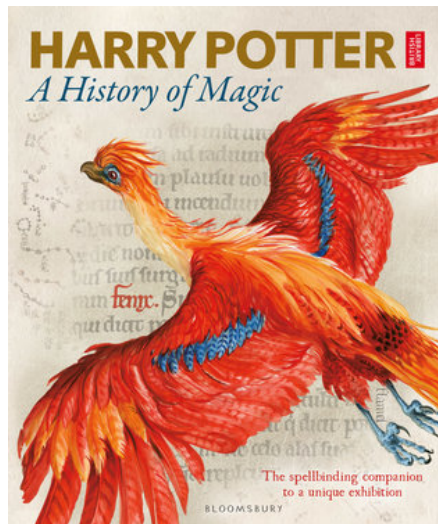




Harry Potter: A History of Magic

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Harry Potter: A History of Magic is the official book of the exhibition, a once-in-a-lifetime collaboration between Bloomsbury, J.K. Rowling and the brilliant curators of the British Library. It promises to take readers on a fascinating journey through the subjects studied at Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry - from Alchemy and Potions classes through to Herbology and Care of Magical Creatures. Each chapter showcases a treasure trove of artefacts from the British Library and other collections around the world, beside exclusive manuscripts, sketches and illustrations from the Harry Potter archive. There's also a specially commissioned essay for each subject area by an expert, writer or cultural commentator, inspired by the contents of the exhibition - absorbing, insightful and unexpected contributions from Steve Backshall, the Reverend Richard Coles, Owen Davies, Julia Eccleshare, Roger Highfield, Steve Kloves, Lucy Mangan, Anna Pavord and Tim Peake, who offer a personal perspective on their magical theme. Readers will be able to pore over ancient spell books, amazing illuminated scrolls that reveal the secret of the Elixir of Life, vials of dragon's blood, mandrake roots, painted centaurs and a genuine witch's broomstick, in a book that shows J.K. Rowling's magical inventions alongside their cultural and historical forebears. This is the ultimate gift for Harry Potter fans, curious minds, big imaginations, bibliophiles and readers around the world who missed out on the chance to see the exhibition in person.

Harry Potter: A History of Magic Details

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Format : Hardcover 256 pages

Genre : Fantasy, Young Adult

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Davies (Contributor) , Richard Coles (Contributor) , Steve Backshall (Contributor) , Steve Kloves (Contributor) ...less

From Reader Review Harry Potter: A History of Magic for online ebook

Mohammed Arabey says

Finally, my copy is on the way to Egypt..

As huge Potterhead, I always admire how close 'The Harry Potter Series' is to our *Real* World.

In Egypt we've this saying; "No Smoke Without Fire"...and this magnificent work of literature has many references to exotic, magical, strange and fantastic subjects, artefacts, creatures and even History..

And it doesn't seem all just a work of fantasy.. it feels like it has *Roots* in real life..

Elixir of Life, dragon's blood, mandrake roots, painted centaurs from old times..Witch hunting.. even people turning into animals.. why is that a folklore that similar all over the globe? Magic has always been here..

????????????????

And now, This book, with the collaboration of the amazing British Library promising that it will shed a new light in this worldwide phenomenon.. J.K. Rowling's masterpiece.. The Harry Potter saga... An academic light full of the imagination..

As the book promises "This is the ultimate gift for Harry Potter fans, curious minds, big imaginations, bibliophiles and readers around the world."

I don't know much about the real exhibition.. but sure I won't miss it printed -hopefully with the photographs, sketches and illustrations.-

Mohammed Arabey
19th August 2017

Nadine says

Required reading for every Harry Potter fan! I originally picked this up after skimming through it at the bookstore and seeing images of drafts and annotations of the original books, so I had to buy it. This book is the written equivalent of walking through the British Library's actual museum Harry Potter: A History of Magic. It focuses heavily on the historical precedents for everything found in the series by filtering it through the various school subjects Harry, Ron, and Hermione take. I learned so much reading this book and am so happy I decided to pay the expensive price tag.

Below I've summarized each section briefly.

The Journey: This section features amazing insights into the publication and editing processes. It focuses mainly on the Philosopher's Stone.

Potions and Alchemy: interesting look at the history of alchemy and how Rowling included the various historical pieces in the series. It also looks at the history of witchcraft and the various symbols associated

with it.

