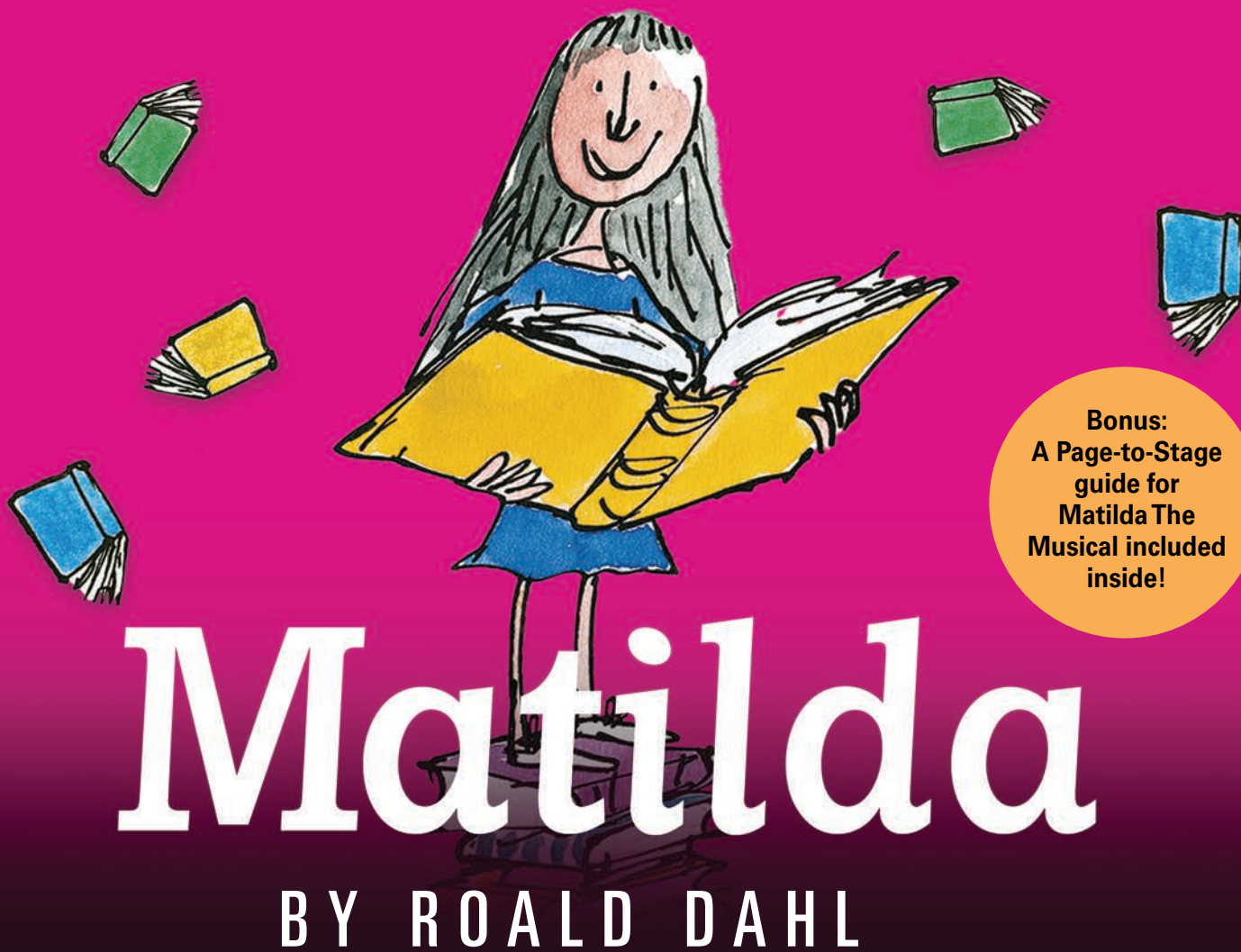


**Penguin's Classroom Classics**  
**Making Curriculum Connections!**



**An Educator's Guide to**



**Bonus:**  
A Page-to-Stage  
guide for  
Matilda The  
Musical included  
inside!

**Matilda**

**BY ROALD DAHL**

**INSPIRE • ENGAGE • EDUCATE**

The activities in this guide align with Common Core State Standards  
and fit into the curriculum for grades 3-5

PenguinClassroom.com

## Dear Educator:

*Matilda* is a delightfully zany coming-of-age story from beloved author Roald Dahl. With humor, magic, comeuppances—and chocolate cake!—it is a tale that students will positively devour. It's no surprise that in addition to helping kids get a thrill out of reading, Roald Dahl ultimately gives the bookworms of the novel (*Matilda* and Miss Honey) their day in the sun!

