

28 Magical Facts About Dumbledore You Probably Haven't Heard Before

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The first time we saw Albus Dumbledore in the Harry Potter series, he was the wise, powerful, and kind wizard who had been the headmaster of Hogwarts for many years. He was the one who had helped Harry and his friends through their first year at school, and he was the one who had helped them to defeat Voldemort. But there were many things about him that we didn't know at the time. In this article, we will explore 28 magical facts about Albus Dumbledore that you probably haven't heard before.

1. Albus Dumbledore was born on July 19, 1891, in a small village in Scotland. He was the youngest of five children, and he was the only one who survived. His father was a wizard, and his mother was a witch. He was a member of the wizarding family known as the Potters, and he was a descendant of the wizard Merlin.

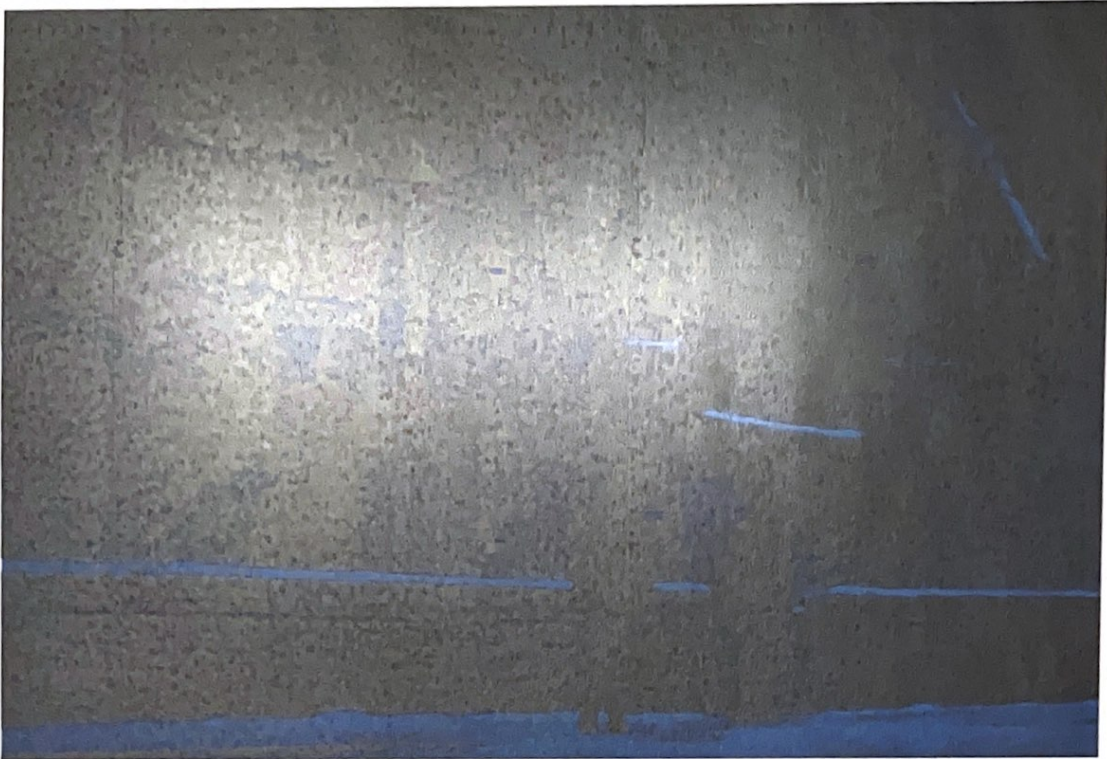


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Albus Percival Wulfric Brian Dumbledore was one of the greatest wizards of all time, although we know him best as the Headmaster of Hogwarts during **Harry Potter's** time in school — at least before his untimely death at the hands of **Severus Snape** on top of the Astronomy Tower. Dumbledore always seemed to be omniscient and know more than he let on. Spoilers: he told Snape to kill him. Sometimes we hated him for it, like when we found out he knew Harry was a Horcrux all along, but more often than not we loved him. Dumbledore is both a sweet old man who loves sherbet lemon candies, but also an incredibly powerful wizard that we all wish we could be mentored by — and the only wizard to ever truly scare **Lord Voldemort**.

Of course, there is more to Dumbledore's story than we get at first glance. Who exactly is this powerful, all-knowing, yet still good-hearted wizard? **JK Rowling** didn't leave his story sandwiched between the covers of the Harry Potter books; she has continued to allude to more and more of his backstory, giving us a better picture of who the wizard really was. Here are 28 magical facts about Albus Dumbledore.

Dumbledore grew up in Godric's Hollow



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He was technically born in the village of Mould-on-the-Wold but grew up in Godric's Hollow, home to **Godric Gryffindor** and the birthplace of Harry Potter, before he was moved to 4 Privet Drive after his parents' murder. There's obviously something special about this small magical village in the West Country of England, as it gave the world three of the most important and brave wizards ever known. It's almost as if Dumbledore and Harry were destined to be connected.

He had a complicated romantic relationship with Gellert Grindelwald



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Before **Tom Riddle**, aka Voldemort, the most infamous dark wizard with a taste for power was **Gellert Grindelwald**. He tried to take over the wizarding world in the 1920s. Dumbledore met Grindelwald when they were teenagers and the two became very close. JK Rowling has since stated that Dumbledore is gay, meaning that this relationship was likely romantic in nature. But did Grindelwald love Dumbledore back? Can someone who loves power so much love another human? We're not sure, but either way, things obviously didn't end well for the pair, as Dumbledore was forced to duel him in 1945, ultimately sending him to Nurmengard to be imprisoned for the remainder of his life.

