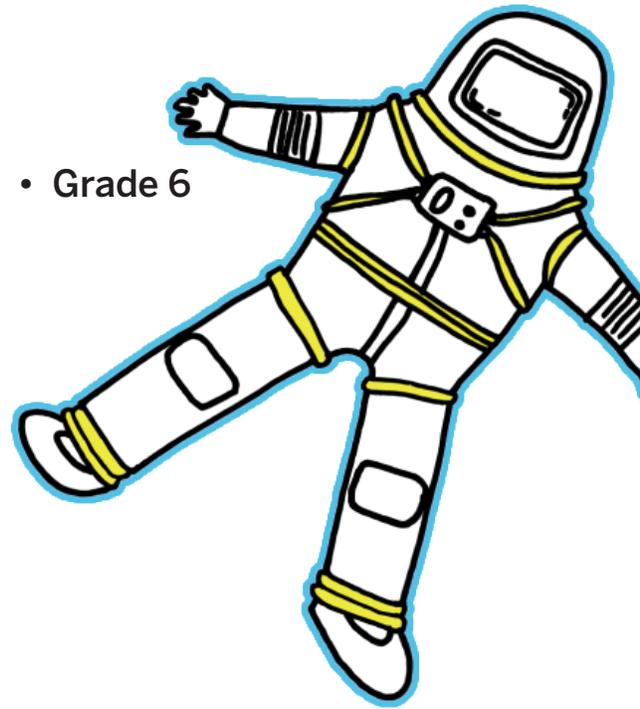


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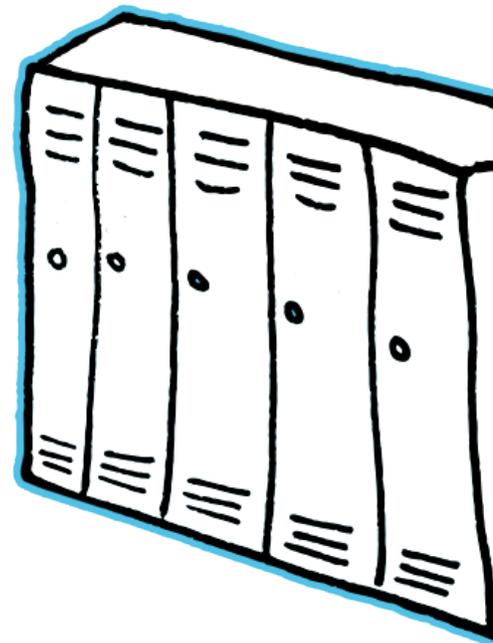


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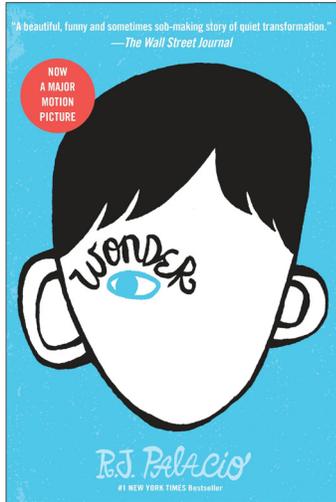
# Wonder

by R. J. Palacio

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# Part 1: Introduction



*Wonder* by R. J. Palacio

## About the story

*Wonder* is a book about a boy who wants nothing more than to be treated like everyone else, but kids his age have trouble getting past his unusual face. The story revolves around Auggie Pullman, a boy who was born with severe facial deformities. Up to this point, he has been homeschooled by his mother, but he is starting 5th grade at a prep school and is concerned about how he will be received by his classmates: Will they make fun of him, or will they be able to accept his appearance and become friends with him?

## About the author

R. J. Palacio was born in New York in 1963, and *Wonder* is her first novel. She was inspired to write this book after a real-life encounter many years ago. She was at an ice-cream shop with her children when her own 3-year-old son cried in fear at seeing a little girl with a facial deformity. Palacio didn't know how to respond, so she grabbed her children and left the shop. She was so angry at herself and the way she reacted that it made her think about what it must be like to experience life every day with a facial deformity, like this little girl.

Since *Wonder* was first published in 2012, it has been published in 45 countries and has sold over five million copies. Palacio has published several other stories related to *Wonder*: *365 Days of Wonder*, *Mr Browne's Book of Precepts*, *Auggie & Me*, and a picture book called *We're All Wonders*.

