

Prime Stage Theatre



Bringing Literature to Life

A Wrinkle in Time

Based on the Newberry award-winning novel by Madeleine L'Engle

Directed by Meagan Reagle

May 11-20, 2012

New Hazlett Theater



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THE GRABLE FOUNDATION
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Bringing Literature to Life

POST-SHOW CHAT SESSIONS

Stay after the school matinees to ask questions of both the actors and the characters! During the 20-minute post-show chat sessions, delve into the minds and reasoning of the characters and then ask questions of the actors about the rehearsal process, theatre performance, and their experiences working on that particular production. No registration required.

ADOPT-A-SCHOOL PROGRAM

Prime Stage Theatre's flagship education program strives to increase adolescent literacy through theatre in underserved and underperforming school districts in the Western Pennsylvania area. In this FREE program, schools receive tickets and books for each Prime Stage production, 10 in-school workshops, and professional development opportunities for teachers. If you would like your school to become involved, please download an application at our website, http://primestage.com/files/pdf/application_aas.pdf.

2011-12 PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT WORKSHOPS — "CREATIVE INQUIRY FOR LITERACY LEARNING"

Bring WONDER into your classroom by introducing creative inquiry into your lessons. Learn how theatre artists use questions and critical thinking in their work, and discover how to use these techniques to inspire your students' love of learning. This season there are three opportunities to expand your creative teaching skills and invigorate your practice: "Introduction to Creative Inquiry," September 10, 2011 at the Allegheny Intermediate Unit #3. "Engaging Disengaged Adolescents," November 7, 2011 at the New Hazlett Theater. "Scientific Inquiry Is Not Just For Science," April 23, 2012 at the Carnegie Science Center. For more information and registration form, visit http://primestage.com/educators_students/workshops.html or contact Christina Farrell, Education Director at cfarrell@primestage.com.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR TEENS, FAMILIES AND ADULTS

Prime Stage Theatre offers opportunities for people of all ages to get involved with the theater. Check out our website to learn about mentorships, volunteering, book readings and many other exciting events. There is something for everyone at Prime Stage! <http://primestage.com/>

A Wrinkle in Time

Welcome to **Prime Stage Theatre:**
Bringing Literature to Life!



Bringing Literature to Life

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Antigone, PST 2011



The Glass Menagerie, PST 2011

Dear Educator,

Welcome to the 2011-12 season at Prime Stage Theatre! We had a very successful season last year with acclaimed productions of *The Legend of Sleepy Hollow*, *The Glass Menagerie* and *Antigone*. We are thrilled to welcome you this year to three productions that will inspire you to imagine and discover: *The Scarlet Letter*, *The Elephant Man* and *A Wrinkle in Time*.

This Resource Guide is designed to provide historical background and context, classroom activities, and other curricular content to help you enliven your students' experience with the literature. We hope it will inspire you to use theatrical skills and creative thinking in your classroom in order to spark personal connections with the themes and characters in the stories.

If you have any questions about the information or activities in this guide, please don't hesitate to contact me. I'm happy to help and welcome your suggestions!

~Christina Farrell
Education Director

cfarrell@primestage.com

Did you know...

- **Prime Stage Theatre** has been in existence for over 13 years.
- **Prime Stage Theatre's** very first production was *A Woman Called Truth* about Sojourner Truth.
- **Prime Stage Theatre** first performed at the Station Square Playhouse (now Hard Rock Café).

Check out what's inside!

A Wrinkle in Time in 30 seconds...or Less!	5
Madeleine L'Engle	5
Meagan Reagle, Adapting a Novel for the Stage	6
The World in 1962	7
Characters	8
Themes	9-10
Glossary	10
Pre-Reading and Pre-Show Activities	11-12
Reading Activities	13-15
Post-Reading and Post-Show Activities	16
Attending the Performance	17
Discussion Questions, Classroom Resources	18

Curriculum Connections Corner

Prime Stage Theatre is committed to directly correlating our programs to the PDE Academic Standards. *A Wrinkle in Time* and this resource guide may be used to address the following curriculum content standards:

Arts and Humanities:
9.1-9.4

Reading, Writing, Speaking, & Listening: 1.1-1.8

Science and Technology:
3.2, 3.4, 3.6, 3.8



Summary—A Wrinkle in Time

A Wrinkle in Time in 30 seconds...

It was a dark and stormy night. Meg Murry, an awkward teenager, lay awake worrying about her father who has been missing for over two years. She joins her oddly gifted younger brother, Charles Wallace, and beautiful scientist mother in the kitchen for a midnight snack. They are soon surprised by a visit from an eccentric woman named Mrs. Whatsit, who seems to be able to read minds. She startles Meg's mother by confirming the existence of a tesseract—a wrinkle in the fabric of space and time.

The next afternoon, Meg and Charles Wallace visit Mrs. Whatsit and find Calvin O'Keefe, a popular and intuitive boy from Meg's school waiting for them. They meet Mrs. Whatsit and her two friends, Mrs. Which and Mrs. Who, who explain that the children must travel through space and time to rescue Mr. Murry who has been captured by an evil force.

They travel to the planet Uriel, where Mrs. Whatsit transforms into a beautiful

creature something like a centaur and an angel. This creature shows them the evil force, a dark shadow, which is overcome by a star's light. With the help of the Happy Medium, Meg is able to see her mother back home.

Now knowing what they are up against, they travel to the planet Camazotz where Mr. Murry is imprisoned. This planet looks very similar to Earth, except everything is in perfect order. The people all move in perfect rhythm to the pulse of IT, a giant disembodied brain that rules all the behavior on the planet. The kids soon arrive at the Central Intelligence building where they are questioned by the Man with Red Eyes. He tries to overtake Charles Wallace's mind, and despite his exceptional intelligence, Charles Wallace is overpowered. He begins to robotically voice the message of IT, then leads Meg and Calvin to Mr. Murry. Meg and Calvin manage to pull Mr. Murry from his holding cell, but are unable to defend themselves from IT's power. They tesser to a gray planet called Ixchel, leaving Charles Wallace behind.

On Ixchel, Meg is cared for by a blind, furry creature whom she names Aunt Beast. The three Mrs. W's reappear and tell Meg that she has one thing that IT does not have, but she must discover this weapon herself. Meg realizes that she must return to Camazotz alone to save Charles Wallace.

Back on Camazotz, Meg confronts IT and realizes that her power to love will defeat the evil darkness. Her love restores Charles Wallace to his true identity and together they tesser back to Earth. The family joyously reunites, and the Mrs. W's visit the happy scene en route to further travels.

...or less.

Meg Murry, an awkward teenager, is sent by on an adventure through time and space with her gifted little brother and popular friend to rescue her father from the evil forces that hold him prisoner on another planet.

