

# AUTHOR OF THE MONTH

## J.K. ROWLING



J K (Joanne Kathleen) Rowling was born in the summer of 1965 at Yate General Hospital in England and grew up in Chepstow, Gwent where she went to Wyedean Comprehensive.

Jo left Chepstow for Exeter University, where she earned a French and Classics degree, and where her course included one year in Paris. As a postgraduate she moved to London to work at Amnesty International, doing research into human rights abuses in Francophone Africa. She started writing the Harry Potter series during a Manchester to London King's Cross train journey, and during the next five years, outlined the plots for each book and began writing the first novel.

Jo then moved to northern Portugal, where she taught English as a foreign language. She married in October 1992 and gave birth to her daughter Jessica in 1993. When her marriage ended, she returned to the UK to live in Edinburgh, where *Harry Potter & the Philosopher's Stone* was eventually completed, and in 1996 she received an offer of publication. The following summer the world was introduced to Harry Potter.

Jo married Dr. Neil Murray in 2001, and a brother for Jessica, David, was born in 2003. A sister, Mackenzie, followed in January 2005.

### The Books

*Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone* was published by Arthur A. Levine Books/Scholastic in September 1998.

The second title in the series, *Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets*, was published on June 2, 1999 and debuted at No. 1 on the adult hardcover bestseller lists.

*Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban* was published on September 8, 1999 to worldwide acclaim and massive press attention. The first three Harry Potter books occupied the top three spots on numerous adult bestseller lists.

The fourth book in the series, *Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire*, was published simultaneously in Britain, the USA, Canada and Australia on July 8, 2000 with a record first print run of 3.8 million in the US alone. It quickly broke all records for the greatest number of books sold on the first weekend of publication.

The fifth book in the series, *Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix*, was published in Britain, the USA, Canada and Australia on June 21, 2003. It is the longest in the series — 766 pages — and broke the records set by *Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire* as the fastest selling book in history.

The sixth book in the series, *Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince*, was published in the UK, US and other English-speaking countries on July 16, 2005 and also achieved record sales.

The seventh and final book in the series, *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows*, was published in the UK, US and other English speaking countries on July 21, 2007. With a record-breaking first print-run of 12 million copies in the USA, the book sold 8.3 million copies in the first 24 hours making it the fastest selling book in history.

J K Rowling has also written two small volumes, which appear as the titles of Harry's school books within the novels. *Fantastic Beasts and Where to Find Them* and *Quidditch Through The Ages* were published by Bloomsbury Children's Books and Scholastic in March 2001 in aid of Comic Relief. A third volume, *The Tales of Beedle the Bard*, which appeared in *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows*, was published on December 3, 2008 in aid of The Children's High Level Group.

The Harry Potter books are distributed in over 200 territories and are translated into 69 languages.