



Novel Guide for Gifted and Advanced Readers



This guide is appropriate for use with gifted and advanced readers. It addresses their affective and cognitive needs through questions that can be used for discussion. Depending on the length of the book, students should read the entire book before conducting the bibliotherapy lesson, the **Group Discussion** using the higher order questions and the **After Discussion** activities. Students should be given the **Before Discussion** activities to complete during their time while reading the book. If the book is exceptionally long, you may need to modify this lesson plan. See **Novel Guide: Notes for Implementing** for additional procedures and recommendations.

Book Title: *Wonder*

Author: R. J. Palacio

Interest Level: Grades 5-7th

Lexile: 790L

Length: 320 Pages

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Summary: August Pullman is not an ordinary ten-year-old kid. He was born with a craniofacial abnormality — a genetic defect that caused his facial features to be severely deformed. His life has never been "normal." Despite his differences, August and his parents decide to transition him from home school to private school now that he's entering fifth grade. It's the start of middle school, they reason, so everyone will be new. But August has to deal with so much more than just being new.

Conceptual Connections

Conceptual Lens: acceptance

Other Key Concepts: belonging; change; relationships

Essential Understanding:

- Acceptance and belonging are essential for a person's well-being.
- All relationships experience change.

Essential Questions:

- Why are acceptance and belonging essential for a person's well-being?
- In what ways do relationships change?
- How are relationships affected by change?
- What is the difference between being accepted and being tolerated?

Affective Focus (Bibliotherapy)

Introductory Activity/Hook

Individuals need to feel accepted and normal. Most people first feel their acceptance at home. By the time they enter elementary and middle school, they want to have friends and feel accepted by peers. In your journal write a short entry about a time when you felt that you were not accepted by your peers.

Menu of Bibliotherapy Questions:

Identification:

- What is August's strength?
- What happens when August decides to go to school?
- How does his life change when he decides to go to school?
- What events at the end of the book help August know that he made the right decision to attend school?
- What events at the end of the story help Olivia know that she made the right decision to invite her family to the play?

Catharsis:

- How does August feel about having a face abnormality?
- How do his feelings about himself change when he goes to school?
- How does August feel about Jack Will, Charlotte, and Julian? Does his feeling change any throughout the story? What about Summer?
- How do Jack Will, Charlotte, and Julian feel about August?
- How does Jack Will, Charlotte, and Julian's feelings shift by the end of the story?

Insight:

- What makes you feel accepted and loved by your family and friends?
- How does it feel when you sense you are not being accepted by others?
- What can you do to help others so that they feel accepted?

Universalization/Follow up Activity

You and a partner will create a pledge to submit to the class on how you can be kinder and friendlier. You will need to list a minimal of three ways that you can be friendlier and three ways that you can be kinder.

Reading Comprehension: Independent Work and Group Discussion

To foster strong reading comprehension, literacy skills, and love of literature, students need to read critically, respond to what they read with text-based evidence, develop a robust vocabulary, and engage in high level discussion with peers. The following activities address these components.

Before Group Discussion: Activities for students to complete independently.

A. Knowledge and Comprehension Questions related to the novel. Students use sticky notes to locate answers in the text as they read. Teacher may use student's answers for a grade.

Knowledge Questions

- How was August extraordinary?
- How was August ordinary?
- Who are the main characters in this book?
- What did August think about going to school?
- What did August think of his tour to school?

Comprehension Questions

Part One-August

From pages 3- 23

- When people first see August they quickly look away. Why do you think people look away when they first see him?
- Part one discusses August going to school for the first time. Why has he never gone to school? Do you think he should attend school?

From pages 23-42

- August gets the opportunity to go on a school tour and meet three students. Which one do you feel turned out to be a bully?
- What was the reaction of the other students when they see August in homeroom?

From pages 42-60

- August compares himself to "Beauty and the Beast", why does he use this simile?
- September's precept is "When given the choice being right or being kind, choose kind". What does that mean?

From pages 61-80

- Why was August looking forward to Halloween?
- What were Jack and Julian discussing?

Part Two: Via

From pages 81-99

- Did Via have a good first day of school?
- August receives a lot of attention from his parents. Do you think that Via is jealous of all the attention that her brothers gets?

Pages 100-117

- How was mom's reaction when August decided to change his costume?
- Who is Miranda and why did she call?

Part Three: Summer

From pages 118-132

- Do you think that Summer feels Jack is a good friend?
- How would you describe Summer? Is she a good person? Why or why not?

Part Four: Jack

- Which character states, "Sometimes you don't have to mean to hurt someone to hurt them," and what does he or she mean by that?
- What are the positive and negative reasons Jack gives about being ex-friends with August?
- What role does Julian play in the war that is beginning?

Part Five: Justin

Pages 186-204

- Why do you think Via hasn't told her parents about the school play that she is in?
- Justin has a lot of tics at dinner. What are tics?

Part Six: August

Pages 205-234

- Why hasn't August noticed that Daisy has been sick for a while?
- How has August feelings changed about getting hearing aids?

Part Seven: Miranda

- Why is Miranda pretending to be sick on the opening night?
- Via and Miranda relationship has changed. What does Miranda miss about their relationship?

