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Matilda

Marking and Assessment Guide

Opening- Level 4 Questions

1. Matilda's parents look upon her as 'nothing more than a scab' – something you have to put up with until you can finally flick it away. Answers may use quotations or paraphrase this information, and should use the word 'scab'. (AF2)

2. Mrs Phelps, the librarian, is concerned about Matilda's safety because she is left alone every afternoon while her mother goes to play bingo, and she walks to the library alone, across a busy road. (AF2)

3. Answer should show children can interpret Matilda's father's expression (two red spots) as showing anger. He is angry because Matilda has dared to call him a cheat. L5 answers would go on to explain that he is especially angry because he knows he is being dishonest, but doesn't want his daughter to point this out to him. (AF3)

4. Mrs Phelps is 'fascinated' by Matilda because she is so young, all alone and apparently a brilliant reader. Answers should paraphrase some of this information and could go on to mention Mrs Phelps' concern for Matilda's safety leading her to take on a parental role, as well as giving Matilda advice about her book choices. (AF3)

5. Answers will vary depending on personal viewpoint, but should suggest that the story starts with a discussion of parenting to introduce the reader to the main theme of the book, e.g. parents and children, or families. It is also a funny discussion which gives us a clue about the style of the writing. L5 answers may go on to suggest that the initial discussion of 'ordinary children' sets the scene for an 'extraordinary' child (Matilda) to enter the story. (AF4)

6. Answer should show an understanding that the terms 'extraordinary', 'sensitive' and 'brilliant' give the reader an impression of a fascinating and exciting character, e.g. I think the words make the reader want to keep reading and find out more about Matilda and what is going to happen to her in the story, or I think the words give the reader clues about Matilda's personality and suggest that something extraordinary might happen in the book. (AF5)

7. Answers will vary depending on personal preference / opinion, but should refer to a specific section of the text and explain why Matilda is justified or not justified in her desire for revenge, e.g. Matilda's father is so horrible to her in Chapter 2 that I think he deserves to be taught a lesson, or Even though Matilda is badly treated by both her parents, who shout at her for wanting to read a book, I don't think she should sink to their level and get involved in playing nasty tricks on them. (AF6)

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Opening- Level 5 Questions

- 1.Children can choose any appropriate quotation to describe the way Matilda's parents treat her, e.g. 'Mr and Mrs Wormwood looked forward enormously to the time when they could pick their little daughter off and flick her away.' or 'Nearly every weekday afternoon Matilda was left alone in the house.' or 'I doubt they would have noticed had she crawled into the house with a broken leg.' (AF2)
- 2.Children should show in their answer that they can summarise the key events of the story without including unnecessary detail, e.g. Matilda learns about her father's dishonest business dealings, is ignored and treated unkindly by her parents and ends the chapter feeling very angry about this unfair treatment. (AF2)
- 3.Answers are most likely to suggest Matilda is unusual because she learns to read very young and is very clever for a small child (or similar evidence), but could also suggest that she is unusually perceptive about adult behaviour (able to see through her father), unusually confident (challenges her father and sets off to the library on her own) and unusually self-motivated (chooses books over TV!). Any reasons acceptable with clear arguments backed up with evidence from the book. (AF3)
4. Answers will vary but should paraphrase evidence from the two chapters, as well as including some personal inference. For example, I think reading is important to Matilda because she is clever and likes learning new things, as well as providing an escape for her from her awful family, or I think reading is so important to Matilda because she likes to feel right on the spot watching it all happen and get lost in stories, rather than watch TV with her unkind family. (AF3)
- 5.Children should be able to identify the text type as a narrative. Answers should refer to at least two features that support their assertion, e.g. third person, past tense, time connectives, chronological order, personal details/anecdotes, facts/dates, emotive language or similar. The best answers will make reference to Roald Dahl's style as well, e.g. funny, gruesome, shocking.. (AF4)
- 6.Answer should define the phrase 'dirty money' as money that has come from dishonesty or cheating (or similar) and explain that Matilda doesn't want to be involved in anything that involves taking advantage of other people. L5 answers might go on to explain why Matilda's use of this term makes her father so angry, e.g. he doesn't like having his business dealings criticized by a small girl, and fears getting caught doing something wrong. (AF5)
- 7.The story is told from the narrator's point of view, but we find out a lot about Matilda's point of view too, and children's answers should refer to at least one piece of evidence from the text, e.g. the first chapter opens with the third person and gives clues about what will happen to Matilda, or The narrator/author is telling the story but we find out a lot about Matilda's feelings, like when she feels angry with her parents at the end of Chapter 2, so we see her viewpoint too. Any appropriate evidence is acceptable. (AF6)
- 8.Answers will vary according to personal opinion, but should refer to effective features of good openings (e.g. introducing characters using interesting details, giving clues about the story, setting the scene, building up the tension) and then find evidence in the story of this particular feature, e.g. I think this is a good opening because we find out something really unusual about Matilda early on in Chapter 1, or I don't like this opening because the first few pages don't even mention Matilda. (AF7)