Bathilda Bagshot introduced Dumbledore and Grindelwald



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Grindelwald was not a student at Hogwarts. He attended Durmstrang, the wizarding school in Russia known for their emphasis on dark arts, and the school that produced Quidditch star **Viktor Krum**. So how would he even have known Dumbledore? Turns out Grindelwald visited Godric's Hollow to learn about the Deathly Hallows and spend time with his great-aunt **Bathilda Bagshot**, who was friends with her neighbors the Dumbledores. The magical historian introduced the two young wizards.

His sister Ariana accidentally killed their mother



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Ariana Dumbledore's story is beyond sad. The youngest of the Dumbledore children was only six years old when some muggle boys saw her practicing magic and attacked her for it. She was so traumatized by the attack that she was unable to control her magic anymore, which drove her mad. Their mother **Kendra** was an unintended victim of an accidental magical explosion caused by Ariana when she was 14 years old.

His father died while imprisoned in Azkaban



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To make matters worse, **Percival Dumbledore** had been imprisoned in Azkaban for taking revenge on the boys who attacked his daughter. Did he kill them? Injure them? Torture them? We're not sure, but whatever he did, it was likely magical in nature, as that would get him sent to Azkaban, where he lived out the remainder of his days. With their father imprisoned and mother dead, Albus became Ariana's guardian.

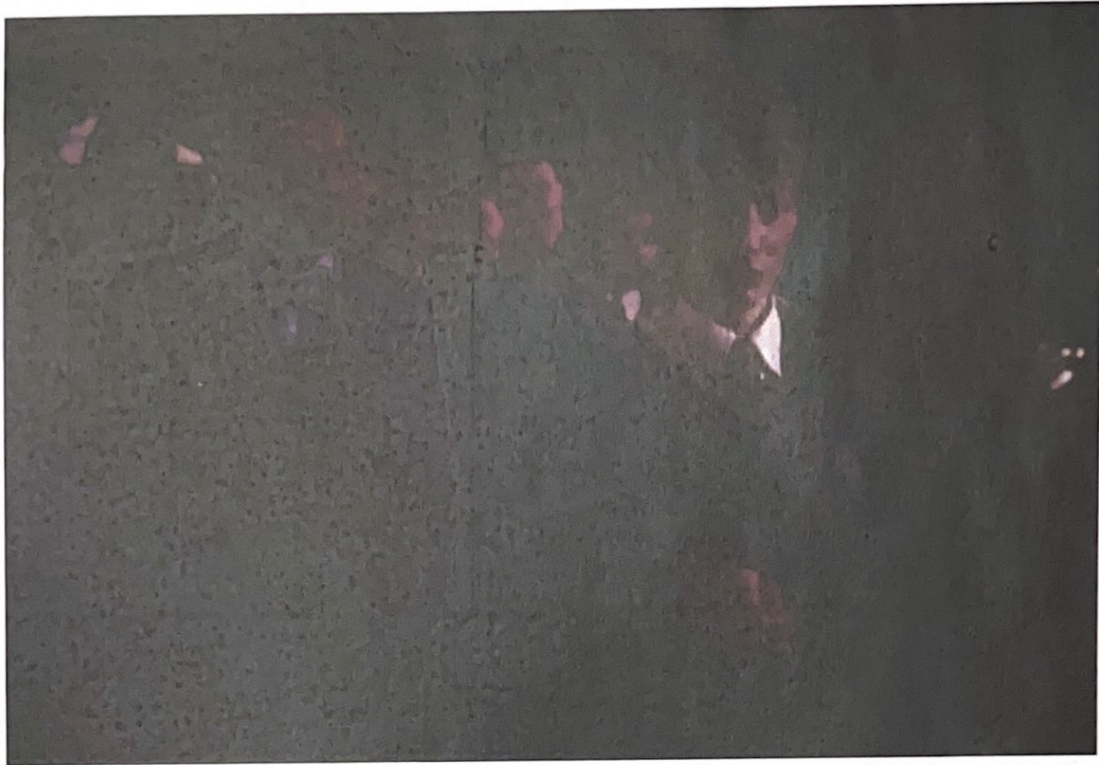
Ariana died due to a duel between Albus and Aberforth Dumbledore, and Grindelwald



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Albus and Grindelwald were busy making plans for Muggle domination “for the greater good” even while Albus was responsible for taking care of his little sister. **Aberforth** argued that it was wrong, which obviously infuriated Grindelwald, and lead to a duel between the three wizards. Ariana tried to stop them, jumping between the wizards mid-duel and was struck by a curse and killed. No one really knew whose spell it was that killed her, but Albus never stopped blaming himself for her death.

Ariana's corpse is Dumbledore's boggart



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We got a glimpse of Dumbledore's guilt over his sister's death while he drank a potion — Emerald Potion to be exact, according to **Pottermore** (now called **Wizarding World**) — that drove him mad on the night of his death. He cried out as if he was watching Grindelwald hurt her, begging to be killed instead. He felt such intense guilt his whole life that she was even his boggart. His greatest fear was that his spell was what killed her.

