
ENGLISH

Paper 2 Fiction

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Text for Section A, an extract from 'Matilda' by Roald Dahl

At two o'clock sharp the class assembled, including Miss Honey, who noted that the jug of water and the glass were in the proper place. Then she took up a position standing right at the back. Everyone waited. Suddenly in marched the gigantic figure of the Headmistress in her belted smock and green breeches.

'Good afternoon, children,' she barked.

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'Good afternoon, Miss Trunchbull,' they chirruped*.

The Headmistress stood before the class, legs apart, hands on hips, glaring at the small boys and girls who sat nervously at their desks in front of her.

'Not a very pretty sight,' she said. Her expression was one of utter distaste.

'What a bunch of nauseating little warts you are.'

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Everyone had the sense to stay silent.

'It makes me vomit,' she went on, 'to think that I am going to have to put up with a load of garbage like you in my school for the next six years. I can see that I'm going to have to expel as many of you as possible as soon as possible to save myself from going round the bend.' She paused and snorted several times. It was a curious noise. You can hear the same sort of thing if you walk through a riding-stable when the horses are being fed. 'I suppose,' she went on, 'your mothers and fathers tell you you're wonderful. Well, I am here to tell you the opposite, and you'd better believe me. Stand up, everybody!'

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They all got quickly to their feet.

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'Now put your hands out in front of you. And as I walk past I want you to turn them over so I can see if they are clean on both sides.'

The Trunchbull began a slow march along the rows of desks inspecting the hands. All went well until she came to a small boy in the second row.

'What's your name?' she barked.

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'Nigel,' the boy said.

'Nigel what?'

'Nigel Hicks,' the boy said.

'Nigel Hicks what?' the Trunchbull bellowed. She bellowed so loud she nearly blew the little chap out of the window.

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‘That’s it,’ Nigel said. ‘Unless you want my middle names as well.’ He was a brave little fellow and one could see that he was trying not to be scared by the Gorgon* who towered above him.

‘I do *not* want your middle names, you blister!’ the Gorgon bellowed. ‘What is *my* name?’

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‘Miss Trunchbull,’ Nigel said.

‘Then use it when you address me! Now then, let’s try again. What is your name?’

‘Nigel Hicks, Miss Trunchbull,’ Nigel said.

‘That’s better,’ the Trunchbull said. ‘Your hands are filthy, Nigel! When did you last wash them?’

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‘Well, let me think,’ Nigel said. ‘That’s rather difficult to remember exactly. It could have been yesterday or it could have been the day before.’

The Trunchbull’s whole body and face seemed to swell up as though she were being inflated by a bicycle-pump.

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‘I knew it!’ she bellowed.

Glossary

to chirrup: to make a sound like a bird

Gorgon: a mythical monster

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