

1991

Dahl, Roald. *Matilda*. Viking Kestral, 1998.

SUMMARY:

Matilda Wormwood is a very intelligent four-year-old. However, no one notices, and certainly not her parents, who are preoccupied with bingo and shady sales dealings. Even when her teacher, Miss Hone, talks to her parents about Matilda's gifts, they turn a deaf ear. Matilda's intelligence is also coupled with a mysterious power, which she learns to use to frustrate her parents and to defend those for whom she cares. When Matilda is able to defeat the evil Miss Trunchbull and "free" Miss Honey, Matilda finds the perfect home for herself as well.

QUESTIONS:

What qualities do you think a person needs to be a good teacher?

In what ways is Mrs. Phelps, the librarian, helpful to Matilda?

Why do you think that Matilda and Lavender became friends?

Is there any significance in the names of some of the major characters---Wormwood, Trunchbull, Honey?

Why do you think Miss Honey can not stand up to Miss Trunchbull?

Is Matilda justified in the tricks that she plays on her father and the "power" she exercises over Miss Trunchbull?

Aside from her intelligence and power, what are other positive qualities that Matilda exhibits?

JOURNAL STARTER:

I feel like a success in school when....

ACTIVITIES:

Hold a spelling bee and a multiplication contest in your classroom.

Invite a used car salesman to discuss how the business is really conducted.

Draw Miss Honey's homes, both the tiny house in the woods and the "Red House."

Many British words and phrases are used in the story---find five and define their use in the novel.

INTEREST LEVELS: Grades 4-6.

BOOK TALK:

Do you ever feel smarter than everyone around you? Well, in Matilda's family, that certainly is the case. The problem is, no one notices or cares. From the time she was four, Matilda has spent hours alone at the library, teaching herself to read, finishing all the children's books, and then moving through titles recommended by the librarian. When she goes to school, she is ready to fly. Her teacher knows it, the other kids know it, but Miss Trunchbull, the oppressive head of the school will have none of it. Trunchbull's time is devoted to suppressing any creativity or enthusiasm displayed by students and faculty. Under Miss Honey's loving care, Matilda finds a niche at school, but when the real story of Miss Trunchbull and Miss Honey comes to the fore, Matilda gathers all her powers to right some serious wrongs!

READ-ALIKES:

Blume, Lesley M.M. *Cornelia and the Audacious Escapades of the Somerset Sisters*. Knopf, 2006.

Codell, Esme Raji. *Sarah Special*. Hyperion, 2003.

DiCamillo, Kate. *Because of Winn-Dixie*. Candlewick, 2000.

Fitzhugh, Louise. *Harriet the Spy*. Harper and Row, 1964.

Lindgren, Astrid. *Pippi Longstocking*. Viking, 1950.

RELATED WEB SITES:

Roald Dahl: <http://www.roalddahl.com>

Penguin Readers Factsheets: <http://www.penguinreaders.com/downloads/0582401984.pdf>

Reading Comprehension and Worksheet: <http://www.vtaide.com/png/matilda.htm>

OTHER RECOGNITION:

Winner of a Children's Choice Award in each of the following states:

Maryland, 1992; Massachusetts, 1992; Nevada, 1992; New Hampshire, 1990;

Utah, 1991; Virginia, 1991; West Virginia, 1992; Wyoming, 1991.

MOVIE TIE-IN: *Matilda*. Tri-Star Pictures, 1996

<http://www.commonsemmedia.org/movie-reviews/Matilda.html>