
PORTAL TO WORD MEANINGS: CHARACTER NAMES AND OTHER WORDS.

J.K. Rowling must have had a lot of fun creating the names of characters and potions and spells. She created a world in which the Herbology professor's name is "Sprout," the spell to confuse someone is "confundus," and the name of the Weasley's house is "The Burrow." These words all have something to do with the character, place, or spell.

There are place names and events that also have meaningful backgrounds. Some of these have been more fully explained in other sections.

In This Section we'll Learn About:

- Character Name Meanings
- Place/Thing Name Meanings

Harry Potter Character Name Meanings

Dumbledore says, "Fear of a name increases fear of the thing itself." It is clear in the Harry Potter books that names are important. Just about everyone in the wizarding world is afraid to say "Voldemort," which adds more and more power to that name. Other witches and wizards have names that are indicative of their personalities or jobs, like Remus Lupin or Professor Sprout. There are names with mythological origins, like Minerva and Andromeda. Then there are names with fun origins like Stan Shunpike.

Even though I've found meanings for all of the names below, that does not mean that J.K. Rowling was thinking about these meanings as she came up with the characters and their names. Some I believe were done on purpose (e.g. Stan Shunpike), but others may just be coincidence. However, even if she did not intend to have these references, they are still there and are still interesting.

Character Names (in alphabetical order):

Aragog—*the giant spider that lives in the Forbidden Forest. Hagrid's "pet."*

- *Aranea* means “spider” in Latin.
- Gog and Magog are two giant effigies (representations of people made out of different materials such as sculpture or painting) carried through the streets of London during the Lord Mayor's Show. The effigies represent two giants that were defeated hundreds of years earlier. Gog and Magog have been around since the 15th century, and the names are based on giants from the Bible.

Ludo Bagman—*Ludo Bagman is one of the referees for the Tri-Wizard Tournament. He tries to cheat and help Harry. He gets in trouble for betting with goblins.*

- Ludo is short for Ludwig which means "famous fighter" in German.
- A *bagman* is a traveling salesman.
- A *bagman* is also slang for a go-between in offering bribes or collecting money. Ludo is the one who bets with Fred and George at the Quidditch

World Cup and cheats them. He also has trouble with the goblins, because he's cheated them too!

Bane—*Bane is one of the centaurs who live in the Forbidden Forest. He is particularly mean and hates humans.*

- Bane means “fatal injury, destruction, or a deadly poison.” Our phrase “the bane of my existence” means that someone makes another person's life miserable. He or she is the “bane.” A fitting name for this unpleasant centaur.

Regulus Arcturus Black—*Sirius's brother and a follower of Voldemort during his first rise to power. RAB stole the Horcrux locket from the cave and died in the process.*

- In Latin *regulus* means a petty king with little or no power.
- Regulus is also the brightest star in the Leo constellation.
- Arcturus is one of the brightest stars in the sky and the brightest star in the constellation Bootes.

Sirius Black—*friend of James Potter and Harry's godfather. His animagus form is a large black dog.*

- Sirius is the “dog star,” the brightest one in the Canis Major (Great Dog) constellation.
- Most of the Blacks are named after stars or constellations.

Libatius Borage—*author of Advanced Potion Making.*

- *Libatius* is a version of the word *libation* which is the act of pouring a liquid, especially in a religious ceremony.
- Borage is a European flower with blue petals that is used and eaten on salads.

Sir Cadogan—*Knight in a Hogwarts portrait. He takes over as the Gryffindor portrait after the Fat Lady is attacked by Sirius Black.*

- Cadogan means "glory in battle" in Welsh. Cad means "battle" and gwogawn means "glory, honor."
- Sir Cadogan is always trying to get the kids to fight with him. He certainly wants glory in battle!

Crookshanks—*Hermione's ginger bowlegged cat.*

- Crookshanks is a Scottish surname meaning "bow legged."
- The word *cruik* means "hook or bend" and a *shank* is a leg bone. So, the name means *hooked leg*.

Apolline Delacour—*Fleur's mother.*

- Apolline is a variation of the name Apollo. Apollo is a Greek god who is very beautiful and represents truth and light.

Fleur Delacour—*she is the Tri-Wizard Tournament champion from Beauxbatons. She later marries Bill Weasley.*

- *Fleur* is French for flower. *Cour* means "court" in French and *de la* usually means "of the," so De la Cour would mean "of the court."
- Another French word that *sounds* the same as "cour" is "coeur" which means heart. A translation of that would be "flower of the heart."