Madeleine L'Engle

Madeleine was born on November 29th, 1918, and spent her formative years in New York City. Instead of her school work, she found that she would much rather be writing stories, poems and journals for herself, which was reflected in her grades (not the best). She was, in fact, branded as stupid by some of her teachers. However, she was not discouraged.

At age 12, she moved to the French Alps with her parents and went to an English boarding school where her passion for writing continued to grow. She flourished during her high school years back in the United States at Ashley Hall in Charleston, South Carolina. She went to Smith College and studied English with some wonderful teachers as she read the classics and continued her own creative writing. She graduated with honors and moved into a Greenwich Village apartment in New York.

She worked in the theater, where Equity union pay and a flexible schedule afforded her the time to write! She published her

first two novels during these years—A Small Rain and Ilsa—before meeting Hugh Franklin, her future husband. They eventually moved to Connecticut to raise their daughter, son and an adopted daughter away from the city in a small dairy farm village with more cows than people. They bought a dead general store, and brought it to life for 9 years before returning to the city in 1959.

After Hugh's death in 1986, it was her writing and lecturing that kept her going. She wrote over 60 books, before passing away on September 6, 2007.

She won many awards for writing, including several Newbury honors, the Smith College Award "for service to community or college which exemplifies the purposes of liberal arts education", the Sophia Award for distinction in her field, the ALAN Award for outstanding contribution to adolescent literature and the National Humanities Medal. In 1985 she was a guest speaker at the Library of Congress,

giving a speech entitled "Dare to be Creative!" In 1997 she was recognized for Lifetime Achievement from the World Fantasy Awards.

From: <http://www.madeleinelengle.com/madeleine-lengle/>

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Madeleine_L'Engle



Meagan Reagle, Director

Prime Stage's production of *A Wrinkle in Time* is directed by Meagan Reagle. This makes Meagan's 5th season with Prime Stage Theatre. She has served as assistant and movement director for *Antigone*, movement director for *The Legend of Sleepy Hollow*, assistant director for *To Kill a Mockingbird*, *Of Mice and Men*, *12 Angry Men*, & *Tuesday's with Morrie*,

dramaturg for *The Outsiders* and *Romeo & Juliet*, and stage manager for *Our Town* and *Tuesday's with Morrie*. Other companies include Ghostlight Theatre Troupe, Point Park Conservatory, Pittsburgh Playwrights, City Theatre, Pittsburgh REP Company, South Park Theatre, Pittsburgh New Works, Pittsburgh CLO, barebones productions, Tuesday

Musical Club, & currently Dancer/Resident Artist with kNOTDance. She is a graduate of Point Park University with a BA in Theatre Arts and also studied physical theatre under the direction of Mark C. Thompson. She is also the director of the Prime Stage Teen Advisory Board's production *Everything Is Fine*, raising awareness about Teen Dating Violence.

Adapting a Novel for the Stage

Directors, playwrights and production teams have to make many decisions when they adapt a novel for the stage. It is not simply reading a book out loud. All those working behind the scenes must consider what emotions, images, sounds or movements to highlight from the book—and how to do it. Director Meagan Reagle gives some insight into her process:

Why do you think *A Wrinkle in Time* is still relevant fifty years after its publication?

MR: It really provokes the imagination. It moves you. Unlike other children's books it makes you look and do things. It inspires thought, active doing, wonder and amazement.

What message stands out to you?

MR: I came across the section where Meg has an epiphany and looks at her father and has a little dialog with herself. "Now that my father is here, things are not fixed. I have to do it. I have to be the one to make things happen or nothing is going to happen." That is a huge lesson for adolescent life into adulthood. You've got to be the one who creates the action.

Why do you think this story will work well on the stage?

MR: Madeleine L'Engle's story is about being productive, proactive, and accomplishing the tasks of hand. That is theatre! A lot of stories are more thought-based, but L'Engle always kept in mind that there is something to be done!

There are so many magical moments in this story. How will you handle the special effects?

MR: In order to bring those effects to life, I looked directly at the images described in the book and letting my imagination do the rest of the work. For instance, L'Engle wrote about a character having a creaky voice, the image

instantly brought to my mind were original Monty Python skits. Another, very influential, is Mrs. Whatsit's sheets are described as paisley print and colorful. I recognized a correlation between that costume and the wings she's supposed to have on Uriel. I am always looking in depth at the language she wrote and how things connect.

How are you collaborating with other organizations on this production?

MR: Mike Hennessy from the Carnegie Science Center will be our Projection Designer for this show. Projections will be the set, adding color to all the worlds the children travel to. The Science Center is providing a special projection ball that we will use for the Happy Medium's world. The ball uses projections that circle around—it will be cool.

We are also working with the Pittsburgh Youth Symphony Orchestra who will be playing the music. Craig Johnson (PYSO Managing Director) gave us a piece written by Noah Kahrs, a percussion and composition student from CAPA (Creative and Performing Arts High School) that we really impressed us. We asked Noah to write music for the production, which will be recorded by members of PYSO and played during the performance. I want music that

will create a unique feel and sound for each place in the story. I talked with Noah about how I want each place to feel. For instance, Camazotz will have a militant modern feel. The choreography will be ruled by time, very progressive.

How do you work with the production team?

MR: First we decide what scenes to look at, then think about it for a week or two. We get back together and compare ideas – no matter how large or impractical – then discuss and decide which ones to go with. I think about the process like a triangle – my ideas and their ideas come to point.

What is your guiding vision for this production of *A Wrinkle in Time*?

MR: BIG, Fun and Fabulous! Being certain in the most uncertain of moments!

Discuss: If YOU were the director...

What is the main theme from the novel that you'd want your audience to think about when they leave the theater?

How might you portray time travel and physical transformation in the theater?

What parts of the book might you leave out of the play? What do you think is most essential?

Which characters do you most relate to, and how do you think your feelings might affect the way you portray the character on stage?

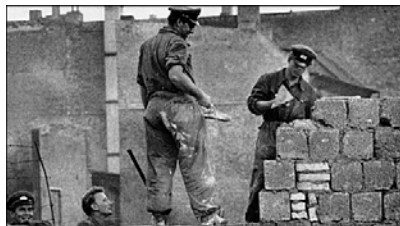
Putting it in Context

The World in 1962:

When *A Wrinkle in Time* was published in 1962, America was in the midst of the Cold War. Readers quickly associated the uniform society of Camazotz with the dangers of Communism. The hot-button topic caused some to become passionately interested in the book, while others scorned it for being too overtly anti-Communist. America was also coming out of the economic boom of the 1950's and moving into a new decade of social unrest and moral reevaluation. People around the world were beginning to think differently about civil rights, religion, the role of government and popular culture.