The best part of the section is the history of bezoar stones

Herbology: This section is not as interesting as the previous chapters since the information given does not relate as directly to the books, although I did really enjoy the information about mandrakes.

Charms: This section offers an interesting look at the various charms used throughout the series and an in depth look at the logical use of charms in the wizarding world.

The best part is the explanation of the origin of abracadabra.

Astronomy: This chapter doesn't relate specifically to Harry Potter other than the connection of names used in the series to stars/constellations, but does give interesting information about the history of stargazing.

The best part of this chapter was seeing Rowling's notes about teachers' names and subjects.

Divination: This chapter was my least favourite of all, however the origin of the mirror of erised made up for it.

Defense Against the Dark Arts: This section offers an interesting look at the historical precedent of warding off evil spirits and witches.

Care of Magical Creatures: If you bought this book in hopes of gaining insight into Rowling writing process and deleted scene, then this is the chapter you'll find most satisfying.

Past, Present, Future: This section felt rushed and incomplete, but did include pictures of Rowling's annotated *Philosopher's Stone*.

leynes says

Well, this didn't necessarily turn out as planned. *Harry Potter: A History of Magic* promises to showcase the magical traditions that lie at the heart of Harry Potter's world. I'm not really sure if this catalogue lives up to its claim.

Personally, I would've preferred it if this book had really **looked** into all of those myths, creatures and people that inspired J.K. Rowling. It would have been such an enrichment if the curators would have tied these traditions to what is written in *Potter* rather than treating all of them in a very superficial manner without analyzing their significance.

This book was not particularly informative if you we're looking for a deeper analysis of J.K. Rowling's work. Instead it functions more as an introduction and general overview to different beliefs about magic and the hunt of fantastical creatures and objects throughout history. All of which is just loosely if at all tied to *Potter*. I found this very disappointing because I thought that so much potential was wasted. I get that this catalogue is also targeted at a younger audience, nonetheless, I don't think it would've hurt to spend more time on less artifacts and discuss their use properly.

Despite all of this, a three-star-rating is still appropriate since the catalogue could score in other areas. The main reason why I enjoyed myself whilst reading it were definitely the pictures. All of them were printed in full color and in the highest quality. It was fascinating to see every single detail.

Additionally, many of Rowling's personal illustrations and manuscripts were included in the catalogue. This was most definitely another highlight for me since I am a die-hard *Potter*-fan. Seeing all of these alternate versions, deleted scenes and unpublished drawings actually made my heart sing. It was a pity that Rowling's handwriting was so hard to read at times (I found it super fascinating btw that she was still plotting by hand and not on her computer when *Hallows* was in the making) and that some of her manuscripts weren't given the space they deserved, e.g. a DIN A4 page was at times printed as a DIN A6 (or even smaller) in this catalogue which made the writing almost impossible to decipher.

Anyways, I thought it would be fun to share some of the more interesting revelations:

- 1) Merpeople were intended to appear at the beginning of *Chamber of Secrets* before Rowling changed her mind. In a draft chapter the Ford Anglia flown by Ron and Harry originally crashed into the lake rather than into the Whomping Willow, leading them to see their first mermaid.
- 2) By 1991, Rowling had already fully envisioned the appearance of the Dursleys, Rubeus Hagrid, Peeves and many other side characters. I was aware that the idea for *Potter* came to her on a train to London in 1990 but I didn't know that her vision was already so clear this early on. It was truly fascinating to see her personal illustrations; a favorite of mine was definitely her portrait of Madame Sprout which she drew the night her own mother died.
- 3) Alice Newton, the daughter of Nigel Newton, the chairman of Bloomsbury Publishing, made the publication of *Philosopher's Stone* possible. She was given an early manuscript that led up as far as Diagon Alley and then pressured her father to bring home the whole thing.
- 4) J.K. Rowling had many different ideas as to how the sorting at Hogwarts would work. She envisioned sorting by the statues of the four founders, or the ghost court, or prefects with the respective heads of houses, or by letting the first year students solve a riddle. Eventually she came to the realization: 'Forget that, just put the hat on.' ;)
- 5) In an early draft, she wrote the character of Fudge as a Muggle Minister who was visited by Hagrid (on behalf of Dumbeldore) to warn him about Voldemort. She also drafted Vernon Dursley as a high ranking Muggle politician who wanted to take Fudge's place. They had some serious bonding moments over being the only two muggles in the know about wizards. It was quite hilarious!
- 6) And lastly, she originally intended the names of *Dumbledore's Army* and *The Order of the Phoenix* to be swapped. Oh well, that would've been weird.

