

Literacy Skills Teacher's Guide for Charlie and the Great Glass Elevator by Roald Dahl

Book Information

Roald Dahl, Charlie and the Great Glass Elevator

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Book Level: 4.4

Interest Level: MG

Taking up where *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory* leaves off, Charlie, his family, and Mr. Wonka find themselves launched into space in the great glass elevator.

Topics: Fantasy/Imagination, Fantasy;
Humor/Funny, Funny; READNOW - Demco
Media Turtleback Books, Demco Media -
Read Now Grades 6-8

Main Characters

Charlie Bucket the hero of the story and owner of the Chocolate Factory

Grandpa George and Grandma Georgina Mrs. Bucket's father and mother

Grandpa Joe and Grandma Josephine Mr. Bucket's father and mother

Lancelot R. Gilligrass the President of the United States

Miss Tibbs the Vice-President of the United States, who is also the President's nanny

Mr. and Mrs. Bucket Charlie's father and mother

Mr. Willy Wonka the chocolate-maker, adventurer, and owner of the Great Glass Elevator

Oompa-Loompas the kind, considerate workers in the Chocolate Factory

Shuckworth, Shanks, and Showler the three famous astronauts flying the Commuter Capsule, which is attacked by the Vermicious Knids

Vermicious Knids the murderous beasts from the planet Vermes

Vocabulary

colossal enormous, gigantic

desperadoes dangerous criminals

driveling talking nonsense, babbling

malevolent evil, wicked

rasped scraped or grated with a pointed file

trifle a small amount

whooshing a rushing sound

Synopsis

As the story *Charlie and the Great Glass Elevator* begins, Charlie Bucket, his parents, his four grandparents, and Mr. Wonka are riding upwards in the Great Glass Elevator on their way to the Chocolate Factory. The factory now belongs to Charlie. While Grandpa Joe has gotten out of bed to tour the Chocolate Factory with Charlie, the other three grandparents still refuse to get out of bed, where they have been for more than twenty years.

Mr. Wonka explains to all of his passengers that they must go higher before they can come down because they must "be going at an absolutely sizzling speed" on the way down so they can break through the roof of the Chocolate Factory. Timing and concentration are very important to prevent the elevator from going too high. Unfortunately, Grandma Josephine distracts Mr. Wonka at a critical moment, and neither he nor Charlie is able to reach the correct button in time to stop the elevator from going into orbit. By going into orbit the three grandparents are forced out of bed. Everyone is floating around the elevator!

The Great Glass Elevator with its eight passengers is not the only thing in orbit. The United States had successfully launched its first Space Hotel two days before. In addition, racing towards the Space Hotel is a large Commuter Capsule containing three famous astronauts and the entire staff for the hotel. The Commuter Capsule sights the elevator and mistakes the eight people inside for spies. Houston Ground Control, the President of the United States, and his Cabinet and staff all try to figure out if the eight in the elevator are Russian or Chinese spies, hotel competitors, or aliens. A panic grips the world as everyone watches the adventure on television.

The elevator reaches the Space Hotel before the Commuter Capsule and links up to the hotel. Mr.

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Wonka and Charlie and his family discover a beautiful hotel totally infested with alien creatures called Vermicious Knids. All of the eight passengers will be killed if they do not hurry back to the safety of the elevator. Shortly thereafter, the Commuter Capsule arrives at the Space Hotel, but its passengers are not as lucky as the elevator passengers. Most commuter passengers escape from the Vermicious Knids, but some are killed. The Commuter Capsule is heavily damaged by repeated attacks by the Vermicious Knids as it attempts to escape and return to Earth since it is not Knid proof like the Great Glass Elevator. Charlie and Mr. Wonka must save the Commuter Capsule by towing it into the earth's atmosphere where it is finally safe from the Vermicious Knids.

When the Commuter Capsule is safe, the Great Glass Elevator and its passengers continue their journey to the Chocolate Factory. Once there, Mr. Wonka hopes the three bedridden grandparents will finally get out of bed and help Charlie run the factory. They refuse, so Mr. Wonka introduces the grandparents to his Wonka-Vite pills, which will reverse their aging process and rejuvenate them. However, greed sets in, and the grandparents take too many pills. One becomes a minus two-year-old, and the other two become babies. Mr. Wonka and Charlie go to Minusland to save Grandma Georgina by reversing the process of the Wonka-Vite pill with the Vita-Wonk pill, and more adventures take place.