This guide breaks down the book into four to six chapters per week and includes pre- and post-reading activities. *Matilda* can be easily used to differentiate instruction: you can support your below-level readers with comprehension and vocabulary activities while challenging advanced learners with activities using figurative language and inference skills. Please select the activities that best suit the needs of your particular students. Some activities may be done in one lesson, while others require several days to accomplish. Each of the suggested activities is aligned with the Common Core Standards for Language Arts. Examining school life, bullying, fear, family, personal growth, and the supernatural, *Matilda* is an ideal way to introduce your students to the magic of reading! When you are done studying the text, put on your own theatrical production of *Matilda*. Using the enclosed activities and reader's theater excerpt, transform your class into a Broadway show!



## About the Book:

A young girl named Matilda Wormwood is precociously gifted but her wealthy, dimwitted parents are oblivious to their daughter's prodigious skills and view her as foolish and idiotic. Aggravated by the rude behavior of her mother and father, Matilda constantly pulls pranks on her family as discipline for their misdeeds, such as pouring Superglue into her father's hat or hiding a parrot in the chimney, tricking the family into thinking there is a ghost in the house.

Eventually, Matilda begins schooling and encounters a loving, sweet schoolteacher named Miss Honey, who is astonished by her unbelievable intellectual abilities and wants to move her into a higher class. The school's hostile headmistress, Miss Trunchbull, disciplines the pupils with abusive physical punishment and refuses. Miss Honey also tries to talk to Mr. and Mrs. Wormwood about Matilda's supreme intelligence, but they don't believe her.

Matilda's relationship with Miss Honey and the high jinx that ensue make this story a delight for all readers, and an especially great fit for third through fifth graders. It is an excellent read-aloud for a classroom or library group, and can be paired with any book discussion exercise.



## About the Author:

Dreary boarding schools, famous candy factories, and world travels all influenced the writing of Roald Dahl, one of the greatest storytellers of all time. After receiving life-threatening injuries during World War II through his work as an RAF fighter pilot, Dahl began writing articles for magazines such as *The New Yorker*. He wrote successful novellas and short stories for adults before concentrating on his marvelous children's stories, which began as bedtime stories he told his children. He once said, "I have a passion for teaching kids to become readers . . . Books shouldn't be daunting, they should be funny, exciting and wonderful; and learning to be a reader gives a terrific advantage."

This guide was written by Janelle Bruno, Ed.M. Janelle has been an elementary school teacher, literacy specialist and trained as an assistant principal. She is currently a Reading Coach for the Beverly Public School System while teaching at Endicott College.



# Classroom Lesson Plans for *Matilda*

## Week 1: Chapters 1–6

### 1. Parent Report Card

- Prior to reading, brainstorm the qualities of a good parent with your class.
- Make a list on the board and create a “report card” for a parent.
- Encourage students to keep these qualities in mind as they meet Matilda’s mother and father in the first few chapters.
- After reading “The Platinum-Blond Man” ask students what grades Mr. and Mrs. Wormwood deserve and have them add the grades to the report card. Make a comments section and encourage students to provide evidence from the book to justify the Wormwood’s grades.

\*\*Common Core State Standards Addressed: RL3.1, RL3.3, RL3.6, RL4.1, RL4.3, RL5.1, RL5.3; W4.2, W4.8, W4.9, W5.2, W5.8, W5.9; L4.1, L4.3, L4.6, L5.1, L5.3, L5.4.6

### 2. Author’s Purpose/Audience

- Discuss the purpose of a narrator.
- Then take a look at the qualities of this book’s narrator.
- What is the narrator’s view of parents (both in general and of the Wormwoods specifically)?
- Is the narrator pro-adult or pro-child?
- What parts of the story support that?
- Why does the narrator refer to the Wormwoods as “the mother” or “the father”?

\*\*Common Core State Standards Addressed: RL4.6, RL5.1, RL5.2; SL4.1, SL4.4, SL5.1, SL5.3, SL5.4; L4.1, L4.3, L5.1, L5.3

### 3. Setting

Matilda is set in an English village, and although most parts of the story will be easy to understand, it contains some British vocabulary that may be confusing. Use the following quotations as examples and ask students to keep track of any other parts of the story that present confusion. Discuss the meaning of each British word or phrase. Use the Cambridge Dictionary for clarification. [<http://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/british/>]

“What’s wrong with watching the telly, may I ask?” the father said.” (pg. 28)

“‘Mummy,’ Matilda said, ‘would you mind if I ate my supper in the dining-room so I could read my book?’” (pg. 28)

“‘Nine hundred and ninety-nine pounds and fifty pence,’ the father said.” (pg. 52)

“She’s barmy as a bedbug.” (pg. 86)

\*\*Common Core State Standards Addressed: RL4.1, RL4.3, RL5.1, RL5.3; SL4.6, SL5.6; L4.1, L4.3, L4.5, L5.1, L5.3