Overall, it was fun to read *Harry Potter: A History of Magic* and even though it didn't grant me the insight and knowledge that I craved, I still wouldn't wanna miss this beautifully crafted coffee table book in my collection.

David Schaafsma says

We had to wait several months to get this from the library and now aim to own it. A large and gorgeous hardback, 250 pages, full glossy color "coffee table" and collectible feast of Potter world, focused obviously on magic in the series, curated and wonderfully produced by no less than the British Library in commemoration of the twentieth anniversary of the publication of the first Harry Potter volume, in conjunction with an exhibition there I will never see, boo hoo.

Read Trish and Mohammed Arabey's reviews so you can see some of it, but there are several treats, including many drawings by Rowling, who turns out to be a very good artist, and helps to explain why she was enthusiastic about illustrated editions. Connects Rowling's work and research with a literary history of magic. A must for Potter fans! Everyone in this house has been poring over it for weeks now.

Ryan Buckby says

This is a highly recommend book for any harry potter fan

As i don't see myself going to the exhibition anytime soon this book was a great way to see and learn more about the harry potter world.

I just had to buy this book and have it for my collection and i just loved reading through the book to see all the different drawings, pictures etc because this series has been with me for over 10 years now and i will never get enough of it.

If you love harry potter i would highly recommend you check this book out if you cant go to the exhibition like myself who lives in a different country.

Andrew says

This is a fascinating book which yes does draw on the Harry Potter name but is far far more than that.

You see the British Library has a long history of publishing supporting books for their larger exhibitions. They are far more than simply tour guides, representing further reading and expanded articles in the exhibit. In other words you can enjoy the book without having set foot inside the building. This has very much been the case in the books on science fiction and comics and graphic novels.

However this book is the next step up - yes the exhibit was incredible in its own right but having read the book you could almost be excused to think that the exhibit is to support the book.

The book itself charts magic and mythical creatures (along with a lot more) through the ages and see how the various wonders found their way in to our culture and I guess out subconscious long before the debut of Harry Potter. If you like a lot of the ideas, names and even creatures that inhabit the pages of the Harry Potter books are mentioned or hinted at here.

Charting the beginning of things can be a very tricky thing and this book shows that magic has been with us for as long as we have been able to communicate. Like I say this book is far more than a celebration of Harry Potter more its a stepping stone in to our history and the wonders that are recorded in it.

The British Library is a true wonder in both what it represents and what it creates. I wonder what next will come from it.

Kaitlin says

I absolutely loved this non-fiction book which combines our world history of magic and the history told in HP. A lot of what Rowling used for inspiration comes from our world, and this book is a great example of so many of the ideas. I found myself pulled through this easily and read it in a day, but it's a great coffee table book too and one I think that many would find really interesting. 4.5*s

Jason says

Must-read for any Harry Potter obsessed person, like myself.

This book is filled with a bunch of really neat information on the history of magic/witchcraft and provides insights into where JK Rowling drew inspiration for a lot of the things we see in Harry Potter.

I have been waiting for something like this for years. My only criticism: I WANT MORE! I could literally sit down with thousands of pages of JK Rowling's private documents from her early days of planning HP and never get bored.

This book is really unique in that you get to see original manuscripts from the editing phases of the HP books - you get to see just *how much* some of the information changed from the time it was written to the time it was published. I am astonished over how different some of the books/plots looked in the early drafts. Here are just a few details that changed from the original planning stages:

(view spoiler)

There are many more cool bits of info in the book, but I could spend all day listing them. Well worth the money I spent on this, and I would encourage you to get a copy for yourself!

K. says

Trigger warnings: witch burnings?? Look, it's a nonfiction book full of medieval artworks that relate to the Hogwarts subjects. There's not really much that's triggering.

This book is absolutely STUNNING and now I'm sadder than ever that I didn't get to go to the exhibition. It not only provides an excellent background in a literal history of magic, with essays from relevant experts for each chapter (i.e. an astronaut for Astronomy, a priest for Defence Against the Dark Arts) tying that particular subject into the world that Rowling created, but it also provides - quite literally - a history of Rowling's world and how it came to be.

