



# A WRINKLE IN TIME: DISCUSSION GUIDE #2



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 5–6

Chapter 5 - The Tesseract  
Chapter 6 - The Happy Medium

### Comprehension:

- What is a tesseract, and how does Mrs Who show how tessering works?  
A tesseract is the fifth dimension. The tesseract is used to create a shortcut through time and space, which allows the children to travel quickly to other planets. Mrs Who explains how a tesser works by creating an analogy of an ant walking across a straight section of her skirt. She folds the skirt to create a wrinkle, which would allow the ant to get to its destination much more quickly.
- What mistake does Mrs Which make in tessering to the next planet?  
Mrs Which accidentally tesserers the group to a two-dimensional planet where the three-dimensional children couldn't breathe or move.
- How do the Mrs Ws ensure that Mrs. Murry won't worry about the children while they're traveling?  
The Mrs Ws took a time tesser—in addition to the space tesser—which will allow the children to be back five minutes before they left. As long as everything goes well, Mrs. Murry will never know the children were gone at all.
- Why do the Mrs Ws take Meg, Charles Wallace, and Calvin into the cavern on Orion's belt?  
The Mrs Ws take the children into the cavern to see the Medium, a friend who will show them their home planet.
- What does the Happy Medium show the children, and what do they notice?  
The Happy Medium uses her crystal ball to show the children their own planet. They see that the outlines of the planet are not clear and that the planet seems to be covered in a smoky haze. The children realize that the smoky thing is the Dark Thing they saw on Uriel.
- What special gift or instruction does Mrs Whatsit give to each child to help them before parting ways?  
Mrs Whatsit tells Calvin that his great gift is his ability to communicate with all kinds of people. Mrs Whatsit strengthens this gift for him. Mrs Whatsit gives Meg the gift of her faults, explaining that they'll come in handy on Camazotz. Mrs Whatsit gives Charles Wallace the resilience of his childhood.
- What item does Mrs Who give to Meg, and why?  
Mrs Who gives her glasses to Meg and says that they are to be used "for the final moment of peril."
- Describe what the children see when they first enter the town. What seems normal, and what seems unusual?  
Meg, Charles Wallace, and Calvin notice that the houses are all exactly alike, and there are children playing in front of all the houses. While the children's behavior initially seems normal and expected, Charles Wallace notices that the kids are skipping and bouncing in rhythm. It's unusual that those actions are identical and simultaneous in front of every house in the area.



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

- Analyze Mrs Who's quote: "Experience is the mother of knowledge." Explain what the quote means and how it relates to Meg's experiences so far in the book.

**This quote means that people learn from their experiences. Throughout the story, the typically stubborn Meg has demanded information and that the group go straight to her father. Because the Mrs Ws are guiding the journey, Meg has been unsuccessful in her attempts to control the situation, and has thus been forced to learn patience. Though Meg was initially skeptical of the Mrs Ws, she now recognizes that the Mrs Ws are helpful. This has helped Meg become more comfortable, trusting, and fond of the celestial beings.**

- Read this sentence from chapter 6.

*The children in our section never drop balls! They're all perfectly trained! We haven't had an Aberration for three years.*

An **aberration** is a deviation, or difference, from what is considered normal or right. Why do you think Madeleine L'Engle capitalized "aberration" in this sentence?

**The author most likely capitalized "aberration" in the sentence to show that an aberration is a person. The capitalization indicates that it's not just an action or an object, but a person who is not fitting in or meeting expectations.**

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

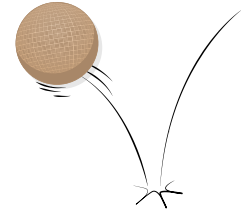
- When the children and the Mrs Ws say goodbye to the Happy Medium, Meg says, "It really helped ever so much because it made me mad, and when I'm mad I don't have room to be scared." Think about a time when you felt two strong, competing emotions. Which emotion triumphed, and how did it affect your situation? Explain.