## Part 2: Text Excerpt and Close Reading Activities

### Excerpt: “Driving,” pages 10–13

- 1 I don't know how long I was sleeping, but when I woke up, there was a full moon outside the car window. It was a purple night, and we were driving on a highway full of cars. And then I heard Mom and Dad talking about me.
- 2 “We can't keep protecting him,” Mom whispered to Dad, who was driving. “We can't just pretend he's going to wake up tomorrow and this isn't going to be his reality, because it is, Nate, and we have to help him learn to deal with it. We can't just keep avoiding situations that ...”
- 3 “So sending him off to middle school like a lamb to the slaughter ...,” Dad answered angrily, but he didn't even finish his sentence because he saw me in the mirror looking up.
- 4 “What's a lamb to the slaughter?” I asked sleepily.
- 5 “Go back to sleep, Auggie,” Dad said softly.
- 6 “Everyone will stare at me at school,” I said, suddenly crying.
- 7 “Honey,” Mom said. She turned around in the front seat and put her hand on my hand. “You know if you don't want to do this, you don't have to. But we spoke to the principal there and told him about you and he really wants to meet you.”
- 8 “What did you tell him about me?”
- 9 “How funny you are, and how kind and smart. When I told him you read *Dragon Rider* when you were six, he was like, ‘Wow, I have to meet this kid.’ ”
- 10 “Did you tell him anything else?” I said.
- 11 Mom smiled at me. Her smile kind of hugged me.



- 12 “I told him about all your surgeries, and how brave you are,” she said.
- 13 “So he knows what I look like?” I asked.
- 14 “Well, we brought pictures from last summer in Montauk,” Dad said. “We showed him pictures of the whole family. And that great shot of you holding that flounder on the boat!”
- 15 “You were there, too?” I have to admit I felt a little disappointed that he was a part of this.
- 16 “We both talked to him, yes,” Dad said. “He’s a really nice man.”
- 17 “You would like him,” Mom added.
- 18 Suddenly it felt like they were on the same side.
- 19 “Wait, so when did you meet him?” I said.
- 20 “He took us on a tour of the school last year,” said Mom.
- 21 “Last year?” I said. “So you’ve been thinking about this for a whole year and you didn’t tell me?”
- 22 “We didn’t know if you’d even get in, Auggie,” answered Mom. “It’s a very hard school to get into. There’s a whole admissions process. I didn’t see the point in telling you and having you get all worked up about it unnecessarily.”
- 23 “But you’re right, Auggie, we should’ve told you when we found out last month that you got in,” said Dad.
- 24 “In hindsight,” sighed Mom, “yes, I guess.”
- 25 “Did that lady who came to the house that time have something to do with this?” I said. “The one that gave me that test?”
- 26 “Yes, actually,” said Mom, looking guilty. “Yes.”
- 27 “You told me it was an IQ test,” I said.
- 28 “I know, well, that was a white lie,” she answered. “It was a test you needed to take to get into the school. You did very well on it, by the way.”
- 29 “So you lied,” I said.
- 30 “A white lie, but yes. Sorry,” she said, trying to smile, but when I didn’t smile back, she turned around in her seat and faced forward.
- 31 “What’s a lamb to the slaughter?” I said.
- 32 Mom sighed and gave Daddy a “look.”
- 33 “I shouldn’t have said that,” Dad said, looking at me in the rearview mirror. “It’s not true. Here’s the thing: Mommy and I love you so much we want to protect you any way we can. It’s just sometimes we want to do it in different ways.”
- 34 “I don’t want to go to school,” I answered, folding my arms.
- 35 “It would be good for you, Auggie,” said Mom.
- 36 “Maybe I’ll go next year,” I answered, looking out the window.
- 37 “This year would be better, Auggie,” said Mom. “You know why? Because you’ll be going into fifth grade, and that’s the first year of middle school—for everyone. You won’t be the only new kid.”
- 38 “I’ll be the only kid who looks like me,” I said.

