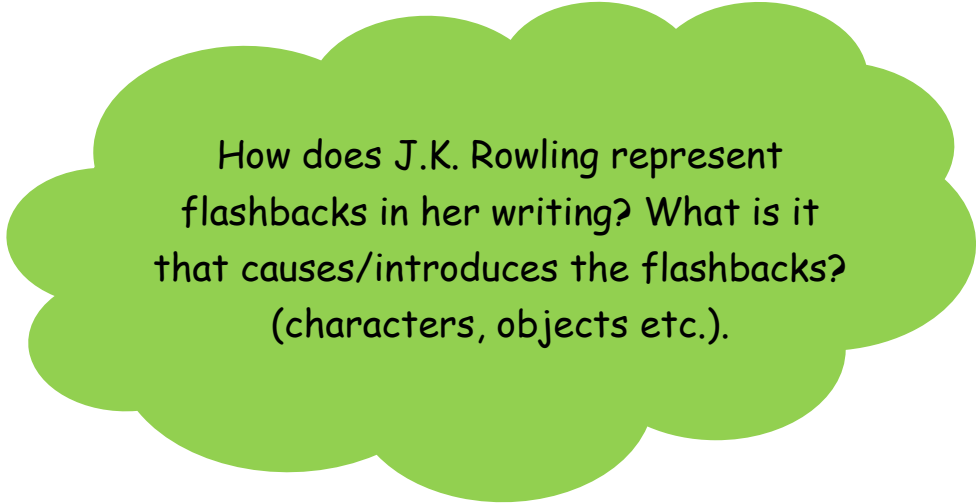


Read the extracts below from the Harry Potter book series. As you read through them, make notes of any devices that J.K. Rowling uses to show a flashback. It may be that she uses a dream, an object or something else to start a flashback in her writing. It is your job as you read the text to try and find these! You can magpie any language that introduces the flashbacks as well, so make as many notes as you feel is useful for you when you come to writing your own flashback later on in this unit. You can use the mind map on the next page to help you make notes.



How does J.K. Rowling represent flashbacks in her writing? What is it that causes/introduces the flashbacks? (characters, objects etc.).

Flashback?

Read these extracts from Chapter 2 of Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone. Are they flashbacks to Harry's earlier life or events that are taking place now? How do we know?

'It was a very sunny Saturday and the zoo was crowded with families. The Dursleys bought Dudley and Piers large chocolate ice-creams at the entrance and then, because the smiling lady in the van had asked Harry what he wanted before they could hurry him away, they bought him a cheap lemon ice lolly. It wasn't bad either, Harry thought, licking it as they watched a gorilla scratching its head and looking remarkably like Dudley, except that it wasn't blond.'

'Nearly ten years had passed since the Dursleys had woken up to find their nephew on the front step, but Privet Drive had hardly changed at all. The sun still rose on the same tidy gardens, it crept into their living room, which was almost exactly the same as it had been on the night when Mr Dursley had seen the report about the owls.'

'Another time, Aunt Petunia had been trying to force him into a revolting old jumper of Dudley's (brown with orange bobbles). The harder she tried to pull it over his head, the smaller it seemed to become, until it might have fitted a glove puppet!'

'He'd lived with the Dursleys almost ten years, ten miserable years, as long as he could remember, ever since he had been a baby and his parents had died in that car crash.'

'A wild looking old woman dressed all green had waved merrily at him once on a bus. A bald man in a very long purple coat had actually shaken his hand in the street. The weirdest thing about all these people was the way they seemed to vanish the second Harry tried to get a second glance.'

'At that moment the telephone rang and Aunt Petunia went to answer it while Harry and Uncle Vernon watched Dudley unwrap the racing bike, a cine-camera, a remote-control aeroplane, sixteen new computer games and a video recorder. He was ripping the paper off a gold wristwatch when Aunt Petunia came back from the telephone, looking both angry and worried.'

'Once, Aunt Petunia, tired of Harry coming back from the barber's looking as though he hadn't been at all, had taken a pair of scissors and cut his hair so short he was almost bald except for his fringe, which she left 'to hide that horrible scar'. Dudley had laughed himself silly at Harry, who spent a sleepless night imagining school the next day, where he was already laughed at for his baggy clothes and Sellotaped glasses. Next morning, however, he had got up to find his hair exactly as it had been before Aunt Petunia had sheared it off.'