Cedric Diggory—*The Tri-Wizard champion from Hufflepuff house, captain of their Quidditch team, and Seeker. He is killed at the end of The Goblet of Fire.*

- Cedric is Welsh for kindly and loved. Cedric was well loved by the Hogwarts students.
- Diggory means to stray or get lost.

Dobby—*Dobby is the Malfoy's house elf who Harry frees in The Chamber of Secrets.*

- In English folklore, a *dobby* was a house-elf similar to a brownie. Dobbies were thin and shaggy, very kind to servants and children, and they did many small services in the household when people were too busy.
- Also slang for a silly old man.

Elphias Doge—*he is an old friend of Dumbledore's and a member of The Order of the Phoenix.*

- *Elphias* Levi was a 19th century French occultist.
- A *doge* was the chief magistrate in Genoa and Venice from the 8th to the 18th century.
- Also sounds like the word "dodge" and in fact Rita Skeeter called him "dodgy" because he wouldn't talk to her about Dumbledore.

Aberforth Dumbledore—*Albus Dumbledore's brother. He owns the Hog's Head in Hogsmeade.*

- *Aber* means a "convergence of waters" and is used often in Scotland and Wales for place names.
- The Forth is a river in Scotland.
- The word *forth* means many things, but mostly going onwards or out. Setting forth we'd say for someone going on a journey.

Albus Percival Wulfric Brian Dumbledore—*Hogwarts Headmaster.*

- *Albus* is Latin for "white."
- *Percival* was one of King Arthur's Knights of the Round Table.
- *Wulfric* means "wolf power" or "wolf ruler." Saint Wulfric was a 12th century saint known for miracles and prophecies.

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- *Brian* is a common name, perhaps it is here just to be humorous!
 - Dumbledore is an Old English word for bumblebee.
 - A *dumbledore* was also a style of hat popular in London in the 1880-90's.

Dudley Dursley—*Harry's bullying Muggle cousin.*

- Dudley is an old aristocratic name in English history. The most famous Dudley was romantically involved with Queen Elizabeth I. Unfortunately for Dudley, both his father and his brother were beheaded for treason!

Petunia Dursley—*Petunia Dursley is Harry's aunt.*

- A petunia is a flower. She and her sister, Lily, were both named for flowers.
- Dursley is an anagram of the words rude and sly.

Argus Filch—*Hogwarts Caretaker.*

- Argus is a creature from Greek mythology. He is a one hundred eyed giant.
- *Filch* means “to steal.” An ironic name considering he was always on the lookout for student wrongdoing.

Mundungus Fletcher—*he is a member of the Order of the Phoenix, but also a thief and a coward. He panics and flees as a "Harry" and Mad Eye Moody ends up dying.*

- Mundungus is a type of dark stinking tobacco (Mundungus often smells of tobacco).
- A *fletcher* is a maker of arrows.

Marcus Flint—*he is the captain of the Slytherin Quidditch team and is especially big and mean.*

- *Marcus* means dedicated to Mars who was the Roman god of war.

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- *Flint* is very hard quartz. If something is “flinty” it is hard and unyielding.

Filius Flitwick—*he is the Charms Professor at Hogwarts. He is also the Head of Ravenclaw House.*

- *Filius* means "son" in Latin.
- *Flitwick* is from to "flit" which means to move with agility.
- A *wick* is a loosely woven cord.
- In one definition of the Northern English, *flitwick* means “lively.”

Ambrosius Flume—*owner of Honeydukes.*

- *Ambrosius* is probably derived from "ambrosia" which was the drink of the gods in Greek mythology. Those who drank it would become immortal.
- A *flume* is a narrow passage made for water to flow through. Fitting that in *The Prisoner of Azkaban* Harry enters Honeydukes through a tunnel!

Fridwulfa—*Giantess and Hagrid's mother.*

- *Wulfa* is old English for “wolf.”
- *Frid* is a variation on the word *firth* which means “living near a wood or forest.”

Cornelius Fudge—*Minister of Magic for the first six books.*

- *Cornelius* in Latin means "horn."
- To *fudge* something means “to mess it up or to ruin it.” It certainly fits his personality!

Marvolo Gaunt—*Tom Riddle's grandfather. He was a mean wizard who could speak Parseltongue, believed only in pure blood, and abused his daughter, Tom's mother Merope who he thought was a squib. He wore the Deathly Hallows ring. He died in Azkaban.*

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- To *mar* something is “to taint or blemish” it.
 - *Volo* is to “wish, want or will.” *Vol* also means “theft” in French.
 - *Gaunt* means thin, bony, and emaciated.
 - Gaunt was a famous English family in history. They were integral in the Wars of the Roses.

