

Discussion Questions for *Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban* by J.K. Rowling

(Some questions adapted from www.scholastic.com and www.hp-lexicon.org)

1. A favorite line in this book is when Snape, Defense Against the Dark Arts, calls Hermione “an insufferable know-it-all.”

It was a mark of how much the class loathed Snape that they were all glaring at him, because every one of them had called Hermione a know-it-all at least once, and Ron, who told Hermione she was a know-it-all at least twice a week, said loudly, “You asked a question and she knows the answer! Why ask if you don’t want to be told?”

Do you have a favorite scene or line in *Prisoner*?

2. What do you think is going through Aunt Petunia’s mind when Aunt Marge says, “If there’s something wrong with the bitch, there’ll be something wrong with the pup”?
3. How would the plot have advanced differently if Scabbers hadn’t been in the picture taken in Egypt that was published in the Daily Prophet, and if Black hadn’t then gotten a copy of that paper?
4. What might have happened if the Knight Bus hadn’t turned up when it did? [Might Sirius have introduced himself to Harry?]
5. Isn’t it interesting that Harry introduces himself as Neville on the Knight Bus. Do you also find it interesting? If so, why?
6. There are instances in the books where things might have gone quite differently if Harry had been willing to confide in an adult. In *Prisoner*, for example, Lupin asks Harry if he is worried about Professor Trelawny’s predictions. “[Harry] thought for a moment of telling Lupin about the dog he’d seen in Magnolia Crescent, but decided not to.”

How might events have changed if Harry had told Lupin about the dog? Can you think of other places where Harry could have confided in an adult? [Harry could have told Dumbledore about hearing a voice in the castle in *Chamber*.]

7. The existence of the Marauder’s Map sets up scenes in future books. Can you think of some examples? [It comes into play in Goblet when Professor Moody confiscates it.] What other themes and items are introduced in *Prisoner* that resurface in later books? [Harry starts getting really good at Defense Against the Dark Arts; Cho is introduced; Peter Pettigrew is introduced.] [Only ask if everyone has read all the books.]
8. This is the only book in which Voldemort doesn’t play the major villain. Why do you think Rowling wrote one book in which Voldemort is in the background?
9. Why does Lupin keep quiet about Black’s ability to turn into a dog?

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10. Aunt Marge explains why some folks are no good: “If there’s something rotten on the *inside*, there’s nothing anyone can do about it.” She thinks she’s describing Harry. Who is she more aptly describing?
11. When Harry has the opportunity to let Peter, the character responsible for his parents’ death, be killed, he chooses not to do it. What does that say about him?
12. Lupin tells Harry that “James would have been highly disappointed if his son had never found any of the secret passages out of the castle.” Why would James want Harry to do anything other than follow all the rules?
13. Sirius Black is imprisoned for 12 years in Azkaban, and Pettigrew is imprisoned for the same amount of time in the body of a rat. Which character was more truly the prisoner?
14. Why do you think Harry and Hermione are allowed to tamper with Buckbeak and Black, but nothing else, when they travel back in time?
15. Do you think there are any signs in the book to suggest that Harry might teach himself to become an animagus?
16. Ron takes the revelation of Scabbers’ true identity as a personal insult. For this, he became estranged from Hermione for so many weeks. How else do you think Ron is feeling after the revelation?
17. Dumbledore tells Harry that Pettigrew is in his debt. Harry says he doesn’t want a bond with Pettigrew. Dumbledore replies, “This is magic at its deepest, its most impenetrable, Harry. But trust me...the time may come when you will be very glad you saved Pettigrew’s life.” How did this come into play in book seven? [Only ask if everyone has read book 7.]
18. When discussing the Dementors’ Kiss, Lupin tells Harry, “You can exist without your soul, you know, as long as your brain and heart are still working. But you’ll have no sense of self anymore, no memory, no ... anything. There’s no chance at all of recovery. You’ll just—exist. As an empty shell.” Why is this important to this story?
19. Do you have any questions or additional comments?