February 1 - 4, 1960— Black college students from North Carolina Agricultural and Technical College sat down at a segregated Woolworth's lunch counter in Greensboro, North Carolina and refused to leave. They are then allowed to stay at the counter, but are refused service. The sit-in captured the media attention and soon spread all over the south.



August 13, 1961 - East German border guards begin construction of Berlin Wall, separating Communist East Germany and Democratic West Germany.

August 28, 1963 - The March on Washington attracts over 200,000 people to Washington, D.C. With the people concentrated around the Lincoln Memorial, Martin Luther King Jr. gives his "I Have a Dream" speech.



November, 1960 - John F. Kennedy narrowly wins the Presidency over Vice-President Richard Nixon, Kennedy is the first Catholic to ascend to the Presidency.



November 22, 1963 - President Kennedy is assassinated in Dallas, Texas by Lee Harvey Oswald.

Events of the Early 1960's

May 6, 1960- President Eisenhower signs the Civil Rights Act of 1960.

March 1, 1961- President Kennedy initiates 17 billion dollar nuclear missile program, and creates the Peace Corps.

April 25, 1961- The US invades Cuba at the Bay of Pigs. It is a failure.

April 12, 1961-Yuri Gagarin of the USSR becomes the first man in space.

May 4, 1961- The Congress of Racial Equality sends "Freedom Riders" on bus trips to test the implementation of new laws prohibiting segregation in interstate travel facilities. A mob in Alabama sets the riders' bus on fire, but the program ultimately succeeds.

September 15, 1961- The US starts underground nuclear testing.

1961- President Kennedy advises Americans to build fallout shelters.

1962- The Supreme Court, rules against prayer in public schools.

1962- John Glenn becomes the first American to orbit the earth.

October 22, 1962- Cuban Missile Crisis: Soviets establish missile bases in Cuba, Kennedy orders a naval blockade to divert any missiles from arriving in Cuba.

1962— The Beatles' first No. 1 on the British charts: "Love Me Do."

January 1963 - Alabama Governor Wallace's "Segregation Forever" speech is given at his inauguration.

June 11, 1963 - President Kennedy proposes the Civil Rights Bill.

September 15, 1963 - Four Black girls are murdered attending Sunday school in the bombing of the Sixteenth Street Baptist Church in Birmingham, Alabama. As a result Riots erupt in Birmingham, and two more black youths are killed in the violence.

September 24, 1963- Nuclear Test Ban Treaty is ratified by Senate.

November 24, 1963 - President Johnson escalates American's military involvement in the Vietnam War.

Characters

Cast:

The cast of the theatre adaptation only includes seven actors. Therefore, some actors are required to play several roles. It also means that not all the characters in the book will appear in the stage production.

Look at the descriptions on this page and think about how you might choose a cast to portray these characters.

What physical characteristics would you look for in the actor playing each character? Why?

What vocal quality would you expect each character to have? Would they speak slowly, quickly, gravelly, squeaky?

Which roles might be shared by one actor? How would make each character unique?

Meg Murry:

Meg feels out-of-place in her town, her school and even in her own family. In her own eyes she is ugly, stupid and overly-emotional. But her bad feelings cause her to act out around others, only making things worse. She wishes that her father would return so that everything will return to normal and all her problems will be solved. But in the end, she learns that she will have to solve her problems on her own and must find the self-assurance to save her family.

Charles Wallace:

A genius with a keen sense of intuition about others, Charles Wallace is a remarkable little boy in every sense. Although he possesses an astounding intellect, he realizes that playing dumb is sometimes safer, so he doesn't speak and endures the taunts of the townspeople. Charles Wallace's ability to tap into others' minds combined with his need to know everything causes him to fall into the mesmerizing trap of IT.

Calvin O'Keefe:

Although Calvin appears to have it all—good looks, athletic ability, popularity—he feels out of place among his own family members. It is with the Murry family that Calvin first feels a sense of belonging, making Meg consider that perhaps she's not so bad off after all. Calvin's gift of communication tells us that words can be a powerful weapon.

Mrs. Whatsit:

The mystery contained within Mrs. Whatsit's name is demonstrated in her many forms. During her first entrance, she is bundled in mismatched clothes so that "the age or sex was impossible to tell." Later, Mrs. Whatsit transforms into an entirely different form altogether—a majestic winged centaur-like creature—and we learn that she was once a star. Yet, she seems to be the most human of the three Mrs. W's and she demonstrates that keeping a sense of humor is an important part of fighting evil.

Mrs. Which:

Mrs. Which is the clear leader of the three Mrs. W's, yet for all her power, she struggles to materialize physically and express herself through speech. She has a hard time remembering human needs, which is demonstrated when she accidentally places the kids on a 2D planet. Yet, she shows her humor by appearing as a witch with a pointed hat and broomstick. Meg feels as though she can trust Mrs. Which implicitly.

Mrs. Who:

Through her ongoing stream of quotes in many languages, Mrs. Who reminds us that the battle of good vs. evil is an ongoing social endeavor which has stretched across all times and cultures. Mrs. Who gives Meg her glasses as a gift on Camazotz, which suggests Meg's ability to see what the others cannot and reinforces the idea that Meg's faults are actually sources of power.

Aunt Beast:

The kids are initially shocked by the unfamiliar and grotesque bodies of the creatures on the planet Ixchel. But Meg soon learns that appearances can be deceiving and develops a close friendship with the kind, telepathic creature she names Aunt Beast. Although both Aunt Beast and IT can read minds, Aunt Beast uses her power for communication and understanding.

IT:

Embodied in a giant brain, IT strives to control all others and force them into a uniform existence. But this shape leaves him "heartless" and Meg defeats his power through her unwavering love. IT teaches us that reason without compassion leads to devastating results.

Mr. Murry:

Meg pictures her father as a superhero who will come to her rescue. But Mr. Murry is slow to understand what has happened to Charles Wallace and Meg realizes that he is simply a regular man with faults. Despite his sincere desire to help her, Meg realizes that she must depend on herself.

Mrs. Murry:

Mrs. Murry proves that smart girls can be pretty. Meg aspires to have her mother's strength of spirit in the face of adversity.

The Man with the Red Eyes:

Although he first appears to be the bad guy in the story, The Man with the Red Eyes is simply a mouthpiece through which IT communicates. He tries to win the kids over by explaining that he is only there to save them from grief and pain, if only they'd just give in. But Meg comes to understand that suffering is part of freedom.

Themes

***A Wrinkle in Time* contains many rich themes for exploration and discussion. Below are listed some prominent themes from the novel with supporting statements. Use these statements to spark discussion or debate with your class. You may identify contradictions within the novel itself or controversial issues that are personally meaningful to you.**

Good vs. Evil:

- Through the use of quotes and historical reference, the novel suggests a never-ending battle between the forces of Light and Dark.
- In the novel, Good is associated with love, individual creativity, moral responsibility and free will. Evil is associated with conformity, hatred, submission to authority, and lack of personal responsibility and initiative.
- The novel suggests that good and evil can sometimes look a lot alike, but people must use individual judgment to distinguish them.