Gregory Goyle—*friend of Draco Malfoy.*

- Goyle could be derived from gargoyle. Gargoyles were the grotesque carved heads put on medieval cathedrals. They were originally used as waterspouts to divert the rainwater away from the stone walls and later used for ornamental purposes. People believed they warded off evil spirits—frightening images to frighten off evil.

Hermione Granger—*one of Harry's best friends.*

- Hermione in Greek means "messenger," and is a form of Hermes, the Greek messenger god.
- In Greek mythology Hermione was a daughter of Menelaus and Helen. While her parents were away fighting in the Trojan War, Hermione's aunt Clytemnestra raised her.
- Hermione was also a character in Shakespeare's play, *The Winter's Tale*—Hermione was the wife of Leonates, the King of Sicilia.
- Granger was also a character in the Ray Bradbury novel *Fahrenheit 451*. This novel is all about how a society first neglects books and then distrusts them so much it burns books. The main character of the book starts to question the book burning and has to flee. He meets Granger, an intellectual in hiding, and some others who have memorized culturally important books. He says at one point, "All we want to do is keep the knowledge we think we will need intact and safe."

Gellert Grindewald—*Grindewald is the dark wizard with whom Dumbledore was friends and eventually had to defeat when he became too dark and evil.*

- *Gellert* is a Germanic name meaning a “powerful or resolute fighter.” A fitting name for the holder of the Elder Wand.
- *Grindewald* is a small village in Switzerland.

Godric Griffindor--*Godric Griffindor is the founder of Griffindor house at Hogwarts.*

- *Godric* means "power of god" or "god ruler" in Old English.
- *Griffindor* is a combination of Griffin (a mythological creature with the body of a lion and wings of an eagle) and the French word *d'or* which means "of gold." Together they would mean something like Gold Griffin or Griffin of Gold.

Interesting Fact—there is a Griffin on the coat of arms of Iceland.

Rubeus Hagrid—*Hogwarts Gamekeeper and Care of Magical Creatures teacher.*

- *Ruber* is Latin for “red or ruddy.”
- According to J.K. Rowling, "Hagrid is also another old English word meaning if you were "hag-rid," it's a dialect word meaning you'd had a

bad night. Hagrid's a big drinker. He has a lot of bad nights." (From the Harry Potter Lexicon).

Arsenius Jigger—*author of Magical Drafts and Potions.*

- The name *arsenius* is a variation of the word *arsenic*, one of the elements and a poison.
- A *jigger* is a small measure for liquor.

Karkus—*leader of the giants when Hagrid goes to visit them.*

- Sounds like "carcass" which is a dead animal's body. Seeing as Karkus is killed by Golgomath, it seems like a fitting name!

Kreacher—*the Black family house-elf.*

- *Kreacher* is a play on words with "creature."
- The German word *kriecher* means "crawler, groveller or bootlicker."

Viktor Krum—*the Tri-Wizard champion from Durmstrang. He is also a famous Quidditch player.*

- *Viktor* means, well, victor or winner in Latin.
- *Krum* is a German surname meaning crooked or deformed. Fitting because Viktor Krum is clumsy when he walks.

Bellatrix Lestrange—*she is a Death Eater and one of Voldemort's most trusted and ruthless followers.*

- *Bellatrix* is the third brightest star in the constellation Orion and is another Black family member named after a constellation.
- It also means warlike or martial.

Rodolphus Lestrange—*Death Eater and married to Bellatrix.*

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- *Rodolphus* is a variation of Rudolph which is a combination of *rod* which meant "fame" and *wulf* which meant "wolf."
 - *Lestrangle* is the name of a 17th-18th century pamphleteer.

Gilderoy Lockhart—*he is the Defense Against the Dark Arts teacher in The Chamber of Secrets and a total fraud.*

- To *gild* is to cover something with a thin layer of gold.
- It can also mean to give a deceptive appearance. "Gilding the lily" means making something look better than it really is in order to sell it.
- *Roi* means "king" in French.

Neville Longbottom—*fellow Gryffindor and Harry's friend.*

- *Neville* is an old and noble English family name.
- *Longbottom* is an old name given to people who lived in long valleys.

Xenophilius Lovegood—*Luna Lovegood's father and editor of the paper The Quibbler.*

- *Xeno* means "strange" or "foreign" in Latin. It's a variation of the word *xenophile* which means someone who loves foreign things, like a foreign country or the culture of a foreign country.
- *Philia* means "friendship." The meaning of the name Xenophilius can then be translated as a *friend of strange things*.
- The Latin "philologus" means learned man or scholar.
- *Lovegood* is pretty straightforward. Love + good.

