

GraphQL 101

An introduction to the world of GraphQL

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Software Engineer*

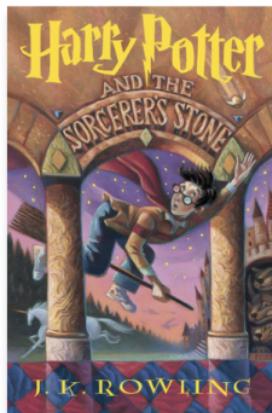


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REST

REST API



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Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone (Harry Potter #1)

by J.K. Rowling, Mary GrandPré (Illustrator), Gianni Pannofino (Narrator)

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Harry Potter's life is miserable. His parents are dead and he's stuck with his heartless relatives, who force him to live in a tiny closet under the stairs. But his fortune changes when he receives a letter that tells him the truth about himself: he's a wizard. A mysterious visitor rescues him from his relatives and takes him to his new home, Hogwarts School of Witchcraft
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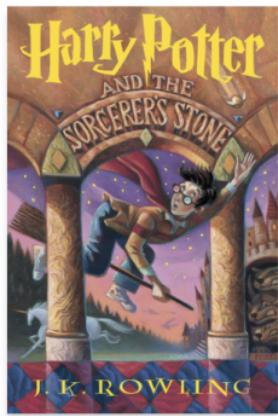
ABOUT J.K. ROWLING

See also: [Robert Galbraith](#)

Although she writes under the pen name **J.K. Rowling**, pronounced like *rolling*, her name when her first *Harry Potter* book was published was simply **Joanne Rowling**. Anticipating that the target audience of young boys might not want to read a book written by a woman, her publishers demanded that she use two initials, rather than her full name. As she had no middle name, she ch ...[more](#)



[More about J.K. Rowling...](#)



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</book/12345>

</bookpic/12345>

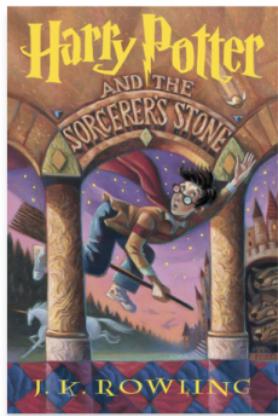
</author/6666>

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</bookquotes/12345>

</bookreviews/12345>

1. Multiple calls
2. Over-fetching



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[more](#)



[/bookpage/12345](#)

[/bookpagewithoutdescription/12345](#)

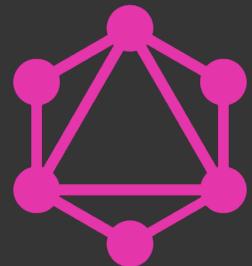
[/bookpagewithoutdescriptionbutwithtwopictures/12345](#)

REST

```
/book/12345  
/bookpic/12345  
/author/6666  
/bookpage/12345
```

- Client calls many APIs/endpoints
- No easy way to specify which fields
- Tempted to build custom endpoints
- Need to write documentation

We would really
need an **alternative**
to REST that gets rid
of all those issues



GraphQL

Query language to
select **exactly** what
you want

“One endpoint to rule them all”