Appearances:

- Many characters in this story have deceiving appearances. Charles Wallace looks the same when under IT's control, but is not the same inside. Aunt Beast appears frightening and strange at first, but proves to be loving and compassionate.
- Meg worries that her awkward appearance isolates her from the rest of her peers. But she learns that her differences are her strengths, and what lies within is beautiful and powerful.

Wisdom and Knowledge:

- Meg is brilliant, yet is a failure as a student. This implies that true wisdom lies outside the confines of education.
- IT is portrayed as a disembodied brain—all reason with no heart. Meg's wisdom lies in her ability to trust her emotions.
- The real danger may be in thinking you know more than you do. This novel shows that there is more to the universe than we may be able to comprehend, and our humanity lies in embracing the mysteries beyond our grasp.

Language and Communication:

- This novel makes us reconsider the many ways that we are able to communicate. Although language is our primary choice, we learn that it is limited compared to music, touch, intuition, sensory awareness and even mind-reading.
- Mrs. Who's use of quotes shows the enduring nature of words and how they can have power across all times and cultures.

Fate and Free Will:

- The novel's portrayal of Camazotz suggests that happiness is meaningless in the absence of free will.
- The children are often thrust into situations by the Mrs. W's without knowing where they are going. This leaves us to wonder if they have complete free will or not.

Love:

- In the novel, Love conquers all. Yet, love blinds Meg to her father's weaknesses at first and she must develop a more realistic love to achieve personal success. Love isn't blind, but allows us to see the truth of what lies beneath the surface.
- Love is seen as both a universal, cosmic force for good, as well as a personal, human quality that binds family and friends.

Fear:

- Through Meg's example we learn even the bravest heroes have fear, but they face their fears head on.
- The novel detaches fear from any specific threat (the kids are afraid of the Black Thing without knowing what it does) in order to make its evil more abstract and absolute.

Women's Roles:

- *A Wrinkle in Time's* success is due in part to the portrayal of a feisty, intelligent female heroine whose ultimate lesson is self-reliance.
- Mrs. Murry breaks the stereotype that smart girls can't be pretty. She is the model professional mother who manages to cook dinner while conducting experiments in the lab.
- The strongest characters are all women, including the Mrs. W's and Aunt Beast, whereas Charles Wallace succumbs to IT, Mr. Murry turns out not to be the superhero Meg had hoped and Calvin is ultimately unable to be Meg's protector.



Choose Love over Fear at Occupy Philly
Photo: Tony Heriza Copyright: AFSC

Themes (Cont.)

Shakespeare—*The Tempest*:

- L'Engle includes many quotes and references to Shakespeare's *The Tempest* through the novel. Just as in *A Wrinkle in Time*, *The Tempest* takes place in a world of illusions. The *Tempest* features a sorcerer who strives to take away the free will of others and Ariel, like Meg's father, is locked away in a column (a cloven pine.)

Religion:

- Religious imagery and allusion are woven throughout *A Wrinkle in Time*. But some people think it's too Christian, while others think it's not Christian enough. It ranks number 23 on the most-banned book list, primarily because Christians objected to Jesus being included equally on the list of other historical figures that have fought evil, as well as claims that the book indoctrinates children with Eastern religions and mystical practices through references and imagery of crystal balls, psychic healing and telepathy.
- Because the novel lacks a clear message about the role of religion, readers are left to decide for themselves what to think. (Perhaps this reinforces the novel's main theme of free will and individuality.)

Art and Music:

- Artists, musicians and philosophers are listed as the key fighters against evil in the world—compared to the traditional warrior stereotype.
- The novel suggests that in order to fully understand the richness of the universe, one must consider musical qualities, color, texture, smells, tastes and spatial qualities.



Rembrandt, *Jakobs Kampf mit dem Engel*

Personal and Moral Responsibility:

- Meg's initial dependence on her father can be compared to those on Camazotz who relinquish personal control to an all-knowing overseer. But when Meg finally takes responsibility herself, she becomes truly free.
- The Evil in the book can only be defeated by those who love others. This suggests that world's condition relies on each individual's ability to give and receive love in return.

Glossary

What is... What?!?

Madeleine L'Engle intentionally used challenging vocabulary in *A Wrinkle in Time* because she believed that people underestimated children's ability to absorb difficult language. We have listed some of the most unfamiliar words here.

Have students record unfamiliar words as they encounter them while reading the book. Students should then look up definitions in a dictionary. Vocabulary activities could include a word wall, word ball or new sentence generation.

PDE Academic Standards 1.7-1.8

AMBROSIA—the food of the gods; an especially delicious treat

BELLIGERENT—warlike or hostile

BILIOUS—irritable, cranky; extremely unpleasant or distasteful (as in bile)

CONNOTATIONS—implied meanings

CORPOREAL—of the nature of the body

DAIS—raised platform at the front of a room

DECIPHER—to discover the meaning of; to interpret through the use of a key

DELINQUENT—failing in or neglected duties or obligations

DICTION—the accent, inflection or enunciation of speech

DISEMBODIED—removed from the body, as in a spirit or soul

DISSOLUTION—dissolving into parts; breaking a tie or union

GAIT—the manner of one's walk

ILLUMINATION—the act of shining light upon;

intellectual or spiritual enlightenment

INEXORABLE—unyielding, unalterable

INTOLERABLE—insufferable, can't be withstood

LINIMENT—a liquid preparation for rubbing on sprains or bruises

MORASS—marshy ground

MYOPIC—near-sighted (as in sight); narrow-minded or short-sighted

OBLIQUELY—diverging from a straight line or course

PEDANTIC—overly concerned with minute details, especially in teaching

PINIONED—prevent a bird from flying by removing its wing, or disabling a person in that manner

PRODIGIOUS—extraordinary in size, amount, extent or degree; wonderful or marvelous

REVERBERATED—echoed or resounded

SADIST—person who enjoys being cruel

SONOROUS—rich and full in sound

SPARSE—thinly scattered; not thick or dense

SUPINE—lying on the back, face or front upward; inactive, usually as a result of indifference

TALISMAN—protective charm

TANGIBLE—substantial, capable of being touched

TRANSLUCENT—permitting light through, but not enough to see clearly through

Pre-Reading and Pre-Show Activities

Prime Stage's mission, *bridging literature, life and learning*, encourages students to approach literature with curiosity and personal relevance. **The activities below are intended to spark enthusiasm, interest and inquiry into the story before they have read the text or attended the performance.**

Research: Below are the cultural and historical figures or books named in *A Wrinkle in Time* with the chapter in which they are listed. Students may choose one or more to research, then complete one of the fun activities to the right.

