

Text 3: Yuri Gagarin & J.K. Rowling — Dreaming Beyond Limits

On 12 April 1961 a 27-year-old Soviet pilot, **Yuri Gagarin**, squeezed into the tiny *Vostok-1* capsule and lifted off from Baikonur. The flight lasted only 108 minutes, yet his single **orbit** of Earth showed that humans could leave the planet and return safely. Gagarin's joyful cry "**Poyekhali!**" ("Let's go!") became a symbol of scientific **courage** and optimism. Factories stopped work to hear radio updates; schools opened new physics clubs; today Russia still celebrates **Cosmonautics Day** every 12 April with rocket launches and science fairs.

Thirty-six years later, in 1997, British writer **J.K. Rowling** published *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone*. She drafted the early chapters on train rides and rewrote them in Edinburgh cafés while her baby daughter slept beside her. Twelve publishers rejected the story before a small firm printed 500 copies. The novel became a global **bestseller**, translated into 80+ languages and filmed by Hollywood. Rowling proved that long **fiction** could beat video games if the plot was magical enough, and her themes of friendship, loyalty and hard work inspired millions of young readers.

What links a cosmonaut and a novelist? Both began with almost nothing—Gagarin in a village that lacked running water, Rowling on government **welfare**—yet used talent, determination and vivid **imagination** to change the world. Gagarin opened the door to human space **exploration**; Rowling opened the door to limitless creative worlds. Their shared **legacy** reminds us that science and art are twin engines moving humanity forward, each encouraging us to dream beyond visible horizons.

Vocabulary (15 words)

1. **Cosmonaut** — космонавт
2. **Orbit** — орбита
3. **Launch** — запуск
4. **Courage** — смелость
5. **Inspire** — вдохновлять
6. **Curiosity** — любопытство
7. **Fiction** — художественная литература
8. **Wizard** — волшебник
9. **Poverty** — бедность
10. **Welfare** — социальная помощь
11. **Publisher** — издатель
12. **Bestseller** — бестселлер
13. **Exploration** — исследование
14. **Imagination** — воображение
15. **Legacy** — наследие

Discussion Questions

1. Why did Gagarin's flight become a global event?
2. How did Rowling change teenagers' reading habits?
3. Which qualities do Gagarin and Rowling share?
4. Can books motivate people to study science? Explain.
5. Who inspires you more — a scientist or a writer? Why?



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Choose one of the statements

1. Yuri Gagarin influenced world history more than any writer.
2. Fiction can change young people's lives as much as real heroes can.
3. Modern society needs science and art equally to progress.
4. Space exploration is more important for humanity than bestselling books.