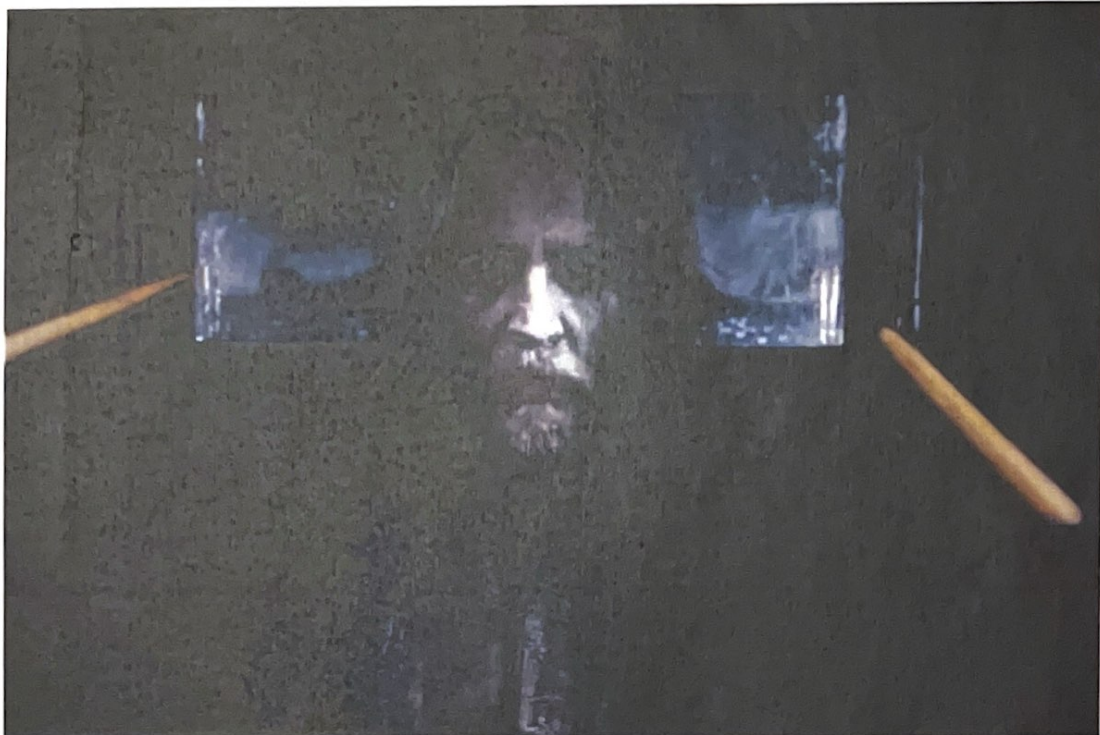
Like Harry, Dumbledore sees his whole family in the Mirror of Erised



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Dumbledore obviously lied when he told Harry he saw a pair of woolen socks in the Mirror of Erised. That was never believable, but Harry was only 11 years old when he first discovered the Mirror, so why would Dumbledore have told him what he desires most? We know Harry saw his parents in the Mirror, and Dumbledore's greatest desire wasn't much different. When Dumbledore looks in the Mirror, he sees his family whole: Aberforth no longer hating him, his mother alive, his father free, and Ariana alive and able to perform magic.

He received an Order of Merlin for defeating Grindelwald



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In 1945, the final year of World War II, Dumbledore and Grindelwald dueled yet again, but this time after Grindelwald spent decades trying to take over the wizarding world. He needed to be stopped, and despite loving his friend, Dumbledore had to be the one to do it. He succeeded, and Grindelwald was locked up in an Austrian wizarding prison. Order of Merlin First Class is awarded to wizards "for acts of outstanding bravery or distinction," by the Wizengamot, an organization even older than the Ministry of Magic. Dumbledore received this high honor for defeating Grindelwald.

He understands multiple magical languages, including Parseltongue



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Dumbledore is more than just a powerful wizard, he is also incredibly smart. He understands at least three magical languages, including Merpeople's Mermish and Goblin's Gobbledegook. He also studied Parseltongue, the snake language spoken by Harry, Voldemort, and **Salazar Slytherin**. While there is no evidence that he can actually speak the language himself, Dumbledore has proven he understands it, which is a feat in itself. Ron learned to mimic the sounds Harry made while speaking the snake language, so Dumbledore likely possesses that ability as well. He probably learned Parseltongue in an attempt to better understand Voldemort.

He once taught Transfiguration



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Dumbledore became Headmaster of Hogwarts sometime around 1970. Prior to that, he was a professor. We learned in *Fantastic Beasts: The Crimes of Grindelwald* that he first taught Defense Against the Dark Arts, as he showed students how to defend themselves against boggarts. Ultimately though, he taught Transfiguration, which according to Rowling is “very hard work,” and more scientific than many other magical disciplines. Fans have theorized that he turned to teaching to try to squash his desire for power. Of course, becoming Headmaster is a form of power, but not quite the same kind that Grindelwald was after.

