceremony where she received another honorary degree.[[108]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/J._K._Rowling#cite_note-107)

## Relationship with the press

Rowling has had a difficult relationship with the press. She admits to being "thin-skinned" and dislikes the fickle nature of reporting. "They went in one day from saying, 'She’s got writer’s block' to saying, 'She's been self-indulgent'", she told *The Times* in 2003, "And I thought, well, what a difference 24 hours makes." However, Rowling disputes her reputation as a recluse who hates to be interviewed.[[109]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/J._K._Rowling#cite_note-Treneman-108) In 2001, the Press Complaints Commission upheld a complaint by Rowling over a series of unauthorised photographs of her with her daughter on the beach in [Mauritius](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mauritius) published in [*OK! Magazine*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/OK%21_Magazine).[[110]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/J._K._Rowling%22%20%5Cl%20%22cite_note-109%22%20%5Co%20%22) In 2007, Rowling's young son, David, assisted by Rowling and her husband, lost a court fight to ban publication of a photograph of him. The photo, taken by a photographer using a long-range lens, was subsequently published in a [*Sunday Express*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Daily_Express#Sunday_Express) article featuring Rowling's family life and motherhood.[[9]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/J._K._Rowling#cite_note-david-8) However, the judgment was overturned in David's favour in May 2008.[[111]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/J._K._Rowling#cite_note-110)[[112]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/J._K._Rowling#cite_note-111)

Rowling has said she particularly dislikes the British tabloid [*The Daily Mail*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Daily_Mail), which made references to a stalker Rowling insists does not exist, and conducted interviews with her estranged ex-husband. As one journalist noted, "Harry's [Uncle Vernon](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vernon_Dursley) is a grotesque philistine of violent tendencies and remarkably little brain. It is not difficult to guess which newspaper Rowling gives him to read [in [*Goblet of Fire*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Harry_Potter_and_the_Goblet_of_Fire)]."[[113]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/J._K._Rowling#cite_note-vernon-112)

Some have speculated that Rowling's fraught relationship with the press was the inspiration behind the character [Rita Skeeter](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rita_Skeeter). However, Rowling noted in 2000 that the character actually predates her rise to fame: "People have asked me whether Rita Skeeter was invented [to reflect *Harry Potter'*s popularity], but in fact she was always planned."[[114]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/J._K._Rowling#cite_note-113) "I tried to put Rita in *Philosopher's Stone* - you know when Harry walks into the Leaky Cauldron for the first time and everyone says, "Mr Potter you're back!", I wanted to put a journalist in there. She wasn't called Rita then but she was a woman. And then I thought, as I looked at the plot overall, I thought, that's not really where she fits best, she fits best in Four when Harry's supposed to come to terms with his fame."[[115]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/J._K._Rowling#cite_note-114)

## Philanthropy

In 2000, Rowling established the Volant Charitable Trust, which uses its annual budget of £5.1 million to combat [poverty](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Poverty) and social inequality. The fund also gives to organizations that aid children, one parent families, and multiple sclerosis research.[[116]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/J._K._Rowling#cite_note-115) Rowling said, "I think you have a moral responsibility when you've been given far more than you need, to do wise things with it and give intelligently."[[85]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/J._K._Rowling#cite_note-USAToday200707-84)

### Anti-poverty

Rowling, once a single parent herself, is now president of the charity [One Parent Families](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/One_Parent_Families), having already become their first Ambassador in 2000.[[117]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/J._K._Rowling#cite_note-OPF-116)[[118]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/J._K._Rowling#cite_note-117) Rowling collaborated with [Sarah Brown](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sarah_Brown_%28spouse%29), wife of British Prime Minister [Gordon Brown](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gordon_Brown), to write a book of children's stories to aid One Parent Families.[[119]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/J._K._Rowling#cite_note-118)

In 2001, the UK anti-poverty fundraiser [Comic Relief](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Comic_Relief_%28charity%29) asked three bestselling British authors – cookery writer and TV presenter [Delia Smith](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Delia_Smith), [Bridget Jones](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bridget_Jones) creator [Helen Fielding](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Helen_Fielding), and Rowling – to submit booklets related to their most famous works for publication.[[120]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/J._K._Rowling#cite_note-119) Rowling's two booklets, [*Fantastic Beasts and Where to Find Them*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fantastic_Beasts_and_Where_to_Find_Them) and [*Quidditch Through the Ages*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Quidditch_Through_the_Ages), are ostensibly facsimiles of books found in the [Hogwarts](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hogwarts) library. Since going on sale in March 2001, the books have raised £15.7 million ($30 million) for the fund. The £10.8 million ($20 million) they have raised outside the UK have been channeled into a newly created International Fund for Children and Young People in Crisis.[[121]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/J._K._Rowling#cite_note-120)