Excerpt from Chapter 9 of Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban

But something odd was happening. An eerie silence was falling across the stadium. The wind, though as strong as ever, was forgetting to roar. It was as though someone had turned off the sound, as though Harry had gone suddenly deaf – what was going on?

And then a horribly familiar wave of cold swept over him, inside him, just as he became aware of something moving on the pitch below ...

Before he'd had time to think, Harry had taken his eyes off the Snitch and looked down.

At least a hundred Dementors, their hidden faces pointing up at him, were standing below. It was as though freezing water was rising in his chest, cutting at his insides. And then he heard it again ... someone was screaming, screaming inside his head ... a woman ...

'Not Harry, not Harry, please not Harry!'

'Stand aside, you silly girl ... stand aside, now ...'

'Not Harry, please no, take me, kill me instead – '

Numbing, swirling white mist was filling Harry's brain ... What was he doing? Why was he flying? He needed to help her ... she was going to die ... she was going to be murdered ...

He was falling, falling through the icy mist.

'Not Harry! Please ... have mercy ... have mercy ...'

A shrill voice was laughing, the woman was screaming, and Harry knew no more.

Excerpt from Chapter 30 of Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire

"What is it?" Harry asked shakily.

"This? It is called a Pensieve," said Dumbledore. "I sometimes find, and I am sure you know the feeling, that I simply have too many thoughts and memories crammed into my mind."

"Er," said Harry, who couldn't truthfully say that he had ever felt anything of the sort.

“At these times,” said Dumbledore, indicating the stone basin, “I use the Pensieve. One simply siphons the excess thoughts from one’s mind, pours them into the basin, and examines them at one’s leisure. It becomes easier to spot patterns and links, you understand, when they are in this form.”

“You mean ... that stuff’s your thoughts? Harry said, staring at the swirling white substance in the basin.

“Certainly,” said Dumbledore. “Let me show you.”

Dumbledore drew his wand out of the inside of his robes, and placed the tip into his own silvery hair, near his temple. When he took the wand away, hair seemed to be clinging to it – but then Harry saw that it was in fact a glistening strand of the same strange silvery white substance that filled the Pensieve. Dumbledore added this fresh thought to the basin, and Harry, astonished, saw his own face swimming around the surface of the bowl.

Dumbledore placed his long hands on either side of the Pensieve and swirled it, rather as a gold prospector would swirl for fragments of gold ... and Harry saw his own face change smoothly into Snape’s, who opened his mouth, and spoke to the ceiling, his voice echoing slightly. “It’s coming back ... Karkaroff’s too ... stronger and clearer than ever ...”

“A connection I could have made without assistance,” Dumbledore sighed, “but never mind.” He peered over the top of his half-moon spectacles at Harry, who was gaping at Snape’s face, which was continuing to swirl around the bowl. “I was using the Pensieve when Mr Fudge arrived for our meeting, and put it away rather hastily. Undoubtedly I did not fasten the cabinet door properly. Naturally, it would have attracted your attention.”

“I’m sorry,” Harry mumbled.

Dumbledore shook his head.

“Curiosity is not a sin,” he said. “But we should exercise caution with our curiosity ... yes, indeed ...”

Excerpt from Chapter 28 of Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix

Harry gazed at the Pensieve, curiosity welling inside him ... what was it that Snape was so keen to hide from Harry?

The silvery lights shimmered on the wall ... Harry took two steps towards the desk, thinking hard. Could it possibly be information about the Department of Mysteries that Snape was determined to keep from him? Harry looked over his shoulder, his heart now thumping harder and faster than ever. How long would it take Snape to release Montague from the toilet? Would he come straight back to his office afterwards, or accompany Montague to the hospital wing? Surely the latter ... Montague was Captain of the Slytherin Quidditch team, Snape would want to make sure he was all right.

Harry walked the remaining few feet to the Pensieve and stood over it, gazing into its depths. He hesitated, listening, then pulled out his wand again. The office and the corridor beyond were completely silent. He gave the contents of the Pensieve a small prod with the end of his wand.

The silvery stuff within began to swirl very fast. Harry leaned forwards over it and saw that it had become transparent. He was, once again, looking down into a room as though through a circular window in the ceiling ... in fact, unless he was much mistaken, he was looking down into the Great Hall.

His breath was actually fogging the surface of Snape's thoughts ... his brain seemed to be in limbo ... it would be insane to do the thing he was so strongly tempted to do ... he was trembling ... Snape could be back at any moment ... but Harry thought of Cho's anger, of Malfoy's jeering face, and a reckless daring seized him.

