

# J.K. Rowling Fact File

## Biography

Going from unemployment to being a multi-millionaire in the space of 5 years, J.K. Rowling's story is almost as amazing as Harry Potter's! She is the best-selling living author in the UK and her books are popular all over the world. Rowling has described writers such as Jane Austen and C.S. Lewis as those who have inspired her the most.

She was born Joanne Rowling on 31st July 1965, in Gloucestershire. She enjoyed writing fantasy stories from an early age, reading them to her younger sister. As a teenager, Rowling began studying French and Classics at Exeter University. Having graduated, she moved to London to work as a researcher for Amnesty International, an organisation which works to protect human rights around the world. She also lived and worked in Manchester.

It was in 1990, when Joanne was on a delayed train journey from Manchester to London that the idea for a series of books came into her head. During the writing of the first Harry Potter book, Joanne's mother died and this huge loss affected her writing. Rowling decided to include more detail about the loss of the main character's parents as she knew how it felt. Rowling used her life as inspiration for many other ideas in the book, for example, her parents met at Kings Cross Station, which is where Harry Potter catches the train to school.

After living and working as an English teacher in Portugal, Rowling moved to Edinburgh with her daughter. Those early days of living in Scotland weren't easy for Joanne - she had no job but dedicated her time to finishing her book. When the story was finally completed, it was sent to 12 different publishing houses, all of which turned it down. In 1997, the book was finally published by Bloomsbury under the name J.K. Rowling. As Joanne didn't have a middle name, she incorporated her grandmother's name, 'Kathleen' into her initials. Her real name wasn't

**Name:**

Joanne Rowling

**Born:**

31st July 1965

**Place of birth:**

Gloucestershire, UK

**Occupation:**

Writer, Author



Photo courtesy of Sjhll - granted under creative commons licence

# J.K. Rowling Fact File

used as the publishers didn't think that boys would want to read a book written by a female author. Shortly after being published, the book won its first award and proved to be very popular. She later released the next book in the series, 'Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets', followed by 'Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban'. It was the fourth book in the series, 'Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire', which broke sales records in both the UK and America. Rowling was also named Author of the Year at the 2000 British Book Awards and awarded an OBE for writing such popular children's books.

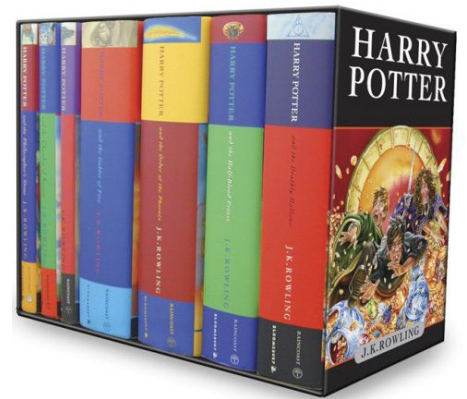


Photo courtesy of veganstraightedge @flickr - granted under creative commons licence

The final book in the series, 'Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows', was released in 2007 and became the fastest-selling book in history. Each book has also been made into a successful film. Since the end of the Harry Potter stories, Rowling has written other books linked to the series. She has also written stories for adults and continues to embark on other projects.

Today, original copies of 'Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone' sell for around £20,000 and the series has been translated into 65 languages.

# J.K. Rowling

Answer the questions in full sentences.

1. When and where was she born?

---

2. Name one of Rowling's favourite authors.

---

3. Explain why she moved to London.

---

4. Where did Joanne come up with the idea for the Harry Potter series?

---

---

5. Can you explain how the death of her own mother affected her writing?

---

---

6. What did the publishers think about Joanne's full name being printed on her books?

---

7. What could one of the original copies of 'Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone' sell for?

---

8. If you have read all of the Harry Potter books, which is your favourite and why?

---

---

---

---

# J.K. Rowling **Answers**

1. When and where was she born?  
**She was born on 31st July 1965, in Gloucestershire.**
2. Name one of Rowling's favourite authors.  
**(Jane Austin / C.S. Lewis) is one of Rowling's favourite authors.**
3. Explain why she moved to London.  
**She moved to London to work as a researcher for Amnesty International.**
4. Where did Joanne come up with the idea for the Harry Potter series?  
**Joanne was on a delayed train journey from Manchester to London when the idea for the Harry Potter series came into her head.**
5. Can you explain how the death of her own mother affected her writing?  
**Rowling decided to introduce more detail about the loss of the main character's parents as she knew how it felt.**
6. What did the publishers think about Joanne's full name being printed on her books?  
**The publishers didn't think that boys would want to read a book written by a female author.**
7. What could one of the original copies of 'Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone' sell for?  
**Today, original copies of 'Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone' now sell for around £20,000.**
8. If you have read all of the Harry Potter books, which is your favourite and why?  
**Own answers.**