So not only does it include medieval manuscripts and oracle bones from 5th century China and a mandrake root that looks shockingly like a person, but it also includes Rowling's planning for Order of the Phoenix,

drafts of deleted scenes from Chamber of Secrets, and her drawings dating back to 1990 of how she pictured various characters. (Fun fact: Dean was originally called Gary. Thank God she changed that one...)

And throughout the entire thing, we have Jim Kay's beautiful and mindblowing illustrations. I loved every single second of reading this book. Every. Single. Second. I sped through it in an afternoon, and I expect I'll revisit it at a slower pace in the future to savour things. But honestly? It's incredible.

Veronique says

If you are a Potter fan, then you'll have heard of this amazing exhibition that the British Library has put together to celebrate the 20 years since the first publication of book 1. It is unreal to think that before then, we didn't have this fascinating world that has charmed everyone. This is also the first time the BL have exhibited an author who is still very much alive :0)

Rowling did inspire herself from myths and many texts, which can be seen here, as well as a wealth of documents and items from the vaults of the Library. This book mirrors this, each section representing one of Harry's classes at Hogwarts. There also many of Jim Kay's illustrations, and Olivia Gill who created the artwork for the Fantastic Beasts volume. These are utterly beautiful!

A great keepsake :0)

Tisha says

The very first thing I have to say is if you are a Potterhead, do read this book. It's so beautiful that it would definitely leave you spellbound!

Well, I had the opportunity to take this book in my hands and stare at it for a while. But it was super expensive and I couldn't buy it and it made me utterly sad! However, I found the ebook somehow and didn't spare the chance to read it of course. The ebook itself has left me mesmerized in such a way that I am wondering what would have happened if I actually owned the physical copy! *Sad Life*

Anyway! Let's talk about the book. It's not a regular Harry Potter book you see; it's more like a collection of information about magic stuffs that we got acquainted with while reading Harry Potter. The book is nothing but the result of a once-in-a-lifetime collaboration between Bloomsbury, J.K. Rowling, and The British Library.

So what's in this book?

This book covers a lot of things starting from Harry's journey to Hogwarts to the different shape and size of dragon eggs! It contains the images of the scribbled pages full of J.K. Rowling's thoughts on the story, her very first writings, her hand-drawn sketches! She is not only an amazing writer; she is a brilliant artist too!

See the following sketches, she drew this when she was building up the idea about Harry Potter.

Here's a sketch of Harry with the Dursleys-

This following sketch shows Harry, Ron, Hermione, Neville, Gary (Later named Dean)-

A detailed sketch of the opening of Diagon Alley! I really loved this one!

J.K. Rowling used to write down every single thought she was having so that she can use those in the perfect time! Her notebook was full of scribbles and stars marks and arrows! **SHE IS LOVE!**

It took J.K. Rowling almost five years of studying, thinking, sketching to come up with seven books full of awesomeness. The theme behind each and every stuff in the Harry Potter series were from her own experiences, from mythologies, from ancient books and so on. The subjects taught at Hogwarts such as Divination, Astronomy, Charms, Herbology, all have some history behind them and it is very elaborately exemplified in each chapter of this book. Many of these were unknown to me until now!

What makes it more beautiful are some of the illustrations by Jim Kay that he made for the illustrated edition of the Harry Potter series. I particularly adored these two!

See, how beautiful it this colorful illustration of Professor Sprout!

This illustration of Nearly Headless Nick completely left me awestricken!

You can also find little boxes titled as ACTIVITY in many pages that would guide you to do some magical things all by yourself!

This book is beautiful both inside and out and yes, someday I'll buy this gorgeous book! Yeah, someday....surely....

ambsreads says

i couldn't help myself. it was sitting on my shelf looking so sad and desperately wanting me to read it.

Rikke says

I was fortunate enough to visit the Harry Potter exhibition at British Library in its opening week in October. It was such a wonderful experience; I stood in awe and looked at Rowling's manuscripts, drawings and schedules; I gazed longingly at Jim Kay's detailed drawings and paintings; and I gasped when I saw the mutated body of a supposed merman (?) and a rumored witch's cauldron from the 16th century.