In 2005, Rowling and [MEP](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Member_of_the_European_Parliament) [Emma Nicholson](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Emma_Nicholson) founded the Children's High Level Group.[[122]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/J._K._Rowling#cite_note-121) In January 2006, Rowling went to [Bucharest](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bucharest) to highlight the use of caged beds in children's [mental institutions](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mental_institution).[[123]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/J._K._Rowling#cite_note-122) To further support the CHLG, Rowling auctioned one of seven handwritten and illustrated copies of [*The Tales of Beedle the Bard*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Tales_of_Beedle_the_Bard), a series of fairy tales referred to in *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows*. The book was purchased for £1.95 million by on-line bookseller [Amazon.com](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Amazon.com) on 13 December 2007, becoming the most expensive modern book ever sold at auction.[[124]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/J._K._Rowling#cite_note-india-123)[[125]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/J._K._Rowling#cite_note-fetches-124)[[126]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/J._K._Rowling#cite_note-125) Rowling commented "This will mean so much to children in desperate need of help. It means Christmas has come early to me."[[125]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/J._K._Rowling#cite_note-fetches-124)[[127]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/J._K._Rowling#cite_note-126) Rowling will give away the remaining six copies to those who have a close connection with the *Harry Potter* books.[[125]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/J._K._Rowling#cite_note-fetches-124) In 2008, Rowling agreed to publish the book with the proceeds going to the Children's High Level Group.[[124]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/J._K._Rowling#cite_note-india-123)

### Political donation

In September 2008, on the eve of the [Labour Party Conference](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Labour_Party_Conference), Rowling announced that she had donated £1 million to the [Labour Party](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Labour_Party_%28UK%29), saying in a statement that, "I believe that poor and vulnerable families will fare much better under the Labour Party than they would under a Cameron-led Conservative Party. Gordon Brown has consistently prioritised and introduced measures that will save as many children as possible from a life lacking in opportunity or choice. The Labour government has reversed the long-term trend in child poverty, and is one of the leading EU countries in combating child poverty. David Cameron's promise of tax perks for the married, on the other hand, is reminiscent of the Conservative government I experienced as a lone parent. It sends the message that the Conservatives still believe a childless, dual-income, but married couple is more deserving of a financial pat on the head than those struggling, as I once was, to keep their families afloat in difficult times."[[128]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/J._K._Rowling#cite_note-127)

### Other philanthropic work

In May 2008, bookseller [Waterstones](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Waterstones) asked Rowling and 12 other writers ([Sebastian Faulks](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sebastian_Faulks), [Doris Lessing](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Doris_Lessing), [Lisa Appignanesi](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lisa_Appignanesi), [Margaret Atwood](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Margaret_Atwood), [Lauren Child](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lauren_Child), [Richard Ford](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Richard_Ford), [Neil Gaiman](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Neil_Gaiman), [Nick Hornby](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nick_Hornby), [Michael Rosen](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Michael_Rosen), [Axel Scheffler](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Axel_Scheffler), [Tom Stoppard](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tom_Stoppard) and [Irvine Welsh](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Irvine_Welsh)) to compose a short piece of their own choosing on a single [A5](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/ISO_216) card, which would then be sold at auction in aid of the charities Dyslexia Action and English [PEN](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/International_PEN). Rowling's contribution was an 800-word [Harry Potter prequel](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Harry_Potter_prequel) that concerns Harry's father, [James Potter](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/James_Potter) and godfather, [Sirius Black](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sirius_Black), and takes place three years before Harry was born.[[129]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/J._K._Rowling#cite_note-128)[[130]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/J._K._Rowling#cite_note-prequel-129) Rowling claims that she does not intend to return to *Harry Potter* for at least ten years.[[131]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/J._K._Rowling#cite_note-130)[[132]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/J._K._Rowling#cite_note-131) The cards will be collected together and sold for charity in book form in August 2008.[[130]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/J._K._Rowling#cite_note-prequel-129)

Rowling has contributed money and support for research and treatment of [multiple sclerosis](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Multiple_sclerosis), from which her mother died in 1990. In 2006, Rowling contributed a substantial sum toward the creation of a new Centre for Regenerative Medicine at [Edinburgh University](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Edinburgh_University).[[133]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/J._K._Rowling#cite_note-132) On 1 August and 2 August 2006 she read alongside [Stephen King](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Stephen_King) and [John Irving](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/John_Irving) at [Radio City Music Hall](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Radio_City_Music_Hall) in New York City. Profits from the event were donated to the Haven Foundation, a charity that aids artists and performers left uninsurable and unable to work, and the medical [NGO](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/NGO) [Médecins Sans Frontières](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/M%C3%A9decins_Sans_Fronti%C3%A8res).[[134]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/J._K._Rowling#cite_note-133) In May 2007, Rowling gave $495,000 to a reward fund of over $4.5 million for the safe return of a young British girl, [Madeleine McCann](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Disappearance_of_Madeleine_McCann), who disappeared in Portugal.[[135]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/J._K._Rowling#cite_note-134)[[136]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/J._K._Rowling#cite_note-safe-135) Rowling, along with [Nelson Mandela](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nelson_Mandela), [Al Gore](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Al_Gore), and [Alan Greenspan](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Alan_Greenspan), wrote an introduction to a collection of Gordon Brown's speeches, the proceeds of which are donated to the Jennifer Brown Research Laboratory.[[137]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/J._K._Rowling#cite_note-136)

