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Introduction

This guide is divided into twelve units of study, and includes the following components:

Pre-reading Discussion

This is a detailed section on the key elements that readers will encounter in the reading assignment. The Pre-reading Discussion centers on the literary elements of *A Wrinkle in Time* and gives suggestions for provoking interest in the chapters ahead. The section ends with ideas for initiating class discussions about the important concepts in the book.

Study Guide and Vocabulary List

Each unit contains a study guide and vocabulary list, along with a corresponding reading assignment. Study guide pages are designed to be duplicated and distributed when the reading assignment is given. Students should answer the questions and study the vocabulary words. Each study guide contains a “Writing Forum” section, in which students are asked to write a brief explication of some textual element. You may want to choose one or all of the questions listed; students may keep the Writing Forum questions in a continuing notebook. The following day’s class session could begin with a review of the written work before proceeding to a discussion of the chapters.

Discussion Concepts

This section details the important concepts that students have encountered in their reading of *A Wrinkle in Time* and may be used to initiate class discussions. Discussions should involve events in the story and their relevance to the characters, important themes, and comparing and contrasting actions and statements. Students should be able to find quotes to support their opinions when necessary. Teachers may want to ask students to practice note-taking periodically during this discussion.

Tests

Tests of comprehension and vocabulary are included in the *A Wrinkle in Time* guide. Varied formats challenge students to think intently and creatively about the material.

Writing Projects

The writing projects at the end of the guide may be used as students progress through *A Wrinkle in Time*, or after the class has finished Unit 12.

Background

Type of Literature

A Wrinkle in Time is a novel of science fiction that draws extensively from the literary traditions of fantasy, fairy tale, myth, and fable. It concerns itself with issues of good and evil, the power of love, and the importance of concern for others.

Setting and Atmosphere

The setting of the story, or the time and place in which the events of the story occur, plays an important role in *A Wrinkle in Time*. The novel begins in an unspecified locale on earth where the Murry family lives, shifts to the planet Uriel, moves on to Orion's belt, to Camazotz and Ixchel, and finally returns to earth for the last scene. The uniqueness of each foreign place provides an atmosphere of fantasy to *A Wrinkle in Time*.

The story takes place in the latter half of the twentieth century, during the popularity of the Cape Canaveral explorations.

Character Development

The characters in *A Wrinkle in Time* are developed through their words, actions, and feelings. The central character in *A Wrinkle in Time* is Meg, the young girl who is called upon to test her courage and resourcefulness. Charles Wallace and Calvin are important characters who possess qualities that complement Meg's personality. Together they are a strong team.

Minor characters in the novel include Father, whose disappearance is the impetus for the children to try to find him; Mrs. Whatsit, Mrs. Who, and Mrs. Which, who provide the means for the children to undertake this task; Aunt Beast, who supplies the complete and unconditional love that Meg needs; and IT, which represents all that is evil in the world.

When *A Wrinkle in Time* begins, Meg feels unhappy, unloved, and angry at her inability to fit in at school. She is having difficulties adjusting to the growing maturity of her friends, and she is unable to perform for her teachers because she lacks the patience necessary to do things the way everyone else does. Meg is unhappy trying to conform, and she is angry about references made to her missing father. She is experiencing adolescence and feels that she is, as Charles Wallace says, "not really one thing or the other." Meg feels that she is a misfit and is dismayed at her many faults, which include anger, impatience, and stubbornness.

These shortcomings, however, allow Meg to rescue both her father and Charles Wallace. When she sees her father imprisoned in IT's column, she puts on the magic glasses and rushes into the column without concern for her own safety. Her anger at Charles Wallace's disappearance and determination not to be taken over by IT are her worst attributes put to good use.

By the time Meg returns to Camazotz to save Charles Wallace from IT, she has learned from her experiences with both evil (in the touch of the Black Thing) and goodness (in the love of Aunt Beast). She now understands that "like and equal are two entirely different things." She has recognized that it is essential and natural that all people are different; she has learned to love herself.

Once Meg realizes how much love she has inside herself, she can save Charles Wallace. She understands that love is always more powerful than hate, so she is, in fact, stronger than IT. When the novel ends, Meg has a new understanding about being different, and about tolerance for differences, as well as a new self-confidence. Meg has emerged from her experiences wiser, more mature, and more accepting of herself.

Unit 1: Chapter 1

Pre-reading Discussion

A Wrinkle in Time draws extensively from the literary traditions of science fiction, fantasy, fairy tale, myth, and fable. Discuss with students what they know about these genres, and talk about the differences and similarities between them.

Next, ask students to conjecture about other kinds of civilizations. Discuss cultures that students think may exist on other planets, ancient cultures that students have studied, and fantasy worlds that they have read about. What stories from other cultures, both ancient and modern, do students know? What commonalities do students think they would find between stories they know and stories from other planets or worlds? What do they think is the purpose of literature and storytelling in these places? What do they think is the purpose of literature and storytelling for them? How do stories help bind the different parts of a culture together? Why are stories important?