- 39 “I’m not going to say it won’t be a big challenge for you, because you know better than that,” she answered. “But it’ll be good for you, Auggie. You’ll make lots of friends. And you’ll learn things you’d never learn with me.” She turned in her seat again and looked at me. “When we took the tour, you know what they had in their science lab? A little baby chick that was just hatching out of its egg. It was so cute! Auggie, it actually kind of reminded me of you when you were a little baby... with those big brown eyes of yours ....”
- 40 I usually love when they talk about when I was a baby. Sometimes I want to curl up into a little tiny ball and let them hug me and kiss me all over. I miss being a baby, not knowing stuff. But I wasn’t in the mood for that now.
- 41 “I don’t want to go,” I said.
- 42 “How about this? Can you at least meet Mr. Tushman before making up your mind?” Mom asked.
- 43 “Mr. Tushman?” I said.
- 44 “He’s the principal,” answered Mom.
- 45 “Mr. *Tushman*?” I repeated.
- 46 “I know, right?” Dad answered, smiling and looking at me in the rearview mirror. “Can you believe that name, Auggie? I mean, who on earth would ever agree to have a name like Mr. Tushman?”
- 47 I smiled even though I didn’t want to let them see me smile. Dad was the one person in the world who could make me laugh no matter how much I didn’t want to laugh. Dad always made everyone laugh.



## Step 1: Close Reading Activity

1. Highlight in yellow everything Auggie says about going to middle school.
2. Highlight in green what Auggie does that shows how he feels about going to middle school.
3. Compare your highlights with a partner. Discuss with your partner: What is Auggie's point of view about going to middle school? Circle the piece of evidence that gave you the clearest idea about Auggie's point of view.
4. With your partner, write three or four sentences explaining what influences Auggie's point of view about going to middle school. What is making him feel or think the way he does? What ideas or beliefs does he have about middle school and other students? How did the author show what was influencing Auggie's point of view (dialogue, action, inner thoughts, feelings)?
5. With your partner, compare and contrast the different perspectives: How do Auggie's mom, Auggie's dad, and Auggie see the issue differently? What does each character say or do that shows his or her point of view?

## Step 2: Connected Excerpts to Continue Close Reading

Continue your work on point of view.

1. It is clear that Via really cares about Auggie. Select three pieces of evidence from the text that show this.
2. Throughout the novel, we learn a lot about Auggie. How does his perspective on himself shift throughout the novel? How do you know?
  - A. Page 3, "Ordinary"
  - B. Pages 57–60, "Padawan"
  - C. Page 210
  - D. Page 282
  - E. Pages 307–308, "Pictures"
3. How does Jack's point of view on Auggie change throughout the novel?
  - A. Pages 136–138, "Carvel"
  - B. Page 141
  - C. Pages 142–143, "Four Things"
4. *Wonder* is written from multiple points of view. Reread "The Bleeding Scream" on pages 76–78, then read "In Science" on pages 151–152. How does hearing Jack's perspective on the Halloween event deepen your understanding of his character and/or the event?

## Step 3: Writing Prompt

Auggie states that he felt a little disappointed that his father was part of the middle school tour. What does this show you about Auggie's point of view about his father? What evidence in the text supports your idea?

# Part 3: Additional Guiding Questions and Projects

## Step 4: Guiding Questions to Read the Whole Book

1. **Pages 10–14:** In “Driving,” what does Auggie overhear his father say about sending him to middle school?
2. **Pages 24–26:** What do you learn about the students' characters when Auggie goes on a tour of the school with Jack Will, Julian, and Charlotte?
3. **Pages 51–53:** What theme is developed in “The Summer Table”?
4. **Pages 57–60:** What led Auggie to cut off his Padawan braid?
5. **Pages 76–78:** What conflict is developed in “The Bleeding Scream”? How might this impact the plot?
6. **Pages 82–83:** Via makes a comment about a shift that will occur this year. What might this quote be foreshadowing?
7. **Part 3, pages 118–132:** What did you learn about Summer's character?
8. **Part 5, pages 186–204:** This is written from Justin's perspective. What did you learn about Justin's character in this section?
9. **Pages 190–192:** What theme is developed in “Valentine's Day”?
10. **Page 254:** What is Auggie's mom really talking about when she says he looks taller?

## Step 5: Extended Discussion Questions

- **What was the root cause of Miranda’s behavior toward Via? What was the impact on their relationship?**
  - » Describe a time when you had a conflict with a close friend. What was the cause of the conflict? How did you respond? How did your friend respond? Would you do anything differently now? Was the conflict resolved? If so, how? If not, what is your relationship like with your friend now?
  