Remus Lupin—*Hogwarts Defense Against the Dark Arts teacher for one year. Werewolf. Friend of James Potter.*

- *Remus* is one of the twin boys (along with Romulus) who founded the city of Rome—they were raised by a she-wolf.

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- *Lupin* is derived from *lupus* which is Latin for “wolf.”

Draco Malfoy—*Harry's enemy at Hogwarts.*

- *Draco* means “dragon” or “serpent” in Latin.
- Draco was also a very harsh lawgiver in ancient Athens. This is where the term *draconian* comes from—it means laws that are unusually or inappropriately harsh or cruel or small offenses that have heavy punishments.
- Malfoy—*mal* means “bad” “wrong” or “ill” in French.
- *Foi* in French means to have faith in something. A translation could be, “faith in the bad.”
- *Maleficus* means “evil doer” in Latin.

Lucius Malfoy—*Draco Malfoy's father.*

- *Lucius* is derived from the Latin *lux* which means “light.” It was a fairly common name during Roman times.
- Lucius was the Roman Emperor against whom King Arthur fought in *Le Morte D'Arthur*. Arthur slices his head with Excalibur and kills him. Lucius had 50 giants fighting for him!
- *Lucius* also resembles the name “lucifer,” another name for the Christian devil.

Narcissa Malfoy—*Draco's mother.*

- Narcissa is derived from Narcissus.
- In Greek legend Narcissus was a young man who was in love with his appearance.

Olympe Maxime—*she is the headmistress for Beuxbatons and one of the Tri-Wizard Tournament referees. She and Hagrid later travel together to meet with the giants.*

- *Olympe* is the French word for Olympus. Mt. Olympus is the home of the Greek Olympian gods.
- *Maxime* is derived from the Latin *maxima* which means “greatest” or “largest.” A fitting name for a half-giant.

Minerva McGonagall—*Hogwarts Deputy Headmistress, Head of Gryffindor, Transfiguration Teacher, member of the Order of the Phoenix.*

- Minerva is the Roman goddess of wisdom and war. Her Greek equivalent is Athena.

Alastor Moody—*the DADA teacher in The Goblet of Fire, but later discovered to be locked in a trunk while Barty Crouch Jr. was using Polyjuice Potion to pretend to be Moody.*

- *Alastor* in Greek means "avenger" or "man's defender."
- Alastor was the “spirit” of feuds between members of the same family. This spirit would punish family members for the crimes of their fathers. It is interesting that in the Harry Potter books, Alastor Moody was the Auror who brought the young Barty Crouch to justice for being a Death Eater. Barty blamed his father, Mr. Crouch, for him turning into a Death Eater.
- *Moody* means “temperamental and subject to extreme mood swings.”

Mulciber—*Death Eater.*

- Mulciber is another name for Vulcan, the Roman god of fire and blacksmithing.
- Mulciber is also a fallen angel in John Milton's epic poem *Paradise Lost*.

Mrs. Norris—*Filch's cat.*

- Mrs. Norris is a character in Jane Austen's book *Mansfield Park*. She is a terrible busybody and self-important.

Padma Patil—*Parvati's sister and in Ravenclaw house.*

- *Padma* is a variation on *padme* which means “lotus” in Sanskrit.

Parvati Patil—*a fellow Gryffindor. She went to the dance with Harry in The Goblet of Fire.*

- Parvati is a Hindu goddess and consort of Shiva, god of destruction and rejuvenation.

Peeves—*the Hogwarts poltergeist.*

- To *peeve* means “to annoy.”
- A "pet peeve" is something small that annoys you.

Peter Pettigrew—*a friend of James and Sirius who betrayed them to Voldemort. Lived as Scabbers the rat and was found out in the Prisoner of Azkaban.*

- Pettigrew is just a surname. However, *petty* means either something small and insignificant or to be spiteful and mean. I think it's interesting that he is petti...**grew**. His pettiness did grow. He went from being a small, insignificant person at Hogwarts to one of the Dark Lord's most loyal servants.

Antioch Peverell—*the first wizard to own the Deathly Hallows Elder Wand.*

- Antioch is a city in Turkey and was an important city during the Crusades. It was ruled by many different groups of people, including Christians and Muslims. Like the Elder Wand, one person could not hold on to it for very long.

Cadmus Peverell—*the first wizard to own the Deathly Hallows Resurrection Stone.*

- According to Greek legend, Cadmus was the founder of the city of Thebes. Cadmus introduced the alphabet to Greece, which he obtained from the Phoenicians.