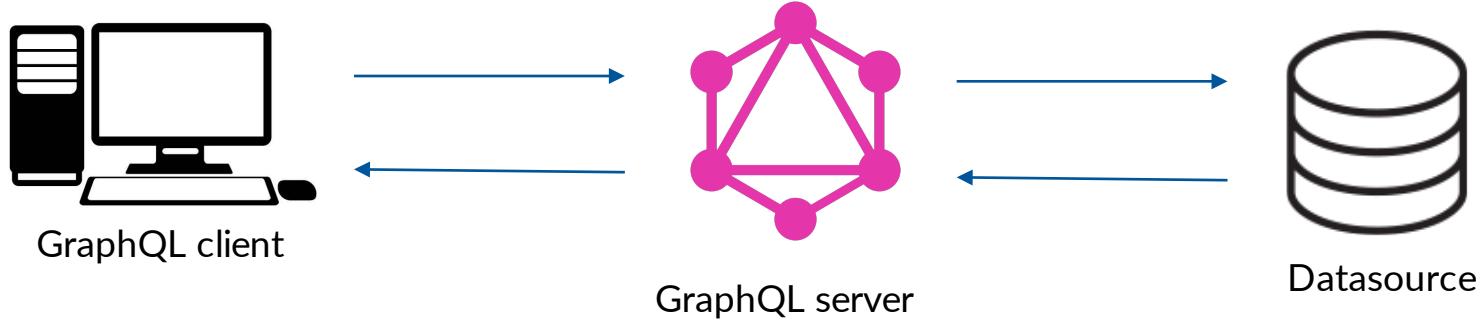


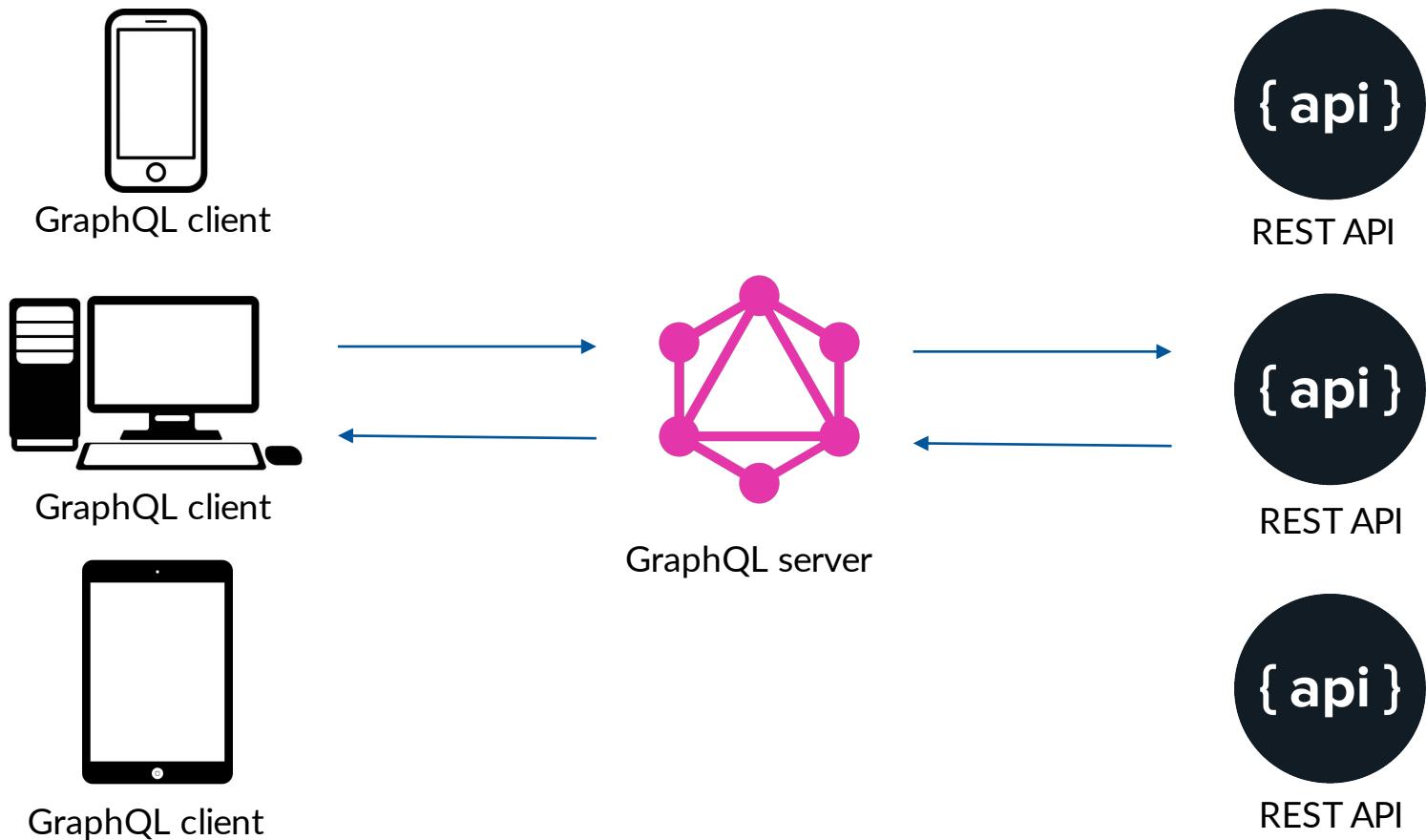
GraphQL

```
query {  
  book(id: 1234) {  
    title  
    author {  
      name  
    }  
  }  
}
```

- Alternative to REST
- Client queries only one endpoint
- Client can specify which fields
- Documentation comes “for free”

How will my
architecture look
like?