He took a great gulp of breath, and plunged his face into the surface of Snape's thoughts. At once, the floor of the office lurched, upping Harry head-first into the Pensieve ...

He was falling through cold blackness, spinning furiously as he went, and

then –

He was standing in the middle of the Great Hall, but the four house tables were gone. Instead, there were more than a hundred smaller tables, all facing the same way, at each of which sat a student, head bent low, scribbling on a roll of parchment. The only sound was the scratching of quills and the occasional rustle as someone adjusted their parchment. It was clearly exam time.

Sunshine was streaming through the high windows on to the bent heads, which shone chestnut and copper and gold in the bright light. Harry looked around carefully. Snape had to be here somewhere ... this was *his* memory ...

And there he was, at a table right behind Harry. Harry stared. Snape-the-teenager had a stringy, pallid look about him, like a plant kept in the dark. His hair was lank and greasy and was flopping on to the table, his hooked nose barely half an inch from the surface of the parchment as he scribbled. Harry moved around behind Snape and read the heading of the examination paper: DEFENCE AGAINST THE DARK ARTS – ORDINARY WIZARDING LEVEL.

So Snape had to be fifteen or sixteen, around Harry's own age. His hand was flying across the parchment; he had written at least a foot more than his closest neighbours, and yet his writing was minuscule and cramped.

“Five more minutes!”

The voice made Harry jump. Turning, he saw the top of Professor Flitwick's head moving between the desks a short distance away. Professor Flitwick was walking past a boy with untidy black hair ... very untidy black hair ...

Harry moved so quickly that, had he been solid, he would have knocked desks flying. Instead he seemed to slide, dreamlike, across two aisles and up a third. The back of the black-haired boy's head drew nearer and

... he was straightening up now, putting down his quill, pulling his roll of parchment towards him so as to reread what he had written ...

Harry stopped in front of the desk and gazed down at his fifteen-year-old father.

Excitement exploded in the pit of his stomach: it was as though he was looking at himself but with deliberate mistakes. James's eyes were hazel, his nose was slightly longer than Harry's and there was no scar on his forehead, but they had the same thin face, same mouth, same eyebrows; James's hair stuck up at the back exactly as Harry's did, his hands could have been Harry's and Harry could tell that, when James stood up, they would be within an inch of each other in height.

James yawned hugely and ruffled up his hair, making it even messier than it had been. Then with a glance towards Professor Flitwick, he turned in his seat and grinned at a boy sitting four seats behind him.

With another shock of excitement, Harry saw Sirius give James the thumbs-up. Sirius was lounging in his chair at his ease, tilting it back on two legs. He was very good looking; his dark hair fell into his eyes with a sort of casual elegance neither James's nor Harry's could ever have achieved, and a girl sitting behind him was eyeing him hopefully, though he didn't seem to have noticed. And two seats along from this girl – Harry's stomach gave another pleasurable squirm - was Remus Lupin. He looked rather pale and peaky (was the full moon approaching?) and was absorbed in the exam: as he reread his answers, he scratched his chin with the end of his quill, frowning slightly.

So that meant Wormtail had to be around here somewhere, too ... and sure enough, Harry spotted him within seconds: a small, mousy-haired boy with a pointed nose. Wormtail looked anxious; he was chewing his fingernails, staring down at his paper, scuffing the ground with his toes. Every now and then he glanced hopefully at his neighbour's paper. Harry stared at Wormtail for a moment, then back at James, who was now doodling on a bit of scrap parchment. He had drawn a Snitch and was now tracing the letters 'L.E.'. What did they stand for?

“Quills down, please!” squeaked Professor Flitwick. “That means you too, Stebbins! Please remain seated while I collect your parchment! *Accio!*”

Over a hundred rolls of parchment zoomed into the air and into Professor Flitwick’s outstretched arms, knocking him backwards off his feet. Several people laughed. A couple of students at the front desks got up, took hold of Professor Flitwick beneath the elbows and lifted him back on to his feet.

“Thank you ... thank you,” panted Professor Flitwick. “Very well, everybody, you’re free to go!”

Harry looked down at his father, who had hastily crossed out the ‘L.E.’ he had been embellishing, jumped to his feet, stuffed his quill and the exam paper into his bag, which he slung over his back, and stood waiting for Sirius to join him.