



# A WRINKLE IN TIME: DISCUSSION GUIDE #1

Encourage critical thinking and support your students' literacy development by asking questions during reading. Here are some questions you can ask your readers to engage them in a discussion. **Sample answers**



## CHAPTERS 1-2

Chapter 1 - Mrs Whatsit  
Chapter 2 - Mrs Who

### Comprehension:

- What are Meg's challenges at school, and how does she cope with them?  
**Meg lacks self-confidence and sees herself as a delinquent. Meg was dropped down to the lowest section in her grade, and she's having trouble connecting with her peers and teachers. She overreacts when she's picked on, and stands up for herself by tackling and fighting a boy who makes fun of her baby brother.**
- Why are people gossiping about Meg and her family?  
**People are gossiping about Meg's father being gone. Since no one is sure where he is or when he'll return, people gossip and make assumptions and judgments about the Murry family.**
- Why is Meg stressed about being in the attic bedroom?  
**Meg is stressed because there's a hurricane with strong wind that is rattling the window, causing her to worry that the roof will blow off the house.**
- What do Meg, Charles Wallace, and Mrs. Murry do in the middle of the night?  
**Meg, Charles Wallace, and Mrs. Murry meet in the kitchen in the middle of the night. Charles Wallace makes his mom and sister cocoa and sandwiches.**
- Why is there a lab in the Murrays' house?  
**Mr. and Mrs. Murry are scientists and use the lab in their home to work and conduct research.**
- Why is Fortinbras growling, and what happens next?  
**Fortinbras must have heard something outside in the storm. Mrs. Murry goes to investigate and brings Mrs Whatsit into the house when she returns.**
- What does Mrs Whatsit say that upsets Mrs. Murry?  
**Mrs Whatsit tells Mrs. Murry that there is such a thing as a tesseract. Mrs. Murry is startled and confused by what Mrs Whatsit could mean.**
- Why does Meg become so angry when the principal, Mr. Jenkins, talks about her father?  
**Meg becomes angry when Mr. Jenkins asks about her home life and if she's heard from her father lately. She feels that Mr. Jenkins is inquiring not because he cares and wants to help but because he's nosy.**
- Who is Calvin O'Keefe, and what surprising thing does he say at the end of chapter 2?  
**Calvin is a fourteen-year-old boy who goes to school with Meg. Although he's athletic and popular at school, he's unhappy like Meg. Calvin is the third of eleven children, and he feels different from the rest of his family and that they don't really care about him. He meets Meg and Charles Wallace in the woods when he's trying to get away from all the runny noses in his family, and he explains that he "had a feeling" to come over to the haunted house in the woods. When Meg, Charles Wallace, and Calvin head to the Murry house, Calvin says, "...I have the funniest feeling that for the first time in my life I'm going home!"**



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### Analysis:

- Compare Meg and the twins. In what ways are they different? How do these differences probably impact their daily lives?  
**Meg has struggled academically since her father left, and she has trouble controlling her emotions, which often leads to conflict with teachers and other students. On the other hand, Dennys and Sandy, the twins, are average students, strong and fast runners, good at games, and they aren't the subject of others' jokes or taunts. Because the twins are more easygoing, Meg likely receives more negative attention on a daily basis than the twins.**
- What can you infer about Mrs. Murry based on her interactions with Mrs Whatsit?  
**Mrs. Murry calmly welcomes Mrs Whatsit, a stranger, into her home during the storm. This shows that she is compassionate, open-minded, and likely curious. Mrs. Murry asks Mrs Whatsit if she'd like to stay until morning rather than go back out in the wild storm, which suggests that Mrs. Murry is caring and concerned.**
- How do we know that Mrs Whatsit is odd—but friendly?  
**Charles Wallace describes Mrs Whatsit and her two friends as "very enjoyable." When Mrs Whatsit enters the Murry house, she is dressed oddly, wearing several scarves of assorted colors and a man's felt hat, and she mentions that she knew it was Charles Wallace's house "by the smell." Despite her odd appearance and behavior, Mrs Whatsit is gentle and kind to Meg, Charles Wallace, and Mrs Murry, and she shares that her "intentions are good." It's clear that Mrs Whatsit is fond of Charles Wallace as she speaks to him as a friend.**

