



# Roald Dahl Stories Lesson Ideas



## Emotion Exploration with Matilda

**TEACHER RESOURCE PACK**

# Emotion Exploration



Discover powers of emotion with Matilda using drama and communication to explore, and then perform an extract from the story.

**Learning Objective:** To explore understanding of emotions and how we react differently to them

**Learning Objective:** To develop communication skills through performance and drama-based activity

## Overview

Children will watch the video, listen to the story and be challenged to think about the emotions the characters are feeling, as Matilda uses her powers for the first time. They will explore ideas around how we respond to our emotions differently and how reactions to a situation can show what kind of person we are. They will then bring their ideas to life through a drama-based activity and devise a performance of the extract, working in pairs.

The main parts of the activities in this lesson are drama-based, so teachers may wish to use a space other than the classroom if available. You will also need a camera or audio equipment if you plan to film or record some of the activities (with appropriate permissions gained).

This resource supports learning in

ENGLISH

DRAMA

PSHE

COMMUNICATION  
SKILLS

### Activities include:

1. Character behaviours
2. Emotion mirrors
3. What's your power?
4. Storyboard and performance

### You will need:

- The video featuring the story extract
- Space for drama activities and performances
- The printed resources (extract, character behaviours, storyboard)
- Emotions card – cut and, if possible, laminated
- Pens or pencils



# Emotion Exploration



## Starter

Invite children to share their thoughts about the extract read aloud in the video. Is there anything they notice about it? How did it make them feel? What can they understand about the characters even in this short extract? To give additional context to the piece, explain that Matilda was being blamed by Miss Trunchbull for the newt being in her water, when in fact, it was not her fault.

Explain to children that you are going to be recreating what happens in the extract through drama.

## MAIN ACTIVITIES

### Task one

Use **Resource 1: Extracts** and give one to each child. Point out that this extract features three characters – can they name them? Matilda, Miss Trunchbull and the newt. Invite them to read the extract and underline the words and phrases that describe the emotions in the extract and depict how the characters are feeling. As the story progresses, we see Matilda's power developing. What is the main emotion Matilda is feeling? How do we know? How would they feel in that situation?

To help children understand what types of characters both Matilda and Miss Trunchbull are, use **Resource 2: Character behaviours** and ask children to share their ideas about how the characters are reacting in the extract – even the newt! What does this tell us about them? For example, we know that Matilda is very angry. Why? Elicit that she has been unjustly blamed by Miss Trunchbull for the newt being in the glass. What about Miss Trunchbull? What does her behaviour tell us? She has accused Matilda of something she has not done and is sat staring in fascination at the newt (we know from the wider story she doesn't even know what it is – she thinks it's a crocodile!). What is the newt doing? Stuck in the glass and 'squirming'. Children can read the extract again to help them. They may also have prior knowledge of the story which could inform their answers.

### Optional activity

Invite children to consider how they might have reacted if they were in the same situation as Matilda in the story. What would they have felt? What would they have done? Can think how any of the other characters in the story might have felt in the same circumstances? (Note if some children in the class aren't familiar with other characters, invite those who are to help them).



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## Task two

We all express emotions and react to situations in different ways. Using **Resources 3: Emotion cards**, number the children 1 or 2 and then pair them up; they are going to do an **Emotions Mirror** activity. They should stand facing each other about an arm length apart. Give each pair one of the cards with an emotion word on it. (*Teachers may want to use the blank versions of the cards and choose the emotions.*)

Run through each of the word cards and make sure children know the vocabulary.

Without sound, child 1 must 'perform' or act out that emotion, first using just their face; then their face and arms; then their whole bodies. Child 2 must act like a mirror and copy exactly what child 1 does. After a few minutes, they should swap over with child 1 being the mirror this time. (*Teachers may want to demonstrate this at the front of the class.*)

Ask the children if they each used the same movement and expression to show the emotion? Or did they show the emotions differently? How did it feel being the 'mirror' and copying the other person's emotion?

In stories like *Matilda*, characters react differently and have different emotions, which can tell us a lot about them.

### Optional activity

**The newt's tale** – ask children to write the story from the newt's perspective. Encourage them to think about the activity they just did – reflecting someone else's emotion is a bit like empathy, where we can see how someone else might be feeling in a particular situation. How is the newt feeling stuck in the glass? What can he see? How would he describe what is happening to *Matilda*? And what does he think of the Trunchbull? Once written, teachers could record them reading their stories aloud just like Mrs Phelps!

## Task three

This extract is a particularly special part of the story, as *Matilda* first uses her power. Read aloud this section to remind the children:

*"A sense of power was brewing in those eyes of hers, a feeling of great strength was settling itself deep inside her eyes. But there was also another feeling which was something else altogether, and which she could not understand. It was like flashes of lightning. Little waves of lightning seemed to be flashing out of her eyes. Her eyeballs were beginning to get hot, as though vast energy was building up somewhere inside them. It was an amazing sensation."*

*Matilda's* power comes from her eyes. Ask pupils, if they were to have a power, what part of their body would it come from? The mouth, the nose, the feet? Ask them to stand in a space, making sure they each have enough room to move. Without making any sound, they must imagine their power is real and demonstrate it in action, using whichever body part they have chosen! Can they guess each other's power and where it comes from? How did it feel imagining they had a power like *Matilda*?