### 3. Character Visualization

Roald Dahl uses vivid words to describe Mr. and Mrs. Wormwood. Read the following sections aloud to students before they see the illustrations and ask them to draw what they believe “the mother” and “the father” look like:

“Mr Wormwood was a small ratty-looking man whose front teeth stuck out underneath a thin ratty moustache. He liked to wear jackets with large brightly-coloured checks and he sported ties that were usually yellow or pale green.” (pg. 23)

“Mrs Wormwood sat munching her meal with her eyes glued to the American soap-opera on the screen. She was a large woman whose hair was dyed platinum blonde except where you could see the mousy-brown bits growing out from the roots. She wore heavy make-up and she had one of those unfortunate bulging figures where the flesh appears to be strapped in all around the body to prevent it from falling out.” (pg. 27)

- Have students compare their pictures with their classmates and then look at the illustrations in the book.
- How similar are their pictures to Quentin Blake’s illustrations?
- Have students evaluate Roald Dahl’s descriptions and the accompanying images.

\*\*Common Core State Standards Addressed: RL4.1, RL4.3, RL4.6, RL5.1, RL5.3; SL4.4, SL4.1, L4.1; L4.3, L5.1, L5.3



# Classroom Lesson Plans for *Matilda*

## Week 1: Chapters 1–6 (cont'd)

### 4. Vocabulary Four Square

Use Vocabulary Four Square to help students make sense of the following words. To do so, have students fold a piece of paper in four and label with the following headings:

- Word
- What is the definition?
- What is a synonym of the word?
- What is an antonym of the word?

Suggested vocabulary:

adoration	devouring	astound	ignorant	fascinated	resented
clutching	satisfactory	skulking	irritable	absorbed	sensible
bearable	obliged	appalling	various	horrendous	clever

\*\*Common Core Standards Addressed: RL4.4, RL5.4; RF4.4, RF5.4; L4.4, L4.5, L5.4, L5.5

### 5. Matilda's Reading List

Matilda has read some pretty impressive books.

- Ask students to use the Internet to find the basic plot of each story listed on page 18.
- What does each story say about Matilda herself?
- Ask students to keep a list of the books they read and, after a few weeks, see if a theme emerges.
- What does the book list tell about each student?

\*\*Common Core State Standards Addressed: RL4.1, RL 4.2, RL4.3, RL5.1, RL5.2, RL5.3, RL6.1; SL4.1, SL4.2, SL5.1, SL5.2; L4.1, L4.3, L5.1, L5.3

## Week 2: Chapters 7–11

### 1. Miss Honey vs. The Trunchbull

Use Venn diagrams to compare and contrast Miss Honey with the Trunchbull.

- Be sure to include specific information about each character on this graphic organizer.
- Technology Integration: Kidspiration.com may be used to create the Venn diagram.

\*\*Common Core State Standards Addressed: RL4.1, RL4.3, RL5.1, RL5.3; W5.8, W5.9; L4.1, L4.2, L4.3, L5.1, L5.2, L5.3

### 2. What's in a Name?

Roald Dahl does a superb job of naming his characters. Using the cast of characters in *Matilda*, have students do a word analysis to think about why he named each person what he did. Use the Internet to look up the meaning of the names when structural analysis won't work:

- Matilda
- Miss Honey
- The Trunchbull
- Mr. and Mrs. Wormwood
- Crunchem Hall

\*\*Common Core State Standards Addressed: RL4.3, RL5.3, RF5.3, L4.4, L5.4



# Classroom Lesson Plans for *Matilda*

## Week 2: Chapters 7–11 (cont'd)

### 3. Poetry

Miss Honey reads limericks to her students and Matilda reciprocates by writing her own limerick for her wonderful teacher.

- Have a discussion with students about what a limerick is and then ask them to find their favorite example.
- Visit [limerickpoems.org](http://limerickpoems.org) or [familyfriendpoems.com/funny/limerick-poems.asp](http://familyfriendpoems.com/funny/limerick-poems.asp).
- Share with the class. Extend this lesson by asking students to create their own limerick, or another type of poem they are familiar with.

\*\*Common Core State Standards Addressed: RL4.2, RL5.2, RL5.4; W5.6; RF5.4; W4.3, W4.5, W5.3, W5.5; L4.1, L4.5, L5.1, L5.2, L5.3, L5.4, L5.5

### 4. Larger than Life

This book is full of characters who are “larger than life.”

- Discuss the meaning of the phrase, then have students choose someone from their own lives—the mailman, a supermarket checker, a neighbor—whom they see often but don’t know much about.
- Give that person a name and character traits.
- Lastly, develop those ideas into a four to five sentence character description.

\*\*Common Core State Standards Addressed: RL4.1, RL4.3, RL5.1, RL5.3; W4.2, W4.8, W4.9, W5.2, W5.8, W5.9; L4.1, L4.5, L5.1, L5.5

### 5. Exposing the Trunchbull

Matilda explains that students at Crunchem Hall Primary don’t dare tell their parents how cruel the Trunchbull actually is because her actions are so horrifying, they’d never believe them.