**Student answers will vary.**



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### CHAPTERS 7–8

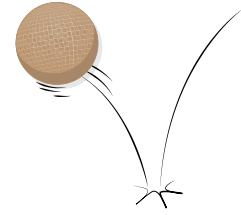
Chapter 7 - The Man With Red Eyes  
Chapter 8 - The Transparent Column

#### Comprehension:

- Describe the interaction between the children and the man they confront at the Central Intelligence Center.  
*When Charles Wallace asks the man simple questions about the procedures, he replies severely, assuming that the children are playing games by asking stupid questions. The man expects that the children should already know the answer to their questions, realizes that they are strangers on Camazotz, and fears that they will all be reprocessed or have to face IT. In order to protect himself from any consequences, the man decides to report the children.*
- What does the Man With the Red Eyes offer Meg, Charles Wallace, and Calvin, and how do the children react?  
*The man offers to “assume all the pain, all the responsibility, all the burdens of thought and decision” for them. He tries to show them by inviting them to recite the multiplication table together, thus hypnotizing them, but the children resist by focusing their minds elsewhere.*
- Why is Meg unsure of what the Man With the Red Eyes looks like—young or old, cruel or kind, human or alien?  
*If Meg were to look any more closely at the man’s face, she’d become hypnotized and he’d overpower her mind.*
- Why does Charles Wallace hit the Man With the Red Eyes?  
*Charles Wallace hits the man because he recognizes that the man isn’t what or who is talking to the children. He doesn’t think the Man With the Red Eyes is real, and he sees that the talking is coming *through* the man, rather than *from* the man.*
- Why does the food smell so good, even though it’s artificial? Why does Charles Wallace’s food taste like sand while the others enjoy a full-course meal?  
*Though the food is synthetic, an illusion causes the food to smell delicious. Charles Wallace is unable to taste the roast turkey because he has a more complex mind than the others and he shuts his mind entirely from the man. Because Meg and Calvin are unable to completely shield their minds, the man is able to influence their senses into believing they’re eating a turkey dinner.*
- What are the signs that Charles Wallace is possessed and not himself?  
*Charles Wallace offers Meg a sweet smile that’s different from his natural smile. Before giving in to the man’s hypnosis, Charles Wallace said the roast turkey tasted like sand, but now he refers to the food as “delicious” and tries to encourage Meg to eat it. His voice is “flattened out, almost as a voice might have sounded on the two-dimensional planet.” Though he looks mostly the same, a part of Charles Wallace’s eyes has turned from black to blue.*
- What does Charles Wallace first say to convince Meg and Calvin to join him, and how do they respond?  
*Charles Wallace says that they’ve been confused and that Man With the Red Eyes is actually a friend while the Mrs Ws are “the ones who are really our enemies.” He says that the children never should have trusted them. Meg and Calvin respond by attacking Charles Wallace and the Man With the Red Eyes, but are quickly stopped by the black-smocked men.*



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Chapter 7 - The Man With Red Eyes  
Chapter 8 - The Transparent Column

- What happens to people who are sick on Camazotz?  
**Rather than letting people suffer from weeks and weeks of sickness, Charles Wallace explains that it's "so much kinder simply to annihilate anyone who is ill." To avoid having people suffer discomfort, "they are simply put to sleep."**
- Describe what the little boy who couldn't bounce the ball properly is doing and what happens to him.  
**The little boy is being punished in a small room at the Central Intelligence Center. He's bouncing the ball in rhythm, and the walls of his little cell pulse with the rhythm of the ball. Each time the ball bounces, the boy screams in pain. Charles Wallace explains that once in a while on Camazotz, there's a little trouble with cooperation, but "after today he'll never desire to deviate again."**

### Analysis:

- How can the men in business suits at the Central Intelligence Center look both similar and different at the same time?  
**While the men each have unique facial features, just like people on earth, they carry themselves and dress in the same way. It's likely that it's difficult to notice the differences unless you look closely at the details because their actions and general appearance feel very alike.**
- Why do you think the Man With the Red Eyes is so transparent with the children? Why do you think he doesn't use force against them?  
**The Man With the Red Eyes is most likely open and honest with Charles Wallace, Meg, and Calvin because he wants them to trust him, and he's confident that they'll eventually give in. If he were to use force, whether mental or physical, the children would be less likely to give in to his influence.**
- Explain how Charles Wallace's arrogance and pride lead to his downfall.  
**Despite Mrs Whatsit's warning to beware of pride and arrogance and Mrs Who's reminder to "Remember that you do not know everything," Charles Wallace behaves recklessly. Because he's unable to accept his lack of understanding in the situation, Charles Wallace insists that he must look into the man's eyes to gain knowledge. He believes he can resist the hypnosis, but Charles Wallace's arrogance and quest for knowledge ultimately lead to him falling under IT's control.**

### Personal Connection:

- Charles Wallace states that "Differences create problems." Explain a time when this statement has been true in your life, and explain a time when this statement has been false in your life.  
**Student answers will vary.**