I cannot recommend the exhibition highly enough. If you're in the area and if you love Harry Potter – or even just nurse an interest in the traditions of fantasy writing – you should go. It is an absolute treasure.

The exhibition not only manages to tell the story of Rowling's writing process and research; it also manages to underline the myths, the folk lore and the actual history that is the very foundation of fantasy writing as we know it today. It not only places the Harry Potter series in a tradition of mermaids and wizards, but also tell the stories of *why* and *how* our perception of magic was built.

It is absolutely wonderful.

This book is actually the exhibition catalogue; it presents the pieces in the exhibition in pictures and text – and most of all, I bought and read for a chance to peruse Rowling's own manuscripts a bit more carefully. After all, there is a lot to be discovered here ...

Annemieke / A Dance with Books says

I'm kind of glad I didn't buy this and borrowed it from the library *ducks* I had higher expectations of the promised tie into our history/mythology from Harry Potter. Most of it was superficial.

Trish says

This year marks the 20th anniversary of the publication of the very first *Harry Potter* book. Who would have thought that a fantasy story for kids would become such a world-wide phenomenon? Certainly not the numerous publishers who turned J.K. Rowling down. *lol*

In honour of the event, the British Library is hosting an exhibition called **Harry Potter: A History of Magic** and this book basically is a summary of the exhibition for all those who cannot go (or don't want to ever forget).

The exhibition doesn't only feature original manuscripts from Rowling along with her sketches of Hogwarts Castle and grounds or characters like Professor Sprout, but real-life artifacts they have had for a long time. Together with the impressive art work by Jim Kay, this gives a 360° view on magic as known from fiction as well as history.

Some of the more impressive exhibits are

- the Battersea Cauldron => an actual cauldron (it's entirely possible it was NOT used for brewing potions) that must have been owned by a wealthy person judging by the craftsmanship, and which was found at the bottom of the Thames

- the Ripley Scroll => only "a" Ripley scroll, actually, as there are 23 left in the world, but this one is telling you how to create the Philosopher's Stone; it's written in rhyme and illustrated by George Ripley, a self-proclaimed alchemist; the scroll is 6m long and (due to its length) has only seldomly been unrolled so the fantastic illustrations are still vibrant and well preserved

- pages from *Culpeper's Medicinal Herbs* => a book Culpeper published that contained detailed descriptions of plants along with illustrations and descriptions of what they were a remedy for (apothecaries were NOT pleased because until Culpeper's book, they had been the only ones with that knowledge so they were living the good life)

- Chinese oracle bones => usually the shoulder bones from an ox, marked with questions of the royal family and the answers by astronomers; the remarkable thing is that this is either the only or one of few written records from the Shang dynasty!

But you can also see the actual tombstone of the real Nicolas Flamel (a French writer and, possibly, real-estate dealer)

as well as Ethiopian talismans

and tools that were used for combining astronomy with divination

The chapters are:

- 1) The Journey (of the books, how HP became such a phenomenon etc)
- 2) Potions and Alchemy
- 3) Herbology
- 4) Charms
- 5) Astronomy
- 6) Divination
- 7) Defense Against the Dark Arts
- 8) Care of Magical Creatures
- 9) Past, Present, Future

These are the lovely people (all curators) that brought together the artifacts as well as the writing in the above mentioned chapters:

The halls and rooms you walk through are decorated with Jim Kay's art, potion bottles, broomsticks (yes, some women actually had witches' brooms), mummified animals, ... and are styled like the corridors and classrooms of Hogwarts (complete with the headmaster's study).

This book, therefore, gives a pretty detailed overview of the history of magic in our world, where it overlaps with Rowling's creation, the impacts it had on every-day life (alchemy, basically, is a blend of "magic" and the ancestor of chemistry after all) and why it has fascinated so many people around the world for so long and continues to do so.

As much as I loved the kids' version of the exhibition book, this is by far more gratifying because it is rich with wonderful photographs of the artifacts, script pages, doodles etc on one hand and accounts of "witchcraft" from around the world and throughout history on the other. Thus, it is the perfect blend of what makes Rowling's books so great and an actual lesson in what we humans have been up to since ancient times.

For anyone wanting an even more intimate look (even telling of the discoveries alchemists made that

impacted our modern chemistry), the BBC made a documentary which can be watched in full here:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mPAiE...>