- Have students pretend that they attend the Crunchem school.
- If they saw the Trunchbull’s actions, would they tell an adult?
- If so, whom would they tell and how would they collect proof to expose the Trunchbull?

\*\*Common Core State Standards Addressed: RL4.1, RL5.1; SL5.1, SL5.2; L4.1, L4.3, L5.1, L5.3

### 6. Determining Word Meaning Using Prefixes and Suffixes

Discuss with students the meaning of prefix and suffix. Then, give students the following prefix and suffix list and talk about the meaning of each one.

Prefixes:	under-	re-	in-/im-	dis-		
Suffixes:	-ment	-ly	-ant	-ate	-able	-ance

Ask students to break apart the following vocabulary words in their notebooks using the information they know about prefix and suffixes:

understatement	enormously	severely	arrogant	obstinate	formidable
reassembled	underestimated	inconvenient	brilliance	amiable	performance
impolite	disapproving	implacable			

\*\*Common Core State Standards Addressed: RL4.4, RL5.4; RF4.4, RF5.4; L4.4, L4.5, L5.4, L5.5

# Classroom Lesson Plans for *Matilda*

## Week 3: Chapters 12–17

### 1. Hyperbole

Roald Dahl uses playful language to engage his readers. Specifically, he includes multiple hyperboles to make his message more dramatic. Using the following examples, explain to students what a hyperbole is.

“Why did you do it, you fool! It looks absolutely frightful! It looks horrendous! You look like a freak!” (pg. 62)

“‘This *clot*,’ boomed the Headmistress, pointing the riding-crop at him like a rapier, ‘this *black-head*, this *foul carbuncle*, this *poisonous pustule* that you see before you is none other than a disgusting criminal, a denizen of the underworld, a member of the Mafia!’” (pg. 120)

“‘You are a vile, repulsive, repellent, malicious little brute!’ the Trunchbull was shouting.” (pg. 162)

Then, using paint strip samples, give each student one “weak” word and have them write it on the least intense color on the paint strip. Next, ask them to find synonyms for the word and put them in order of intensity on their paint strips in accordance with the color intensity.

For example (from light to dark colors):

good	tasty	delicious	mouth-watering	scrumptious
------	-------	-----------	----------------	-------------

\*\*Common Core State Standards Addressed: RL4.4, RL5.4; L4.4, L4.5, L5.4, L5.5

### 2. Simile and Metaphor

Discuss the concepts of simile and metaphor. Use the excerpts below as examples.

“Your son Wilfred has spent six years as a grub in this school and we are still waiting for him to emerge from the chrysalis.” (pg. 9)

“The boy was by now so full of cake he was like a sackful of wet cement and you couldn’t have hurt him with a sledge-hammer.” (pg. 133)

Now ask students to complete the following statements using figurative language.

- Matilda is as tiny as \_\_\_\_\_.
- The Trunchbull’s strength is like \_\_\_\_\_.
- Miss Honey is as sweet as \_\_\_\_\_.
- After Bruce Bogtrotter ate the cake, he felt like \_\_\_\_\_.

\*\*Common Core State Standards Addressed: RL5.4; L4.4, L4.5, L5.4, L5.5

### 3. Character Mini-Study

Make a list of Matilda characters on the board and divide your students into equal groups. Assign each group a character (or group of characters) from the book.

- Using evidence from the text, ask students to pick four adjectives to describe their character.
- Have students share their words and their evidence from the text to justify the selection.

\*\*Common Core State Standards Addressed: RL4.1, RL4.3, RL5.1, RL5.3; SL5.1, SL5.2; L4.1, L4.2, L4.4, L4.5, L5.1, L5.2, L5.4, L5.5





# Classroom Lesson Plans for *Matilda*

## Week 3: Chapters 12–17 (cont'd)

### 4. Miss Honey's Cottage

Before reading Chapter 16, ask students to make a prediction of what they think Miss Honey's cottage will look like. Ask them to draw a detailed picture of her home, or create her home by clipping furniture, colors, patterns, etc. from magazines.

- Be sure to have students reference the text to explain their decorating/architectural ideas.
- After reading the chapter, ask students to discuss the differences in Miss Honey's home with their predicted pictures. Did anyone accurately predict what Miss Honey's house would be like?

