

**Read the following extract from 'Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone' by JK Rowling:**

The door swung open at once. A tall, black-haired witch in emerald-green robes stood there. She had a very stern face and Harry's first thought was that this was not someone to cross.

'The first-years, Professor McGonagall,' said Hagrid.

'Thank you, Hagrid. I will take them from here.'

She pulled the door wide. The Entrance Hall was so big you could have fitted the whole of the Dursleys' house in it. The stone walls were lit with flaming torches like the ones at Gringotts, the ceiling was too high to make out, and a magnificent marble staircase facing them led to the upper floors.

They followed Professor McGonagall across the flagged stone floor. Harry could hear the drone of hundreds of voices from a doorway to the right – the rest of the school must already be here – but Professor McGonagall showed the first-years into a small empty chamber off the hall. They crowded in, standing rather closer together than they usually would have done, peering about nervously.

'Welcome to Hogwarts,' said Professor McGonagall. 'The start-of-term banquet will begin shortly, but before you take your seats in the Great Hall, you will be sorted into your houses. The Sorting is a very important ceremony because, while you are here, your house will be something like your family within Hogwarts. You will have classes with the rest of your house, sleep in your house dormitory and spend free time in your house common room.

'The four houses are called Gryffindor, Hufflepuff, Ravenclaw and Slytherin. Each house has its own noble history and each has produced outstanding witches and wizards. While you are at Hogwarts, your triumphs will earn your house points, while any rule-breaking will lose house points. At the end of the year, the house with the most points is awarded the House Cup, a great honour. I hope each of you will be a credit to whichever house becomes yours.

'The sorting Ceremony will take place in a few minutes in front of the rest of the school. I suggest you all smarten yourselves up as much as you can while you are waiting.'

Her eyes lingered for a moment on Neville's cloak, which was fastened under his left ear, and on Ron's smudged nose. Harry nervously tried to flatten his hair.

**Answer the questions below:**

1. Find definitions for the following words and phrases:

a. stern \_\_\_\_\_

b. flagged stone floor

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\_\_\_\_\_

c. chamber

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

d. ceremony \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

2. Write down the words and phrases that help us to understand how BIG the Entrance Hall is:

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\_\_\_\_\_

3. Why are the voices of the rest of the school described as a 'drone'? You may need to look up different definitions of the word 'drone'.

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4. As the first years entered the chamber they stood 'rather closer together than they usually would have done'. Why?

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5. Professor McGonagall describes houses as 'like your family within Hogwarts'. Why does she describe houses in this way?

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6. How are house points earned and lost?

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7. How do Harry and the rest of the first years feel? Give evidence to support your answer.

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8. Over to you! In September you will start at a new school. It will not be as strange as Hogwarts was to Harry and his friends, but it will take a bit of getting used to. Write a story describing your first day at your new school. You can keep it realistic, or let your imagination run wild.

Wishing you all the very best at your new school and hoping each of you will be a credit to your new school and your old one! Mrs Mwenya 😊