Discussion Questions for *Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets* by J.K. Rowling

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

1. A favorite line in this book is on the first page. Dudley says, “Pass the frying pan.” “You’ve forgotten the magic word,” says Harry irritably and the Dursleys go bonkers. Do you have a favorite scene or line in *Chamber*?

2. House elves are not cute little fantasy creatures. They have a powerful magic of their own but are essentially enslaved to their owners. Rowling sets this up in many ways when Harry first meets Dobby and in the rest of the book. Can you think of examples? [Harry’s muggle upbringing has helped him empathize with others who feel powerless. Harry asks Dobby to sit down “like an equal”.]

3. Were Harry and Ron justified in flying the car to school?

4. Colin Creevey accuses Malfoy of being jealous of Harry. Do you think Draco is jealous of Harry?

5. What are some muggle equivalents of the Kwikspell course? Do you ever feel sorry for Filch?

6. What is the significance of Harry’s fears that he should have been in Slytherin? Why is this so important?

7. How does the game of Quidditch represent Harry’s life at Hogwarts? Consider the position he plays on the team—”seeker.” How is that role similar to the role he plays in the fight against evil?

8. Draco buys himself a place on the Slytherin Quidditch team. Do you think superior skill or superior equipment is most important in winning a game? Why?

9. When Fudge, Dumbledore, and Mr. Malfoy are in Hagrid’s hut, did Dumbledore know Harry was in the room? Explain your answer.

10. There are a number of occurrences of socks in the books. Can you think of some of them? Is this significant or just coincidence? [Harry uses a sock to free Dobby, Dumbledore says he’d see himself in the Mirror of Erised holding a pair of socks, Harry uses socks to hide the sneakoscope].

11. Why do some wizards consider themselves superior to Muggle-born students? In what ways could their elitism and snobbery initiate conflict at Hogwarts and within the larger magical community?
12. Tom Riddle is one of the brightest students ever to attend Hogwarts. So is Hermione. How might she have turned out, if she hadn’t made friends with Harry and Ron?

13. What is Snape thinking when he realizes Harry is a parslemouth?

14. Dumbledore tells Harry, “Only a true Gryffindor could have pulled [the sword] out of the [Sorting] Hat.”. What does it mean to be a true Gryffindor, or Slytherin, or Hufflepuff, or Ravenclaw?

15. If you could make polyjuice potion, who would you want to turn into for an hour?

16. The visit to Knockturn Alley and Mr. Borgin’s shop also sets up scenes in future books. Can you think of some examples? [The vanishing cabinet, the hand of glory, the necklace] [Only ask if everyone has read all the books in the series.] What other themes and items are introduced in Chamber that resurface in later books?

17. Discuss how Rowling uses caricatures, such as depicting unpleasant people like Dudley as grossly overweight, and how this might influence characters’ and readers’ prejudices regarding obese people. How could Rowling have achieved successful characterization without describing these people’s physiques?

18. Do you have any questions or additional comments?