

# ***A WRINKLE IN TIME:*** **FIVE LESSON PLANS**



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commissioned by



# LESSON PLAN ONE: WHAT'S NORMAL, ANYWAY?

“‘My, but isn’t he cunning.’ Mrs. Whatsit beamed at him fondly. ‘It’s lucky he has someone to understand him.’

‘But I’m afraid he doesn’t,’ Mrs. Murray said. ‘None of us is quite up to Charles.’

‘But at least you aren’t trying to squash him down.’ Mrs. Whatsit nodded her head vigorously. ‘You’re letting him be himself.’”

—Madeleine L’Engle, *A Wrinkle in Time*

How are you normal? How are you different? In *A WRINKLE IN TIME*, both Meg and her brother Charles Wallace feel that they are outsiders; they feel less than “normal.” But what IS “normal” and is it something that we really want to be?

**AIM: *How can we relate to our classmates/ensemble members? How do we honor our differences?***

## **STEP ONE: Tableau work**

Like a painting or a statue in a museum, a tableau is a theatrical “frozen picture” in which actors are positioned to show a moment in time.

First, discuss with students what normal, everyday actions are, ie. brushing your teeth, walking the dog. On chart paper, create a menu of what the students offer.

Next in groups of three or four, create tableaux (plural for “tableau”) describing what you think some of these “normal” actions should look like. Share these stage pictures with the whole class.

Next have the groups adjust their tableau. How can we make this normal activity “not normal”? What do you think “not normal” should look like (in *A WRINKLE IN TIME*, “not normal” is also called “weird,” “strange” or “scary”)?

Show your tableaux to the rest of the group. How are the tableaux different? How are they the same?

## **STEP TWO: Writing work**

Take fifteen minutes and write out brief answers to these questions:

- Describe your family and friends?

- Describe your school?
- What makes you happy?
- What inspires you? What do you do to challenge yourself?
- What do you do for fun?
- What do you do to cheer yourself up?
- What are your goals?

**STEP THREE: Interview work**

Split your class or group into smaller groups of two. Each set of partners will spend fifteen minutes comparing their answers to the questions above. What do you have in common? How are you different? Each set of partners will report on their findings to the rest of the group, describing what they have in common and how they are different.

**STEP FOUR: Discussion and exploration**

Discuss your findings. Has this work changed what you think of as “normal”? How can we celebrate what we have in common? How can we celebrate what makes us different?

**VARIATIONS: Further exploration**

- How do you think the characters of A WRINKLE IN TIME would answer the questions above? How would Meg answer? Charles Wallace? Calvin? Write out the answers to the questions above in the voice of one of the characters in A WRINKLE IN TIME and collect these answers in a long-form journal.
- Besides through writing or speaking, how else can we describe ourselves? Using your notes from above, create a picture, painting, collage or multi-media artwork to describe yourself.
- In A WRINKLE IN TIME, Mrs. Whatsit tells Meg that her faults will be very useful to her in her adventure. Usually our faults are things that we want to change—why do you think she says this? Write out a list of your faults and think about how they might be useful in your own adventures.

**LEARNING OBJECTIVES**

English/Language Arts: Students will write in response to literature.

English/Language Arts: Students will write narrative accounts, such as short stories or plays.

English/Language Arts: Students will understand the effects of an author’s style on the reader (e.g. word choice, imagery)