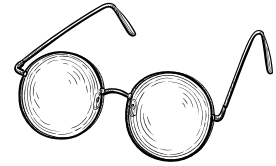




A WRINKLE IN TIME: DISCUSSION GUIDE #3

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 9–10

Chapter 9 - IT
Chapter 10 - Absolute Zero

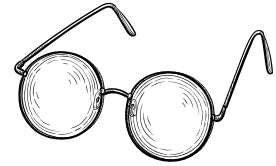
Comprehension:

- How has Meg's father changed since she saw him last?
Meg's father no longer wears his horn-rimmed glasses, and he's grown a beard and long hair almost to his shoulders. His brown silky hair now has shots of gray in it.
- How does Meg get through the transparent column to her father?
Meg puts on Mrs Who's spectacles. That allows her to pass through the transparent wall into the cell.
- How does Meg first feel when she is reunited with her father, and what does she quickly realize about him?
Meg feels an immediate sense of relief, completely reassured that "now and forever everything would be all right." She feels peace, comfort, and joy. She then realizes that she can see him, but he can't see her.
- How do Mrs Who's glasses help Mr. Murry and Meg when they're together in the transparent column?
The glasses help Mr. Murry and Meg see. Then, they're both able to exit the column when Mr. Murry wears the glasses and Meg holds onto his back as he walks through the transparent wall.
- What does IT look like, and why doesn't Meg physically destroy IT?
IT looks like a disembodied, oversized, living brain. The brain pulses and quivers as it sits on a dais. IT warns that destroying IT means also destroying Charles Wallace. Meg doesn't want to hurt her little brother or the others under IT's control on Camazotz.
- What happens to Meg after Mr. Murry tesser them out of Camazotz?
Meg experiences a lot of pain and then seems to be trapped inside her own body. She cannot move or speak, feels incredibly cold, and is "as lifeless as marble," but she can still hear what's going on around her. Since her heartbeat is returning, her body seems to be recovering.
- According to Mr. Murry, how were they able to resist IT even though IT is so powerful?
Mr. Murry explains that they were able to resist IT because they actively refused to allow IT to control their minds, and IT is completely unused to being refused.
- How does Meg react when she realizes that Charles Wallace is not with them?
Meg panics and asks repeatedly, "Where is Charles Wallace?" She blames her father for tessering without her brother, and she blames Calvin for telling Mr. Murry to tesser in the first place. Meg demands that Mr. Murry take her back to Camazotz and help.
- Describe the three figures that approach Mr. Murry, Meg, and Calvin.
The three tall figures walk upright and are a dull gray color. They have four arms, each with hands that have more than five fingers. The fingers are long waving tentacles. The figures have heads and faces, but no eyes. The faces have indentations where humans have features, and in place of ears and hair, they have tentacles.
- How do the figures communicate, and what happens to Meg when a tentacle touches her face?
The figures communicate by speaking through their waving tentacles. When the beast's tentacle touches Meg's face, she feels a tingling warmth spread through her body, lessening her pain, and she becomes sleepy. She experiences a reassuring sense of safety.



A WRINKLE IN TIME: DISCUSSION GUIDE #3

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 9–10

Chapter 9 - IT
Chapter 10 - Absolute Zero

Analysis:

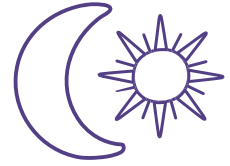
- Before Meg finds her father, she believes that he's omnipotent—all-powerful and able to do anything. After she finds him, she realizes he's "not omnipotent after all." How does this impact Meg, and what larger life lesson might this teach her?
Meg is devastated when she realizes that simply finding her father isn't the immediate resolution she's been looking for. When she sees that her father is unable to save Charles Wallace from IT, she's disappointed, frustrated, and angry. This realization might teach Meg that no individual is powerful enough to fix any and every problem and that it's not fair to place so much responsibility on one person's shoulders.
- When Charles Wallace, under the influence of IT, speaks about sameness and equality on Camazotz, Meg has a revelation that "Like and equal are two entirely different things." How does this statement relate to *A Wrinkle in Time*, and how does it relate to the 1960s when the book was published?
At the beginning of the story, Meg is unhappy because she's different, struggles to fit in at school, and lacks connection with her peers. But when Meg sees the way people live on Camazotz, she realizes that it's better to embrace differences than to be the same as everyone else. She sees that conformity takes away independence and freedom of choice. This statement relates to the time period in which the book was published because the 1960s was the height of the American civil rights movement—a time of continued struggle for social and racial justice and equality for African Americans. People don't need to be alike in order to be equal and enjoy the same rights and protections by law.
- Madeleine L'Engle uses the phrase "puny little brain" in Meg's narration in chapter 9 and Mr. Murry's dialogue in chapter 10. What significance do you think this phrase has in the context of these chapters and the story as a whole? Explain why you think the author chose these words.
Meg "knew that her puny little brain was no match" for IT's power, and Mr. Murry says that "it's far more than we can understand with our puny little brains." Both Meg and Mr. Murry have a lot of knowledge and are smart people, but they're aware of their own limitations. "Puny brain" suggests that both characters recognize they lack knowledge and understanding of complex scientific concepts and the power of IT. Madeleine L'Engle likely chose these words to highlight the limitations of human knowledge and the importance of humility. The phrase also serves to contrast Charles Wallace's pride and arrogance that stem from his intelligence and knowledge.

