

Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone

(US: "Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone")

UK / US : 2001 : dir. Chris Columbus : Warner Bros

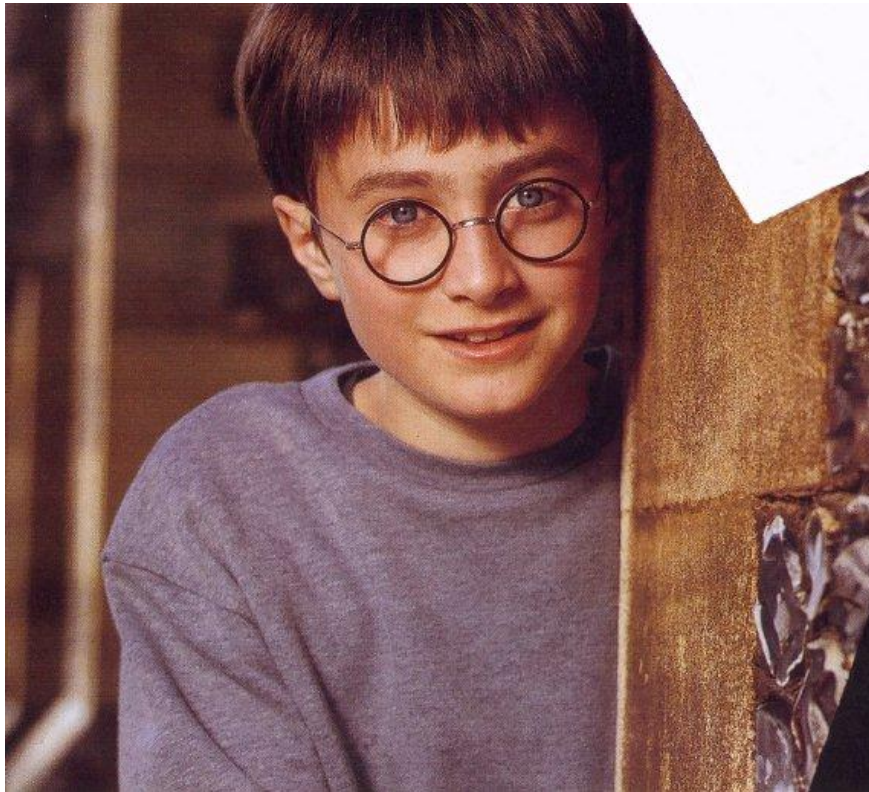
: 143 min

prod: : scr: : dir.ph.:

[Daniel Radcliffe](#) [d]

Sean Biggersaff; Maggie Smith; Robbie Coltrane; Richard Harris; John Cleese; David Bradley

Ref:	Pages	Sources	Stills	Words	Ω	8	≠	M	☼	Copy on VHS	Last Viewed
5555	4.5	4	3	1,950	3	-	-	-	-	No	unseen



*A shot in the arm
for spec-wearing
kids everywhere –
a boy hero who
still looks good in
glasses. It must
be magic...*

*Source:
indeterminate*

Evening Standard item – 01/11/2001 – “Joe steps in as the new voice of Harry Potter”:

“A London schoolboy has landed a last-minute role in the new Harry Potter film as the voice of the young wizard. As the first American review judges the movie not as good as the book, it has emerged that the main star Daniel Radcliffe, 12, had to be dubbed in two scenes when his voice broke before the end of filming.

Joe Sowerbutts, 13, from Putney, whose classmates at Latymer Upper School in Hammersmith say his voice sounds just like Daniel's, was drafted in by producers at Warner Bros. Joe provides Harry's voice in two scenes of the £90 million movie – one on a broomstick and one in a forest – as well as on Nintendo and PlayStation games. It is believed he will receive £200,000 for his efforts.

His mother, Julie Sowerbutts, is reported to have said: "It was a great honour for him but

he's such a laid-back boy and has done so many other things it really wasn't that big a deal."

The first review of "**HARRY POTTER AND THE PHILOSOPHER'S STONE**" describes the film, which will have its world premiere in London on Sunday, as "eye-popping", but not as good as the book. *Time* magazine, which was shown the film before the critics, says the movie was "not perfect" and the book "a more transporting piece of entertainment".

The American weekly said the makers assumed "a heavy load" in trying to bring all the novel's elements to the screen and what emerged was "essentially a greatest-hits compilation of the book". But it also says that fans will not be disappointed by the production, which contains "dazzling special effects", such as the snake that winks at Harry in the zoo to owls which sweep through the Great Hall at Hogwarts school.