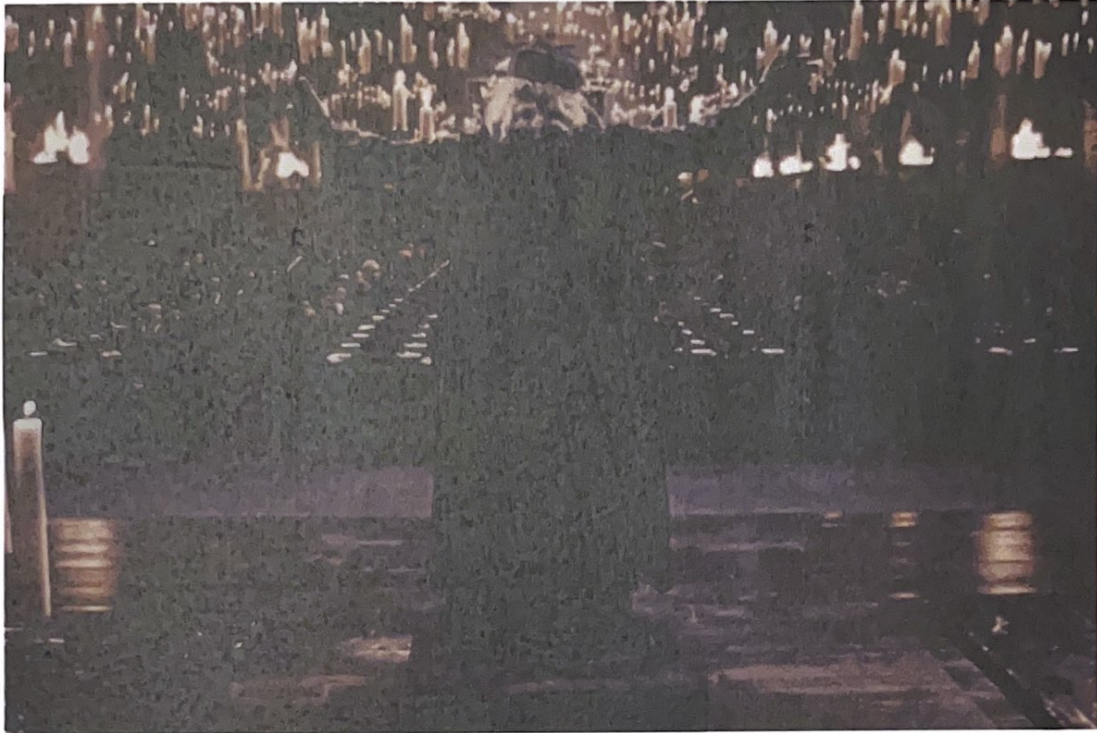
His wand has a thestral hair core



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Dumbledore wields the limitlessly powerful Elder Wand, a Deathly Hallow and present from Death itself. It only makes sense that the core of that wand is the hair of a thestral, the creatures that bring the carriages from the train to Hogwarts and can only be seen after witnessing a death firsthand. Dumbledore's life has always been plagued by death and tragedy, so it seems fitting his wand would have a thestral hair core.

He can perform magic without a wand



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Performing magic without a wand is no small feat. Only the most powerful wizards have this ability, and as we all know, Dumbledore is clearly one of the most powerful wizards. He's proven his magical prowess both with and without a wand on numerous occasions. For instance, he's seen changing and decorating the Great Hall, saving Harry after falling off his broom during a Quidditch match, and throwing him aside in order to battle Voldemort himself — all without a wand.

He can apparate silently



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Dumbledore's apparation skills are also next to none. Hogwarts wards against apparation, as it is a school and they can't just have students disappearing randomly, but Dumbledore has no trouble apparating around and from the castle at will. Not only that, but he is also able to apparate silently, while the vast majority of witches and wizards produce a loud noise when they apparate. We only know for sure of one other wizard with this silent ability: Voldemort.

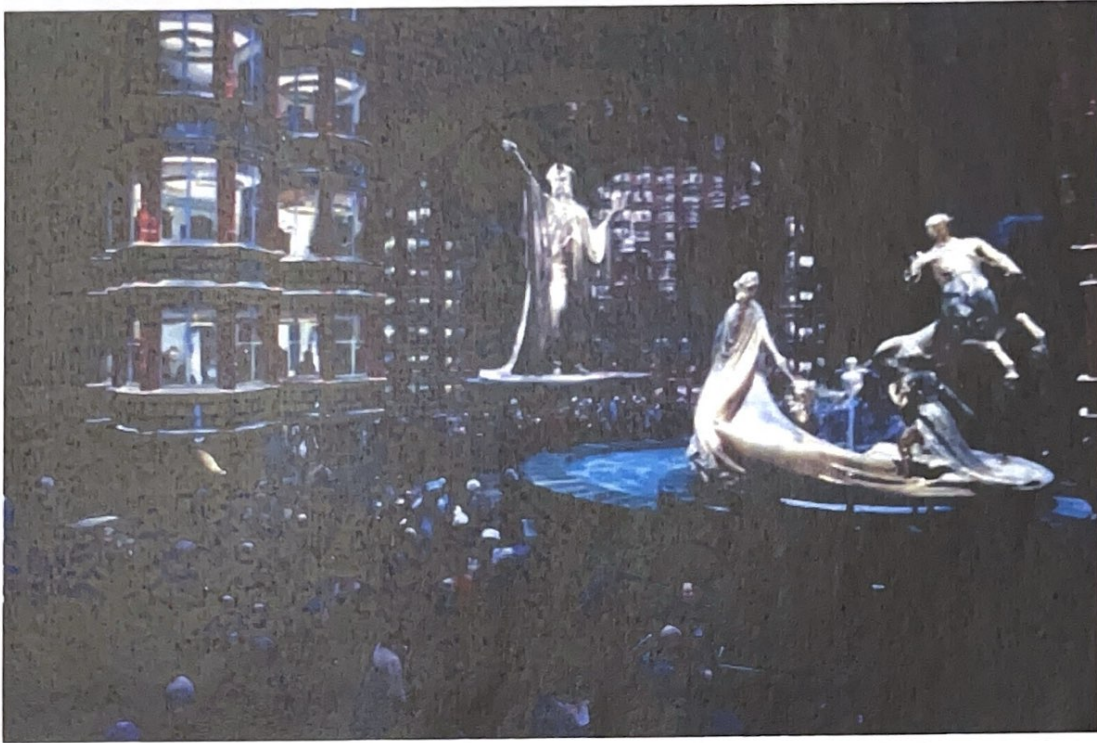
He can become invisible without an invisibility cloak