Even after the grandparents return to their normal ages, they continue to stay in their bed of twenty years and refuse to leave it. While they are discussing this, the Oompa-Loompas bring an invitation from the President of the United States to board the helicopter he has waiting outside the Chocolate Factory gates and come to the White House for a party. The bed will not fit into the helicopter so the grandparents must get out of bed if they are to go to the party and meet the President. They finally let their feet touch the floor when they run to board the helicopter and go to the White House. All of this takes place in one busy day.

Open-Ended Questions

Use these open-ended questions as the basis for class discussions, student presentations, or extended writing assignments.

Initial Understanding

In the early chapters of the book, after the Great Glass Elevator and its occupants have gone into orbit, we find them leading a race toward the Space Hotel "U.S.A." They arrive shortly before the Commuter Capsule with the hotel staff and astronauts. How is this important?

By arriving first, Mr. Wonka is able to identify the danger they all are facing from the Vermicious Knids. He can understand the threats and lead the others to safety. Because the occupants of the Elevator are safe, they are able to save the others. If the Commuter Capsule had arrived first, all its passengers may have been killed.

Literary Analysis

Mr. Wonka tells the reader in this story "...that nearly all people in the world behave badly when there is something really big at stake." What does Mr. Wonka mean by this?

While people often fight over money, in this story the pills are the big stake items. People become selfish and greedy over the pills. They are so intent on having the most, they do not pay attention to instructions for taking the pills. Their squabbling results in Grandma Georgina going to Minusland and Grandma Josephine and Grandpa George becoming babies.

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Inferential Comprehension

Mr. Wonka invents the Wonka-Vite pills, which have an effect similar to the "fountain of youth" that human beings have been seeking for centuries. Rejuvenation continues to be a goal for some human beings. Do you believe that it is possible to invent or discover something that could reverse the aging process?

With scientific developments as they are today, anything seems possible. Many doctors and nutritionists believe that vitamins, exercise, and proper diet promote good health and slow or even reverse the aging process. Some promote the idea of gene alteration which might alter the aging process. Others, however, believe in the inevitability of death and that it is important to "let nature take its course."

Constructing Meaning

When Mr. Wonka tells the bedridden grandparents about Wonka-Vite he says, "...listen carefully because this could change your whole lives. It could even change you." Do the grandparents change?

Despite being reluctant to accept the Wonka-Vite pills at first, the grandparents do take them, and even fight over them. They have been grumpy, crabby people, and fighting over the valuable pills only makes them greedy and selfish as well. They go through various stages of change after taking the pills including infancy, Minusland, and extreme old age before returning to their original ages. Their personalities seem to improve after their experiences. They do not argue and disagree as much as before.

Teachable Skills

Responding to Literature The Oompa-Loompas sing a song telling the story of Goldie Pinklesweet and how she took pills she should not have taken. Have students write a song or poem telling the story about a real or imagined event. Each song or poem should have a major character and have an event in it which has a consequence. Have the students read the poem or sing the

song aloud to the class.

Recognizing Details In the story *Charlie and the Great Glass Elevator*, the author provides detailed descriptions of the Great Glass Elevator and the Space Hotel. Have the students choose the one they find most fascinating. Have them draw a detailed picture or create a model to show its features.

Making Inferences Mr. Wonka invents many things: the Great Glass Elevator, Wonka-Vite, Vita-Wonk, the Chocolate Factory, and special languages. Have the students write an essay about one of Mr. Wonka's inventions that would change the world. Be specific in what changes would occur.

Understanding the Author's Craft Mr. Wonka gives detailed recipes for the making of the Wonka-Vite and the Vita-Wonk pills. He also tells what each pill does. Have the students use their imaginations to invent a pill for a purpose of their choice, such as to cure an illness or to change an individual. Have each student list ingredients and write instructions for making the pill. Each student should name the pill and state its purpose. Collect all recipes and put them together into a recipe book. Have the class name its recipe book.