

# Charlie and the Chocolate Factory

Roald Dahl

*Research, Reflection and Writing*

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## Radical R. Dahl

*Charlie and the Chocolate Factory* can be read as a children's fantasy or as a text designed to elicit radical questions about the world we live in. For example, Willie Wonka represents the greedy, cold-hearted, false-smiling capitalist class, and Charlie and his family represent the ignorant working class that accepts the status quo and even wants to rise and become the new exploiting, capitalist class.

Secondly, everything Willie Wonka says about the Oompa-Loompas is false. No tribe or people has ever voluntarily left its jungle home and chosen to live in a factory. Factory work is the scourge of the modern economy. No one would prefer a factory job to living peacefully and quietly on the land, in a forest environment.

Thirdly, the fast food, candy and chocolate industries are the cause of widespread diseases from tooth decay and obesity to diabetes and heart disease. The fact that refined sugars are unhealthy might explain why those children who eat the most sugar-rich chocolate are the worst behaved and unhealthiest. The fact that the children who eat the most chocolate belong to upper-class families might also explain why they are the worst behaved children.

## Comprehension

- Who is Charlie? Use three adjectives to describe his personality.
- Describe Charlie's home life. Define "extended family" and include in your description Charlie's extended family. Use at least five adjectives and three sentences.
- Describe Charlie's family's economic status in detail. If you think they are rich or poor, provide proof from the novel. Use specific quotes from the book to support your answer.
- Which member of Charlie's family talks to him about the Chocolate Factory? How does this person know so much? What important information does he tell Charlie about the factory?
- What do the residents of the town think about the factory?
- Who is Willy Wonka? Use five adjectives to describe him.
- Why does Willy Wonka hold a contest? Discuss the profit motive and the other motive.
- How do the other children who won the contest behave? 5-10 sentences. Provide details.
- Who are the Chocolate Factory employees? What is their common name? Why don't they have individual names? What do they think about the children on the tour?
- The Chocolate Factory employees are living in the factory. Would you live in a factory? Would you be so happy that you would sing songs? Also consider this quotation from a black athlete about the history of slavery: "Black athletes are being forced to sing the national anthem in the same way that slaves were ordered by their masters to sing songs, former NBA star Kareem Abdul-Jabbar argued in a recent op-ed." <https://www.rt.com/usa/436112-jabaar-slavery-national-anthem/>

## A New Perspective: Willy Wonka

What is your opinion of this man? In English slang, *wonky* means wrong, and I think W. Wonka is not only wrong but **irresponsible**, **deceptive**, **greedy**, and **heartless**. Find proof of these points or try to argue against them. You should write 1-2 pages on this topic.

## Research: Factory Reality

0.5-1 page

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BeJy3dA4Ahk>

Haiti and Disney:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JIRAC8LMkRs>

India and clothing factories:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HHw4HEzzsyc>

## Research: Child Labor and the Chocolate Industry

1-2 pages

Article:

Article: <https://www.cnn.com/2014/02/13/world/africa/cocoa-nomics-from-bean-to-bar/index.html>

<http://www.hangthebankers.com/nestle-mars-hershey-child-slaves-chocolate/>

Child Slavery: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=L VX4JhDSv2Y>

White Slaves: <http://www.ancient-origins.net/ancient-places-africa/white-slaves-barbary-002171>

Video Documentary: The Dark Side of Chocolate:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7Vfbv6hNeng>

The Shady Side of Chocolate

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Z5C7jmrycf0>

Slavery article:

<http://www.historyonthenet.com/black-peoples-of-america-work-done-by-slaves/>