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In *The Sorcerer's Stone*, Dumbledore tells Harry, "I don't need a cloak to become invisible." Harry's invisibility cloak is a one of a kind item, a Deathly Hallow created by Death himself, but this easy to miss throwaway line spoken by Dumbledore just further proves how powerful he really is. The Disillusionment Charm camouflages a wizard among their surroundings, but Dumbledore used an advanced version of the spell which could make him truly invisible. It's possible that Grindelwald taught him this advanced spell, as he was capable of the same ability.

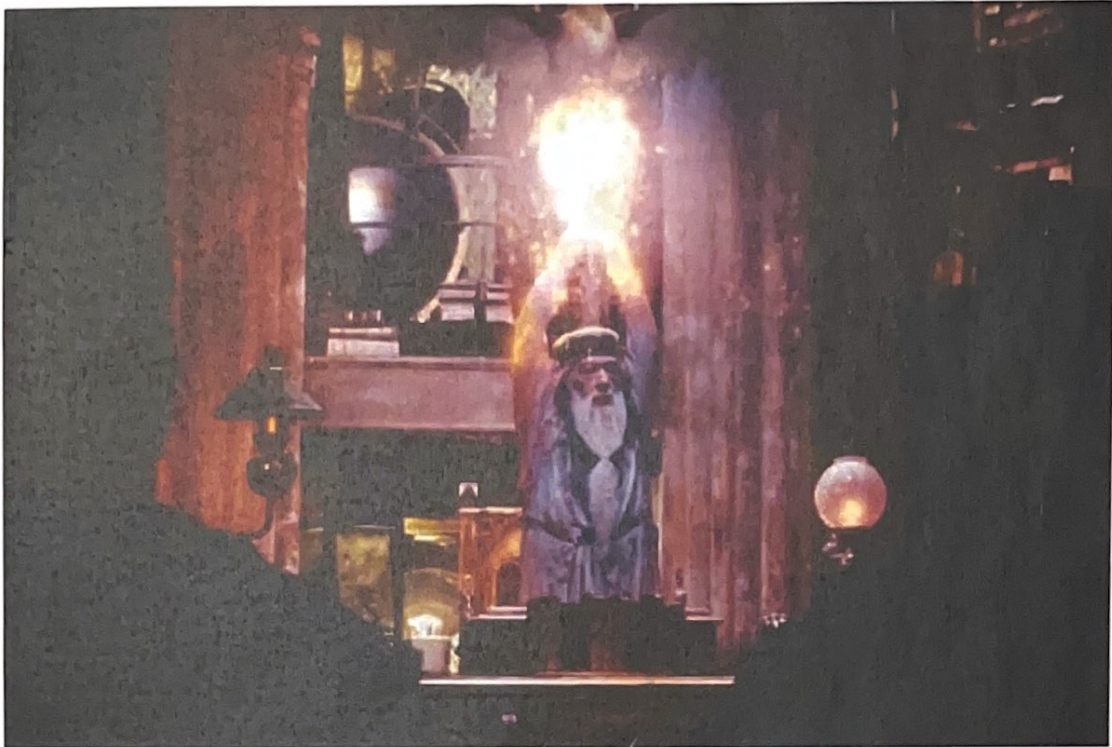
He was offered the position of Minister of Magic multiple times



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Dumbledore explains to Harry during the moments he's dead in *The Deathly Hallows* that he was offered the position of Minister of Magic many times, and consistently rejected it. He says he had learned he was not to be trusted with power. There was likely also the sense of guilt he felt from the pain caused while trying to gain power with Grindelwald that prevented him from ever wanting that kind of power again. Besides, Dumbledore doesn't seem like the biggest fan of the Ministry of Magic. Why would he ever want to run it?

His Patronus is a Phoenix



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Dumbledore has a pet phoenix named Fawkes who often comes to his — or occasionally, Harry's — rescue. It's no surprise then that his Patronus is also a phoenix. It could represent a phoenix's ability to rise up from the ashes, Dumbledore's affinity for fire, or simply his love for his loyal companion. According to Pottermore, a phoenix is one of the most uncommon forms a Patronus could take, which is also not surprising from a one-of-a-kind wizard like Dumbledore.

