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ENGL 1301

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Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone: a magical movie

In both the books and the movies of *Harry Potter*, a magical world comes alive in readers' and viewers' minds, filled with the impossible and awe-inspiring stories of young witches and wizards living and learning in their residence of Hogwarts, a school of witchcraft and wizardry. *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone*—screenplay written by Steve Kloves and directed by Chris Columbus—is the first out of eight movies, and a brilliant introduction to the wizarding world of J.K. Rowling's book series. The setting, music, and characters make the magic of the story come alive; the use of clever cinematic tricks creates a movie that entertains all ages.

Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone tells the beginning of the story of a young boy named Harry Potter (Daniel Radcliffe), who thinks he is a muggle—a non-magic being—until his 11th birthday, when his whole life gets turned upside-down. He is taken to the wizarding world and introduced to who he really is: which is quite different from the lie his Aunt Petunia Dursley (Fiona Shaw) and Uncle Vernon Dursley (Richard Griffiths) told him to keep him quiet and unassuming. Instead, he is the son of a witch and a wizard, who died protecting him when he was a baby. The film takes Potter to Hogwarts, where he meets who will be his two best friends: Ron Weasley (Rupert Grint) and Hermione Granger (Emma Watson); they have many adventures—all leading to the

Commented [JMS1]: This is part of the title, so capitalize:
A Magical Movie

Commented [JMS2]: Space initials, just as you space
their names

Commented [JMS3]: Agreement error. Many writers make the mistake of having the verb agree with the noun next to it instead of the subject. Don't be one of them. Read this out loud, and you will hear the error. And this is another reason I wish teachers were still teaching sentence diagramming: you would have seen the error immediately: 'use' is the subject of the sentence; 'tricks' is the object of the prepositional phrase modifying 'use'. You make this mistake again later, yet my grammar checker catches it each time, so be sure you go into settings and have the grammar checker 'checked' for highest level.

Commented [JMS4]: Superb intro and thesis

climax at the end of the film, where they have their first run-in with the antagonist of the series.

From the beginning of the film, the mood is set. When we first see Potter as he will be throughout the movie, the **use** of bright lights, no music, and camera angles **create** a contrast between the scene before: a flashback from when he was dropped at his aunt's front door as a baby. In that second scene, the camera angles from the floor create the appearance of being small and inferior, like the Dursleys have taught him to be. Later in the movie, the low angles are used in conflicts or situations of inferiority, but as Potter gains confidence, they're used less and less. The **use** of aerial camera angles **show** more of the setting and **make** a scene seem fuller and the characters smaller; camera angles with objects blocking part of the view create the illusion of being hidden, or being in the room with the characters, almost as if the viewer is part of the story as well.

Just **like as** camera angles completely change the mood and feeling of a scene, in *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone*, the use of music gives clues and pushes the story along. When Potter and his friends come across something vital to the story, the music sounds anticipating; when they are safe or happy **if** the music reflects that feeling; when something dangerous is happening, the music becomes intense and adds strength. One trick that the movie uses in multiple scenes is building music in a stressful situation until the last moment before a shocking action happens, and then completely silencing all music, letting us focus solely on the occurrence. The score fits the film perfectly—adding dramatic emphasis to situations or clues that later reveal themselves as a major part of the storyline.

Commented [JMS5]: Use 'like' when it's a simple comparison between two words or phrases; use 'as' and 'as if' when it's a sentence.

Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone is an exceptional debut to the *Harry Potter* movie series, and sets the tone for what is to come in later films. It ends nicely by sufficiently tying the story up enough so viewers of all ages get the sense of finality, while leaving a few strands of the knot untied to continue the remaining, thrilling tales of Harry Potter; all perfectly portrayed by exceptional actors; tone set by magnificent music; and scenes captured by clever camera angles.

Commented [JMS6]: No comma; this is a compound verb, not a compound sentence

Commented [JMS7]: Good closure