\*\*Common Core State Standards Addressed: RL4.1, RL4.3, RL5.1, RL5.3; L4.1, L4.3, L5.1, L5.3

### 5. Vocabulary Context Chart

Explain to students that they can learn the meaning of some new words from the context of the sentence they are in. Ask students to create a Context Chart in their notebook by using the following headings:

- Word or Phrase in Context
- Word Parts, Related Words
- Prediction of Meaning
- Meaning from Discussion or Dictionary
- Image to Remember Meaning

Students should put the following words under the "Word or Phrase in Context" column and fill in the chart.

newt	culprit	deed	aloft	plummeted	hesitate
repulsive	reluctantly	precious	accused	peculiar	awestruck
phenomenon	bleak	perched	awkward	triumph	clarity

\*\*Common Core State Standards Addressed: RL4.4, RL5.4; RF4.3, RF4.4, RF5.3, RF5.4; L4.4, L4.5, L5.4, L5.5

## Week 4: Chapters 18–21

### 1. Would You Rather?

Miss Honey explains to Matilda that the reason she had the ability to move things with her mind is because she was using so little of her brainpower in school. When she moves to the top grade, Matilda loses the superpower because her brain is finally being challenged.

- Consider both options. If you were Matilda, would you rather be in a class that bores you and have the ability to move things with your mind, or be challenged in school in a grade that is more appropriate for you?
- Have students write their response in an opinion paragraph and be sure to justify the answer with meaningful connections and details from the text.

\*\*Common Core State Standards Addressed: RL4.10, RL5.10; W4.1, W4.2, W4.4, W5.1, W5.2, W5.4; L4.1, L4.3, L5.1, L5.3

### 2. Sequence of Events

Even though this book takes place over a relatively short period of time, it is still considered a "coming-of-age" story.

- Explain this phrase to your students.
- Make copies of the illustrations from the text and ask students to put them in order.
- Then ask students to describe the main event from each illustration to create a summary of Matilda's growth over the course of the text.

\*\*Common Core State Standards Addressed: RL4.1, RL4.3, RL5.1, RL5.3, RL5.5; W4.7, W4.8, W4.9; W5.8, W5.7, W5.8, W5.9; L4.1, L4.3, L5.1, L5.3



# Classroom Lesson Plans for *Matilda*

## Week 4: Chapters 18–21, (cont'd)

### 3. **Happy Ending?**

Ask students if they believe *Matilda* has a happy ending. Why or why not? Have them use their imagination to write an alternative ending to the story, or extend the story past Roald Dahl's ending.

\*\*Common Core State Standards Addressed: RL4.1, RL 4.2, RL5.1, RL5.2; W4.3, W4.4, W5.3, W5.4, W5.9; L4.1, L4.3, L5.1, L5.3

### 4. **Matilda Book Review**

Give the students the following assignment:

Congratulations! You have just been hired as a book reviewer and asked to write a brief book write-up as a kind of “teaser” or advertisement for *Matilda*. Your book review should highlight important events from the story and introduce the reader to enough characters to interest them in the book. Be sure to keep the following suggestions in mind:

- Find the publisher, publication date, price, page count, etc.
- Give just enough information to “hook” your audience into reading the book, but be sure not to give away the ending.
- Offer an honest evaluation of the book—it can be negative or positive!

\*\*Common Core State Standards Addressed: RL4.1, RL5.1, RL4.2, RL5.2; W4.1, W4.4, W4.5, W4.6, W5.1, W5.4, W5.5, W5.6; L4.1, L4.3

### 5. **Greetings from the Wormwoods!**

Ask students to write a postcard from the Wormwoods to Matilda from their new home in Spain.

- What are their new lives like?
- What would they want to tell Matilda?
- Be sure to reference the parts of the story that lead students to predict what the Wormwoods would write on the postcard.

\*\*Common Core State Standards Addressed: RL4.1, RL4.3, RL5.1, RL5.3; W4.4, W4.7, W4.9, W5.7, W5.9; L4.1, L4.3, L5.1, L5.2, L5.3

### 6. **Vocabulary Knowledge Checklist**

Have students create a table in their notebooks with the following headings from left to right:

Word	Know it well, can explain and use it.	Know something about it, can relate it to a situation	Have seen or heard the word	Do not know the word



# Classroom Lesson Plans for *Matilda*

## Week 4: Chapters 18–21, (cont'd)

Then, write the following vocabulary words down in the left hand column under the "Word" heading. Ask students to assess their knowledge before they read chapters 18–21 by marking a "B" (for before reading) in the column that they feel best explains their knowledge of the word. After reading each chapter and discussing vocabulary, have students mark an "A" (for after reading) to show growth of their word knowledge.

cautious	snippet	extraordinary	confident
essential	obvious	scowling	somersault
elated	chaos	eagerly	consent

\*\*Common Core State Standards Addressed: RL4.4, RL5.4; RF4.3, RF4.4, RF5.3, RF5.4; L4.4, L4.5, L5.4, L5.5

### Awards and Honors for *Matilda*

The Children's Book Award (UK)  
Nation's Favourite Children's Book (BBC)

### Praise for *Matilda*

"Dahl's phenomenal popularity among children speaks for his breathless storytelling charms; his fans won't be disappointed by *Matilda*."