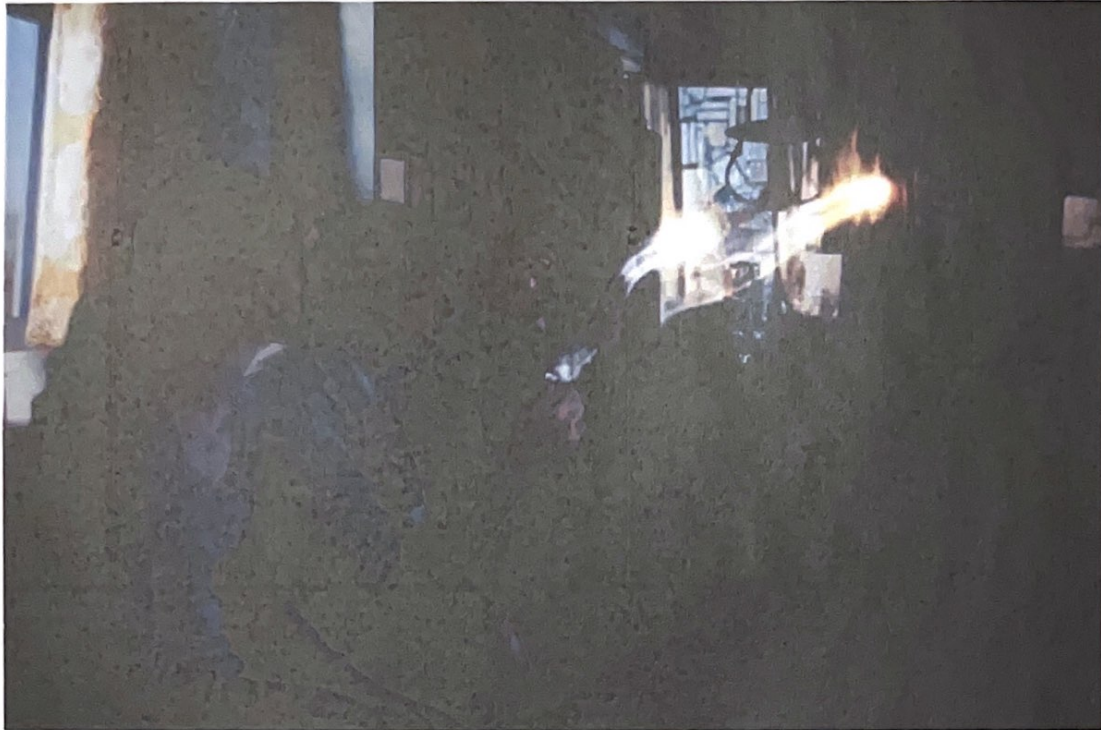
He was a Gryffindor



Bloomsbury/Scholastic

Dumbledore has never failed to prove himself daring and courageous, just as any good Gryffindor would be. While he's obviously partial to Harry and his friends, his bias toward Gryffindor is even more personal than that. It was his own house when he was in school, and as Headmaster, there's nothing stopping him from randomly handing out extra house points to the scarlet and gold lions whenever he deems fit.

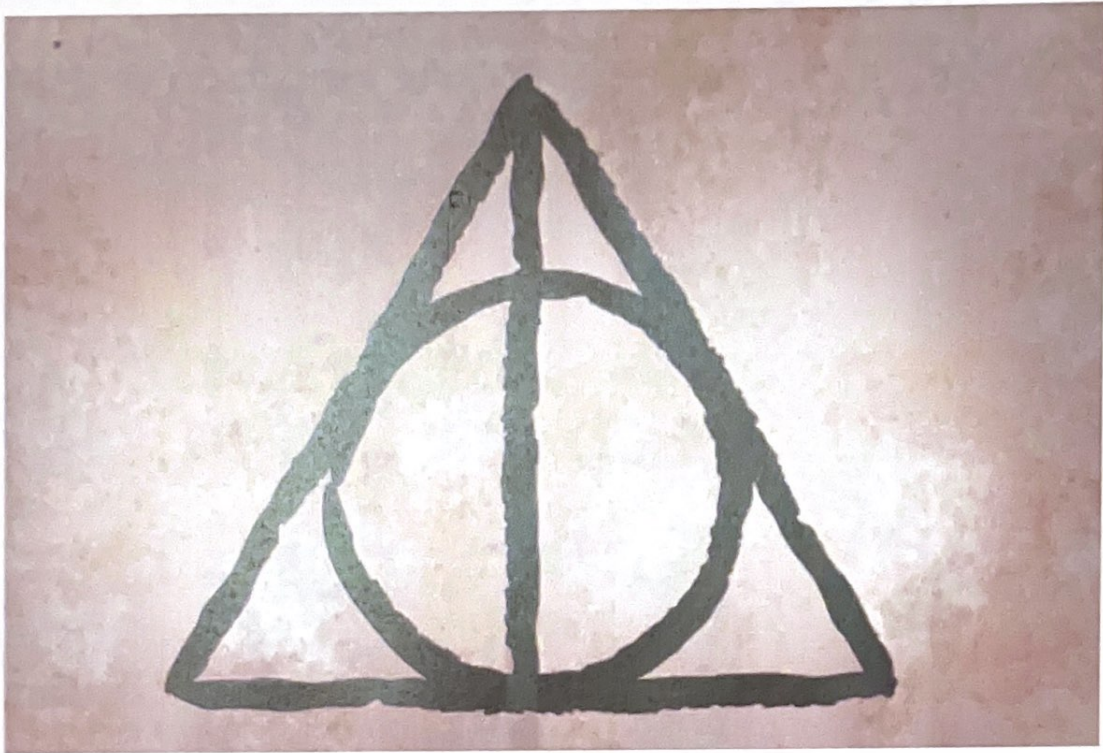
He was a magical inventor and alchemist



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While Dumbledore was a student at Hogwarts, he excelled in many subjects such as Charms. He was one of the brightest students Hogwarts had ever seen, publishing scholarly papers and winning awards while in school. It was there that he met **Nicholas Flamel**, the alchemist credited with the creation of the Sorcerer's Stone. Dumbledore performed alchemy alongside Flamel, and also invented some of his own magical devices, including the Deluminator, which he left to **Ron Weasley** in his will. He also discovered the twelve uses of dragon's blood, one of which is oven cleaning.