Ignotus Peverell—*the first wizard to own the Deathly Hallows invisibility cloak.*

- *Ignotus* means "unknown" in Latin and it's where we get our word "incognito." Fitting for someone with an invisibility cloak!

Pigwidgeon—*Ron's owl. Sirius gave Ron the owl after they discovered Scabbers was not really a rat. "Pig" is a very small, very excitable owl.*

- A *pigwidgin* is a small fairy or small thing. The spelling is a play on word with pigeon.

Madame Pince—*the Hogwarts librarian.*

- "Pince-nez" are glasses that pinch the nose. They have no ear piece so they just sit on top of your nose.
- "Pincer" is the French word for "to pinch." Madame Pince is a very pinched librarian!

Poppy Pomfrey—*she is the Healer at Hogwarts.*

- Poppy is the opium poppy which was used for healing.
- Pomfrey might refer to the medieval herb *comfrey*, used to aid blood clotting.

Harry Potter—According to J.K. Rowling, "I got the name Potter from people who lived down the road from me in Winterbourne. [...] I liked the surname so I took it."

Lily Potter—*Harry's mother.*

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- Lilies symbolize virtue, chastity, purity.
 - Lilies are used at Easter as a symbol of rebirth.

Ernie Prang—*one of the drivers of the Knight Bus.*

- *Prang* is British slang meaning an automobile crash. Certainly fitting for the driver of the Knight Bus. It was a wild ride for Harry.

Quirinus Quirrell—*Professor Quirrell is the Defense Against the Dark Arts teacher in The Sorcerer's Stone. He is possessed by Voldemort and tries to kill Harry at the end.*

- In Roman mythology, the god Janus sometimes appeared with the name Janus *Quirinus* and he was the god with two faces, one facing in each direction. Pretty fitting, a two faced god, as the name for Quirrell.

Rowena Ravenclaw—*one of the four Founders of Hogwarts and the founder of Ravenclaw House.*

- According to Geoffrey of Monmouth's *History of the Kings of Britain*, Rowena was the beautiful and beguiling daughter of Hengist, one of the Anglo-Saxon leaders who terrorized Britain. The king of Britain, Vortigern, fell in love with her and told Hengist that he would give him whatever he wanted to be able to marry Rowena. Hengist demanded the area known as Kent. Vortigern gave it to him.
- Ravens are popular birds in Celtic mythology. They are clever and smart. However, they are also the birds associated with bloody battlefields. The goddess Morrigan often appeared as a Raven.

Sanguini—*vampire Harry meets at one of Slughorn's parties.*

- *Sanguini* means "bleed" in Italian.

Newt Scamander—*author of Fantastic Beasts and Where to Find Them.*

- A newt is a small, slender, often brightly colored salamander.

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- The name scamander is similar to salamander.

Scorpius Malfoy—*Draco's son.*

- Scorpius means “scorpion” in Latin.
- A constellation. Scorpius is descended through his grandmother (Narcissa) from the Blacks. Most of the Black family, like Sirius and Regulus, are named for constellations.
- The scorpion is the astrological symbol of the sign Scorpio.

Rufus Scrimgeour—*Minister of Magic after Cornelius Fudge. He tries to get Harry to work with the Ministry, but Harry does not like him or trust him.*

- *Rufus* means "red-faced" in Latin.
- England had a King, William II, who was also called William Rufus (William the Red, because he had red hair). William Rufus was not well liked!
- Scrimgeour is a Scottish surname.

Stan Shunpike—*he is one of the drivers on the Knight Bus.*

- A *shunpike* is a side road used to avoid the toll on a highway—in other words a road that is used to "shun" the turnpike. Very fitting for one of the drivers of the Knight Bus!

Rita Skeeter—*Reporter in The Goblet of Fire who is an unregistered animagus and spies on the students to get stories.*

- *Rita* means "pearl" in Greek.
- Skeeter is a slang word for mosquito. Rita Skeeter is certainly very annoying like a mosquito.

Wilbert Slinkhard—*author of the Defense Against the Dark Arts book that Umbridge uses.*

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- To *slink* means to move quietly and sneakily. Fitting for a book that is used by Umbridge, a teacher who wants to quietly take over Hogwarts.

Horace Slughorn—*he is the Potions Master at Hogwarts in The Half Blood Prince.*

- *Hora* is Latin for “hour” or “time.”
- Horus is the Egyptian god of the sky, sun, moon, and war.
- A *slughorn* is a musical instrument that you blow, like a trumpet.

