



# WORK IT, GIRL: BECOME A LEADER LIKE J.K. ROWLING - TEACHER'S GUIDE

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## Learning Objective

Growing from a child whose teachers thought she was not living up to her potential, to one of the most successful authors in the world, the life story of J. K. Rowling is undeniable proof that persistence, even in the face of adversity, can lead to success. This remarkable book will help students realize that the greatest accomplishments don't come easy – rather, they are the result of hard work and dedication. Students will come away with ten valuable lessons Jo has learned over the years that can be applied to their own lives and help them achieve their ambitions. Complete with bold, paper cut style illustrations, this uplifting addition to the Work It Girl series will inspire anyone with a dream and the determination to see it through.

## Essential Questions in This Unit

1. How did J. K. Rowling become famous?
2. What lifechanging events happened to Jo that affected her deeply?
3. What did Jo do when she faced a challenge or rejection?
4. How did Jo make time to write her book when so many things were happening in her life?
5. What qualities of Jo's personality helped her finally sell her book to a publisher?
6. In what ways does Jo share the wealth of her success with others?



## Classroom Discussion Topics

1. In the book the author explains that young Jo “never truly became very engaged with her schoolwork” (p. 10-11). Ask the students why they think Jo didn’t like doing her schoolwork. Have they ever experienced difficulty with any of their school subjects? What did they do to address that problem? Was there anything else they could have done to get help?
2. Jo had several challenging, discouraging experiences in her life: her mother’s illness and death, not getting into Oxford, her divorce, needing financial help from the government. Ask the class to describe how she reacted these events. In what ways do they think these events made her stronger?
3. Jo was surprised at how difficult it is to make a living as a writer and needed to get a non-writing job to help pay bills. As a result, “Jo felt sorry for herself for a little while” (p. 16). Ask the students why they think she was so upset. What valuable lesson do they think she learned from this experience?
4. The book explains that Jo’s Harry Potter manuscript was turned down by twelve different publishing houses. Why do the students think the publishers did not want her book? What do they think was different about Barry Cunningham’s reaction to the book at Bloomsbury? What did he see that the others could not?

## Student Activities

1. Have students try their hands at writing a story. It can be a short story, or even an outline for an entire book. Ask them to think like an author or publisher. Who is the audience for the book? In what part of the bookstore will it be shelved? What time of year should the book be published (for example, does it have a holiday theme, would it be a great summer read, etc.)? Will there be illustrations? What should the book jacket look like?
2. In the book Jo displays the trait of perseverance: no matter what obstacles or challenges came her way, she kept writing and believing in her book. Ask the class to list qualities that can help you persevere, even in the



most difficult situations. Post these qualities in the classroom, and leave room to add to it as more ideas strike.

**3.** Ask students to look carefully at the illustrations in the book. Using this style as inspiration, have them create a portrait or other image with cut out pieces of paper (card stock, construction, or other paper). Close observers may note that the images in the book make creative use of shadows. In their work, ask students to experiment with layering and arranging the paper to achieve this effect.

**4.** As the book states, “there is always someone in the world who has less than you do” (p. 61). Taking Jo’s philanthropy (or giving to worthy causes) as inspiration, ask the class to list ways they can help those less fortunate – and remember, there are lots of ways to help besides donating money!

