

Literature Circle: *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone*

Due to its length and difficulty level, I never expected to have a third grade literature circle reading *Harry Potter*! However, the students in this group already own and have read the book, and have demonstrated their ability to read at a higher-than-average level. We assume that if they have their own copy and are reading it on their own already, then it is okay with their parents. Because of the students' high interest level in this book, I find they are more motivated to put forth their best effort at "thinking about" what they read.

I would like to emphasize that the purpose of this group is not to simply read through the book, but to learn how to really *think about* what one is reading. We only get through one to three pages per day because we spend so much time analyzing the sentences.

- With J. K. Rowling, we are finding a gold mine of figurative language. (phrases that mean something different than what the words actually say – such as "fly like a bird," or "as hungry as a horse")
- We are learning how to figure out who is speaking by watching the quotation marks and the paragraphing.
- We are learning how to make "inferences" from clues that Rowling provides.
- We are finding tons of evidence that prove the character traits of each character. Students are coming up with great character traits such as: judgmental, noble, suspicious, persuasive, dastardly, obnoxious, and arrogant.
- We also take time to wonder about why J. K. Rowling mentions things that seem out of place. We are learning that there is a purpose for everything she writes...but it's only by keeping track of the clues that we can figure it out.

Because this is a difficult book, not normally read in third grade, the students in this group are expected to put forth their best effort in how they behave during our discussion time. If someone works harder at getting people to laugh than at thinking about and contributing to the discussion, then that person will be asked to leave the group. The students in this group may also have a small amount of additional homework during the week.