Edward Bulwer-Lytton, *Paul Clifford* (1)
 Blaise Pascal (2)
 Seneca (2)
 James Boswell, *Life of Johnson* (3)
 Book of Genesis (3)
 Dante Alighieri (3)
 A. Perez (3)
 Albert Einstein (3, 5)
 William Shakespeare, *Macbeth* (4)
 Horace (4)
 Euripides (4)
 Book of Isaiah (4)
 Miguel de Cervantes (5)
 Lewis Carroll, *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* (5, 6)
 William Shakespeare, *The Tempest* (5, 6, 9)
 Jacques Delille (5)
 Book of John (5)
 Jesus (5)
 Leonardo da Vinci (5)
 Michaelangelo (5)
 William Shakespeare (5)
 Buddha (5)
 Rembrandt (5)
 St. Francis de Sales (5)
 Euclid (5)
 Louis Pasteur (5)
 Marie Curie (5)
 Albert Schweitzer (5)
 Mohandas Gandhi (5)
 Nicolaus Copernicus (5)
 Johann Wolfgang von Goethe (6)
 William Shakespeare, *Hamlet* (7)
 Franklin Delano Roosevelt (7)
 Abraham Lincoln, "The Gettysburg Address" (7, 9)
 Thomas Jefferson, "Declaration of Independence" (9)
 First Book of Corinthians (12)

Superheroes: Consider how this person or book may be a force for good in the world and what evils he/she/it may be trying to defeat. Create a comic book-style illustration featuring the figure or book in a battle of good vs. evil.



Marvel Comics, 2009

Quote Guessing Game: Find quotes from the person or book that illustrates the fight against evil. Post the quotes, then as a class try to guess which person or book said it. As you guess, notice the similarities and differences between the sources.

Timeline: Create a timeline showing where each person or book appears in history. Add other information to the timeline that may enrich understanding of historical context.

Fighting for Light Mural: Gather pictures related to each person or book and create a large mural depicting the universal fight against evil. Create an appropriate title for the mural that describes the themes and images within the images.



The Creation of Man (Sistine Chapel ceiling), Michelangelo

Memoirs: Write a brief memoir in the voice of the research subject which describes his/her fight against evil. Recount the actions taken in the battle for good, then reflect on how they felt about their role. Did they feel they were successful? What work remained at the end of their life.

Pre-Reading and Pre-Show Activities (cont.)

Time Travel Explained: Read this simple explanation of Einstein's Theory of Relativity. Then recreate the bedsheet analogy in the classroom or have students draw their understanding of the theory. Come up with other examples which demonstrate how "Space tells matter how to move. Matter tells space how to curve" and write or draw your examples.

QUANTUM STRANGENESS AND SPACETIME

by Sherrill Roberts

(found at <http://www.strangemag.com/spacetime.html>)

The scientific premises suggesting a theoretical time travel mechanism are Einstein's Theory of Relativity and its successor, quantum mechanics. Einstein's inclusion of time as simply another basic dimension of physical reality, like width and height, and his mathematical equations using the speed of light as a cosmic "speed limit," paved the way for quantum mechanics' description of the physical universe in terms of black holes, singularities, and "cosmic strings," concepts which at times defy "rationality." MIT Professor Alan Guth has given us a concise summary of the Theory of Relativity: "Space tells matter how to move. Matter tells space how to curve."

If we envision the concept of spacetime as a bedsheet held at the four corners, we can immediately see these implications of Relativity if we place a tennis ball in the center of the sheet; the flat sheet of spacetime is distorted into a curve with the ball at the center, matter telling space how to curve. If we place a second ball on the surface, the new ball rolls toward the indentation made by the first, curved space telling matter how to move. If we place a bowling ball in the center of our flat spacetime, the indentation will be very deep, possibly tearing a hole in the fabric of our spacetime, a black hole. If we view spacetime from beneath the flat sheet, we will see the bowling ball as a protruding shape, the black hole has emerged on the "other side of time" as a white hole or possibly a wormhole.

Keeping this scenario in mind, it becomes clear that what is needed for time travel is an object which is massive enough to create a significant distortion of spacetime, something larger and heavier than a ping-pong ball on the surface of our bedsheet.

Questions and Stories about Time Travel: Imagine if we discovered how to travel through time. Create a list of "what if" questions or "I wonder" statements that reflect the implications of this discovery. Consider how time travel might affect government, personal relationships, commerce, history or morality. Once you have created a long list of questions and wonderings, choose one that is especially interesting and write a short story that elaborates on the possibilities.

Group Variation: Rather than writing short stories individually, create a group story by having each student write or speak one sentence at a time. Encourage students to think about the consequences of the actions of the characters in the story and create unexpected turns in the plot.

World Conflicts: Visit <http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/war/index.html> to see a current list of current World Conflicts. Then consider these discussion and activity ideas:

- What are the main causes for world conflicts? List reasons, then write a proposal for the best way to work toward peace.
- Locate and mark each conflict on a world map with a red dot, connecting countries in conflict with red lines. What do you notice? How could you create a map that shows peace? Why is a "peace map" more difficult to create?
- Immanuel Kant wrote, "Perpetual peace is no empty idea, but a practical thing which, through its gradual solution, is coming always nearer its final realization..." Do you agree with this statement? Can you envision a perpetually peaceful world? Write an essay describing what that world might be like.

All About Space: Here are some great questions to spark wondering about space travel, created by Nancy Polette at LitGuides. (<http://www.nancypolette.com/LitGuidesText/wrinkleintime.htm>) Find out:

1. How long would it take to get to Saturn by space shuttle?
2. Why does the sky look black from space?
3. What would happen if an astronaut took off her glove for a few seconds in space?
4. Do spiders spin the same kinds of webs in space as on the Earth?
5. Why can't the space shuttle visit the moon?
6. In pictures of the Shuttle, why do you not see any stars?
7. What have been the practical benefits of the space program?
8. Will humans be able to land on Jupiter in the next century?

BOOKS TO HELP:

To Space and Back by Sally K. Ride.
Lothrop, 1986

The Astronaut Training Book for Kids
by Kim Long. Lodestar 1990

Great Lives: Human Rights by William Jay Jacobs. Scribners 1990

Reading Activities

Prime Stage's mission, *bridging literature, life and learning*, encourages students to make personal connections to literature through meaningful, interactive exploration of the text and themes. **The activities below are intended to enliven, clarify and enrich the text as they read the novel.**

It Was a Dark and Stormy Night: If you read Chapter One aloud as a class, begin by creating a thunderstorm in the classroom. Begin by having students rub their hands together, creating the effect of soft rain. Then gradually begin to tap very lightly on laps or desks with fingertips. Slowly get louder, using the whole hand to tap, growing to a climax in which students use their feet to create the effect of thunder. Slowly work back again until the room is quiet and the storm passes. For extra fun, keep a "light rain" going in the classroom in the background as students read the first two paragraphs out loud.