Matilda

Marking and Assessment Guide

Middle- Level 4 Questions

1. Answer should include examples of words and phrases used in Chapter 10 by Hortensia to describe Miss Trunchbull, e.g. 'she hates very small children', 'the Prince of Darkness', 'the Foul Serpent', 'the Fiery Dragon', 'terrifically strong', 'formidable figure' or similar. Children should use at least 2 examples. (AF2)
2. Answer should include examples of words and phrases used in Chapter 11 by Miss Trunchbull to describe Bruce Bogtrotter, e.g. 'clot', 'blackhead', 'foul carbuncle', 'poisonous pustule', 'disgusting criminal', 'denizen of the underworld', 'member of the Mafia', 'thief', 'crook', 'pirate', 'brigand', 'rustler', 'miserable little gumboil', 'suppurating little blister', 'robber-bandit', 'safe-cracker', 'highwayman' or similar. Children should use at least 2 examples. (AF2)
3. Answers should infer from Matilda's behaviour that she feels frightened, 'mesmerized', worried, angry, uncertain or similar, after hearing Hortensia's terrifying stories of Miss Trunchbull's behaviour. (AF3)
4. Answer should demonstrate that children understand the battle going on between Miss Trunchbull and Bruce / the whole school. The Trunchbull has planned a horrible, humiliating punishment for Bruce and she is very powerful, so when it seems possible that Bruce might win, the whole school is with him and celebrates with a cheer. (AF4)
5. Answers should find evidence of aspects of the plot that link back to the opening, e.g. The battle between children and grown-ups at school links back to the battle between Matilda and her parents at home, in the first few chapters, or Matilda uses her brilliant brain to understand the situation, linking back to the introduction, where we find out about how clever and unusual she is. (AF4)
6. This will be a personal opinion, but should explain how the terrifying description of 'The Chokey' makes them feel, e.g. It makes me feel frightened for Matilda because she might have to go to that terrible place if Miss Trunchbull decides to pick on her, or It makes me angry that an adult and a teacher could treat children so cruelly. (AF5)
7. Answer should explain that creating nasty and revolting characters is a good technique for adding suspense / tension / excitement to the story and making the reader want to know more. L5 answers will go on to describe how Roald Dahl was writing for children, and knew that children love to read about disgusting or horrible or nasty things! (AF6)
8. Answers will vary and there is no correct answer, but children must use evidence from the story. For example, I think this story is set in the past because teachers wouldn't be allowed to act like that in a school now, or I think this story is set in the present because the way the children talk is similar to the way I talk to my friends, or I think the story is set in the future because I can't believe any school like this can exist in the past or present! (AF7)

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Marking and Assessment Guide

Middle- Level 5 Questions

1. Children can choose any appropriate quotation that Hortensia uses to scare Matilda, e.g. 'she thinks five-year-olds are grubs that haven't yet hatched out', 'many don't survive', 'they get carried out on stretchers screaming', 'have you heard about The Chokey?', 'she has a nasty habit of guessing' or similar. (AF2)
2. Children should show in their answer that they can summarise what they know about Miss Trunchbull, without including unnecessary detail, e.g. Miss Trunchbull is a formidable woman, who hates small children and thinks nothing of inflicting terrible punishments for the slightest misdemeanours, or Ruling the school with a fist of iron, Miss Trunchbull is huge, terrifying, strong and utterly without mercy. (AF2)
3. Children should use their own words to describe how Matilda's feelings go from concern to horror. At the beginning of the chapter she is reasonably calm and content, but after hearing Hortensia's stories of The Trunchbull she is worried, frightened and angry. (AF3)
4. Children should use their own words to describe how Miss Trunchbull's feelings go from triumph to anxiety to fury as she sees her carefully planned punishment gradually fail. She expects to humiliate Bruce and teach him a lesson, but he manages to eat the whole cake and get a cheer from the school, making her so angry she smashes a plate over his head. (AF3)
5. Answers should use evidence from the story (quotation or paraphrased) to describe techniques used to build up the tension during Bruce's ordeal, e.g. All the action is taking place on stage, in front of the whole school who are nervously waiting, everyone knows something terrible is going to happen but Miss Trunchbull takes a long time to announce the punishment, use of short sentences, shocking language, threats and the contrast between Miss Trunchbull pretending to be nice, and screaming. (AF4)
6. Children should explain the meaning of 'glittering with fury' (she is so angry the children can see her fury dancing in her eyes), before going on to give their own opinion on the effectiveness of these vocabulary choices, e.g. I think 'glittering with fury' is an effective phrase because it paints a picture of Miss Trunchbull's rage, and also helps the reader imagine how Bruce and the other children might be feeling. (AF5)
7. Answers will vary widely, but any relevant idea is acceptable, with reference to the text, e.g. If I was Matilda, I would try to persuade Lavender to help me think of a plan to get rid of Miss Trunchbull so all the children could be safe, or If I was Matilda, I would trap Miss Trunchbull in The Chokey, and ring the Police! (AF6)
8. Answers will depend on personal reading, but children may suggest other Roald Dahl stories or any other authors who use humour, e.g. Horrid Henry, Diary of a Wimpy Kid, Jacqueline Wilson, Quentin Blake etc. Answers should give clear evidence comparing the styles.

