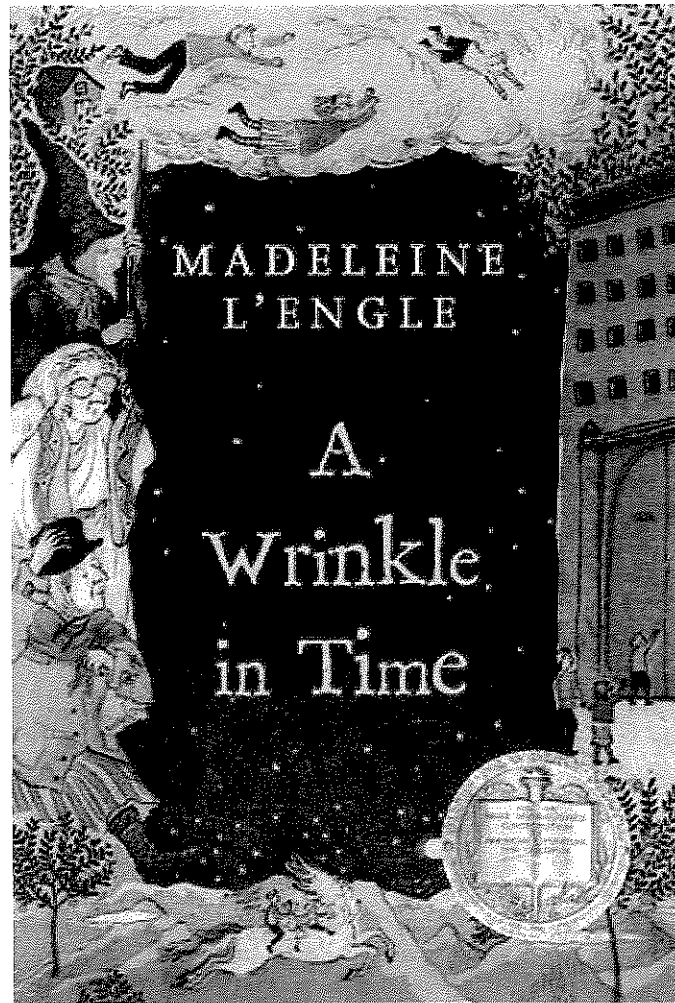


A Wrinkle in Time: Chapters 1-4



NAME: _____

Before You Read

A Wrinkle in Time Chapters 1–4

FOCUS ACTIVITY

What skills, strengths, ideas, or beliefs help you meet everyday challenges?

List Ideas

Make a list of the things you rely on when faced with a challenge. Include personal skills.

Setting a Purpose

As you read, identify the challenges that Meg Murry faces in her life.

BACKGROUND

Did You Know?

French author Jules Verne (1828–1905) is generally considered to be the first serious writer of science fiction. He wrote at a time when the public was becoming fascinated with the potential of science to change people's lives. In his writing, Verne imagined devices and human abilities that did not become realities until after his death. His characters rode in airplanes and submarines before anyone had seen one. His books include *From the Earth to the Moon*, *Twenty Thousand Leagues Under the Sea*, and *A Journey to the Center of the Earth*.

Competing in Science

Madeleine L'Engle wrote *A Wrinkle in Time* in the early 1960s, when science was a popular topic around the world. The United States was trying to be the first country in the world to send people into space. Anything that contributed to this goal received the utmost attention.

Throughout the 1950s, the former Soviet Union and the United States competed with each other extensively in many areas, including in science. The Soviet Union was the first nation to put a satellite in orbit and excelled in other areas of science. To improve its space program, the U.S. government established the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA). In the early 1960s, U.S. President John F. Kennedy promised to put an American on the moon "before the decade [was] out." NASA trained crews of astronauts and improved space exploration equipment to prepare for the attempt. It was during this period of early space exploration that L'Engle wrote *A Wrinkle in Time*.