### Optional discussion activity

*Matilda* using her powers for good sets a positive example for children. Ask children what they would use their power for if it were real? Would they use it to help themselves or others? What problems could they solve with their powers? Powers like *Matilda's* may not be real, but we all have 'power' we can use to help others. Ask children what kinds of powers they can identify in real life (kindness, friendship, empathy, fairness) and how can we use them for good.

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## Task four

Now children have explored the characters and their emotions in the extract, it's time to tell the story their way! Working in the same pairs, child 1 is Matilda and child 2 is Miss Trunchbull (remind all child 2s that although most of the 'action' is focused on Matilda, they have a big reaction to give at the end when the newt is tipped over!).

Using **Resource 4: Storyboard**, ask children to create a storyboard for how they plan to 'perform' the piece. Working together, they should decide the stages of their performance and how they plan to show the different emotions, using just their facial expressions and bodies – no speaking.

Once they have completed their storyboard, give the children time to practice and then invite each pair to perform.

*If permissions allow, teachers could film each pair's performance and use this to review together as a class afterwards and even share with parents and carers.*

## Plenary

As a class, celebrate each pair's performance. Was there anything they found challenging about their role? What did they notice about each other's performances? Were they similar or different? Remind children that we all feel emotion differently and react in different ways. Our emotions can be used positively like Matilda, or negatively like the Trunchbull. Who would they rather be?!



# Emotion Exploration



## RESOURCE 1: EXTRACT FROM MATILDA

Matilda felt herself getting angrier . . . and angrier . . . and angrier . . . so unbearably angry that something was bound to explode inside her very soon.

The newt was still squirming in the tall glass of water. It looked horribly uncomfortable. The glass was not big enough for it. Matilda glared at the Trunchbull. How she hated her. She glared at the glass with the newt in it. She longed to march up and grab the glass and tip the contents, newt and all, over the Trunchbull's head. She trembled to think what the Trunchbull would do to her if she did that.

The Trunchbull was sitting behind the teacher's table staring with a mixture of horror and fascination at the newt wriggling in the glass. Matilda's eyes were also riveted on the glass. And now, quite slowly, there began to creep over Matilda a most extraordinary and peculiar feeling. The feeling was mostly in the eyes. A kind of electricity seemed to be gathering inside them. A sense of power was brewing in those eyes of hers, a feeling of great strength was settling itself deep inside her eyes. But there was also another feeling which was something else altogether, and which she could not understand. It was like flashes of lightning. Little waves of lightning seemed to be flashing out of her eyes. Her eyeballs were beginning to get hot, as though vast energy was building up somewhere inside them. It was an amazing sensation. She kept her eyes steadily on the glass, and now the power was concentrating itself in one small part of each eye and growing stronger and stronger and it felt as though millions of tiny little invisible arms with hands on them were shooting out of her eyes towards the glass she was staring at.

'Tip it!' Matilda whispered. 'Tip it over!'

She saw the glass wobble. It actually tilted backwards a fraction of an inch, then righted itself again. She kept pushing at it with all those millions of invisible little arms and hands

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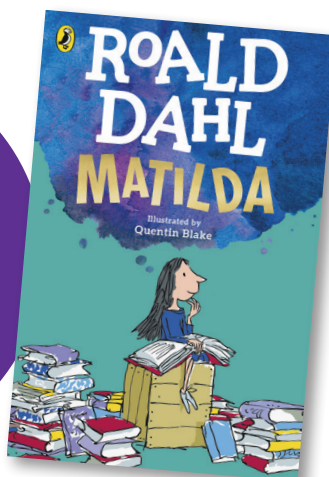


that were reaching out from her eyes, feeling the power that was flashing straight from the two little black dots in the very centres of her eyeballs.

‘Tip it!’ she whispered again. ‘Tip it over!’

Once more the glass wobbled. She pushed harder still, willing her eyes to shoot out more power. And then, very very slowly, so slowly she could hardly see it happening, the glass began to lean backwards, further and further and further backwards until it was balancing on just one edge of its base. And there it teetered for a few seconds before finally toppling over and falling with a sharp tinkle on to the desktop. The water in it and the squirming newt splashed out all over Miss Trunchbull’s enormous bosom. The Headmistress let out a yell that must have rattled every windowpane in the building and for the second time in the last five minutes she shot out of her chair like a rocket.

**FIND THIS IN  
CHAPTER 14  
OF MATILDA**





# Emotion Exploration



## RESOURCE 2: CHARACTER BEHAVIOURS

Look at the two pictures below – Miss Trunchbull and Matilda. During the extract the two main characters are behaving very differently. What does this tell us about them? (If you need a reminder, read the extract again).

Write your ideas beside each picture.



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# Emotion Exploration

## RESOURCE 3: EMOTION CARDS



HAPPY

SAD

WORRIED

FEAR

SURPRISE

MISERABLE

SHY

CROSS

ANGER

CONFUSED

AMUSED

BORED

PLEASED

HURT

TIRED

POWERFUL

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## RESOURCE 4: MATILDA'S POWER STORYBOARD

Use this storyboard to plan your performance. Don't forget to think about how you can show how each character is feeling and reacting to the situation.  
Use your learning from the different activities and the extract to help you.
