

Harry Potter and the Mystery RPG

v1.7

By Tanner Wilson

In this game players tell a story about Hogwarts Students uncovering a mystery over the course of a school year. One player will be the Storyteller, referred to as the *Headmaster*, their job is to drive the story forward and shepherd the mystery. The other players will inhabit the role of *Students* solving said mystery. Harry Potter and the Mystery RPG is inspired in part by *Damn the Man Save the Music* by Hannah Shaffer, *Stigmata* by Chad Walker, and *Apocalypse world* by Vicent Baker

Players will need:

3-4 Hours.

1-7 Sessions of play.

Character Sheets and one 10-sided dice for every Student.

A prop wand.

A mystery sheet for the Headmaster.

HOW TO PLAY THE GAME

Harry Potter and the Mystery RPG breaks up play into *Chapters*, during every Chapter both the Headmaster and Students tell each other about Hogwarts, the witches, wizards, and magical creatures who inhabit it, and the stories plot. The Headmaster gets to tell the Students about the mystery and the Students get to tell the Headmaster about their characters. Here's how that works, a Student tells the other players what their character does during a Chapter. Sometimes it's that simple and that's exactly what their character does. Other times the Headmaster asks a Student to roll a dice afterward to determine the outcome of their characters actions or asks them to change a few things.

A Headmaster asks a Student to roll the dice when the following are true:

1. The outcome of an action they take is uncertain and dramatic.
2. They are not casting a spell to accomplish the action.

If any of the criteria is untrue the Student cannot roll the dice and decides for themselves the outcome of their actions. When both are true the Student rolls one 10- sided dice (The most magical feeling dice). The Student must roll a 7 + to succeed.

When a student succeeds:

- They gain control over the narrative and tell the players about the outcome of their action.
- They uncover an element of the mystery.

When a student fails:

- The other Students tell the Student about the outcome of their action and how it complicates the narrative.
- They uncover an element of the mystery.
- Trouble is increased by 1.
- The Student may choose to cast a spell instead of failing and the Trouble is not increased.

WIZARD POINTS

Students accrue these *Wizard Points* throughout play and spend them to successfully cast magic spells.

TROUBLE

How close the Students are to unfortunate consequences is reflected by *Trouble*. A group wide stat which starts at 0 and changes throughout play. The value of the Trouble is added to the cost of some spells. When Trouble reaches 3 the narrative the Students suffer an unfortunate consequence.

Whether it be physical harm or worse, expelled! If this happens before the mystery is solved the Students lose the game.

SPELL CASTING and the SPELLBOOK

A Student overcoming a problem with magic may cast a spell from their *Spellbook* appropriate to the task at hand. The Student may have to spend Wizard Points to cast the spell. The spell is always cast successfully and the Student tells the rest of the players about the spell's outcome. Once cast, each spell must be refreshed before being cast again.

The Spellbook has space for 5 spells and starts with none. During play Students add spells to their spellbook. At the end of the school year the Student chooses 1 spell to keep and removes the rest. This remaining spell is added to the spellbooks signature spell list and will always be available to the student. Every year the signature spell list grows.

- The first and last new spells on a page costs 0 Wizard Points to cast.
- Signature spells cost 1 Wizard Point to cast.
- The remaining spells cost 1 + the Trouble to cast.
- Casting a spell on a Hogwarts professors costs an extra +1.

REMEMBERING A SPELL

To cast a spell not already in their Spellbook the Student may remember a spell they were previously taught in class. The Student names the spell they wish to cast, it's intended effect, and tells the players about when and where they learned it before writing their new spell down in their Spellbook. The Headmaster may decide a spell a Student is trying to remember is forbidden, Students can only remember forbidden spells if they are taught the spell during a Chapter. Players shouldn't confine themselves only to spells seen in books and movies, they are intended to make up their own.

SCHOOL SECRETS

During character creations every Student writes down a school secret and a clue that leads to that secret. The other players, including the Headmaster are not shown. For every Student's School Secret discovered in a year, each Student may add an extra spell to their signature spell list. At the start of a new school year each Student creates another School Secret. The School Secrets can be anything mysterious and unknown about Hogwarts castle, its faculty, or permanent residences.

STRUCTURE OF PLAY

This game takes place over the course of a school year. Starting in the fall passing through winter and ending as summer begins. Play is broken into chapters, each player takes a turn setting up a chapter. Starting with the Headmaster and continuing counterclockwise around the table. A prop wand should be used as a speaking stick of sorts and passed around with the story.

Once the wand has made a full round of the table, arriving back with the Headmaster the school season progresses. From the fall to the winter and spring and ending once summer arrives

CHAPTERS.

Start of Year Feast

The Headmaster chooses this chapter on their first turn. They answer the following questions for the other players:

What are the mysteries Hook?

Who is the new defense against the dark arts teacher this year?

What decision did the headmaster make that will make this year different for the

Students?

The other players answer the following questions for the Headmaster:

What are their 2 Story Beats and how are they affected by them this chapter?