He is the only person besides Harry to have acquired all three Deathly Hallows



Bloomsbury/Scholastic

Dumbledore won the Elder Wand after defeating Grindelwald and continued to use it until his own death. He also acquired both the Resurrection Stone and Invisibility Cloak, meaning throughout the course of his life, he had access to all three of the Deathly Hallows. Harry Potter later did the same, making them the only two wizards to have ever had all three. However, Dumbledore did most of the legwork there for Harry as well, so really he should get most, if not all, of the credit.

He witnessed Trelawney's prophecy about Harry Potter firsthand



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Professor Trelawney was actually pretty terrible at divination and teaching. She got an interview with Dumbledore to teach at Hogwarts only because her great-great-grandmother was a famous seer. There's a good chance she wouldn't have gotten the job if not for her prophecy mid-interview in which she proclaimed the infamous "Neither can live while the other survives," about Harry Potter and Lord Voldemort. So Dumbledore was there when it all began.

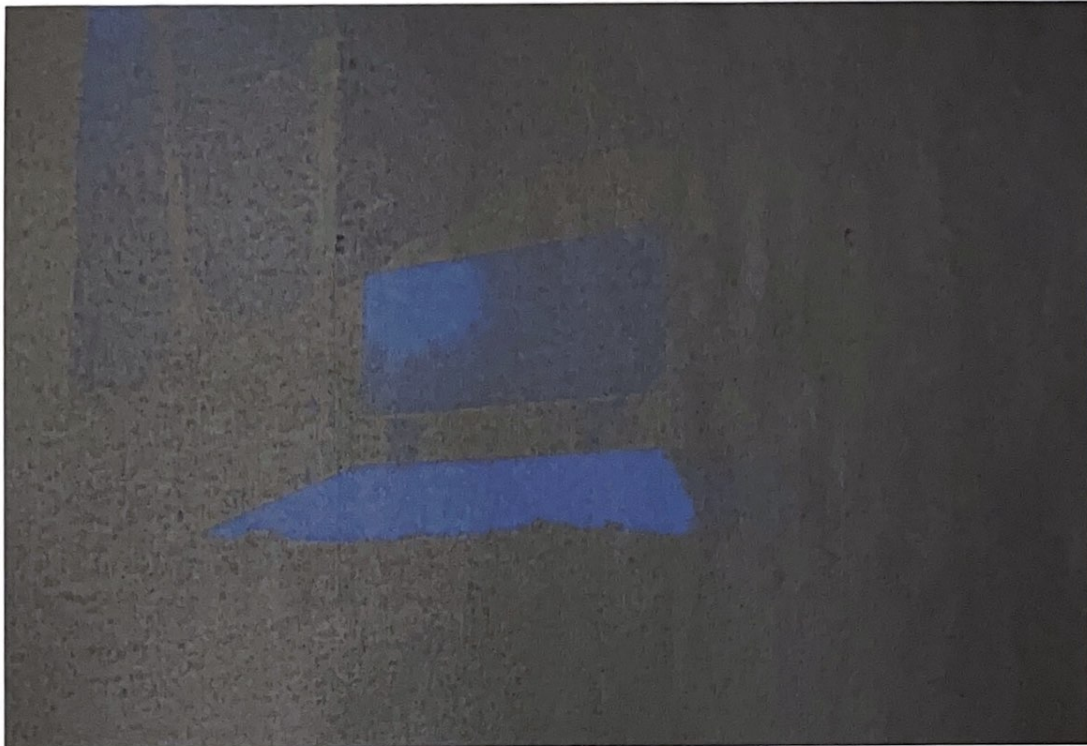
His death was foreshadowed by Trelawney



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Maybe Trelawney wasn't really as terrible a psychic as we — or her students — believed. Aside from her accurate prophecies she made while in a trance, she also made one offhand comment in *The Prisoner of Azkaban* that proved to be true: "Never forget that when thirteen dine together, the first to rise will be the first to die!" This prediction foreshadowed the deaths of **Sirius Black**, **Remus Lupin**, and Albus Dumbledore at different points in the series. When she made that prediction in *Prisoner of Azkaban*, she was turning down a seat at a table that Dumbledore offered her, because she didn't want to be the thirteenth to sit, ultimately dooming someone. However, **Scabbers**, aka **Peter Pettigrew**, was in Ron's pocket at the time, meaning the table already sat thirteen. Guess who was the first to rise?

He is the only wizard to have been buried at Hogwarts



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Any other headmaster would want to be buried with his or her family, and not at the school they work at. However, Hogwarts truly was Dumbledore's home, and the students and faculty his family. Because he lost most of his family fairly young and he largely blames himself for their fates, there was probably also the guilt of being buried near them that kept him from going back to Godric's Hollow to be laid to rest. There are discrepancies between the books and films as to where he was actually buried: in the book, his tomb is next to the black lake, but in the film, it's shown on an island in the middle of the lake. Either way, his is the only tomb at Hogwarts.

