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BREVET DE TECHNICIEN SUPERIEUR

AUDIOVISUEL

EPREUVE U2 :

ANGLAIS

Heeeeeere's Harry

With but a few weeks left to wait, Potter fans are primed for the first installment of the indomitable lad's adventures.

By John Hornand Malcolm Jones.

Brendan Vinnicombe lives, breathes and trick-or-treats Harry Potter. The 8-year-old has read all four of J.K. Rowling's books (and no, you may not borrow any of them). He also owns a Harry Potter backpack, sleeps under a Harry Potter poster and puts spells on his mother and little sister. This Halloween, the Manhattan Beach, Calif., second grader will wander with countless little firemen and Statues of Liberty as the bespectacled boy wizard, complete with tape on the bridge of his glasses, just like the hero of Hogwarts. As good as the candy might be, Brendan's real reward arrives two weeks later, when he will don his outfit again for the first showing of the movie adaptation of Rowling's "Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone". "I can't wait," the boy says. "Brendan is a marketer's dream", says his mother, Katie.

Yes, he is, Mrs. Vinnicombe, and Warner Bros. and Mattel and Coke and every other company with a stake in the movie version of "Harry Potter" are all betting that there are tens of millions more like Brendan, counting the hours until the movie debuts Nov. 16. Already the most popular children's book of all time, "Harry Potter" as a movie must now live up to its best-selling legacy. The studio is privately calling this the most important movie franchise in company history (at least three sequels are planned, with a possible total of seven), and that's some claim coming from the company that made the "Batman", "Lethal Weapon" and "Matrix" films.

Clearly Warner Bros. thinks it's got a huge hit on its hands and doesn't want to blow it. Having invested \$126 million in the first movie, the studio has taken few chances. After Steven Spielberg turned down the director's job, Warners asked four filmmakers ("Brazil's" Terry Gilliam, "Ghostbusters" Ivan Reitman, "City of Angels" Brad Silberling and "Home Alone's" Chris Columbus) to audition. And while Rowling and some within

Warners preferred Gilliam's darker style, the studio ultimately tapped Columbus, the most middle-of-the-road pick.

Warner's caution is not misplaced. Potter fans are fiercely protective of Rowling's novels, and those fans are legion. So far the four books have sold a whopping 100 million copies worldwide, and "Sorcerer's Stone" has sold 19.7 million copies. Staying true to Rowling's vision guided every decision. The casting director auditioned so many children to find the perfect Harry that she reportedly quit in frustration. And Rowling was consulted on nearly every detail, right down to the color of broomsticks.

Before he came onboard, screenwriter Steve Kloves ("Wonder Boys") pledged not to invent new scenes or characters : "When I first met with Warner Bros. I said - I think it's all here. We should be faithful to the book. The real challenge was to distill a book with so many beloved scenes and characters into a feature-length script. You would assume that with all this great stuff in front of you, it would be easier than writing an original script. It's not," says Kloves.

Warners was careful to avoid any public acrimony between the film-makers and Rowling. "I have been knocked backwards by the amount of input I have been given", she has said. "And we know why this is, because there are so many children out there who want to see it my way. So I can only say to anyone who's concerned about that, please trust me, I am fighting in your corner. I sold it to people I trusted, and so far my trust has not been misplaced".

Like her fans, Rowling cringed at the possibility that the film might be surrounded by a flood of cheesy merchandise and promotions. "It's inevitable", she admitted. "There will be merchandise. I have to be resigned to that". Resigned, perhaps. But did it have to come to

this? Harry Potter cake pans? On the Warner Bros. Web site promoting the film, there already is this enticement: "Coca-Cola, Minute Maid and Hi-C Invite You to Play Harry Potter and the Search for the Sorcerer's Stone Game!" To win a trip to England, kids need only purchase specially marked packages of various tooth-rotting beverages. Toy stores are crammed with Potter paraphernalia that, to be fair, isn't all that shoddy. But it's mostly plastic stuff that seems wholly at odds with the make-your-own-magic ethos of the books. Still, this is no "Star Wars" or "Godzilla" glut, and Jim Silver, publisher of the industry journal Toy Book, applauds the efforts of Rowling and Warners to avoid superfluous merchandise and cheap knickknacks. "They're keeping it much more high quality", he says.

"Harry" couldn't arrive at a better time for Warners, which hasn't had a blockbuster hit since "The Perfect Storm" in 2000. But if "Harry Potter" is to succeed on the scale of, say, "Titanic", its hero must first defeat the most powerful enemy he's ever faced: the American teenager. When "Potter" first appeared on Hollywood's audience-interest surveys last Thursday, the film enjoyed tremendously broad awareness: 86 percent of those queried knew about the movie three weeks before its release. But among audiences 14 to 16 - the repeat viewers who can propel a \$200 million hit into a \$400 million pop-culture phenomenon - only 18 percent were definitely interested in the movie.

Remember, though, that teens were never a big part of the audience for the "Potter" books, and that didn't seem to hurt much. The real question is, are Americans ready for a feel-good fantasy about the forces of good vanquishing the forces of evil? And that's no question at all

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TRAVAIL A EFFECTUER

1 - Dégagez les éléments essentiels du texte dans un compte rendu **en français** de 300 mots maximum. **8 points**

2 - Traduisez **en français** le passage suivant :

- depuis la ligne 86 « When I first met with Warner Bros. »
- jusqu'à la ligne 96 « says Koves ».

4 points

3 - Répondez **en anglais** aux **deux** questions suivantes :

3.1 - How exactly did Warner Bros. stay « true to Rowling's vision »? (ligne 73) **4 points**

3.2 - In your opinion, is « merchandise » (ligne 114) inevitable in the cinema industry? **4 points**

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