Costume Designs: As you encounter the three Mrs. W's in the story, create a costume sketch imagining what they would look like. Use descriptions from the text to inform your drawing. What is clearly described in the text and what is left to your imagination? Compare pictures with classmates—how are they similar and different?

Sensory Descriptions: Choose a character from the story and write a character description using all five senses. (i.e. What would Mrs. Whatsit smell like? What is Calvin's favorite flavor? Describe the texture of Meg's hair. Etc.)

Space Travel Agency: Pretend you are an inter-planetary travel agent who books vacations to the planets in *A Wrinkle in Time*. (Earth, Uriel, The Happy Medium's Planet in Orion's Belt, Ixchel, Camazotz) Create a travel brochure highlighting the reasons to visit each location. Use the text to shape your descriptions, but add your own details and special flare as well!

In Defense of Chapter Three: During Chapter Three, Calvin comes over to the Murry's house for dinner. Why does L'Engle include this chapter in the book, rather than simply sending the kids off their adventure after Chapter Two? Do you think it is necessary to the rest of the book? Write a persuasive essay explaining whether or not you think this chapter is essential to the rest of the book.

Light and Dark Collage: How are Light and Dark used in imagery and symbolism in our culture? Using pictures from magazines, art samples, fashion, poetry, quotes, idioms or other examples, create a collage of images and words that reflect our interpretations of Light and Dark.



Costume rendering of Mrs. Who by Helen Q. Huang, Round House Theatre



The Tempest: Many allusions are made to Shakespeare's play *The Tempest* throughout *A Wrinkle in Time*. *The Tempest* tells of sailors who are shipwrecked on an island where they discover the banished duke named Prospero, who is also a powerful sorcerer. Also on the island are his daughter Miranda, his servant and the spirit Ariel. Prospero releases Ariel from imprisonment in a tree, only to enslave him. Prospero uses his magic to manipulate the sailors—with hilarious results.

Chart the similarities in plot between *The Tempest* and *A Wrinkle in Time*. Then write a comparison between Prospero and IT, Ariel and Mr. Murry. Why do you think Madeleine L'Engle made the connection between these two stories?

The Witch banishing Ariel to the Cloven Pine, Edmund Dulac Fairy Tale Paintings

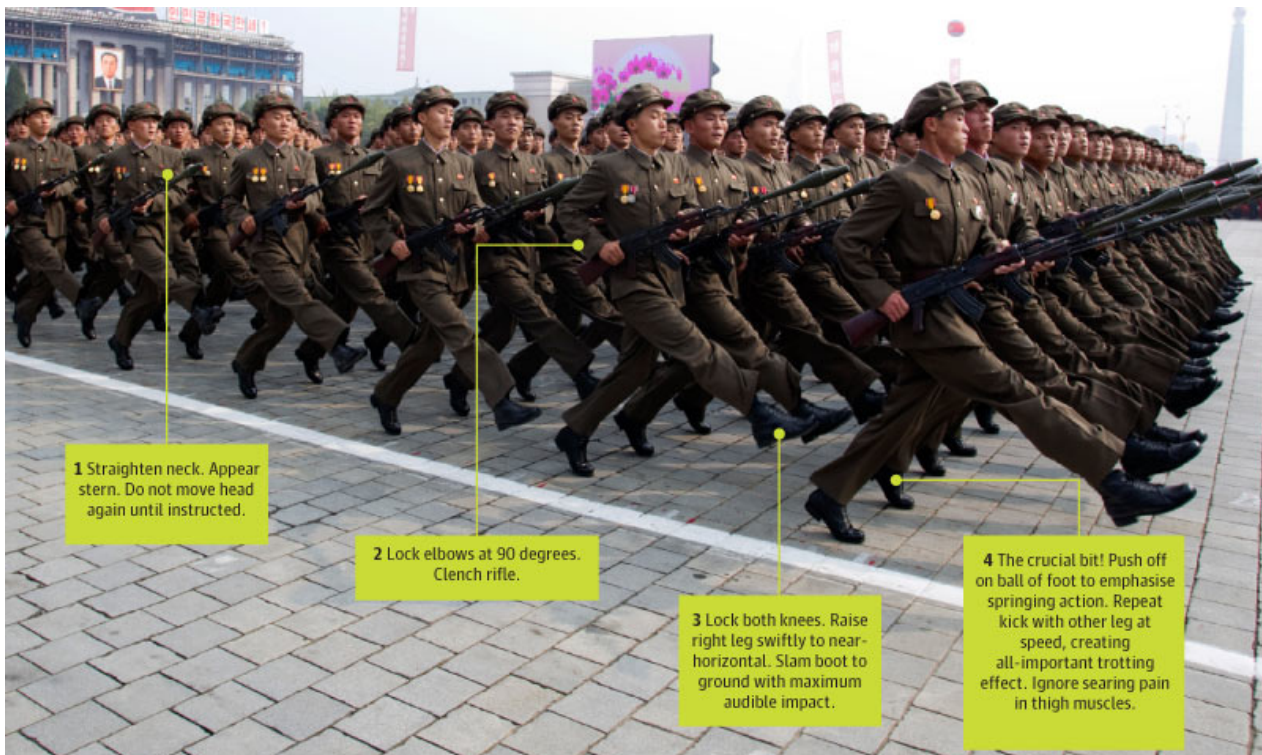
"...For that he was a spirit too delicate
To act their earthy and abhorr'd commands,
Refusing their grand hests, they did confine him
By help of their most potent ministers,
And in their most unmitigable rage,
Into a cloven pine; within which rift
Imprisoned, he didst painfully remain..."

Reading Activities (cont.)