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Ending- Level 4 Questions

1. The class sit 'silent, apprehensive, waiting' because they are nervous about Miss Trunchbull's arrival after what happened the last time she taught the class. (AF2)
2. Miss Honey thinks Matilda has lost her power because she now has an outlet or challenge for her enormous brain. Miss Honey thinks Matilda's powers came to her as a result of being bored and frustrated. (AF2)
3. Answers should infer that Miss Trunchbull's face turns as white as snow because she is frightened, shocked, unnerved, feels like she has seen a ghost, because the words that Matilda is making the chalk write on the blackboard are addressed to her from her dead brother! (AF3)
4. Children should find evidence in the text to support their opinion, e.g. The children feel delighted because they will no longer have to spend their entire time at school living in fear, or The children feel relieved that Miss Trunchbull has finally got what she deserved, and they can get on with learning and making friends at school. Answers can paraphrase but should give evidence from the story. (AF3)
5. Answers may include any example that refers back to an earlier section of the story, e.g. The final chapter describes Mr Wormwood's criminal behaviour that is described in Chapter 2, or The end of the story links back to Miss Honey's Story when she finally gets the house and money that are rightfully hers, or similar. (AF4)
6. Answer will be a personal opinion, but could refer to any section of the text where Matilda is the key character, e.g. I think Matilda is a good name for the book because Matilda is the character that keeps the action going, or I don't think Matilda is a good name for the book because it doesn't give you any clues about what might happen in the story. (AF5)
7. Any relevant ideas are acceptable, e.g. I think Matilda is wondering what her future will hold, and whether she will ever see her parents again, or I think Matilda is looking forward to living with Miss Honey and talking about lots of exciting things together. (AF6)
8. Answers must give a clear opinion supported by a reason, e.g. I was surprised Matilda stayed with Miss Honey, but relieved that she didn't have to go with her awful family, or I was expecting Matilda to stay with Miss Honey, and wouldn't change this because she would never have been happy with her parents. (AF7)

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Ending- Level 5 Questions

1. 'The most sensational bit of news of all' is when Miss Trunchbull is so overcome by the words on the blackboard that she faints to the floor. All the children leap up to have a look. (AF2)
2. Answers should show an understanding that Matilda's family have to leave their house because Mr Wormwood has been involved in criminal activity, and is frightened of being caught, either by the Police or the other criminals! Children should paraphrase or quote Miss Honey's explanation. (AF2)
3. Answers will vary depending on personal opinion, but must be supported by some evidence from the text, e.g. I think Miss Trunchbull treats the children badly because she wants everyone to be as miserable as she is, or I think Miss Trunchbull treats the children badly because she had a horrible time at school and she wants other children to suffer like she did. (AF3)
4. Answers should infer from Matilda and Miss Honey's behaviour that they don't need to speak to each other because they are both so happy there is nothing to say. Other reasons are acceptable, e.g. they are both so tired after everything that has happened that they don't want to speak, as long as supported by knowledge of the story. (AF3)
5. Children can choose any alternative title, as long as they explain it with reference to the text. (AF4)
6. There is no right answer, but children must use their knowledge of the story and their understanding of the word 'heaven' to explain their opinion, e.g. Heaven means a wonderful or ideal place, so I think it is a good word to describe Miss Honey's feelings when Matilda decides to stay with her. (AF5)
7. Answers will vary depending on each child's opinion, but should be backed up by sound argument, e.g. I think Matilda was right to trick Miss Trunchbull because she had behaved so appallingly towards the children and Miss Honey that she deserved to be taught a lesson, or I don't think Matilda was right to trick Miss Trunchbull because it's never right to mislead people or tell lies, and she should have gone to the Police. (AF6)
8. Answers will vary widely, but should focus on why this story is interesting or worth telling, e.g. I think Roald Dahl chose to write this story because Matilda is such an interesting character and her powers create lots of possible adventures, or I think Roald Dahl chose to write this story because he wanted to show that grown-ups aren't always right and children sometimes have the power to change their lives. (AF7)