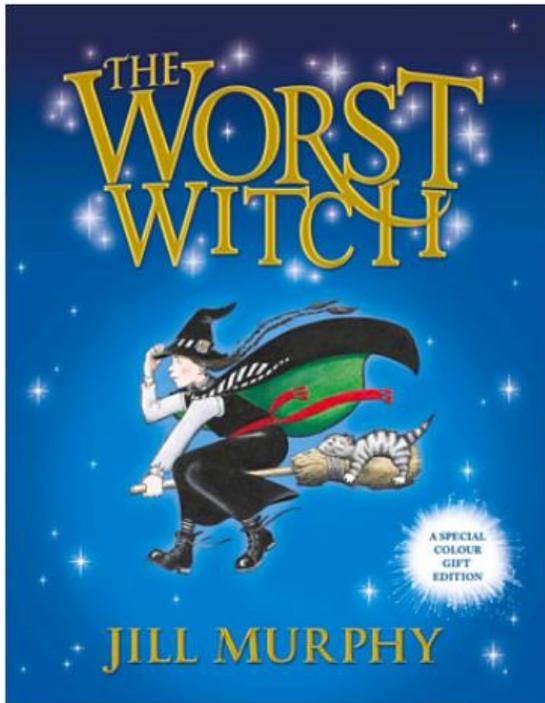


The Worst Witch

- by Jill Murphy



Disaster-prone Mildred Hubble has enchanted millions of readers over the years, causing all sorts of calamities at Miss Cackle's Academy. Published by Puffin.

- **LO: To read using inference to help understanding of character and plot.**
- Some will even: Provide more than one piece of evidence to support a view.
- Some will: Provide a suitable piece of evidence to support the view.
- Most will: Find clues to help them form the supporting evidence
- All will: Read the text using good decoding strategies.

Read or watch the video of a short extract
<https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/articles/z7rrcqt>

As you listen, think about the following questions.

- What is Mildred like?
- Would you want to be friends with her?
- What does 'hair-raising' mean?



Activity 1

Read the first extract from *The Worst Witch* by yourself .

Top tip!

If you struggle with any words, try the following reading strategies.

- Sound the word out. Can you split the word up and then try to say it?
- Think about whether it looks like another word that you know.
- Miss the word out and read ahead. Then go back and ‘guess’ what the word may have been.

Extract 1

There were so many rules that you couldn't do anything without being told off and there seemed to be tests and exams every week.

Mildred Hubble was in her first year at the school. She was one of those people who always seem to be in trouble. She didn't exactly mean to break rules and annoy the teachers, but things just seemed to happen whenever she was around. You could rely on Mildred to leave her hat on back-to-front or her bootlaces trailing along the floor. She couldn't walk from one end of a corridor to the other without someone yelling at her, and nearly every night she was writing lines or being kept in (not that there was anywhere to go if you were allowed out). Anyway, she had lots of friends, even if they did keep their distance in the potion laboratory, and her best friend Maud stayed loyally by her through everything, however hair-raising. They made a funny pair, for Mildred was tall and thin with long plaits which she often chewed absent-mindedly (another thing she was told off about), while Maud was short and tubby, had round glasses and wore her hair in bunches.

Writers choose their words carefully so that readers can really get to know the characters.

Think about how Jill Murphy has added extra information about her characters, then have a look at some of the quotes in the table below.

Explain what they tell us about the characters or the plot.

You can copy out the table and fill in your answers, or say your answers out loud.

Top tip

You could use these sentence starters to help you.

This tells us that...

This shows us that...

Task 1: To use inference to work out the characters.

Quote	What Does This Tell You?
There were so many rules that you couldn't do anything without being told off...	This tells us that no matter how well-behaved the pupils were, they would probably still get in trouble because there were so many rules.
... but things just seemed to happen whenever she was around.	
... not that there was anywhere to go if you were allowed out.	
... even if they did keep their distance in the potion laboratory...	
... with long plaits which she often chewed absent-mindedly...	

Task 2: Read the 2nd extract yourself

- **Extract 2**

- *“I think Miss Cackle gave you that cat on purpose,” Ethel sneered. “You’re both as bad as each other.”*
- *“Oh, be quiet,” said Mildred, trying to keep her temper. “Anyway, it’s not a bad cat. It’ll learn in time.”*
- *“Like you did?” Ethel went on. “Wasn’t it last week that you crashed into the dustbins?”*
- *“Look, Ethel,” Mildred said, “you’d better be quiet, because if you don’t I shall...”*
- *“Well?”*
- *“I shall turn you into a frog and I don’t want to do that.”*
- *Ethel gave a shriek of laughter.*
- *“That’s really funny!” she crowed. “You don’t even know the beginners’ spells, let alone ones like that.”*
- *Mildred blushed and looked very miserable.*

- *“Go on then!” cried Ethel. “Go on then, if you’re so clever. Turn me into a frog. I am waiting.”*
- *It just so happened that Mildred did have an idea of that spell (she had been reading about it in the library). By now, everyone had crowded round, waiting to see what would happen, and Ethel was still jeering. It was unbearable.*
- *Mildred muttered the spell under her breath - and Ethel vanished. In her place stood a small pink and grey pig.*
- *Cries and shouts rent the air.*
- *“Oh no!”*
- *“That’s torn it!”*
- *“You’ve done it now, Mildred!”*
- *Mildred was horrified. “Oh, Ethel,” she said, “I’m sorry, but you did ask for it.”*
- *The pig looked furious.*
- *“You beast, Mildred Hubble!” it grunted, “Change me back!”*

By showing us what characters say to each other and how they say it, the writer helps to bring the characters to life.

This is called **dialogue** .

Have a look at these examples of dialogue from Extract 2 and have a go at explaining what they tell us about Mildred and Ethel.

You can copy out the table and fill in your answers, or say your answers out loud.

Example Of Dialogue	What It Tells Us
<p>"I think Miss Cackle gave you that cat on purpose," Ethel sneered. "You're both as bad as each other."</p>	<p>Ethel: She can be mean and enjoys teasing Mildred.</p>
<p>"Oh, be quiet," said Mildred, trying to keep her temper. "Anyway, it's not a bad cat. It'll learn in time."</p>	<p>Mildred:</p>
<p>"Go on, then!" cried Ethel. "Go on then, if you're so clever. Turn me into a frog. I am waiting."</p>	<p>Ethel:</p>
<p>Mildred was horrified. "Oh, Ethel," she said, "I'm sorry, but you did ask for it."</p>	<p>Mildred:</p>

Activity 3

Extract 2 ends with a real cliff-hanger. As a reader, we really want to know what will happen next.

- Will Mildred be able to reverse the spell?
- Will a teacher come and discover what Mildred has done?
- Will the 'pig' run away?

Write down 4 predictions or say them out loud.

You might like to use some of these sentence starters to help you.

I think...

I wonder if...

I don't think...