Reading Assignment

Chapter 1

Study Guide Skill: Recalling Details

Study Guide: Unit 1

Reading Assignment

Chapter 1

Directions: Complete the following statements with the correct word or words.

1. Meg is upset because she is having trouble in _____.
2. She is unable to think about her _____ without crying.
3. Her brothers, _____ and _____, are ten years old.
4. The barking of _____, the dog, frightens her as much as the storm does.
5. She finds _____, her five-year-old brother, waiting for her in the kitchen.
6. People seem to regard _____ as unattractive, _____ as “not quite bright”, and _____ and _____ as regular children.
7. Meg’s father has assured her that _____ tests have revealed she and Charles are “more than okay.”
8. Mrs. Murry is a beautiful woman who is a _____ by profession.
9. Mrs. Murry lovingly assures her daughter that _____ will cause Meg to be beautiful and life to be easier for her.
10. Charles Wallace reveals that the haunted house in the woods is occupied by _____.
11. Mrs. Whatsit recognizes _____’s uniqueness and compliments Mrs. Murry on how she handles him.
12. When Mrs. Whatsit tells Mrs. Murry that a _____ does exist, the younger woman turns white.



Writing Forum

- What is the significance of the storm in this chapter? Why do you think the author chose to begin the book with a storm?
- Describe two incidents in the chapter that reveal Charles Wallace’s ability to anticipate his sister’s and his mother’s thoughts.
- When Charles Wallace asks Mother whether or not he may use the last tomato on Meg’s sandwich, she replies, “To what better use could it be put?” What does this response tell you about Meg’s mother and how she feels about Meg?
- What are Meg’s feelings about herself? How are they revealed in this chapter?

Vocabulary

frenzied	smugly	luxuriously	diction	sullen	cunning
lashing	vicious	baring	exclusive	resentment	vigorously
scudded	serenity	crevices	prodigious	passable	liniment
wraith-like	uncanny	fury	fragrantly	repulsive	supine
delinquent	savagely	preliminaries	subdued	intentions	relinquished

Discussion Concepts

1. What is happening as the novel begins? Where is Meg?
2. Why is Meg so upset by thoughts of school? How does she feel about school?
3. Why does Meg want to hide her feelings from people? Why is she angry that she always shows her feelings?
4. How do you know Charles Wallace has been expecting Meg? What special ability does he seem to have with Meg and her mother?
5. Why do people think Charles Wallace is not very bright? How does Meg know he is much more than bright?
6. Where is Meg's father? How does this make Meg feel?
7. How do you know Meg's mother is not critical of Meg or Charles Wallace? What incidents indicate this is a loving, kind family?
8. What seems to be Meg's problem? How does it cause trouble for her?
9. What does Charles Wallace reveal about Mrs. Whatsit? When Mrs. Whatsit arrives, what is unusual about her?
10. After enjoying her sandwich, what comment does Mrs. Whatsit make that shocks Mother? How do you think Mrs. Whatsit knew about the tesseract? How does this comment make the reader want to turn the page and read further?

Test: Unit 1
Chapter 1

Part I: Comprehension

Directions: Select the answer that best completes each of the following statements and write the letter of that answer on the line.

1. This novel opens on a stormy night in a) October; b) January; c) August. _____
2. Meg is the a) youngest; b) middle; c) eldest child in the Murry family. _____
3. Meg does not practice moderation and is often in trouble a) at home; b) at school; c) at work. _____
4. Charles Wallace seems to have been expecting a) Mrs. Whatsit's; b) Meg's; c) Fortinbras' arrival in the kitchen. _____
5. Charles Wallace has a habit of a) babbling on and on; b) seldom speaking to strangers; c) sleepwalking. _____
6. He appears to be able to anticipate a) the dog's thoughts; b) Mother's and Meg's moves; c) the twins' thoughts. _____
7. Mrs. Whatsit has already met a) Meg; b) Mother; c) Charles Wallace. _____
8. Mrs. Whatsit, the reader learns, is a) a farmer; b) a thief; c) a seamstress. _____
9. When Mrs. Whatsit says, "There is such a thing as a tesseract," she seems to a) hear her friends call her; b) respond to Charles Wallace's question; c) read Mother's thoughts. _____
10. A mystery surrounds the whereabouts of Meg's a) brothers; b) kitten; c) father. _____

Part II: Vocabulary

Directions: Use each of the following words in sentences.

1. wraith-like _____
2. smugly _____
3. serenity _____
4. uncanny _____
5. luxuriously _____
6. crevices _____
7. fury _____
8. diction _____
9. prodigious _____
10. sullen _____
11. cunning _____
12. supine _____