Who Wrote the Harry Potter Books?

DIRECTIONS: Read the passage. Answer the questions.

J.K Rowling was born in England in 1965. She had a happy childhood, but remembers being teased over her name – other kids often called her “Rowling pin”. Rowling always wanted to be a writing. When she was six she wrote a book about a rabbit with the measles, and asked her mother to “get it published”. Her friend Sean was the first person to encourage her to be a writer. She later put Sean’s beat-up Ford Anglia into one of her Harry Potter books as a flying car.

She studied French in college, at her parents’ urging, though she really wanted to study English. After graduating from college she worked at different jobs in London, including working for Amnesty International, a charity that fights for human rights all over the world.

Rowling got the idea for Harry Potter on a long train ride. The characters formed in her mind first, though when she first thought of Harry he wasn’t a wizard. As soon as she got home that day she started working on the book, Harry Potter and the Philosopher’s Stone, which took her several years to write.

Her agent spent a year trying to find a publisher, but no one wanted to publish the book. Finally a small publisher, Bloomsbury, decided to publish it. At first only 1000 copies were printed, half of which went to libraries. But sales really took off, and as you probably know, that first book turned into a very popular series. First edition copies of her first book are now worth around $50,000 each.

The last book of the series, Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows was one of the fastest selling books of all time, and Rowling admits it is her favorite. She plans to keep writing, though she doesn’t plan to write anymore Harry Potter books.

1. When she was a kid, what was J.K. Rowling’s first book about?

2. Where was Rowling when she got the idea for the Harry Potter books?

3. Why are first editions of the first Harry Potter book worth so much money?