— *Publishers Weekly*

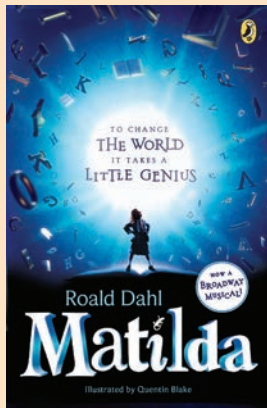
"Dahl here returns to the sort of whimsically grotesque fantasy that makes grown-ups wince and children beg for more."

— *Kirkus Reviews*

"I read *Matilda* for the first time when I was 38 and I was rolling on the floor. Roald Dahl is like a cool teenager. The coolest."

— *Parent's Choice*





## From the Page to the Stage: Making the Characters Come Alive

Created by the Royal Shakespeare Company, the following activities were developed to support their production of *Matilda The Musical*. All of the suggested exercises are inspired by the work that actors and directors do in the rehearsal room.

For more ideas and activities to use in the classroom visit [www.rsc.org.uk/education](http://www.rsc.org.uk/education)

### Activity Outline

**Purpose of the activity:** Through basic drama exercises, students will start to understand how different characters move, walk, and talk. They will also become aware of the three-dimensional quality of Dahl's characters and the level of detailed description used in his novel.

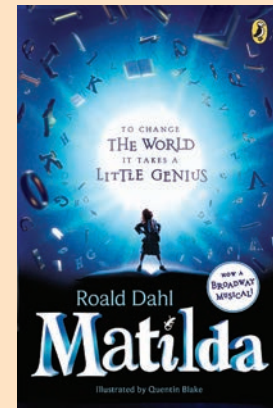
You will need

- A hall or classroom with chairs and tables to one side
- 6 copies of the character descriptions (see next page), cut up into individual character sections
- Start off the session with participants moving around the room as individuals, finding the spaces and filling them in.
- Then ask them to lead with a different part of their body such as nose, toes, tummy, chest, and chin and ask them what type of person might walk like that?
- You can get them to try walking at different speeds and on different parts of their feet (toes, outside of feet, heels) and ask them what sort of person might walk like that?
- Ask participants to think of a line from a nursery rhyme or popular song. Ask them to repeat these out loud as they move around in the kind of voice that their character might use. Ask them some questions about how high or low or slow or fast or old or young their voice might sound.
- Choose a character to work on and ask all participants to find a space of their own as you read through the related Character Description (see opposite page). They should listen and respond to the words—physically becoming that character and adding in an action and a way of moving around the room for the character.
- At times, ask the group to 'freeze' and at these moments walk around and ask questions of individuals such as 'Where exactly are you?' 'What are you doing at this precise moment?' 'What are you wearing?' 'What are you thinking?' to check what participants have decided upon for their characterization.
- In small groups make the character altogether – adding in their spoken line or thinking of some other words/sounds that their character might say.

© RSC. The enclosed exercises were created by the Royal Shakespeare Company to support their production of *Matilda The Musical*. For further information about the education work of the RSC visit [www.rsc.org.uk/education](http://www.rsc.org.uk/education)



## From the Page to the Stage: Making the Characters Come Alive



### Character Descriptions

**Matilda** – “You mustn’t let a little thing like little stop you”

‘Extra-ordinary, sensitive and brilliant – her mind was so nimble and she was so quick to learn. By the time she was three, she had taught herself to read by studying newspapers and magazines that lay around the house.’

**Mr Wormwood** – “If you knew the deal I’m pulling off at work, you’d soon see clever...”

‘A small ratty-looking man whose front teeth stuck out underneath a thin ratty moustache. He liked to wear jackets with large brightly coloured checks and he sported ties that were usually yellow or pale green. Gormless and wrapped up in his own silly little life; he is a dealer in second-hand cars who does pretty well at it although he has some very dishonest tactics.’

**Mrs Wormwood** – “Looks is more important than books”

‘A large woman whose hair was dyed platinum blonde except where you could see the mousy-brown bits growing out from the roots. She wore heavy make-up and she had one of those unfortunate bulging figures where the flesh appears to be strapped in all around the body to prevent it from falling out. She is glued to the TV screen most of the time which leaves her so exhausted both physically and emotionally that she never has enough energy to cook an evening meal so she usually gave her family TV dinners or fish and chips.’

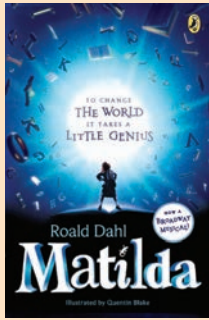
**Miss Honey** – “Bad times don’t last forever”

‘Not more than twenty-three or twenty-four. She had a lovely pale oval Madonna face with blue eyes and her hair was light-brown. Her body was so slim and fragile one got the feeling that if she fell over she would smash into a thousand pieces, like a porcelain figure. A mild and quiet person who never raised her voice and was seldom seen to smile, but there is no doubt she possessed that rare gift for being adored by every small child under her care. Some curious warmth that was almost tangible shone out of Miss Honey’s face when she spoke to a confused and homesick newcomer to the class.’

