



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 5-7

Lexile: 790L

Length: 315

Guide developed by: Meagan Stewart

Summary: Ten year old August was born with rare facial deformities that have caused his life to be anything but ordinary. Ordinary is what he wishes for more than anything. Auggie (his nickname) feels ordinary on the inside, but he is constantly reminded of his flaws by how people respond when they see him. August displays remarkable understanding toward those who make him feel like a monster, and he shows us the bravery it takes to face the world with a severe handicap. One cannot help but want to be a better person after reading this book.

Conceptual Connections

Conceptual Lens: belonging

Other Key Concepts: friendship, appearance

Essential Understandings:

- Belonging is an essential need for all individuals.
- Friendship provides a sense of belonging.
- Appearance can influence a person's actions towards others.

Essential Questions:

- What is the difference between being needed and wanted? How do both contribute to a sense of belonging?
- How are people influenced by outward appearance?
- How can friends impact a person's life?

Affective Focus (Bibliotherapy)

Introductory Activity/Hook

Belonging is an essential need for all individuals. (Review all essential understandings.) Read the front inside cover of the book aloud. This is a short introduction to the story.

Have you ever been a new student to a school? Have you ever felt like you were completely different from everyone else? Write a journal entry telling how you felt during this transition time. Also, list ideas that could make the experience better.

Menu of Bibliotherapy Questions

Identification:

- What is August's big "problem" in the story?
- How does August's family help him through this problem?
- What happened at the end of the story?

Catharsis:

- How did August feel about his problem?
- How did other children feel about his problem?
- How did August feel about himself at the end of the story?
- How did others' feel about August at the end of the story?

Insight:

- What are some positive characteristics of good friends?
- How do you feel when you are faced with challenges or problems?
- What can you do to overcome those challenges?
- How do you feel when you succeed at overcoming those challenges?
- How can friends help you to overcome challenges?

Universalization/Follow up Activity

In the book, Mr. Brown asks the class to write their own precepts. Talk to a partner about which precept you can relate to in your own personal experiences with challenges and difficulties. With your partner, write a precept and illustrate it.

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

- Who were the main characters?
- What school does August attend for the first time?
- What did August like about school?
- What did August dislike about school?

Comprehension Questions

- Why is August so determined not to attend school in the beginning?
- What makes August change his mind about attending school?
- Describe one thing that happened to August that you think would be especially difficult to experience.
- In what ways did having August as brother affect Via's life?
- What influenced Jack's decision to be friends with August?

B. Vocabulary Study: Students will complete the following activities with vocabulary from the novel. The activities may be used for a grade, but should also be included in the discussion.

- Students look up the word in the dictionary or online, noting the definition that best fits how the word is used in the passage. Also, determine possible synonyms and evaluate the author's use of the word in the passage.
- Students will complete a graphic organizer provided by the teacher.

Vocabulary Words

- anomalies (p. 6)
- cleft palate (p. 6)
- apprentice (p. 43)
- precept (p. 46)
- theorems (p. 204)
- taciturn (p. 216)
- imbeciles (p. 277)
- verbosity (p. 301)

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

- Mr. Browne was one of August's teachers. He introduced a new precept to the class each month, and each student was to write that month's precept in their notebook. Writing down the first precept made August realize "that I was going to like school. No matter what." Why do you think August feels that way? Would this make you feel better about attending school?
- Complete flow chart on a character. Identify two traits and give two pieces of evidence from the text that support and show these traits.
- Choose one situation in the book and tell about it. How you would handle things differently from the character in this situation?

2. Analysis

- For Halloween, August had planned to dress as Boba Fett, but at the last minute he decided to wear his old Bleeding Scream costume. How did this decision affect August?
- Jack found and fixed up a sled which he named Lightning. Describe what Jack later found out about the sled. Compare and contrast his feelings before and after he learned about the sled.
- Describe a portion of the story that you felt shocked you the most. What was so unbelievable about this part?

3. Evaluation

- Do you agree with the characters' actions while standing up to the bullies? Why or why not?
- Decide which character in the selection you would most like to spend the day with and explain why.
- In the story, Julian makes a very rude remark that no one catches but August. He referred to August as a character of Star Wars that has a deformed face. How did August react in this situation? What choice would you make in this situation?

4. Synthesis

- Write 3 new titles for the story. Why would these titles be a good "fit" for the story?
- How is the relationship between Via and August? How do you think August would react in certain situations if he did not have Via with him?
- Write a diary account for Julian dealing with one incident in the story. What advice would you give Julian about handling situations in middle school?

After Group Discussion: Activities for students to complete with a partner, in a small group, or individually. Activities may be used for 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 an original character and write a short narrative showing how this character would fit in the story.
- **Social Studies-** Research a prominent person in history who had a facial deformity or another type of life changing medical condition. Write a newspaper article about how this person overcame obstacles in their life.

- **Science/Health-** Research August's condition and create a pamphlet including treatment, life expectancy, statistics regarding number of people affected by it, etc.
- **Art-** In the story, the characters had to draw their self-portrait as an animal. Choose an animal that would fit your personality and create a self-portrait.
- **Careers-** August has several surgeries throughout his life because of his condition. Research the career option of surgeon. Create a PowerPoint including overview of career, training and education that you would need, average work week or work load, work environment, skills required for the position, etc. What do you like or dislike about this career? Would you consider surgeon as a career option?
- **Language Arts/Creative Drama-** You are now a new character in the story. Write a short play (one scene) including you as a new character.

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 scene
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