Salazar Slytherin—*one of the four founders of Hogwarts School and the founder of Slytherin House.*

- Antonio de Oliveira Salazar was the Prime Minister of Portugal from 1932-1968.
- Slytherin sounds like "slither" which of course puts you in mind of a snake.

Severus Snape—*Hogwarts Potions Master and Defense Against the Dark Arts teacher (for one year). Headmaster during The Deathly Hallows. Former Death Eater.*

- *Severus* is Latin for “grave, strict, austere, stern, severe, or forbidding.”
- To *sever* means to “cut off.”
- Severus is also the last name of a particularly cruel Roman Emperor.
- Saint Severus was a Catholic Saint who lived in the 5th century. He was born in Gaul but moved to England to combat paganism there.
- Snape is a village in England.

Phyllida Spore—*author of One Thousand Magical Herbs and Fungi.*

- *Phyllida* means "greenery or foliage."

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- A spore is a small reproductive body used to propagate mushrooms.

Pomona Sprout—*teacher of Herbology at Hogwarts.*

- Pomona is a Roman nymph of fruit and fruit trees.
- A *sprout* is a stage of a plant when it is first coming up out of the soil.

Emeric Switch—*author of A Beginner's Guide to Transfiguration.*

- To switch means "to change," perfect for a transfiguration expert!

Pious Thicket—*Ministry worker who is put under the Imperius Curse and made Minister. He is really under the control of Voldemort and the Death Eaters.*

- *Pious* means to exhibit religious reverence. Many Popes were named Pious.
- The Latin word *nescio* means "to be ignorant and unaware." Thicket was put under the Imperius curse, so he was essentially unaware of what he was doing.
- In slang when someone is called "thick" they are stupid and slow. So thick-ness is to be slow and ignorant.

Sybil Trelawney—*Professor Trelawney is the Divination teacher at Hogwarts. She gave the prophecy about Harry and Voldemort.*

- Sybil was a wise woman in Roman mythology who could foretell the future. She traveled with Aeneas (the greatest Roman hero) on his journey into the underworld and helped him with his tasks.
- Trelawney is a Cornish surname.
- Squire John Trelawney is a character in the book *Treasure Island*.

Wilkie Twycross—*teacher brought in to Hogwarts to teach Apparition.*

- Wilkie is a Scottish nickname for William.

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- Twycross is an old English surname that comes from a village. It means a "double cross" which is a crossroads that branches in four directions.

Dolores Umbridge—*she was one of the witches trying to convict Harry at his trial in Order of the Phoenix, she was the Hogwarts High Inquisitor and later ousted Dumbledore and became headmistress. When Voldemort returned to power she was the Head of the Muggle Born Registration Committee.*

- *Dolores* means "sorrows" in Spanish.
- Umbrage means "to take offense." We say we "take umbrage" with something we find offensive. Professor Umbridge is surely offensive!

Professor Vector—*she is the Arithmancy teacher at Hogwarts.*

- Vector is a mathematical term, meaning magnitude and direction.

Voldemort—*Dark Lord.*

- *Vol* means "theft" or "flight" in French.
- *Mort* means "death."
- A translation of *Voldemort* is "flight of death," or "theft of death." This is perfect since the one thing Voldemort feared was death.

Arthur Weasley—*Ron's father.*

- Arthur is the first name of King Arthur, who defeated and killed a Roman Emperor by the name of...*Lucius!*
- Weasley makes you think of weasels which are small predators. They have long slender bodies and can follow prey into *burrows*. Weasels are considered clever and sneaky. According to J.K. Rowling, "In Britain and Ireland the weasel has a bad reputation as an unfortunate, even malevolent, animal. However, since childhood I have had a great fondness for the Family *Mustelidae* [weasel family]; not so much malignant as maligned, in my opinion."

Ginevra "Ginny" Weasley—*Ron's sister. Harry's girlfriend and then wife. Member of Dumbledore's Army while in school.*

- *Ginevra* means "fair."
- It is a variation of the name Guinevere, King Arthur's wife.

Molly Weasley—*Ron's mother.*

- The name may be from the term "mollycoddling." To be mollycoddling is to be overprotective. Mrs. Weasley is certainly overprotective.

Ron Bilius Weasley—*Harry's best friend.*

- Ron is a common name, just like all the Weasley's have common names.
- *Bilius* is the adjective for "bile." Bile is a secretion from the liver and people who are considered bilius are ill-tempered. He was named after his uncle.