Daniel Radcliffe is also described as much quieter than Harry Potter in the book, while the child stars are said to require "some patience" from viewers of the 143-minute movie, which is an hour longer than most children's films.

Daniel has signed a reported £1 million deal to star in the sequel, "**HARRY POTTER AND THE CHAMBER OF SECRETS**". By next summer, it will become clearer to the producers whether he will still resemble JK Rowling's creation enough to film the rest of the series."

The Daily Telegraph leader column piece – 05/11/2001 – "Good versus Evil":

"In times of conflict, colourful, grandiose and slightly escapist films seem peculiarly apt. It is perhaps no surprise that "**HARRY POTTER AND THE PHILOSOPHER'S STONE**", which had its première last night, seems set to be so successful. In it, we find many of the elements of a traditional fairy tale: an orphaned youngster, wicked relatives, a hero's growing self-awareness. But there is something else that makes Harry Potter especially appropriate to our current discontents: it is a story about good and evil, and one rooted in British values.

Think for a moment about how odd it is, in an age when children's stories are supposed to be "relevant", that people in 130 countries will flock to watch a story that is set in what is in

effect an old fashioned boarding school. Harry Potter is an embodiment of traditional national virtues: sportsmanship, modesty, fair play, indignation at injustice.

J.K.Rowling has confounded experts on child development with the popularity of her creation and, in so doing, has probably done more for British literacy than any other post-war writer. She has her detractors. Some critics point out that, behind the clever magic and the funny words, there is insipid dialogue. But those who hanker after stronger stuff need wait only six weeks for the adaptation of "**THE FELLOWSHIP OF THE RING**". Here, again, is a battle between good and evil; and here is another elegy for the British values represented by the Shire. This time, there can be no complaints about lack of scope or ambition. Tolkien's admirers have waited 50 years for this moment: how appropriate that the film, like the book, should come at a time when Britain is fighting to defend its way of life."

Evening Standard item – 13/11/2001 – "Harry Potter and the magic cash machine":

"It's a marketing and merchandising phenomenon, worth an estimated billion dollars. David Rowan reports on the selling – and exploitation – of Harry Potter.

Only a muggle could have missed the 150-second internet trailer, the 22-page *Vanity Fair* photo shoot and the commemorative Isle of Man £5 coins. But if Pottermania has thus far eluded you, prepare to face the interactive candy¹, the hand-held video games, the commemorative Coke cans and the Pokemon-style trading cards.

Oh, and a film, too.

"**HARRY POTTER AND THE PHILOSOPHER'S STONE**", Warner Bros' much-hyped take on the JK Rowling novel, has already become a marketing and merchandising phenomenon – and it's not even released for another 65 days. Already hundreds of millions of dollars have been agreed in aggressive licensing deals – ensuring the Christmas market will be flooded with Harry Potter role-playing games, personal radios, voice-changing devices, construction

¹ Or "sweets", as they're still called in this country, thank you very much.

kits, video consoles, metallic bookends, trivia games and orange drinks.

"The launch of Harry Potter products will be a worldwide effort," according to Dan Romanelli, president of Warner Bros' consumer products division. "We're looking to support the literary and film property as a long-term franchise."

And that, say licensing experts, means the characters invented by a single mother in a Glasgow cafe are now "properties" as valuable as any in recent film history. Although Warner Bros protects its investments with obsessive secrecy – "We won't be able to give out that information," it responded to even our blandest questions – others who know the territory suggest the merchandising tie-ins compare to blockbusters such as "**STAR WARS**". Ian Downes, whose company, Saban, licensed "Power Rangers" and "Digimon", estimates that the merchandising fees and the associated cross-marketing agreements will bring in enough to break Gringotts bank: "They have to be looking at a billion-dollar franchise on a global level."

Those eager to buy into the Potter film include Coca-Cola, which acquired global marketing rights for a reported \$150 million (with a pledge to fund community-reading schemes, at Ms Rowling's request, lest her creation become simply a commercial entity). Also wielding the cheque-book was Mattel, which bought the worldwide "master toy" licence; Hasbro, which acquired rights to products ranging from trading-card games to "the magical Bertie Bott's Every Flavour Beans"; Lego, proud to market Hogwarts School construction kits until 2004; and Electronic Arts, which "will work closely with JK Rowling" to turn Harry into a range of electronic games. Even the Queen is a willing participant – accompanying Harry on an officially endorsed set of coins issued last week in the Isle of Man. According to the Pobjoy Mint, 25,000 of the coins sold within five hours.

