

Story Squares for Grades 4-5

Multiple Learning Styles for Reading Comprehension

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Grades Four/Five

Matilda

by Roald Dahl

Matilda Wormwood is a genius. By the age of four she was reading books by Dickens, Hemingway, and Steinbeck. Unfortunately, her parents have absolutely no interest in her learning. They would rather have Matilda watch television than read books. Poor Matilda spends her entire day reading and plotting revenge on her parents. From putting super glue in her father's hat to making her family believe their house is haunted, Matilda uses her intelligence in quite interesting ways.

Matilda's first day of school finds her in Miss Honey's classroom. Miss Honey is warm, enthusiastic, and amazed at Matilda's intelligence. However, Miss Trunchbull, the school's cruel headmistress and Miss Honey's aunt, is not impressed. Matilda and Miss Honey become close friends. This leads Matilda into more revenge-plotting against Miss Trunchbull. Matilda finds out her brain is capable of much more than merely learning, and she begins a scheme to help Miss Honey and rid the school of Miss Trunchbull. After the successful trickery, Matilda's family agrees to let her live with her teacher while they move to Spain. Matilda and Miss Honey live happily ever after.

This book is recommended for small groups or partners in fourth grade or for fifth-graders to use independently.

Missing May

by Cynthia Rylant

When you suffer the loss of a loved one, everything seems very bleak. But when that person is the one who held your family together, the loss can become overwhelming. This is the traumatic story that befalls Summer and her Uncle Ob when Aunt May dies.

The two have to move on and accept the sudden death. Much to their surprise, moving on is helped by Summer's friend, Cletus Underwood. He brings them happiness and a reason to go on.

This book is recommended for fourth-graders, to be read in a large group. It can also be utilized as independent reading for fifth-graders.

Matilda

by Roald Dahl

Choose _____ from each square.

1

- 1 Define these words in alphabetical order: bunion, basin, knickers, chasten, rubbish, prodigy, peroxide, interval.
- 2 List five mean things that Miss Trunchbull does in the story.
- 3 Keep a record of the books and authors Matilda reads.
- 4 How did Miss Honey “teach” Matilda when she was in first grade?
- 5 List as many things as you can that show the Wormwoods are not good people.

2

- 1 Write two *zip-code poems*, one describing Matilda and the other describing Mr. and Mrs. Wormwood.
- 2 Put yourself in Miss Honey’s shoes. Write a journal describing a typical day in her life.
- 3 Make a list of five advantages and five disadvantages of being Matilda.
- 4 Do you know anyone who is like one of the characters in the book? Who is it and what makes them similar?
- 5 Choose your favorite chapter. Explain what you liked about it in a well-written paragraph.

3

- 1 Make a *Venn diagram* comparing and contrasting Mr. and Mrs. Wormwood to your parents. List at least four examples in each section.
- 2 Matilda plays tricks on her family. Tell what she does and explain why she does it.
- 3 What makes Miss Honey a good teacher? What makes Miss Trunchbull a bad one?
- 4 Explain why Miss Honey is not wealthy.
- 5 Summarize how Matilda helps Miss Honey with her problem.

4

- 1 Draw the inside and outside of Miss Honey’s cottage using descriptions from the book.
- 2 Write an *epilogue* to the book telling what happens to Matilda, the Wormwoods, and Miss Honey.
- 3 What would have happened if the Wormwoods and Miss Trunchbull never left? Change the ending of the story.
- 4 Make a poster or write a commercial advertising the truth about Mr. Wormwood’s car dealership.
- 5 Give ten reasons why Matilda is an unusual child.

Missing May

by Cynthia Rylant

Choose _____ from each square.

1

- 1 Make a timeline of important events in Summer's life. Illustrate them and write a caption for each.
- 2 Make three lists labeled Ob, Summer, and Cletus. Write ten character traits for each.
- 3 List at least five items that you would find if you looked inside Cletus's suitcase. Why would you find each of these?
- 4 Locate ten words in the book with which you are unfamiliar. Define them and use them in complete sentences.
- 5 When Ob starts to fall apart with grief, he feels there is no reason to continue. Make a list of ten reasons he has to continue.

2

- 1 Imagine you are May. Write a journal about something important in your life.
- 2 Write a ten-line *freestyle poem* about a main character in the story.
- 3 Research the state capital of West Virginia. Find important facts about it and be prepared to share what you learn. (Be sure to include it in written form in your project.)
- 4 Summer and Ob have suffered a terrible loss. Tell about a special person you have lost.
- 5 If you were Summer, what are some ways that you would try to get Ob back to normal?

3

- 1 Compare and contrast two of the main characters from the story in a *T-chart*.
- 2 Write at least ten questions that Ob would ask May if he was able to talk with her.
- 3 Summarize the important events from each chapter.
- 4 What do you think would have happened if the Reverend Miriam B. Young had been there to answer Ob's questions? Write a paragraph or two to describe the events.
- 5 Summer did not believe in the reverend, but did not say so. In a well-written paragraph, explain why she kept quiet about her true feelings.

4

- 1 Make your own whirligig. Bring it in on the day your project is due.
- 2 Draw a comparison picture of Summer's home and Cletus's home.
- 3 May loved gardening in her vegetable garden. Design a garden in honor of May. Be sure you label all the plants and vegetables.
- 4 The end of chapter 11 contains one of Summer's memories of May. Write about another memory that she might have about Ob.
- 5 Look into the future. Write a chapter about what has happened to the main characters ten years later.

Trumpet of the Swan

by E.B. White

Choose _____ from each square.

1

- 1 Define these words in alphabetical order: treacherous, loafing, intruder, idyllic, onerous, irksome, vain, adjacent, defective, distress.
- 2 Make a list of as many animals mentioned in the story as you can. (There are over 80!)
- 3 Research trumpeter swans. Write five facts you learned about them.
- 4 Make a list of 15 adjectives from the story and the pages on which you found them.
- 5 Copy "Sam Beaver's Poem" and draw an illustration for it.

2

- 1 Write a short biography of Louis.
- 2 Pretend you are Louis and write three journal entries: one when you are learning to read, one when you live in Boston, and one when you live in Philadelphia.
- 3 Write a ten-line *free style poem* about Sam Beaver.
- 4 In chapter nine, the paper reported the music store break-in. Write a newspaper article telling exactly what happened.
- 5 Write about a time when you felt different from those around you.

3

- 1 Explain how Louis's, Sam's, and Sam's father's dreams came true.
- 2 Make up ten questions you would ask a zookeeper.
- 3 Make a *cause-and-effect chain* starting with Louis's family realizing he has no voice. Create at least six links.
- 4 Create two lists – one of the swan-like things Louis does, and another of the un-swanlike things. Give each list a heading. Be sure to have at least five examples under each heading.
- 5 Summarize what happened when Louis's father returned the money to the music store.

4

- 1 Design something to help Louis carry his belongings. Remember, he must be able to fly.
- 2 Louis spent the night in a hotel. Design a hotel room made especially for swans.
- 3 What would have happened if the zookeeper had clipped Serena's wings? Rewrite the ending of the story.
- 4 Determine three other solutions besides a trumpet to help Louis communicate with Serena.
- 5 Give ten reasons why Sam Beaver is an incredible person and ten reasons why Louis is an incredible swan.