GraphQL Schema Definition

```
schema {  
  query: Query  
}
```

```
type Query {  
  book(isbn: String!): Book  
}
```

```
type Book {  
  id: String  
  isbn: String  
  title: String  
  author: Author  
  review: Review  
}
```

```
type Author {  
  id: String  
  name: String  
}  
  
type Review {  
  id: String  
  stars: Int  
  content: String  
}
```

GraphQL Operations

- *Queries*
- *Mutations*
- *Subscriptions*

Queries

request

```
query {  
  book(id: "88888") {  
    id  
    isbn  
    title  
    author {  
      name  
    }  
  }  
}
```

response

```
"data": {  
  "book": {  
    "id": "88888",  
    "isbn": "0618346252",  
    "title": "The Fellowship of the King",  
    "author": {  
      "name": "J.R.R. Tolkien"  
    }  
  }  
}
```

Mutations

request

```
mutation {
  updateBook (
    id: "88888",
    title: "The Fellowship of the Ring"
  ) {
    id
    title
  }
}
```

response

```
"data": {
  "book": {
    "id": "88888",
    "title": "The Fellowship of the Ring"
  }
}
```

Subscriptions

request

```
subscription {
  likesUpdated {
    id
    title
    likes
  }
}
```

response

```
"data": {
  "likesUpdated": [
    {
      "id": "88888",
      "title": "The Fellowship of the Ring"
      "likes": 57
    },
    {
      "id": "99999",
      "title": "A Game of Thrones"
      "likes": 52
    }
  ]
}
```

request

```
subscription {  
  likesUpdated {  
    id  
    title  
    likes  
  }  
}
```

response

```
"data": {  
  "likesUpdated": [  
    {  
      "id": "88888",  
      "title": "The Fellowship of the Ring"  
      "likes": 57  
    },  
    {  
      "id": "99999",  
      "title": "A Game of Thrones"  
      "likes": 53  
    }  
  ]  
}
```

Demo

github.com/engfragui/simple-graphql-server



```
1 query {  
2   book (id:"11111") {  
3     id  
4     isbn  
5     title  
6     author {  
7       id  
8       name  
9     }  
10    review {  
11      id  
12      stars  
13      content  
14    }  
15  }  
16 }
```

```
{  
  "data": {  
    "book": {  
      "id": "11111",  
      "isbn": "0439708184",  
      "title": "Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone",  
      "author": {  
        "id": "2222",  
        "name": "J.K. Rowling"  
      },  
      "review": {  
        "id": "111111",  
        "stars": 5,  
        "content": "Re-reading it as an adult didn't make  
me love this book any less. Such a wonderful adventure of  
friendship, respect, courage, and magic."  
      }  
    }  
  }  
}
```

Drawbacks and possible solutions

Many queries to data layer

solve by →

Batching

No “out of the box”
HTTP caching

solve by →

Normalized
cache

Malicious queries

solve by →

Timeout or limit
query depth

GraphQL Recap

- *Query language alternative to REST*
- *Operations | Queries, mutations, subscriptions*
- *Drawbacks and possible solutions*

Resources

- GraphQL official documentation: graphql.org
- Zero to GraphQL in 30 Minutes: [youtube.com/watch?v=UBGzsb2UkeY](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UBGzsb2UkeY)
- From REST to GraphQL: [youtube.com/watch?v=eD7kLFGOgVw](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eD7kLFGOgVw)
- Beyond REST: Coursera's Journey to GraphQL: infoq.com/presentations/coursera-graphql
- Wrapping a REST API in GraphQL: graphql.org/blog/rest-api-graphql-wrapper
- Under the Hood of The Times Website: open.nytimes.com/react-relay-and-graphql-under-the-hood-of-the-times-website-redesign-22fb62ea9764
- REST versus GraphQL: blog.pusher.com/rest-versus-graphql
- Mental models for teaching GraphQL: medium.com/@leeshapton/mental-maps-for-teaching-graphql-to-beginners-9db9b85ac957
- Making mistakes with GraphQL: medium.com/impraise-design-engineering/making-mistakes-with-graphql-874b8ca62b9d
- GraphQL for iOS Developers: artsy.github.io/blog/2016/06/19/graphql-for-mobile
- More GraphQL Talks: graph.cool/talks/topics

Thank you

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