



J. K. Rowling: A Biography (Greenwood Biographies)

By Connie Ann Kirk



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The unprecedented popularity of the Harry Potter books took the publishing world by storm and captured the imaginations of readers around the world. This unofficial biographical study of J. K. Rowling invites fans and critics alike to take a close look at the person behind the phenomenon, the facts of her life as a writer, and the extraordinary success of an ordinary woman.^L This detailed book explores both the critical acclaim and the controversies surrounding Rowling's books and the characters, who seem to have found a life of their own. Chapters take the reader from Rowling's early childhood in England through her school years, friendships, and early influences, tracing her family life, her travels and personal relationships, and the development of her career as a writer.

The Harry Potter books are carefully considered against the backdrop of the fantasy genre and are also situated within the broader framework of popular culture. A bibliography provides reviews, critical articles, biographical sources, and related Web site information. A timeline highlights the events of Rowling's life and career. Other appendices cite the many awards her books have received around the world. Also included are lists of her special literary and humanitarian interests.



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- Sales Rank: #1019833 in eBooks
- Published on: 2003-03-30
- Released on: 2003-03-30
- Format: Kindle eBook

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Editorial Review

From School Library Journal

Grade 9 Up-In a preface, Kirk discusses her sources; she obtained every biography in print, watched or read transcripts of every available live or taped interview, and searched the Internet. Data is presented in seven chapters, five appendixes, and a bibliography that sorts resources into several sections. Although there is information about the author herself, the majority of the content is devoted to analyzing her writing. Chapter one likens Rowling to Harry Potter in that they both went from rags to riches. Her work is compared to a number of genres and series in both children's and adult literature. Throughout, Kirk follows up facts with speculations as to their meaning or significance and/or possible outcomes that may occur. For example, after describing Hermione in Shakespeare's *The Winter's Tale*, Kirk says, "Only time will tell if any similarities to Shakespeare's Hermione will pop up for her namesake in the Harry Potter novels." One chapter compares Rowling's books to other fantasy novels and discusses the banning of her books for endorsing witchcraft, the occult, and/or devil worship. The scholarly writing style and evaluative content make this volume useful to high school students studying Rowling and her work.

Kathleen Simonetta, Indian Trails Public Library District, Wheeling, IL

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Review

"A must-have for school and public libraries. Kirk has written an appealing and highly readable introduction to the publishing phenomenon known as Harry Potter....The publisher and author are to be commended on a job well done!"-ARBA Online

"Well researched and written, this biography will serve both the interested reader and the student looking for report material."-VOYA

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About the Author

CONNIE ANN KIRK is an author and independent scholar specializing in American and children's literature and the poet, Emily Dickinson. Her books from Greenwood Press include: *J.K. Rowling: A Biography*, *Emily Dickinson: A Biography*, *Mark Twain: A Biography*, *Sylvia Plath: A Biography*, and *The Companion to American Children's Picture Books*.

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Timmy Gallegos:

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