

HOGWARTS



As well as taking great care to describe their characters, writers also think carefully about the setting for their stories. The setting is the surroundings and time in which action takes place. The following extracts come from Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone by J. K. Rowling. In the first extract which tells you about Harry Potter's new school, Hogwarts, Harry finds that things are not quite as he expected them to be.

Hogwarts

There were a hundred and forty-two staircases at Hogwarts: wide, sweeping ones; narrow rickety ones; some that led somewhere different on a Friday; some with a vanishing step half-way up that you had to remember to jump. Then there were doors that wouldn't open unless you asked politely, or tickled them in exactly the right place, and doors that weren't really doors at all, but solid walls just pretending. It was also very hard to remember where anything was, because it all seemed to move around a lot. The people in the portraits kept going to visit each other and Harry was sure the coats of armour could walk.

The Dining Hall

Harry had never even imagined such a strange and splendid place. It was lit by thousands and thousands of candles which were floating in mid-air over four long tables, where the rest of the students were sitting. These tables were laid with glittering golden plates and goblets. At the top of the Hall was another long table where the teachers were sitting. Professor McGonagall led the first-years up here so that they came to a halt in a line facing the other students, with the teachers behind them. The hundreds of faces staring at them looked like pale lanterns in the flickering candlelight. Dotted here and there among the students, the ghosts shone misty silver. Mainly to avoid all the staring eyes, Harry looked upwards and saw a velvety black ceiling dotted with stars.