- **In “Alien” (pages 265–267), Amos, Miles, and Henry decide to defend Auggie and Jack against bullies from another school. Before this, Amos, Miles, and Henry had participated in bullying Auggie. Why do you think they chose to step in and defend Auggie and Jack at this moment? What was the effect of this decision? Do you think the boys were happy they made this decision or did they end up regretting it?**
  - » Now, discuss a time when you chose to stand up for someone else. What made you want to step in and defend another person?
  
- **Auggie says, “I wish every day could be Halloween. We could all wear masks all the time. Then we could walk around and get to know each other before we got to see what we looked like under the masks” (73). Auggie is talking about a literal mask, but what metaphorical masks do the characters in *Wonder* wear? Think about Julian, Via, Miranda, and Jack Will.**
  - » What are some of the masks that you or your friends wear? What would happen if you took off that mask?

## Step 6: Writer’s Craft

R. J. Palacio chose to write the novel from the perspective of different characters. What is the impact of this on us as readers? What do you learn about a character after reading his or her perspective?

- **Auggie:** Part 1, pages 3–80
- **Via:** Part 2, pages 81–117
- **Summer:** Part 3, pages 118–132
- **Jack:** Part 4, pages 133–185
- **Justin:** Part 5, pages 186–204
- **Auggie:** Part 6, pages 205–234
- **Miranda:** Part 7, pages 235–248
- **Auggie:** Part 8, pages 249–310

## Step 7: Writing Prompts

### Analytical:

Choose one of the postcard precepts (312–313) and explain what this tells you about the character who wrote it. Find two or three pieces of evidence from the text that support your ideas.

### Creative:

Rewrite the beginning of “Driving” from the point of view of Auggie’s mom or dad. Begin with the conversation that is happening before Auggie wakes up. Be sure to reveal the character’s point of view about Auggie going to middle school through his or her thoughts, actions, or dialogue.

## Step 8: Final Project

### Option 1:

Throughout the novel, Mr. Browne shares a number of precepts with his class. Choose five precepts and explain what they mean to you in your own life. Write your own precept and explain what it means to you. This could be something you create on your own or a quote you find in a book or on the Internet that applies to your life now. If you use someone else’s quote, be sure to provide the citation.

### Option 2:

There are a number of instances of bullying throughout this novel, but there are also a number of instances of acts of kindness. Choose one character and create a collage of quotes that shows how this character acts and how he or she responds to how others act. Present your collage without the character’s name showing so your classmates can try to guess who the character is.

### Option 3:

Conduct research on a childhood illness or disability. This could be a condition similar to Auggie’s or something different. Create an informational brochure or poster to teach others about this illness or disability. Be creative, but also factual. Be sure to use evidence from at least two credible sources.

## Step 9: Challenge

In *Wonder*, it is obvious from the start that Julian and Auggie will never be friends. Julian is mean and constantly bullies Auggie. The book is written from the point of view of many characters, but we never see Julian's. Why does Julian act this way? Is he just a bully or is there something behind his behavior?

**Writing Prompt:** Julian's postcard precept was "Sometimes it's good to start over." What do you think this means to him? Why would he want to start over? Use evidence from the text to support your answer.

## Step 10: Extra

Choose Kind is a movement that has gained a lot of traction since the publication of *Wonder*. Students can develop their own Choose Kind projects for their classroom or the school.

- When are times that they can choose to be kind?
- What would it look like to be kind?
- Does it mean sitting with someone who is alone in the lunchroom?
- Does it mean standing up for someone who is getting teased?
- Does it mean including someone in a game at recess?

Keep track of incidents when you or classmates chose to be kind. Discuss how it made you feel to choose kindness. Was it harder or easier than you thought? Why? How did others around you react?

## Step 11: Extended Reading

- *Loser* by Jerry Spinelli (Amplify Library)
- *The 10 P.M. Question* by Kate De Goldi (Amplify Library)
- *Bluish* by Virginia Hamilton (Amplify Library)
- *Absolutely Almost* by Lisa Graff
- *Fish in a Tree* by Lynda Mullaly Hunt
- *Ida B* by Katherine Hannigan (Amplify Library)







