

Charlie Bumpers vs. the Teacher of the Year

We've put together a list of vocabulary words – some for definition, some for spelling, some because they raise interesting questions – to go along with reading the book. Feel free to use all or some of our suggestions. (page numbers reflect the hardcover version)

Vocabulary:

P1 riot (what it means; what it means in context)

P2 squeals (what it means; what it means in context)

P3 trophies

P3 scraped

P4 inspect

P5 panicked

P8 organized

P8 wreck

P8 lookout tower

P9 transferred

P9 pronounce

P10 squid

P10 squirt (why would Charlie's Dad call his daughter Squirt?)

P12 allergic (Is it possible to be allergic to a person?)

P13 dictator

P13 arguing

P14 bozo

P15 chanted

P18 miraculously

P21 queasy

P21 notice

P23 excellent

P23 imitation

P23 occurred

P25 adjustments

P26 miserable

P28 confessed

P29 especially

P32 surrounded

P34 constantly

P36 polite

P37 except

P38 terrarium

P39 arboreal
P39 nocturnal
P40 gawking

P42 hilarious
P46 buenos dias

P48 supreme
P48 commander
P49 hoarse
P50 croaky (what it means; what it means in context)
P53 fault
P53 sideline
P54 bounds (what it means; what it means in context)
P55 equipment (what it means; what it means in context)

P57 colossal
P57 moldy (what it means; what it means in context)
P58 scowling
P60 memorize
P65 enormous

P68 speechless
P68 annoying
P70 blurt
P72 permanently

P76 squeaked (what it means; what it means in context)
P76 scattered
P77 foothold
P78 shrieked
P81 superintendent

P82 bonked
P82 definitely
P83 catastrophe
P86 borrowing
P86 permission
P87 attached

P90 hesitated
P90 grumbled
P91 pumping

P94 hazard
P96 custodian

P98 officially
P100 straight
P103 streamers
P104 cocoon
P104 scrunched
P106 hysterics (what it means; what it means in context)
P107 pharaoh

P109 suspiciously
P116 judgment
P116 rotten (what it means; what it means in context)

P120 consequences
P122 doomed
P125 whooping
P130 misplaced (what it means; what it means in context)
P130 confused
P134 doubted

Random Questions:

Here are few questions that you can use to spark conversation once you've finished the book. You can use them in a group discussion or as the basis for a writing assignment.

Has your teacher ever been "Teacher of the Year"?
What do you think makes a teacher "Teacher of the Year"?
Have you ever read "Jeremy Thatcher, Dragon Hatcher"? Did you know that it's a real book?

Lots of things happen a million times in the book. Like Mabel "the Squid" takes a million hours to talk about her first day of school. Mrs. Burke has a million rules. Charlie has read Jeremy Thatcher a million times. Do you think any of these things are possible? Why do you think Charlie uses "a million" to mean a lot?

Hector is the New Kid (even though there are two other new kids). Have you ever been the new kid in class? How did that make you feel? If you've never been the new kid could you imagine what it might be like? What parts do you think would be good? What parts would be bad?

Have you ever befriended the new kid or tried to make them feel welcome in class? What sort of things do you think you could do? Charlie tries to make Hector a part of the games at recess. Do you think that was a good idea? What did you think when Hector came to school with his shoes covered in black marker, just like Charlie's?

If you were the new kid in class do you think you'd like to have Charlie as a friend? Why or why not?

P116: "I always have these great ideas I think will make things better, but things keep going wrong." Have you ever felt like that? Can you think of a time you got into trouble when you were trying to do something good?

After you've read the entire book:

At the end of the book you find out why Mrs. Burke had Charlie sit near Hector – not so Charlie would be neater and quieter, but to be friendly to Hector and to maybe help Hector more easily adjust to being in a new school in a new country. Did you have any idea that's why Mrs. Burke did it? Now that you know, does it change the way you remember things from the book?

In the last chapter, Charlie gets into big trouble, or so he thinks. He throws his shoe to get the ball down for the younger kids. Fortunately for Charlie, it all worked out in the end. What did you think was going to happen after Charlie's shoe got stuck on the roof? After Mr. Schuler took the ball back? After Mrs. Burke found Charlie?