Part Eight: August

From pages 250-270

- How does August feel about going on the fifth grade field trip?
- Who helps August and Jack when they find themselves in trouble?

From pages 271-309

- August was not honest with the teachers about being able to remember the faces of the seventh graders. Why do you think he wasn't honest?
- What happens at the school ceremony that shows a change from the beginning of the school year to the end?

B. Vocabulary Study: Students will complete the following activities with vocabulary from the novel.

- **Word mapping:** A vocabulary word map is a graphic organizer that helps you think about new words or concepts in several ways. To build a word map, start by entering the new word in the middle of the map. Then, fill in the rest of the map with a definition, synonyms, antonyms, and a picture to help illustrate the new word.
- **Contextualizing:** This means putting new vocabulary words into sentences to help you remember them and to test if you are using them correctly. Try using the words in your everyday conversations and look for the words while you read and watch television. Personalizing the words and writing down why the vocabulary item (i.e. the word or phrase) is important to you or where you first saw it helps to remember something new.

Vocabulary Words

- petrified (p.4)
- cleft (p.6)
- palate (p.6)
- precept (p.45)
- plague (p.120)
- deed (p 65)
- monuments (p.65)
- jagged (p.88)
- catastrophe (p.89)
- gauge (p.90)
- illuminate (p. 99)
- hypocrite (p.175)
- dioramas (p.206)

Group Discussion: Teacher-facilitated small group discussion. Teacher may choose to provide students with a set of the questions prior to the discussion. Students should also be encouraged to create their own questions.

Higher-Level Questions (using Bloom's categories)

1. Application:

- August made a big decision to go to school. In the past he was home schooled. Now that he's in school he has gotten mixed reactions from the other students when they see him. If you were in August's position, do you think you would have gone to school? Is it logical for him to be in school or should he continue to be home school?
- How would August define being normal or ordinary?
- If you had a facial abnormality would it be difficult thing for you to accept?
- There is a phrase that states "never judge a book by its cover". How does this statement apply to August?

2. Analysis:

- August's sister Olivia says that for a second she saw him like everyone else did. (Through the peephole) What does Olivia mean when she says this?
- What type of sister is Olivia?
- What type of friends does August have?

3. Evaluation:

- What does this story tell you about choosing the right thing?
- What impression did you get from Summer? Was she a loyal friend? What about Jack Will, Julian and Charlotte?
- What does this story teaches us about children with facial abnormalities?

4. Synthesis:

- How would this story have been different if August had decided not to return to school after the Halloween incident?
- What do you think August would have done if Jack Will knew that he was the kid under the mask?
- What words do you think would have been used if Jack and his friends knew that August was present?

After Group Discussion: Activities for students to complete with a partner, in a small group, or individually. Activities can be used as a grade.

A. Connections to the Curriculum: Students will make connections to a curriculum area (math, science, social studies, language arts, art, or careers) using one of the concepts from the story. The product should reflect creativity as well as critical thinking.

- **Language Arts- Create a Precept Poster**

Auggie's teacher, Mr. Browne, begins his first day of teaching English to his 5th grade class with a lesson on precepts. Precepts are "words to live by" or "rules about really important things." Mr. Browne's precept for the month of September is: "If you have a choice between being right or being kind, choose kind." Find one precept that means something to you. Put the quote and the author of the quote on a piece of poster board to display in the class. Decorate the poster any way you would like. On the back of the poster board, write a few sentences about why you chose this quote and what it means to you.

- **Social Studies-** Students will have a class debate or discussion about choosing the right side. This debate can be done by "hot seating." Hot seating can help to concentrate on personal feelings of August and observations of other characters.
- **Science/Health-** August has had many surgeries and extreme facial abnormalities. He had to have special care when he was smaller. Students will research different types of surgeries that can be provided for facial reconstruction.
- **Art-** Students will discuss and list the mixed feelings and emotions in this book. Students will then create a painting of one of the many emotions that August has felt.
- **Careers-** August has a passion for science. Although, he has a facial abnormality he is very smart. Students will research different types of careers that are available for individuals who have a strong interest in science.
- **Language Arts/Creative Drama-** Students will create small skit with props role playing their favorite scene from the book. (Example: lunch with Summer, Halloween costume, first day of school, school tour, nature retreat)

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B. Creative Reading: Using the following list of creative products, students will complete a project reflecting their personal connection with the novel (students may determine their own creative product with the approval of the teacher)

1. Create a puppet play based on a favorite scene in the story
2. Create a poem based on the novel, a character, or favorite
3. Illustrate a favorite scene(s) from the story
4. Create a story board of the plot of the story
5. Write a screen play based on the story
6. Create a new ending for the story
7. Create a map of the location(s) of the story
8. Create a mural representative of the story and characters
9. Extend the story into a sequel
10. Rewrite a portion of the story from another character's perspective
11. Rewrite the story in another time or culture
12. Create an online product: infographic, video, character blog, etc.
13. Write a song that one or more of the characters might sing
14. Create an interpretative dance for the story
15. Student idea for a creative product related to the story