All in Rhythm: All the people on Camazotz fall into the steady rhythmic pulse of IT. See what it is like to live in the same rhythm as everyone else by trying these rhythm games:

- **Leader in the Middle**—Form a circle. One person goes into the middle and makes a simple, repeatable movement and sound. All others imitate, trying to be exactly the same as the leader. Then, while still making the movement and sound, the leader makes eye contact with another person in the circle, inviting him to take her spot. As they change places, the others must slowly change movements until they are imitating the new leader. Discuss: *What are the challenges of trying to imitate the leader exactly? Is it easier to be the leader or the follower?*
- **Chaos to Unity**—Everyone in the class will make a rhythm of their own (clapping, tapping, vocal sounds, stomping, etc.) and all will perform their rhythms simultaneously, creating chaos. The group has thirty seconds to unify their rhythms. This should happen gradually, however, so that it the group becomes progressively more and more unified. Discuss: *How did you personally decide how to change your rhythm? How do you think the group came to unity - was there a leader or not?*
- **Who is the Leader?** - One student leaves the room. The others form a circle and secretly choose one leader who slowly leads body movements. The first student returns to the room has one minute to try to guess who the leader is. Once students have played a couple rounds of the game, throw a curve ball by assigning no leader at all. Rather the group must try to regulate itself as a whole... but sometimes the guesser still thinks there is a leader! Discuss: *How can the people in the circle keep the identity of the leader secret? What kinds of movements are most successful in this game? What makes a good leader? How can the group stay together with no leader—or can it?*
- **School of Fish**— In a large open space, gather a group of about seven or eight people standing closely together, all facing the same direction. The student that seems to be the most in the front (facing forward) begins to move forward, leading with creative movements. (Use arms, hips, head, high and low levels, fast and slow movements, etc.) The others in the group must follow her lead as closely as possible. Once the leader turns around, another person is most in the front (facing forward) and leadership is seamlessly passed along to the new leader. This experience should look and feel like a school of fish swimming together through the ocean. Discuss: *When is unified movement beautiful and when is it unnerving to you?*

This picture shows the North Korean Military demonstrating their signature “goosestep” marching style. Compare this picture to the Chapter Six in *A Wrinkle in Time*, where the children all bounce the ball at the same time. Write a monologue which describes what one of the soldiers might be thinking at the moment this picture was taken. What might he fear? What might he be proud about? What might be most important to him?



How To March Like the North Korean Military by Leo Hickman, guardian.co.uk, October 2010—Photograph: Dan Chung for the Guardian

Reading Activities (cont.)

Extra-Sensory: Generally, we think about our world in terms of our five senses... but many characters in *A Wrinkle in Time* interpret their surroundings in ways that are more difficult to explain. Consider times that you've had gut feelings, vibes or intuitions. How important are these extra-sensory responses to your decision-making in general? Do you trust these senses? Write a narrative essay describing a time when you had these feelings and describe how they influenced you.

Special Effects: One of the challenges of presenting *A Wrinkle in Time* as a play, is figuring out how to portray the things and events that do not exist. And remember, the theatre is different than the movies—no CGI! Choose one of the parts of the book below, then describe how you would solve the problem of presenting it on stage. Use words, pictures or diagrams to explain your idea.

- **Tessering:** How would you create the effect of disappearing from one place and suddenly reappearing in another? Consider this phrase from Chapter Four: "It wasn't that Calvin wasn't there and then that he was. It wasn't that part of him came first and then the rest of him followed, like a hand and then an arm, an eye and then a nose. It was a sort of shimmering, a looking at Calvin through water, through smoke, through fire, and then there he was, solid and reassuring."
- **Mrs. Whatsit's Transformation:** From Chapter Four: "Outwardly Mrs. Whatsit was surely no longer a Mrs. Whatsit. She was a marble white body with powerful flanks, something like a horse, for from the magnificently modeled back sprang a nobly formed torso, arms, and a head resembling a man's, but a man with a perfection of dignity and virtue, an exaltation of joy such as Meg had never before seen. No, she thought, it's not like a Greek centaur. Not in the least. From the shoulders slowly a pair of wings unfolded, wings made of rainbows, of light upon water, of poetry."
- **Ixchel's Creatures:** From Chapter Ten: "They were the same dull gray color as the flowers. If they hadn't walked upright they would have seemed like animals. They had four arms and far more than five fingers to each hand, and the fingers were not fingers, but long waving tentacles. They had heads, and they had faces. But where the faces of the creatures on Uriel had seemed far more than human faces, these seemed far less. Where the features would normally be there were several indentations, and in place of ears and hair were more tentacles."



Travel Gifts: The Mrs. W's give the children special gifts to help them on their time travel adventures. If you were traveling through time and space, what gifts would you like to receive and from whom? Would you prefer objects or knowledge to help you with your travels? What else might you like to bring along? Make a list or draw a picture of the things you want to have when you travel to another planet. Be sure to explain why the items are important to you. **Variation:** The class could bring in real objects or quotes and pack a group suitcase, with each student explaining why they've brought their object.

Foreign Places: The children in *A Wrinkle in Time* travel to many strange places. Have you ever been to a place that felt completely foreign to you? What a narrative essay describing what seemed most unusual to you and how you dealt with the unfamiliarities. Also consider how you might have seemed unfamiliar to others in this new scenario.

TAKE THE
Prime Stage Theatre Challenge



The fun begins April 9th, 2012
www.primestage.com

The Prime Stage Challenge is an online game designed to connect your students' experience before, during and after the performance!

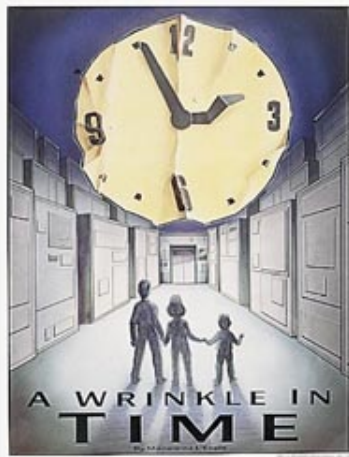
Show what you know to earn a clue that will be revealed during the show!

After the show, share your ideas with other schools via the Prime Stage Facebook page and earn Prime Stage Perks!

Post-Reading and Post-Performance Activities

Prime Stage's mission, *bridging literature, life and learning*, encourages students to reflect on their learning. **The activities below are intended to provide opportunity to synthesize the learning and make personal meaning after they have read the text or attended the performance.**

If You Want Something Done Right...: At the beginning of the story Meg feels like everything will turn out all right if only her father were there. But when she rescues him, she's disappointed to learn that he is only human and can not magically solve all of her problems. In the end, she learns that she must take control of her problems and can't wait for others to solve them for her. Write a journal entry from Meg's point of view reflecting on how her image of herself has changed from the beginning of the story when she was a social outcast, to the end.

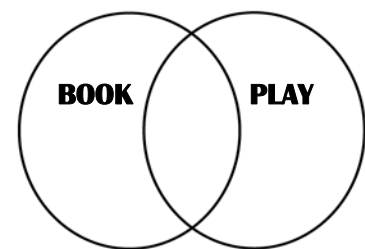


Surprising Choices: What surprised you about this production by Prime Stage Theatre? Consider the costumes, set design, music, lighting, special effects, acting and directing. What do you think motivated the production team or actors to make the choice that surprised you? Were they trying to solve a unique problem, create a strong response from the audience, make a creative statement or address some other need? Write a statement describing the surprising choice, explaining why you think it was part of the production and whether or not you thought it was a good choice.