**Miss Trunchbull** – “Children are maggots!”

‘A formidable middle-aged lady. A gigantic holy terror, a fierce tyrannical monster who frightened the life out of pupils and teachers alike. She had an obstinate chin, a cruel mouth and small arrogant eyes. When she marched – Miss Trunchbull never walked, she always marched like a storm-trooper with long strides and arms aswinging – when she marched along a corridor you could actually hear her snorting as she went. She had once been a famous athlete, and even now the muscles were still clearly in evidence. There was an aura of menace about her even at a distance, and when she came up close you could almost feel the dangerous heat radiating from her as from a red-hot rod of metal.’





## From the Page to the Stage: Telling the Story in Pictures

Divide the class into small groups of threes or fours

- Give one of the Story Sections to each of the groups and ask them to tell their section of the story using frozen pictures
- At first, the frozen pictures should start with a freeze frame and end with a freeze frame and have no speaking except for one person who reads their story sentence out while the action is taking place (or you can read this for them)
- Next ask the group to add in their lines from the play that the characters in their section of the story say – groups can use one or all of these to help to tell their story better
- Try and show the whole story as one piece with no stops between when one group starts and another finishes
- Explore with the group how this felt and whether working in this way provided any greater insights to the story

### Story sections:

1 A girl is born to stupid, lazy and dishonest parents who don't want her – she is called Matilda.

- 'dinners don't microwave themselves you know'
- 'the child is clearly an idiot'
- 'telly is better than books'

2 Matilda discovers that she loves reading and can escape her unhappy family life by entering the fantasy worlds of books.

- 'I really love Dickens. Mr Pickwick makes me laugh'
- 'your stupid books and your stupid reading'
- 'the sooner you're locked up in school the better'

3 Matilda's parents are very mean to her so she plays tricks on them to cheer herself up – she's too clever for them and never gets caught.

- 'a man's hair is his greatest asset'
- 'Your.....hair! It's... it's.... green!'
- 'Maybe you used some of mummy's peroxide by mistake?'

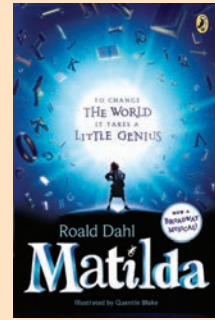
4 On Matilda's first day at school, she meets her lovely teacher Miss Honey who sees how clever the girl is

- 'How about this: two times four hundred and eighty seven, if you took your time do you think you could –'
- 'Nine hundred and seventy four'
- 'My, my that is good'





## From the Page to the Stage: Telling the Story in Pictures



5 Matilda and her friends meet the terrifying headmistress of the school – Miss Trunchbull who puts children into a horrifying torture chamber.

- 'Quiet you maggots!'
- 'To teach the child, we must first break the child.'
- 'You ought to be in prison, in the deepest, dankest, darkest prison!'

6 Matilda discovers that if she concentrates really hard, she can make things move with just her eyes.

- 'Tip it....tip it over!'
- 'I moved it with my eyes'
- 'I think it's something to do with that incredible mind of yours'

7 Matilda discovers that her lovely teacher Miss Honey has been treated terribly by the cruel headmistress Miss Trunchbull for many years.

- 'My father was a wonderful man. Magnus was his name. Magnificent Magnus I used to call him.'
- 'She was so cruel to you. Miss Honey, your aunt's a murderer! She did him in!'
- 'All the grown-ups in this town think she's wonderful. They would never believe such a thing of her.'

8 Matilda uses magic to write something on the blackboard for the evil Miss Trunchbull which scares the headmistress and makes her run away forever.

- 'The chalk! Look, the chalk, it's moving!'
- 'No-one's doing anything!'
- 'Run, Agatha, now. Or I will get you – like you got me!'

9 Matilda's parents run off to Spain and so the girl and the lovely Miss Honey live together happily.

- 'Quick, in the car!'
- 'What about the girl? Do you want to stay? Here with Miss Honey?'
- 'Yes! Yes I do!'

© RSC. The enclosed exercises were created by the Royal Shakespeare Company to support their production of Matilda The Musical. For further information about the education work of the RSC visit [www.rsc.org.uk/education](http://www.rsc.org.uk/education)





Roald Dahl's  
**Matilda**  
THE MUSICAL

## Adapted for Reader's Theater from *Matilda*

Students will have the opportunity to expand their comprehension while building engagement and enthusiasm for learning by performing this Reader's Theater excerpt from *Matilda*. Reader's Theater is a way for students to practice their fluency through multiple readings of the text. Students must rely on their fluency, using expression, intonation, and inflection while reading aloud to depict the character's actions, as opposed to using props, costumes, and sets. Assign each student a role and let *Matilda* come to life in your classroom!