Harry Potter Words and their Meanings

Just like with the character names, there are words that have interesting or representative meanings. Some are Latin, like *inferius*, some are slang like "jiggery pokery," and some just have very fitting meanings, like garroting gas.

Auror—*an auror is a witch or wizard who fights and protects others from dark wizards.*

- *Aura* means "gold" in Latin.

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- An "aura" is often explained as a light that surrounds a person, even though most people can't see it. Aurors are wizards who are expert at seeing dark wizards and their magic.

Azkaban—*the wizard prison.*

- It sounds like Alcatraz, the prison located on an island in San Francisco Bay. Both start with A and are prisons located on islands in the middle of rough, dangerous seas. Alcatraz was where the U.S. put its most dangerous prisoners and those most likely to escape from other prisons. It closed in 1963.

Beauxbaton—*one of the schools to compete in the Tri-Wizard Tournament.*

- *Beau* means "beautiful" in French.
- *Baton* means "stick" in French.

Burrow—*the name of the Weasley family home.*

- A burrow is a hole dug up by a small animal like a rabbit (or a *weasel*).
- To *burrow* means to "dig" or "nestle in the ground." A burrow is usually a snug place to live.

Caput Draconis—*Griffindor tower password.*

- In Latin *caput* means "head."
- *Draconis* is a derivative of "dragon." The words would translate as "dragon's head."

Catherine Wheel—*firework used in the Order of the Phoenix when the students try to get back at Umbridge.*

- A Catherine Wheel is a firework popular in England. It is a circular firework that shoots off sparks as it turns.

Diagon Alley—*the wizard shopping area.*

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- Sounds like *diagonally*.

Dilligrout—*Griffindor tower password.*

- Dilligrout is a watery porridge made with plums in it that was once served in British coronation ceremonies.

Erumpent Horn—*Xenofilus Lovegood has one in his house.*

- *Erumpo* means "to break out" in Latin.
- *Erumpent* means "bursting out." Our word *eruption* comes from this word.
- When Harry, Ron, and Hermione visit Xenofilus in *The Deathly Hallows* he tries to hit Harry with a Stunning Spell to capture him for the Snatchers. When Harry ducks the spell hits the Erumpent Horn and there followed a "colossal explosion."

Fidelius—*charm that creates a secret keeper.*

- *Fidelitas* means "loyalty" in Latin. Our word *fidelity* is derived from it.

Fiendfyre—*cursed flame. Crabbe starts it in the Room of Requirement when they are looking for the diadem. Can destroy a Horcrux.*

- A fiend is an inhuman cruel person, or monster.
- *Fyre* is the Old English word for "fire." It is certainly fitting that *fiendfyre* can destroy a Horcrux. It is a particularly horrible and dangerous kind of dark magic fire.

Flibbertigibbet—*a Griffindor tower password.*

- A silly, scatterbrained person.

Floo Powder—*the magical powder used to travel through fireplaces.*

- A *flue* is a pipe or tube through which hot air, gas, steam, or smoke may pass.

Fortuna major—*Griffindor tower password.*

- *Fortuna* means "good luck" in Latin.
- *Major* means "great or large."

Garroting Gas—*Ginny mentions it as a distraction for Harry and Hermione to get into Umbridge's office.*

- To garrot someone is to strangle them with a cord of some sort. The garroting gas in Harry Potter makes it hard for people to breathe.

Grimmauld Place—*the Black family home. The Order of the Phoenix headquarters. Harry, Ron, and Hermione's hideout at the beginning of The Deathly Hallows.*

- The name is a play on words, "Grim Old Place." And it certainly is!

Gringott's—*wizard bank.*

- A play on the word "ingot." An *ingot* is a "mass of metal cast into a convenient shape for storage or transportation." Gold and silver are often molded into ingots, like bars. A good name for a bank.

The Hanged Man—*pub in Little Hangleton where Muggles talked about the murder of the Riddles.*

- *The Hanged Man* is a card in a Tarot deck. In the Hanged Man card, the man hangs from a wooden beam (like a gallows or cross) by one foot. One foot crosses behind the other and his arms cross behind his back. A nimbus or halo surrounds his head, and his face is calm.

Hebridean—*one of the dragons in the first Tri-Wizard Tournament was a Hebridean Black.*

- The Hebrides is a group of more than 500 islands off the western coast of Scotland.

Heliopath—*spirits of fire.*

- Helios is the Greek god of the sun. He crosses the sky every day in a chariot drawn by four horses.
- *Helio* means “sun” in Greek.