Meaningful Moments Poster: Choose five-eight moments from the performance (or the book) that made the most lasting impressions on you. Using pictures and words create your own poster for the play. Try to capture the emotional quality of the performance as you experience it. Try to use the same colors, light quality and textures that you observed in the performance. Your final poster should give the viewer an authentic understanding of what it felt like to be an audience member.

Before and After Pictures: Draw two pictures... one showing your experience of reading the book, the other showing your experience of attending the play. How are the pictures the same? How are they different?

Variation: Create a Venn diagram with the class comparing the experiences of reading a book and seeing a performance. Is one better than the other? How does one experience inform or enhance the other?



I Give You Your Faults: Meg finally realizes that her faults are actually her greatest strengths. Do you have a quality that could be considered both a strength and a weakness? Write a short piece describing this quality and how it has worked for and against you.

Things Have Changed: At the end of the story, much has changed for the characters. Meg has discovered her strengths, Mr. Murry has returned home, Calvin has found a family in which he fits, etc. Consider how these personal changes might affect their behavior and interaction with the community. Write a short follow-up chapter for the book in which one of the following things happens:

- Mr. Murry and Meg go to the post office together and meet the nosy post office lady.
- As Meg and Charles Wallace come home from school, the bullies call him stupid.
- The boys on the basketball team tease Calvin for hanging out with Meg.

Many Morals of the Story: The main messages of *A Wrinkle in Time* centers on Meg's experience and personal journey. However, each of the other characters might have taken away a different lesson from the experience. Write a sentence for MR. MURRY, CALVIN, MRS. MURRY and CHARLES WALLACE which sums up the lesson they learned as a result of their adventure.

Attending the Performance

House rules (...and we don't mean your mama's house!)

It goes without saying that when most children today hear the word "theatre" they think "Oh, MOVIE theatre." And with that thought comes all of those things that we do at movie theatres: eat popcorn, drink noisily from soda cups, put feet on the seat, text message—and the list goes on from there. But live theatre is just that: it's LIVE with LIVE HUMANS who react and respond to the audience, something that we at Prime Stage think is the beauty of the theatre experience. Because of this, live theatre requires a higher level of respect between the audience and performer in order for the experience to be a positive one.

Please review the following "house rules" with your students prior to attending our production:

—Please stay together with your group and wait for the ushers to help you all find your seats.

—Please turn all cell phones and pagers **completely off** before the performance. If you are texting during the performance, you will be asked to leave.

—No photography or video taping.

—Please stay in your seat until the intermission or the end of the show.

—No eating, drinking, or chewing gum during the performance or inside the theatre house.

—While we encourage active listening and appropriate responses to the play such as laughing or clapping, please do not talk to your neighbors during the performance.

—Be polite and attentive. Show your appreciation by clapping—the actors love to see how much you enjoyed the show!

PDE Academic Standards 1.6, 9.1

Thinking Like a Critic

Critics play a very important role in theatre. They are often the first to see the show and can write a wonderful—or a horrendous—review for all the world to see. Prepare your students to attend the show by "thinking like a critic."

Read the following questions before the show.

Think about the questions as you're watching the show and write your answers in a notebook or journal during intermission or on the bus ride home.

Write a critique of the show based on your responses.

PDE Academic Standards 9.1-9.4, 1.4-1.5



"I would rather be attacked than unnoticed. For the worst thing you can do to an author is to be silent as to his works. An attack upon a town is a bad thing; but starving it is still even worse." ~ author Samuel Johnson (1709-1784)

Actor choices—How did they move and speak? Did they seem like people we know? How did they relate to other characters?

Designer choices—What design element captured your attention the most—the set, costumes, lights, or sound—and why? How did the design elements work together to support the entire production? What choices did the designers make in materials, colors, intensity, detail, etc.? Were the design elements more descriptive or suggestive? What symbols were in the design elements?

Director choices—What was the style, pace, and rhythm of the play? What stage pictures helped to tell the story? How did the director unify all the elements of the production?

Interpretation—Did the director make a statement about life now? How did the characters, design, and play make you feel? What did the play mean to you? What might it mean to others?

Evaluation—Why do you suppose the playwright wrote the play? Why was the play produced now? When were moments where the storytelling was very clear? When were moments you were confused about the story? Who would enjoy the play and why?

Remember—it's all about choices! Whether you loved the play or not, identify the specific choices that made you feel that way!



Bringing Literature to Life

new hazlett theater
center for the performing arts

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E-mail: studentmat@primestage.com

BOOKED YOUR TICKETS YET???

Prime Stage Theatre's student matinees for *A Wrinkle in Time* will be held May 15, 16 and 17, 2012. All performances begin at 10 AM at the New Hazlett Theater and are followed by a brief post-show chat session.

Tickets are \$10 per student.

Book tickets by emailing studentmat@primestage.com or calling 412.841.7353.

Matinees fill up quickly so BOOK EARLY!

Discussion Questions

1. What would you say is the main theme of *A Wrinkle in Time*? Do you feel it was intended to teach a moral lesson?
2. Which character do you think made the greatest personal transformation and why?
3. Do you think the playwright makes a judgment about government or politics? What evidence can you find?
4. The people on Camazotz have no crime, no responsibility and no decisions to make. So what's the evil?
5. Why do you think Charles Wallace trusts the Mrs. W's? Even though the three ladies are so odd, why do you think the children trust them?
6. Discuss the role of religion in *A Wrinkle in Time*. Do you feel it L'Engle was trying to make a religious statement through this book? Do you think she was trying to make an anti-religious statement?
7. Why must Meg go alone to Camazotz?
8. Do you believe IT was defeated at the end of the book? Why or why not?

PDE Academic Standards 1.1, 1.3, 1.6

Resources for your Classroom

INTERNET RESOURCES

Madeleine L'Engle's official website with books and interviews.
<http://www.madeleinelengle.com/>

Biographies of many of the historical figures listed in the book.
<http://www.blupete.com/Literature.htm>

Mind-blowing pictures of space taken from NASA cameras.
<http://www.jpl.nasa.gov/spaceimages/>

PBS special on Time Travel with Carl Sagan.
<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/nova/time/>

NOVA—The Fabric of the Cosmos.
<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/nova/physics/fabric-of-cosmos.html>

DVD

A Wrinkle in Time. Walt Disney Home Entertainment. 2004.
(Note that Madeleine L'Engle did *not* endorse this movie.)

BOOKS

PeaceJam: A Billion Simple Acts of Peace by Ivan SuvanjiEFF, Dawn Gifford Engle. Puffin, 2008.

To Space and Back by Sally K. Ride. Lothrop, 1986

The Astronaut Training Book for Kids by Kim Long. Lodestar 1990

Great Lives: Human Rights by William Jay Jacobs. Scribners 1990

AUDIO BOOK

A Wrinkle in Time read by Madeleine L'Engle. Listening Library, 2006.