## Legal disputes

*Main article:* [*Legal disputes over Harry Potter*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Legal_disputes_over_Harry_Potter)

Rowling, her publishers and [Time Warner](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Time_Warner), the owner of the rights to the [Harry Potter films](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Harry_Potter_films), have taken numerous legal actions to protect their copyright, and also have fielded accusations of copyright theft themselves.[[138]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/J._K._Rowling#cite_note-Potter_author_zaps_court_rival-137) The worldwide popularity of the *Harry Potter* series has led to the appearance of a number of locally produced, unauthorised sequels and other derivative works, sparking efforts to ban or contain them.[[139]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/J._K._Rowling#cite_note-yemets-138) While these legal proceedings have countered a number of cases of outright piracy,[[140]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/J._K._Rowling%22%20%5Cl%20%22cite_note-walkup-139%22%20%5Co%20%22) other attempts have targeted not-for-profit endeavours and have been criticised as a result as too draconian.[[141]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/J._K._Rowling#cite_note-140)

Another area of legal dispute involves a series of injunctions obtained by Rowling and her publishers to prohibit anyone from reading her books before their official release date. These injunctions have very sweeping powers and have occasionally drawn fire from civil liberties and free speech campaigners and sparked debates over the "right to read".[[142]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/J._K._Rowling#cite_note-141)[[143]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/J._K._Rowling#cite_note-142) The powers afforded by these injunctions have even been used in subsequent cases unrelated to publishing.[[144]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/J._K._Rowling#cite_note-143)

## Publications

Harry Potter series

1. [*Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Harry_Potter_and_the_Philosopher%27s_Stone) (26 June 1997)
2. [*Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Harry_Potter_and_the_Chamber_of_Secrets) (2 July 1998)
3. [*Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Harry_Potter_and_the_Prisoner_of_Azkaban) (8 July 1999)
4. [*Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Harry_Potter_and_the_Goblet_of_Fire) (8 July 2000)
5. [*Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Harry_Potter_and_the_Order_of_the_Phoenix) (21 June 2003)
6. [*Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Harry_Potter_and_the_Half-Blood_Prince) (16 July 2005)
7. [*Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Harry_Potter_and_the_Deathly_Hallows) (21 July 2007)

Other books

* [*Fantastic Beasts and Where to Find Them*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fantastic_Beasts_and_Where_to_Find_Them) (supplement to the Potter series) (2001)
* [*Quidditch Through the Ages*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Quidditch_Through_the_Ages) (supplement to the Potter series) (2001)
* [*The Tales of Beedle the Bard*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Tales_of_Beedle_the_Bard) (4 December 2008, also publicly displayed by Amazon.com) (2007)

Articles

* "The First It Girl: J.K. Rowling reviews *Decca: the Letters of* [*Jessica Mitford*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jessica_Mitford) ed by Peter Y Sussman", [*The Daily Telegraph*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Daily_Telegraph) 26 July 2006
* Introduction to "Ending Child Poverty" in *Moving Britain Forward. Selected Speeches 1997–2006* by [Gordon Brown](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gordon_Brown), Bloomsbury (2006)
* Foreword to the anthology *Magic*, ed by Gil McNeil and [Sarah Brown](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sarah_Brown_%28spouse%29), Bloomsbury (2002)
* [The Fringe Benefits of Failure, and the Importance of Imagination](http://harvardmagazine.com/go/jkrowling.html), J.K. Rowling, Harvard Magazine, 5 June 2008

## See also

* [Legal disputes over Harry Potter](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Legal_disputes_over_Harry_Potter)
* [Religious debates over Harry Potter](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Religious_debates_over_Harry_Potter)
* [Politics of Harry Potter](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Politics_of_Harry_Potter)
* [Harry Potter influences and analogues](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Harry_Potter_influences_and_analogues)

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## External links

* [J.K. Rowling Fan Site](http://www.JKRfan.com)
* [English section of J.K. Rowling's official personal site](http://www.jkrowling.com/en) ([Macromedia Flash](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Macromedia_Flash)-heavy, with [pop-ups](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pop-up); [text-only version](http://www.jkrowling.com/textonly/en/))
* [The first It Girl](http://www.telegraph.co.uk/arts/main.jhtml?xml=/arts/2006/11/26/bomit05.xml): Rowling's article on Jessica Mitford for *The Telegraph*
* [Rowling's foreword to the anthology *Magic*](http://www.bloomsbury.com/magic/)
* [Video, audio and transcript](http://harvardmagazine.com/go/jkrowling.html) of Rowling's speech at [Harvard University](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Harvard_University)'s 2008 [commencement](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Graduation).
* [J. K. Rowling](http://www.isfdb.org/cgi-bin/ea.cgi?J._K._Rowling) at the [Internet Speculative Fiction Database](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Internet_Speculative_Fiction_Database)
* [J.K. Rowling](http://www.imdb.com/name/nm0746830/) at the [Internet Movie Database](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Internet_Movie_Database)
* [J.K. Rowling](http://www.iblist.com/author146.htm) at the [Internet Book List](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Internet_Book_List)