Horcrux—*'the receptacle in which a Dark wizard has hidden a fragment of his soul for the purposes of attaining immortality'.*

- *Hora* means "time" in Latin.
- *Crux* means "cross" in Latin.

Inferius—*the Inferi are the undead. Voldemort uses them in the cave to protect the locket Horcrux.*

- *Inferus* in Latin means “below or under.”
- The Inferi are the inhabitants of the Roman underworld. The other inhabitants include gods, like Pluto, and also humans.

Jiggery Pokery—*one of the fake spells Harry used to scare Dudley.*

- Jiggery Pokery is underhanded scheming behavior.

The Knight Bus—*the bus that picks up Harry at the beginning of The Prisoner of Azkaban after he blows up Aunt Marge.*

- The Knight Bus is a play on words. There really is a *Night Bus* in London and a knight (as in the "knight in shining armor") comes to rescue people. The Knight Bus comes to the aid of witches and wizards who need a ride.

Knockturn Alley—*the shopping area for the dark arts.*

- Sounds like *nocturnally*.

Legilimency—*legilimency is the ability to read the thoughts of another person. Voldemort and Snape are both accomplished legilimens.*

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- In Latin *legens* means "a reader."
 - *Lego* means "to gather, collect."
 - *Mens* means "mind."
 - A translation might be "a reader who gathers thoughts from the mind."

Marauder's Map—*the map Fred and George give to Harry in The Prisoner of Azkaban that maps out the entire castle, where everyone is, and the secret exits.*

- To *marauder* means "to go on raids," especially after spoils or riches.
- A *marauder* is also a person who goes on those raids.

Metamorphmagus—*witches or wizards who can change their appearance.*

- *Meta* in Greek means "after" or "beyond."
- *Morph* in Greek means "shape" or "form."

Muggle—*non-magical person.*

- A *mug* is British slang for someone who is gullible.

Nimbus 2000—*Harry's first broom.*

- A nimbus is a type of cloud.
- It is also a form of *nimble* which mean "to move quickly and lightly." An excellent quality in a broom!

Occlumency—*the ability to close one's mind to legilimency. Snape is a very accomplished occlumens. He tries to teach it to Harry in The Order of the Phoenix.*

- In Latin *occludo* means "to close, shut down, close off."
- *Mens* means "mind."

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- A translation would be "to close off the mind."

Oddsbodikins—*a Griffindor tower password.*

- It's an archaic interjection—Oddsbodikins!

Omniooculars—*these are the binoculars of the wizard world. They can do replays and perform other functions. Harry uses them at the World Cup.*

- In Latin *omnis* means "all" or "everything." Our words omniscient (which means all knowing) and omnipresent (being everywhere all at once) come from the Latin *omnis*.
- *Occular* means having to do with the eye in medical terms.

Parseltongue—*the language that allows a witch or wizard to speak with snakes.*

- In Latin *pars* means "part."
- In modern language *parse* means "to break words into parts."

Patronus—*the spell that takes the form of an animal to ward off Dementors.*

- *Patron* means "protector" in Latin.

Pensieve—*the bowl that contains some of Dumbledore's thoughts.*

- To be *pensive* means to be thoughtful.
- In Latin, *pensito* means to "weigh carefully," "consider," "think over."

Protean—*charm that makes the object change forms. Hermione uses it to charm the fake galleons to be a means of communication for the DA.*

- Proteus is a Greek water god who can change form at will. He would often change form to escape being captured by heroes who wanted him to answer their questions.

Quibbler—*the Lovegood's newspaper. It often has ridiculous stories, and no one takes it seriously.*

- To *quibble* means to evade the point in an argument by bickering about words.

Quid Agis—*Griffindor tower password.*

- This is Latin that basically says, "how are you?"

Smeltings—*Dudley's school.*

- Smelting is melting metal (like iron) to reduce it and make the impurities rise to the surface, so they can be removed. Too bad Dudley didn't get smelted and have his impurities removed!

Snatchers—*Snatchers are the people who go out hunting for "Undesirables" in the Deathly Hallows.*

- *Snatcher* is a slang term for a kidnapper.

Spellotape—*magical tape.*

- Sellotape is the real word for cellophane tape in England. In the U.S. we'd say "Scotch tape®."

Splinch—*what happens when you apparate unsuccessfully.*

- A combination of splice and pinch. Ouch!

Squib—*a person who has no magical ability and is born to a wizard family.*

- A *squib* is a broken firecracker that burns but does not explode.

Wattlebird—*Griffindor tower password.*

- Wattlebirds are real birds who are known for their "wattles," those fleshy pieces that hang down from their throats (like a turkey's wattles).