GENRE: Humor, Narrative

THEMES: Bullying, Good vs. Evil, Education

READERS: 10

READER AGES: 8–12

LENGTH: 5 minutes

CHARACTERS: Narrator, Announcer, The Trunchbull, Cook, Bruce, Matilda, Lavender, Student 1, Student 2, Student 3



NARRATOR: After lunch, the children of Crunchem Hall heard the following announcement:

ANNOUNCER: Everyone should come to the Assembly Hall and be seated as soon as lunch is over.

NARRATOR: The Trunchbull, the school's giant and vicious headmistress, marched to the center of the stage with a riding crop in her hand.

THE TRUNCHBULL: Bruce Bogtrotter! Come up here and be smart about it!

NARRATOR: An eleven-year-old boy stood up and waddled briskly to the platform. He looked terrified.

THE TRUNCHBULL: This thief, this pirate, this brigand, this rustler sneaked like a serpent into the kitchen and stole a slice of my private chocolate cake from my tea tray!

BRUCE: No, I didn't!

THE TRUNCHBULL: Liar! Cook saw you eat it! Cook, come here! Bruce Bogtrotter wishes to tell you how good your chocolate cake is!

NARRATOR: The cook, a tall, skinny woman, walked onto the platform wearing a dirty apron.

THE TRUNCHBULL: Cook, Bruce Bogtrotter simply adores your cake. Do you have any more cake to give him?

COOK (mechanically, as if rehearsed): I do, indeed.

NARRATOR: The cook disappeared and returned with an absolutely enormous chocolate cake on a china platter.

THE TRUNCHBULL: Sit down, Bogtrotter. Since you enjoyed the slice you ate so much, I ordered cook to bake an extra large cake all for you. So why don't you cut a nice, thick slice?

NARRATOR: All the children in the hall were waiting for something to happen. They started whispering.







Roald Dahl's  
**Matilda**  
THE MUSICAL

STUDENT 1: The Trunchbull would never give someone a cake out of kindness.

STUDENT 2: Maybe it's filled with pepper! Or castor oil!

STUDENT 3: Or maybe it's booby-trapped and it'll blow up and take Bruce with it!

BRUCE: I don't want to eat it.

THE TRUNCHBULL: Eat it, you little brat! You wanted cake and you're going to eat it! Nobody leaves this hall until you have eaten the entire cake! Do you understand?

NARRATOR: Bruce knew there was no way to get out of this mess other than eating his way out of it, so he took a tentative bite. And another. And another.

MATILDA: Do you think he can do it?

LAVENDER: No. It's impossible. He'll be sick before he's halfway through.

NARRATOR: Instead of slowing down as he ate, Bruce seemed to gain confidence. He ate a second slice—and a third—and suddenly, he had eaten half the cake! The students were watching and willing him to continue.

STUDENT 1: Come on, Brucie! You can make it!

THE TRUNCHBULL: Silence!!!

MATILDA (whispering): I think he's going to make it!

LAVENDER: I think so, too! I wouldn't have believed anyone in the world could eat a cake that size!

MATILDA: The Trunchbull doesn't believe it either. She's turning redder and redder. She's going to be furious if he wins.

NARRATOR: Like a long distance runner who sees the finish line, Bruce kept going and going, and when he finished the last mouthful, the students leapt to their chairs, yelling and clapping and shouting.

STUDENT 1: Well done, Brucie!

STUDENT 2: Good for you, Brucie!

STUDENT 3: You've won a gold medal, Brucie!

NARRATOR: The Trunchbull stood motionless, her eyes glittering with fury. She glared at Bruce, who was too full to move or speak or do anything but sit there with a grin of triumph on his face. Suddenly, she lunged forward and grabbed the giant china platter that the cake had rested upon. She raised the platter in the air and brought it down right on top of Bruce's head. There was a spectacular crash, and the pieces flew all over the stage, but Bruce just shook his head a few times and kept on grinning.

THE TRUNCHBULL: Go to blazes!

NARRATOR: With that scream of anger, the Trunchbull and the cook left the stage. Bruce Bogtrotter had won!

Reader's Theater Extension: Using this script as a model, have students write a Reader's Theater from another chapter in the book.





# Spread Matilda's Magic!

Use Matilda as the spokesperson for reading in your school!

- Host a Read-a-thon
- Create a Dahl-themed book club with your students
- Throw a Matilda birthday party
- Perform a Reader's Theatre of *Matilda*, or another favorite Roald Dahl title
- ... and more!

Now available: *Matilda*, the Broadway tie-in edition



Roald Dahl books available for classroom use!



Penguin Young Readers Group  
PenguinClassroom.com



@PenguinClass



PenguinClassroom