### Personal Connection:

- Meg says, "Usually no matter what happens people think it's my fault, even if I have nothing to do with it at all." Tell about a time when you were blamed for something you didn't do. How did it feel, and how did you handle it?  
**Student answers will vary.**



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## CHAPTERS 3-4

Chapter 3 - Mrs Which  
Chapter 4 - The Black Thing

### Comprehension:

- How does Meg help Calvin with schoolwork?  
**Meg helps Calvin with his math, even though he is several grades above Meg. She shows him a different way to find the answers.**
- What explanation does Mrs. Murry give for Meg's school struggles?  
**Meg likes to use shortcuts, like when solving problems in math, and gets stuck when she's expected to do things the long way.**
- What hard questions does Calvin ask Meg about her father, and how does Meg respond?  
**Calvin asks Meg where her father is and what work he does. He also asks Meg if she thinks her father could be dead. Meg tells Calvin that she's afraid no one knows where her father is, not even the people he was working for. She shares that she thinks she's too emotional and needs to be strong like her mother.**
- Charles Wallace interrupts Meg and Calvin's discussion. What does Charles Wallace tell them it's time for?  
**Charles Wallace tells them that he's not exactly sure where they're going, but he thinks it's time to find Mr. Murry.**
- Where do the Mrs Ws take the children first? Describe the planet.  
**The Mrs Ws and the children travel to Uriel, the third planet of the star Malak in the spiral nebula Messier 101. The planet is covered with fields of green grass and tiny, multicolored flowers underneath puffy, white clouds. Uriel also has tall mountains that seem to be reaching into infinity, a great plateau of granite-like rock shaped into enormous monoliths, a beautiful garden, and a broad, crystal river. The creatures seem to make music from the movement of their wings.**
- What does Mrs Who say that Meg must do if she wants to help her father?  
**Mrs Who says that Meg must learn patience if she wants to help her father.**
- What does Mrs Whatsit transform into? Describe her appearance and abilities.  
**Mrs Whatsit transforms into a beautiful, white horse-like creature with wings. Mrs Whatsit is able to fly, and she carries the children through the air to show them around Uriel.**
- How do the flowers help the children?  
**The flowers give the children oxygen as they move upward where the atmosphere thins and it's harder for them to breathe.**



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- Describe the dark shadow. How does it affect the children and Mrs Whatsit when they look at it?  
**The dark shadow looms in the sky, appearing even less tangible than a cloud. Its power chills the children with a fear that's beyond anything they've ever felt. It makes breathing and speaking difficult for Mrs Whatsit and the children, and the dark shadow causes their bodies to be tense and rigid.**

### Analysis: \_\_\_\_\_

- What does Mrs. Murry mean when she says, "... just because we don't understand doesn't mean that the explanation doesn't exist"?  
**Mrs. Murry senses that the recent peculiar events—Mrs Whatsit's middle-of-the-night visit, Calvin's arrival, and the ladies living in the haunted house in the woods—are somehow connected to Mr. Murry's absence. While she's unable to understand right now, she believes that these events are related and meaningful.**
- Why does Mrs Who communicate through quotes? Analyze the effectiveness of her communication style.  
**Mrs Who finds it difficult to verbalize her thoughts and feelings, so it helps her to quote instead of working out the words on her own. While this method allows Mrs Who to share her thoughts, others are often confused by what she says.**

### Personal Connection: \_\_\_\_\_

- When Meg tells Calvin that everyone likes him, he responds with, "For all the unimportant reasons." In your opinion and experience, what are the important and unimportant reasons to like someone?  
**Student answers will vary.**