

SPECIALISED CENTRE FOR SCIENCE AND EDUCATION IN
SOUTHERN FEDERAL DISTRICT

Group essay contest

“Unity in Diversity: Russia and the English-Speaking World. Time for
Equal Opportunities”

Research work (essay)

«British characters popular in Russia (Sherlock Holmes, Harry Potter,
James Bond, Robin Hood, Peter Pen, Alice Through the Looking Glass, Mary
Poppins, Miss Marple and others to choose from): cultural reflection and public
love»

Participants:



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“Harry Potter” by J.K. Rowling is extremely popular all over the world, representing a large universe, which, unbelievably enough, was rejected by 12 publishers in the beginning.

Nowadays, unlike in European countries, the books about the bizarre magical world of Harry Potter are even more popular among Russian readers than Stephen King’s ones.

The reasons for Potter’s unprecedented popularity include the author’s use of the language, its own atmosphere, profound questions raised as well as Harry Potter himself becoming a role model.

Some find the series to be an ordinary story without really delving into it, they also might have little chance to read or watch it in the original to enjoy the authenticity from all aspects.

Harry Potter is a series of seven fantasy novels written by British author, J.K. Rowling: "Philosopher's Stone", "The Chamber of Secrets", "The prisoner of Azkaban", "The Goblet of Fire", "The order of the Phoenix", "The Half-Blood Prince" and "The Deathly Hallows". The novels chronicle the lives of a young wizard, Harry Potter, and his friends Hermione Granger and Ron Weasley, all of whom are students at Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry. The main story arc concerns Harry's struggle against Lord Voldemort, a dark wizard who intends to become immortal, overthrow the wizard governing body known as the Ministry of Magic and subjugate all wizards and Muggles (non-magical people).

Harry Potter is extremely popular all over the world, he has a huge number of fans who maintain fan accounts, organize meetings, and sincerely love, reread and revise books and films about their favorite characters. It is probably difficult to imagine any kind of a larger universe invented by one person, which is a world where many of us would like to find themselves one day. Interestingly the first Harry Potter manuscript was rejected by 12 publishers. Only 2 years after the book was completed, in June 1997, and the first edition of the novel "Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone" was published in England as an edition of just 500 copies. In Russia, the book was published in October 2000.

Some more statistics: within the period from mid-May to mid-June, the interest in "Potteriana" in Russia doubled compared to the same period in 2019. In contrast with 2019, the books about the magical world have become 35% more in demand in Moscow as well as in the northern capital. the demand in buying books about the "boy who survived" is quite hype-driven this year - from mid-May to mid-June 2020 it appeared 3.5 times higher than in 2019 (tass.ru).

Nowadays, the books about the bizarre magical world of Harry Potter are searched for most often on the platform - this request comes in the first place in the corresponding section. Surprisingly (or not), the works by J. K. Rowling are

even more popular among Russian readers than Stephen King's ones, analysts say.

So, we have been wondering what Harry Potter owes such popularity to, both among younger and older readers. The first reason might be the accessibility, sophistication, and beauty of the language. In addition, when reading this work, you realise what great skill of visualization is exercised by the author! You can imagine the content down to the smallest detail. It is worth noting that Rowling came up with her own spellings and coined a number of words and phrases which later became phraseological units that swept the world (summalinguae.com).

Both children and adults enjoy this series of books, as there is a special atmosphere in this masterpiece, as if it were warming your soul. In some parts of it, it becomes touching, while in others, on the contrary, the reader can be filled with joys of spring.

Speaking about the content, this can be characterized as deep, even profound. Let us consider the example: "Happiness can be found even in the darkest of times, if one only remembers to turn on the light." or "To the well-organized mind, death is but the next great adventure." (Rowling, 1999, 2010). In other words, the reader is literally drawn to this work because it dwells upon universal things: from friendship to betrayal, from love to death. In addition, the fantasy genre facilitates experiencing the adventures of the main characters. In addition to the above, the main character of this story-Harry Potter is endowed with the best human qualities, namely kindness and honesty, courage, loyalty, and responsiveness. He can be considered as a role model. After all, a boy with such a difficult fate and lack of freedom could become arrogant and hypocritical when receiving some privileges, but fortunately this did not happen. Nobody is perfect, though. We are talking about Harry Potter as a hero, a man who saved the entire magical world. But he, like everyone else, has his weaknesses. Like any teenager, he is reckless, constantly risking his life, as if this life were

eternal. He is often quick-tempered and may perform unreasonable acts, guided solely by emotions - not mind.

But there is also the opposite opinion. Many people find the Harry Potter series simply boring, proving this by the fact that this is an ordinary story about good and evil, no different from the good old Cinderella or Snow White. Often people who claim this seem to fail to have read the book completely and to delve into it, but only skimmed it through leaping to rather inappropriate conclusions. While there also must be some difficulty in reading the series in the original, people who do not know English can only read their translated versions. This is not very good: with the translator's "intervention" many meanings may change, be distorted and even lost. One should bear in mind that in "Harry Potter" all names, titles and so on have their own subtext, symbolism (Agarwal, Agarwal, 2005).

In conclusion, "Harry Potter" is our favourite book and film. We can re-read or re-watch it a million times, never finding it boring. Strangely, it does make us want to go to Hogwarts to study magic. We have always wanted to have such friends as The Golden Trio, and we think that J.K. Rowling is an amazing writer, since she has been helping people from all over the world to love reading, even if they have deeply disliked it before. "Harry Potter" is a seminal work indeed. That is why we advise everyone to read it. Mischief managed!

References:

1. Agarwal, N., Agarwal, C. (2005). *Friends and Foes of Harry Potter: Names Decoded*. Outskirts Press.
2. Rowling, J. K. (2010). *Harry Potter and the prisoner of Azkaban*. London: Bloomsbury.
3. Rowling, J. K. (1999). *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone*. New York: Scholastic.
4. *Harry Potter and the Translator's Madness*, <https://summalinguae.com/language-culture/harry-potter-translators-madness/>.
5. *Research: "Harry Potter" remains the most popular book in Russia*, 26 June, 2020, <https://tass.ru/obschestvo/8820125>.



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Почему английская писательница Дж. К. Роулинг покорила тысячи русских сердец?

Что теряют те, кто до сих пор оставался безразличным к культовому произведению о Гарри Поттере?

Учащиеся 9 социогуманитарного класса Колесникова Софья и Анисимова Катерина пытаются найти ответы в рамках командного конкурса эссе на английском языке «Unity in Diversity: Russia and the English-Speaking World Time for equal opportunities» от образовательной компании RELOD @relod_official и Всероссийской государственной библиотеки иностранной литературы имени М.И. Рудомино.

Этот проект объединил не только наших обучающихся – он нацелен погрузить молодых исследователей в межпредметную, кросскультурную деятельность. Одним из критериев успешного эссе организаторы выделяют «оригинальный подход». Надеемся, что креативность обучающихся СУНЦ ЮФО будет оценена жюри по достоинству!

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