Personal Connection:

- When Meg struggles to resist IT's power, Mr. Murry suggests that she recite the periodic table of elements. A picture flashes into her mind of winter evenings she spent studying the periodic table of elements with her father. What memory creates a clear picture in your mind, and how does the memory make you feel? Share a meaningful memory and how it impacts your life today.
Student answers will vary.



A WRINKLE IN TIME: DISCUSSION GUIDE #3



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 11-12

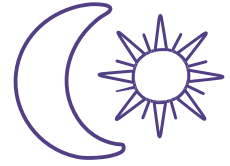
Chapter 11 - Aunt Beast
Chapter 12 - The Foolish and the Weak

Comprehension:

- Why does Meg decide to trust the beast?
Meg realizes that the bliss, relaxation, and deep sense of security she feels when she's cradled in the beast's arms could never come from something evil like IT. She recognizes the stark contrast between what the IT gives—pain—and what the beast gives—relief. With this, Meg knows the beast must be good and she decides to trust her.
- What concept do the beasts struggle to understand?
The beasts struggle to understand the concept of sight.
- Why is Meg unable to hug Mrs Whatsit when she appears on Ixchel?
Mrs Whatsit is not completely materialized, so embracing her would be like "trying to hug a sunbeam" rather than hugging another solid being.
- Why does Meg have to be the one to journey back to Camazotz?
Meg and Charles Wallace share a deep bond. In contrast, Mr. Murry has been away since Charles Wallace was a baby and Calvin has not been friends with Charles Wallace and Meg for very long. So Meg's relationship with Charles Wallace is their best hope of fighting the power of IT.
- What gift does Mrs Whatsit give Meg for her journey back to Camazotz?
Mrs Whatsit gives Meg her love.
- How does IT first try to break down Meg's resistance when she returns to Camazotz?
IT says that Mrs Whatsit has been working for him all along. IT shares that he knew Mrs Whatsit would send Meg back to Camazotz.
- How does Meg first try to resist IT's power, and what does she realize?
Meg tries to use her anger and hatred to fight IT, but then she remembers that Mrs Who advised her to use a weapon that IT doesn't have. IT knows all about hate, so Meg realizes she should use something different.
- What does Meg have that IT doesn't have, and how does this impact the events in the story?
Meg's powerful weapon is love. Meg has love from Mrs Whatsit, her mother and father, the twins and the real Charles Wallace, and Aunt Beast, and she has her love for them. Meg realizes that her love for Charles Wallace is the best weapon against IT. She repeats "I love you," and this breaks IT's hold over Charles Wallace's mind.
- Where do Meg and Charles Wallace go when they leave Camazotz?
They end up home in the twins' vegetable garden.



A WRINKLE IN TIME: DISCUSSION GUIDE #3



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 11-12

Chapter 11 - Aunt Beast
Chapter 12 - The Foolish and the Weak

Analysis:

- What is the significance of the name Aunt Beast?

Meg initially feels "utter loathing and revulsion" when she meets the beasts. The beasts appear as aliens that are significantly different from humans in both their appearance and abilities, and Meg is terrified at the idea of being taken by Aunt Beast and the others. Despite her frightening physical appearance, Aunt Beast's demeanor is gentle, affectionate, and warmhearted. This convinces Meg to relax, allowing them to communicate and bond. Aunt Beast treats Meg with love and care, creating a bond that is deeper than friendship but not quite as intimate as a parent. The name drives home that appearances are deceiving and that someone's actions and intentions are what really matter.

- Why do you think the Mrs Ws are stern and serious as they discuss the plans to save Charles Wallace? How does their "tough love" advance the story?

The Mrs Ws seem frustrated that Meg continues to expect others to take risks while she does nothing to help solve the problem. Meg insists that the Mrs Ws, Aunt Beast and her friends, or Mr. Murry go to Camazotz to save Charles Wallace. The Mrs Ws' responses suggest that they want Meg to face her fears, assume responsibility, and take action to get Charles Wallace back from IT. Meg realizes that she can no longer wish for things to be easy and simple and for others to solve the problem, and she recognizes that it's up to her to go to Camazotz and face IT.

Personal Connection:

- Aunt Beast says, "But we know that just because we want something does not mean that we will get what we want." Tell about a time when you've experienced this. What is it that you wanted, and why were you unable to get it?

Student answers will vary.