How was their summer and why are they glad to be back?

The Mystery Thickens

The Students are introduced to a suspicious event that raises questions. Whenever players finish a Mystery Thickens Chapter they decide on a question the Chapter raised and write it down on a note card placed in the center of the table. Questions like *Why was Dilan Weatherbee wearing slytherin robes when he is a hufflepuff?* Or *Why does the portrait we found in the forbidden forest run and hide every time it's the full moon?*

Questions Answered

The Students are given the opportunity to answer a question raised during a Mystery Thickens Chapter. If a question is answered during this Chapter remove it from the table.

School Day

At the beginning of this Chapter Trouble is reduced by 1. The Students must be undertaking a wizardly task of the academic sort. Don't feel pressured to make these scenes particularly long or dramatic if it feels unwarranted.

Magical Hijinks

After this Chapter ends all Students gain +2 Wizard Points and may now use all expired spells! The Students must be engaging in a schoolyard prank or other childish escapade. Don't feel pressured to make these scenes particularly long or dramatic if it feels unwarranted.

Dramatic Conclusion

This Chapter begins immediately after the last Questions Answered Chapter ends. The Wand is passed directly to the Headmaster. During this Chapter all pieces come into play and who or whatever is responsible for this years mystery makes their move.

DURING PLAY

When a Student or the Headmaster has the wand they answer the following questions as the Chapter begins:

What kind of chapter will this be: The Mystery Thickens, School Day, Magical Hijinks, A Question Answered?

Which characters are present and where are they?

What interesting action have the Students just taken as the scene opens?

When a player has the wand the Headmaster answers the following questions during the chapter:

What is the Chapters conflict and how does it challenge the Students?

What non-Student characters enter the scene?

Which 1 Story Beats will affect this scene?

Which suspicious event or opportunity to answer a question will present itself?

Does this scene have a Shocking Twist and what is it?

When a Student has the wand the other students may answer the following questions during the chapter:

What magical element of Hogwarts castle makes this more interesting?

Do I drop a clue for my School Secret?

Does my character enter the chapter?

CREATING A STUDENT

1. Choose their Hogwarts house.

Their choice influences in what ways they can gain Wizard Points.

GRYFFINDOR, gain a wizard point whenever your bravery gets you in trouble.

RAVENCLAW, gain a wizard point whenever your curiosity gets you in trouble.

SLYTHERIN, gain a wizard point whenever your ambition gets you in trouble.

HUFFLEPUFF, gain a wizard point whenever your loyalty gets you in trouble.

2. Start play with 3 Wizard Points

3. Write down you School Secret

4. Choose 2 STORY BEATS.

These are narrative actions that will become motifs and central to a Students story. During every scene the players will choose 3 Story Beats to affect the narrative. These can be internal, the Students acts on the world, or external, the world acting on the Student. Every year the Students spend at Hogwarts they gain an extra Story Beat.

Story Beats

You are worrying about your friend.

The students are afraid of you.

You are falling in love.

A crush is admiring you.

Your rival is challenging you.

You are starting a club.

You are failing a class.

You are answering all the questions.

Your wand is malfunctioning.

You are keeping uncomfortable secrets.

You are making mischief.

Quidditch is obsessing you.

You are speaking to snakes.

You are experiencing prophecy.

Students are bullying you.

A professor is blaming you.

The magical world is confusing you.

You are losing a friend.

You are finding friendship.

The muggle world is fascinating you.

SAMPLE MYSTERY

Hogwarts and the Fullmoon Garden

Ministry goons blackmail a disgraced werewolf hunter into faking a werewolf infestation at Hogwarts, all to have an excuse to kick out the current headmaster. Using Helga Hufflepuff's legendary secret garden a plot to kidnap a student and use the gardens unique magic to transform them into a werewolf is set in motion.

Hook for the Start of Year Feast

Markus Bain, the disgraced werewolf hunter, is the new defense against the dark arts teacher. During the opening feast he greets the school by announcing one of their number is a werewolf who he will find and capture!

Mystery Thickens

- a. A strange plant, known to have only ever been grown by Helga Hufflepuff, has bloomed around the castle.
- b. Rooms have been torn apart, as if by a werewolf attack, and an important item is missing.
- c. Most nights Markus can be found pacing in front of a secret entrance trying to get in.
- d. The Students find a portrait in an unlikely location that runs and hides every time its the full moon.
- e. A minister official clandestinely corners Markus, pressuring him to get "the job" done.

Shocking Twist

The apparent werewolf attacks are not caused by a student but instead the ghost of a werewolf. Christoph of Kent was bitten at a young age and lost his life in 1582. Enraged by the presents of a hunter in the school his ghost sets about thwarting Markus and preventing others from suffering his fate.

Climatic Conclusion

Markus Bain kidnaps a student and takes them into the secret Garden on a full moon to turn them into a werewolf. Can the Students discover the entrance and save him in time?