

Teacher's Boggart Chart Questions

1. Review the shapes that the boggart turned into to frighten the characters in the *Harry Potter* excerpts, and identify what you think that shape may symbolize. For example, why do you think Ron fears spiders? What does his fear of spiders symbolize?

Students think analytically and deeply to develop their thoughts, from what the characters fear most to what their fears represent. The text describes what the boggart turns into, revealing to readers each character's fear. And what characters fear is sometimes more than a scary monster. Some of the shapes that the boggart turned into symbolize ideas rather than a monster. For example, while the banshee may look scary, the death that she foreshadows may be what Seamus fears most. The full moon by itself seems harmless. But when it can turn a wizard into an uncontrollable beast like a werewolf, it symbolizes a trigger that makes Professor Lupin lose control over himself month after month.

2. Compare and contrast the boggart shapes and note any pattern you observe among them.

Students may observe that all student characters seem to fear scary and monstrous creatures, while Professor Lupin and Mrs. Weasley face something that is from real life. The discussion may develop into considering how one's fear may evolve as one ages and acquires more knowledge and experiences.

3. Describe how to defeat a boggart. Why do you think this is an effective way to overcome fear?

The classroom scene tells readers specifically how to defeat a boggart through the dialogue between Professor Lupin and the students. Lupin instructs the students to say the charm riddikulus with conviction, at the same time imagining what they fear in a comical situation. Students are invited to reflect on how fear can be combatted through humor—how an individual may stand up in the face of what seems frightening. A critical concept that may come out of this discussion is that fear may be based on how one perceives things and how that perception may affect one's behavior. By changing the way one sees what she or he fears, one may be able to face and even overcome that fear.

4. Provide your own explanation of why Mrs. Weasley was unable to defeat the boggart.

*Students with in depth knowledge of the Harry Potter series may mention that the Order of the Phoenix is a secret group of witches and wizards who have fought against Voldemort before the evil wizard was defeated by baby Harry. The book, *Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix*, is set at a time after Voldemort has fully come back to life and is amassing followers. This poses much danger for the members of the Order of the Phoenix and their families, who have chosen to fight against Voldemort, no matter the cost.*

With the return of Voldemort, Mrs. Weasley's biggest fear is that her loved ones will die at the hand of the evil wizard and his followers. She is overwhelmed by this frightful possibility when she faces the bloody dead bodies of her loved ones. Although she knows that it is a boggart that shifts into images of her children's, her husband's, and Harry's dead bodies, she is unable to cast the riddikulus charm successfully. In the end, it is Lupin who is able to cast the charm and defeat the boggart.

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5. Note any inferences you can make about the author's intent for including these two boggart scenes in the series.

Students may mention that the riddikulus charm sounds similar to the word "ridiculous." This discussion may be guided to students considering what the author may be suggesting by choosing a charm that sounds like "ridiculous" and describing how the boggart can be defeated. In addition, in comparing boggarts, students may notice a distinct contrast in the portrayal of boggarts of children (which seem to be more literal monsters) and those of adults. Students are invited to explore the implications of these distinctions.