Such frantic merchandising is now typical among the major film studios, which can claw back large chunks of their production costs by concluding licensing deals sometimes two or three years ahead of a film's release. Merchandise tie-ins now account for a \$150 billion, industry, of which the UK market is worth \$6.1 billion, according to the International Licensing Industry Merchandisers' Association (Lima). And

although Ms Rowling might be uncomfortable with the idea, licensed merchandise adds considerably to the prices paid by parents and children.

According to industry insiders, manufacturers of toys and clothing typically pay a royalty of around 12 per cent of the wholesale price – money that's added to the mark-up. (Mattel is thought to have agreed to 15 per cent on Harry Potter toys.) On a £1 children's comic, the contribution might be 10p. With mass-market drinks, such as Coke, the royalty will normally be less than one per cent of the wholesale price, but the film will benefit from the cans' widespread visibility.

Negotiations begin on day one of a film's planning, and are a vital part of raising finance. "It's, a well-worn formula," says Andrew Levy, Lima's managing director, who sees nothing atypical in the Potter marketing. Licences have a strictly limited shelf-life. "There are classic brands, such as "**Tom and Jerry**", where the licensing programme could go on for 50 years. But for the huge hyped movies – such as "**GODZILLA**" – there will be a three-month window of licensing opportunity." With Harry Potter, he believes Warner Bros is aiming at a series of three-month bursts: first the movie, followed nine months later by the video, and then the second movie.

So valuable are the spin-offs that marketable characters may be specifically written into films: some in the industry suggest that Buzz Lightyear was such, a merchandise-led creation in "**TOY STORY**". But as "**STAR WARS**" showed, the "greed" factor is not always met by consumer demand: although Hasbro sold \$500 million of light-sabres and C-3POs, a further \$150 million remained on the shelves. "You can manipulate things too much – consumers are sophisticated and can see through it," said Ian Downes, of Saban, which licenses for Fox Kids Europe.

"Arguably, there may be too many Harry Potter products out there – only Warner Bros will know that."

Another danger for the studios is overly hyping the film itself. Excessive advance promotion risks boring the audience – which is why Nick James, editor of *Sight and Sound* magazine, believes Warner has "drip-fed" us trailers and snippets in a co-ordinated web campaign. "Feeding little titbits is the new approach – the web has much to do with it.

The more previews, more razzmatazz that's generated, the more the studio could be seen to be compromising the purity of the book." "

Barbican Screen Guide – Nov 2001 – review:

"All aboard the Hogwarts Express for the most eagerly awaited film of the year. Daniel Radcliff, a name soon to be on everyone's lips², stars as Harry Potter, the young orphan who goes to study at the Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry, discovers magic and fantasy, and leaves the dull world of the Muggles behind. Also starring Sean Biggersaff, John Cleese, David Bradley and Robbie Coltrane."

– And a Barbican Screen promotional event to milk the premiere:

"Harry Potter Family Festival Weekend: Calling all witches and wizards.... adults and children. Escape from the muggle world, dress up in your favourite cloaks and hats and catch the Hogwarts Express from platform 9 1/4 to the Barbican.

Watch Harry Potter's new action packed film, **"THE PHILOSOPHER'S STONE"**, then make your own sorting hat, create your own spells and transform yourself into a warty goblin. Listen to wonderful stories of trolls and giants. Spook yourself and others by making shadow ghosts and build creepy castles and dragons out of clay.

How you spend the weekend is up to you. You can watch the Harry Potter movie and then take part in an afternoon of workshops or you can do the workshops first then relax in the Cinema. If you want to get completely Harry Pottered, see the film another time and do a whole day of workshops.

Workshops begin at 11am, 12.30pm, 2.30pm and 4pm. Each workshop lasts one hour."

² You might have taken the trouble to spell his name right then, I guess.

No further information currently available. American children, apparently, would have needed counsellors on hand to explain to them gently what a “philosopher” is.

See subject index under [BOARDING SCHOOL](#), **FANTASY / FAIRY TALES / FOLK TALES, GRANDPARENTS, ORPHANS / ADOPTION** and **WITCHES & WIZARDS**.