VOCABULARY PREVIEW

antagonistic [an tag'ə nis'tik] *adj.* hostile; unfriendly

assimilate [ə sim'ə lāt'] *v.* to absorb; to understand

diction [dik'shən] *n.* manner of speaking; pronunciation

ephemeral [i fem'ər əl] *adj.* short-lived; temporary

preliminaries [pri lim'ə ner'ēz] *n.* preparations; beginnings

prodigious [prə dij'əs] *adj.* tremendous; amazing

relinquish [ri ling'kwish] *v.* to let go; to abandon

tangible [tan'jə bəl] *adj.* touchable; real; solid

tractable [trak'tə bəl] *adj.* manageable; obedient

wraithlike [rāth'lik] *adj.* ghostly

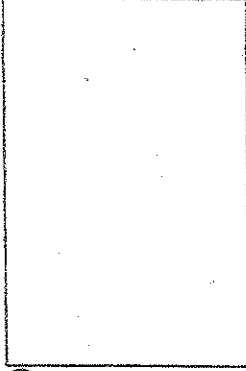

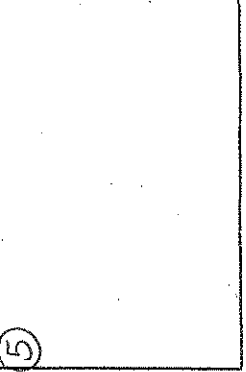

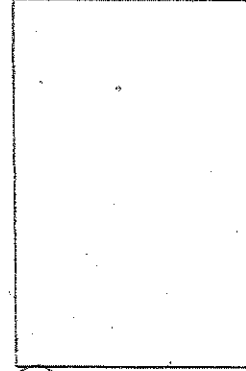

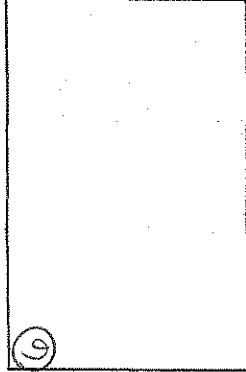

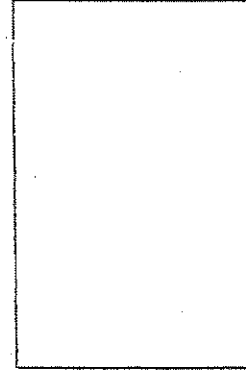

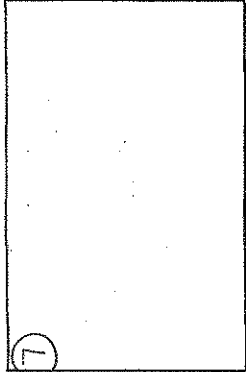

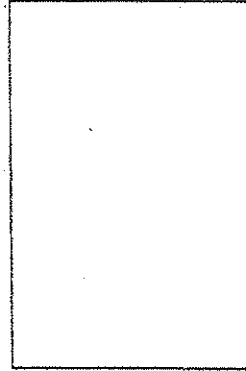

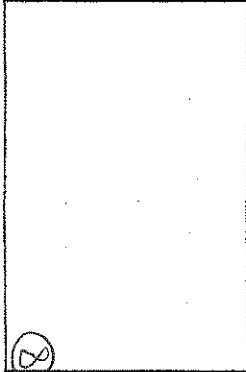
Vocabulary

Name: _____

Chapters 1-4 words

Date: _____

Vocabulary Sketches

①				⑤					⑦					⑨					⑪
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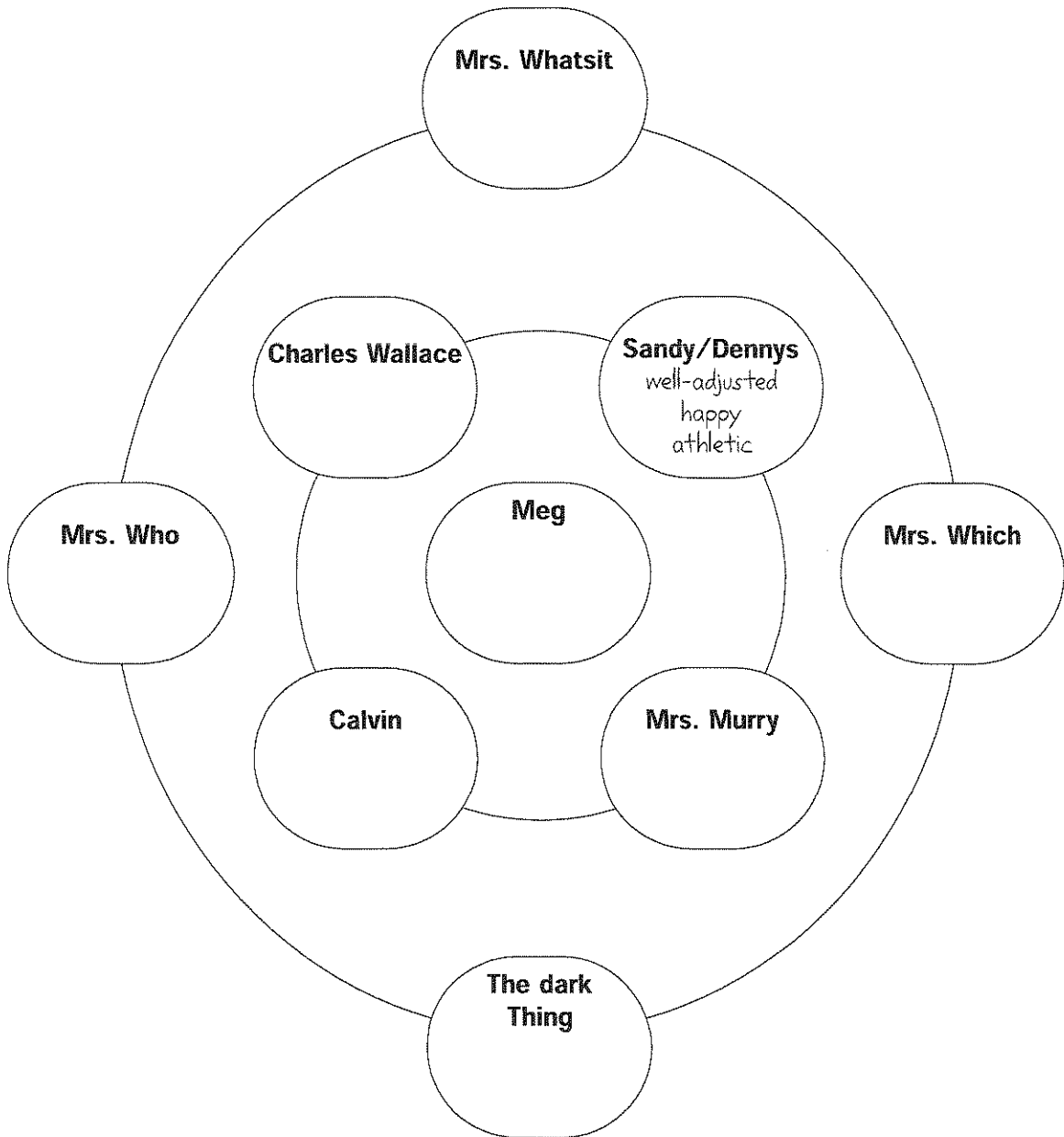
Known words

Unknown words

Active Reading

A Wrinkle in Time Chapters 1–4

You will meet both extraterrestrial and human characters in *A Wrinkle in Time*. As you read, try to think of words that describe the characters. Add several adjectives until you have a brief description of the characters in the book.



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Name: _____

Date: _____

Vocabulary Activity: One of These Words is Not Like the Others
 Chapter 1: "Mrs. Whatsit" — Chapter 3: "Mrs. Which"

Directions: Read each group of words. Cross out the word that *does not* belong in the group. Then explain why the remaining words belong together.

1. peacefully calmly serenely excitedly

2. prodigious extraordinary remarkable average

3. accidentally unconsciously purposely inadvertently

4. calmly raucous blaring disturbing

5. offended indignant annoyed pleased

6. hesitantly dubiously doubtfully unquestionably

Definition of Science Fiction

Science fiction is a genre of fiction in which the stories often tell about science and technology of the future. It is important to note that science fiction has a relationship with the principles of science—these stories involve partially true-partially fictitious laws or theories of science. It should not be completely unbelievable, because it then ventures into the genre fantasy.

