

Children's Fantasy Fiction

Similar to Science Fiction writing Fantasy Fiction tends to be set in a world that is in many respects similar to our own. However, the crucial differences between our world and the fantasy world are created this time not through scientific advances but magic.

Feeling oddly as though his legs had turned to lead, Harry got into line behind a boy with sandy hair, with Ron behind him, and they walked out of the chamber, back across the hall and through a pair of double doors into the Great 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. He heard Hermione whisper, 'It's bewitched to look like the sky outside, I read about it in *Hogwarts: A history*.

It was hard to believe that there was a ceiling there at all, and that the Great Hall didn't simply open on the heavens.

Harry quickly looked down again as Professor McGonagall silently placed a four-legged stool in front of the first-years. On top of the stool she put a pointed wizard's hat. This hat was patched and frayed and extremely dirty. Aunt Petunia wouldn't have let it in the house.

Maybe they had to try and get a rabbit out of it, Harry thought wildly. That seemed like the sort of thing – noticing that everyone in the hall was now staring at the hat he started staring at it too. For a few seconds there was complete silence. Then the hat twitched. A rip near the brim opened wide like a mouth – and the hat began to sing.

Taken from 'Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone' by J.K. Rowling

Comment [K1]: The impressive sounding Great Hall creates a sense of power, mystery and magic. Often magic is ancient, or has been handed down through the generations and the establishment of an old 'Great Hall' helps reinforce the impression that we are in the presence of something primeval and primordial

Comment [K2]: In opposition to science fiction, fantasy writing tends to avoid modern scientific developments as much as possible, viewing them as perhaps the enemy of magic. Hence perhaps the fact that Harry usually turns up to school in a steam train. The one time that he does turn up in a flying car it gets whacked by the Whomping Willow

Comment [K3]: One of the simplest and most obvious forms of magic is the use of floating or flying

Comment [K4]: Gold always creates an impression of old wealth and power with connotations of dragons and kings. Goblets as well reinforces this

Comment [K5]: Fantasy fiction, just like the real world, has levels of power and authority often decided by magical ability. In this case McGonagall is a professor of wizardry

Comment [K6]: Shifting darkness creates uncertainty and magic

Comment [K7]: Another favourite form of magic is illusion – making things seem what they are not. Notice the benign form of this magic. It is used to decorate and beautify the world. There is however, usually a dark side of the magic waiting somewhere to balance the equation

Comment [K8]: Again everyday objects or animals suddenly coming to life or being able to talk are obvious symbols that we are in a magical world