He lived to be 115 years old



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The silver-haired wizard clearly looks old, but it's still surprising that Dumbledore was as old as he was at the end of his life, and he didn't even die from old age. According to Pottermore, Albus was born in 1881 and died in 1997 at the ripe old age of 115. That's impressive, to say the least. This means he was born just two years after **Thomas Edison** invented the lightbulb. Then we have Dumbledore inventing a magical device that can take the light from lightbulbs. Who knows how long the headmaster would have lived if not for his agreement to be killed by Snape.

Dumbledore is represented by the Reaper in the *Deathly Hallows* "Tale of the Three Brothers"



Warner Bros.

This was a fan theory JK Rowling has claimed to like and taken on as her own, calling it "a beautiful theory and it fits." In *The Deathly Hallows*, the gang learns "The Tale of the Three Brothers." Each brother cheats death and walks away with a prize. The eldest brother receives the Elder Wand, a wand capable of tremendous power. The middle brother receives the Resurrection Stone, which brings the dead back to life. And the youngest brother receives the Invisibility Cloak, allowing him to hide from Death until he greets him as an old friend in his old age. According to the theory, Voldemort is the eldest brother, Snape is the middle brother, and Harry is the youngest. Meanwhile, Dumbledore himself represents Death.

“Dumbledore” is an Old English word for “bumblebee”



Kristine Tanne on Unsplash

JK Rowling has said that she chose the name “Dumbledore” because it is an Old English word for “bumblebee” from the eighteenth century, and she pictured him walking around the castle humming to himself like a happy little bumblebee. Cute. So not only is Dumbledore an incredibly powerful wizard, but he’s also a music lover who was named after an adorable tiny musical insect.

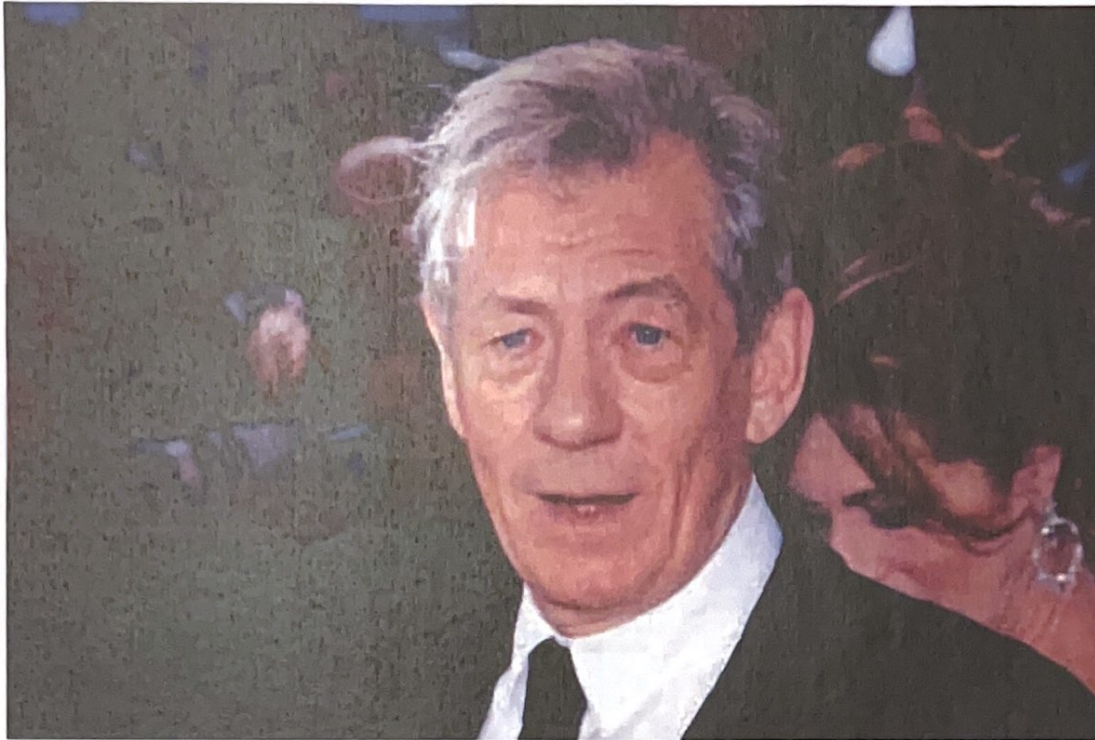
Richard Harris almost turned down the role of Dumbledore in the films



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Richard Harris portrayed Albus Dumbledore in the film versions of both *The Sorcerer's Stone* and *The Chamber of Secrets*, but unfortunately passed away before being able to film *The Prisoner of Azkaban*. Richard Harris's Dumbledore is a fan favorite among Potterheads, but it almost didn't happen. He initially wanted to reject the role because he knew his health was bad and he wouldn't be able to see the series through to the end. However, his 11-year-old granddaughter threatened to never speak to him again if he turned down the opportunity. Clearly she won.

Sir Ian McKellen turned down the role after Harris passed



Featureflash Photo Agency / Shutterstock.com

Next in line to play Dumbledore after Harris passed was **Sir Ian McKellen**. However, he did not feel comfortable taking on the role because Harris once called him a “dreadful actor,” saying that he was “technically brilliant but passionless.” Imagine trying to fill the already gigantic shoes of someone who didn’t even like you. Not to mention, McKellen had already played **Gandalf** in the **Lord of the Rings** films, and the character of yet another old wizard was just too similar. So instead the role went to **Michael Gambon**.