The plot creates situations different from those of both the present day and the known past. Science fiction texts also include a human element, explaining what effect new discoveries, happenings and scientific developments will have on us in the future.

Science fiction texts are often set in the future, in space, on a different world, or in a different universe or dimension.

Early pioneers of the genre of science fiction are H. G. Wells (*The War of the Worlds*) and Jules Verne (*20,000 Leagues Under The Sea*).

Some well-known 20th century science fiction texts include *1984* by George Orwell, *Brave New World* by Alduous Huxley, and *The Fountainhead* by Ayn Rand. In addition, the four most-popular and well-recognized 20th century authors are Isaac Asimov, author of the *Foundation* trilogy and his robot series, Arthur C. Clarke famous for *2001, a Space Odyssey*; Ray Bradbury, known for his *Martian Chronicles*, and Robert Heinlein, author of *Stranger in a Strange Land* and *The Moon Is a Harsh Mistress*.

An excerpt from “Why Fantasy Might be True,” an essay by T. A. Barron

In fantasy, as in life, bigger is not always better. *A Wrinkle in Time* clocks in at just about two hundred pages. What are the essential qualities that make the most powerful, enduring fantasy tales?

To start with, a story must be more than just a series of obstacles—a video game in literary form. If the main character only needs to survive a string of hurdles to attain the ultimate goal, the reader might have an enjoyable ride but gain much in the way of meaning.

What, you might ask, is wrong with that? Nothing, so far as it goes. A serial-obstacle fantasy can be an enjoyable read, a rollicking adventure while it lasts. But—just as a candy bar tastes great but doesn’t confer any nutritional value—this kind of story misses the deeper, lasting potential of fully developed fantasy. The sort of “real meal” that can fuel a lifetime of ideas and questions and meanings.

The best fantasy has three essential qualities shared with any fine literature: depth of character, truth of place, and richness of meaning. With them, we get an adventure that can delight, amaze, prod, expand, and sometimes even inspire.

Let’s begin with depth of character. As Madeleine L’Engle knew well, a character who grows believably through his or her adventures makes a much more compelling protagonist than one who merely survives. Just look at Wrinkle’s unlikely hero, Meg. She starts out friendless, unhappy, humiliated at school, and painfully insecure. Two hundred pages later, she is the one person in the whole universe who can save her lost brother...and who, by the power of love, can change the very course of the stars.

In the best fantasy, the kind that stands the test of time, the hero’s character is deepened by every obstacle. So when this sort of hero confronts, for example, a European-style dragon who greedily guards a hoard of jewels, it’s more than just a battle of swords and claws. The hero must also face the greed and hunger for power within. Only then can he or she really triumph. That outer obstacle leads to inner growth, while that inner growth leads to wisdom. And the reader joins in that experience.

Truth of place is the second essential quality of enduring fantasy. In such stories, place is more than just a setting, a backdrop to the action. It rises to a much higher level—to a form of character, with all the moods, contradictions, and subtleties of a human being.

If a place is fully and sensuously realized, we don’t just read about being there. We are there. Just as we are with L’Engle’s Meg as she travels through space and visits planets that are bizarre, terrifying, and beautiful. Her amazing journey—the hero’s journey—is also ours.

With characters who grow and places that really come to life, a story gains genuine suspense. If all the main character does is leap over obstacles, one after another, where is the real satisfaction. We need to feel rising tension before that final release. This principle applies to making music, baking bread, opening a long-awaited gift—and also to reading a good story.

The third essential quality, richness of meaning, boils down to one thing: a big idea. Not lessons or sermons—far from it! I'm talking about rich, subtle, complex ideas. The most enduring questions about life. The key elements of what it means to be human, vulnerable, struggling, searching, making choices, and wholly alive.

Ultimately, the best fantasy is true. Fantasy shows us reality not through a perfect mirror, but through a bent mirror, so the biggest questions of life can be more fully illuminated and explored. When the stories we see in that magical mirror contains believable characters, realistic places, and meaningful ideas—then they have the power to change our lives.

Source: Published in *The Horn Book Magazine*
July/August 2012