

Practicing Punctuation: J.K. Rowling

J.K. Rowling (1965 -) is the author of the *Harry Potter* novels. Have at least one member of your group read this excerpt from "Chapter Ten, Halloween" (from *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone*) out loud, with expression. You may choose to have several people perform the passage, emphasizing different words and meanings. After the readings, describe below the effect of at least three specific punctuation choices. Certain marks of punctuation are highlighted to give you a head start on this exercise, however; you may choose punctuation choices that have been highlighted in the text, or you may choose other punctuation options that have not been highlighted.

In the space below the passage, you should consider the other options that the author might have used, the way in which the punctuation chosen (or not chosen) adds to the tone or mood of the writing, and your own personal reaction to the punctuation choice that was made.

Harry then did something that was both very brave and very stupid: He took a great running jump and managed to fasten his arms around the troll's neck from behind. The troll couldn't feel Harry hanging there, but even a troll will notice if you stick a long bit of wood up its nose, and Harry's wand had still been in his hand when he'd jumped – it had gone straight up one of the troll's nostrils.

Howling with pain, the troll twisted and flailed its club, with Harry clinging on for dear life; any second, the troll was going to rip him off or catch him a terrible blow with the club.

Hermione had sunk to the floor in fright; Ron pulled out his own wand – not knowing what he was going to do he heard himself cry the first spell that came into his head: *Wingardium Leviosa!*

1. Write the first mark of punctuation you want to examine: _____
2. Write the second mark of punctuation you want to examine: _____
3. Write the third mark of punctuation you want to examine: _____

Practicing Punctuation: Cormac McCarthy

Cormac McCarthy (1933 -) is a contemporary author whose novels and plays have been made into films (*The Road*, *No Country for Old Men*, *All the Pretty Horses*, and *The Sunset Limited*). Have at least one member of your group read this excerpt from *The Road* out loud – with expression. You may choose to have several people perform the passage, emphasizing different words and meanings. After the readings, describe below the effect of at least three specific punctuation choices. Certain marks of punctuation are highlighted to give you a head start on this exercise, however; you may choose punctuation choices that have been highlighted in the text, or you may choose other punctuation options that have not been highlighted.

In the space below the passage, you should consider the other options that the author might have used, the way in which the punctuation chosen (or not chosen) adds to the tone or mood of the writing, and your own personal reaction to the punctuation choice that was made.

From *The Road* by Cormac McCarthy

He turned and grabbed the boy. Hurry, he said. Hurry.

He'd dropped the lighter. No time to look. He pushed the boy up the stairs. Help us, they called.

Hurry.

A bearded face appeared blinking at the foot of the stairs. Please, he called. Please.

Hurry. For God's sake hurry.

He shoved the boy through the hatch and sent him sprawling. He stood and got hold of the door and swung it over and let it slam down and he turned to grab the boy but the boy had gotten up and was doing his little dance of terror. For the love of God will you come on, he hissed. But the boy was pointing out the window and when he looked he went cold all over. Coming across the field were four bearded men and two women. He grabbed the boy by the hand. Christ, he said. Run. Run.

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1. Write the first mark of punctuation you want to examine: _____
 2. Write the second mark of punctuation you want to examine: _____
 3. Write the third mark of punctuation you want to examine: _____

