



# ZINC

READING LABS

## ***Wonder* Excerpt: Comprehension Quiz** **(Teacher and Student Versions)**

### Excerpt: *Wonder*

By R.J. Palacio, 2012



■ Level 1 Difficulty

4 Min Read

**Reading Skills:** Details, Developing Ideas and Relationships (Fiction), Inference

**Writing Skills:** Explanatory/Informational

### **About the Text**

The young adult novel *Wonder* (2012) written by R.J. Palacio, tells the story of ten-year-old “Auggie,” a young man born with a facial abnormality. The novel follows Auggie’s experience entering fifth-grade at a school in Manhattan after being home-schooled all his life. The book is written in multiple perspectives, shifting between Auggie and the people close to him as he contends with bullies, makes friends, and tries to build his self-esteem.

This excerpt from the beginning of the text introduces Auggie and his nuclear family: Mom, a children’s book illustrator; Dad; and Auggie’s protective older sister Via. This passage also introduces Auggie’s best friend Christopher and his other friends, Zachery and Alex. Written in a first-person conversational tone, Auggie confides that he wishes he didn’t have an unusual condition, but he knows that “the only reason I’m not ordinary is that no one else sees me that way.” He describes how his family learned to ignore the faces people make at him. He expresses apprehension and excitement about starting school, and he laments that he cannot be like the other kids.



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## Comprehension Quiz Implementation Guide

### 1) Read the Text

Quiz questions are based on the beginning of the story, up to the end of paragraph 11 ("I have other...").

Have students read the excerpt in their own hard copies or at:

<https://www.penguinrandomhouse.ca/books/208913/wonder-by-r-j-palacio/9780375869020/excerpt>

### 2) Assign the Quiz

Printable student and teacher versions (with answer key) are included.

\*Optional: Assign the writing prompt to be completed after the multiple choice questions.

### 3) Grading and Review

The teacher version includes correct answer explanations. A detailed writing prompt scoring guide and rubric are included.



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## Student Quiz - Excerpt: *Wonder*

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Q1. Why couldn't August go to school until the fifth grade?

- A. His family tried to keep his condition a secret.
- B. His little sister had a lot of health problems.
- C. He was afraid of being teased by other children.
- D. He kept getting sick and having different surgeries.

Q2. In the first four paragraphs ("I know I'm..." to "...am is me."), why does August list the ways he feels ordinary "inside"?

- A. To explain that while he looks different from others, he's the same as everyone else
- B. To set a sarcastic tone for the rest of his story
- C. To get the reader ready to hear that he looks different than others
- D. To make himself believe that he looks like everyone else

Q3. What can the reader infer (figure out) from the last line of the passage?

- A. August tries to hide his hurt feelings.
- B. August's friends don't invite him to as many parties as they used to.
- C. Being homeschooled has made August trust his schoolmates less.
- D. August exaggerates when he describes what he looks like.



## Writing Prompt - Excerpt: *Wonder*

August Pullman says, "The only reason I'm not ordinary is that no one else sees me that way." What does this line suggest about the way August views himself? In your own words, explain how this piece of August's personal philosophy fits with the larger themes of difference and self-esteem in this passage. Use quotations from the text to support your analysis, and consider the way August uses the words "ordinary" and "normal" to describe his life and hopes for the future.

### Be sure to:

- Write a thesis statement or topic sentence that clearly states your main idea.
- Use textual evidence and supporting details from the article to develop your ideas.
- Follow a logical organizational structure that connects your ideas clearly.



## Teacher Quiz Answer Key - Excerpt: *Wonder*

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### Q1. Why couldn't August go to school until the fifth grade?

A. His family tried to keep his condition a secret.

*wrong: I can see why you might guess this, but August never says that his family is hiding his health issues from anyone.*

B. His little sister had a lot of health problems..

*wrong: Interesting idea, but August never says that his sister has health problems.*

C. He was afraid of being teased by the other children.

*wrong: It's true that August talks a little about his fears at other points in this excerpt, but that's not why he couldn't go to school.*

D. He kept getting sick and having different surgeries.

*✓ right: In paragraph 6 ("Next week..."), August explains: "People think I haven't gone to school because of the way I look, but it's not that. It's because of all the surgeries I had."*

### Q2. In the first four paragraphs ("I know I'm..." to "...am is me."), why does August list the ways he feels ordinary "inside"?

A. To explain that while he looks different from others, he's the same as everyone else

*✓ right: In the opening paragraphs, August says several times that he likes "ordinary things" and feels "ordinary," and that the only thing that's different about him is the way he looks.*



B. To set a sarcastic tone for the rest of his story

*wrong: Interesting thought, but the tone of this story is not sarcastic.*

C. To get the reader ready to hear that he looks different from others

*wrong: Good guess, but August talks about how he looks starting in the very first paragraph, so he's not "getting anyone ready" for this news.*

D. To make himself believe that he looks like everyone else

*wrong: Interesting guess, but August never tells the reader, or himself, that he looks like everyone else.*

**Q3. What can the reader infer (figure out) from the last line of the passage?**

**A. August tries to hide his hurt feelings.**

**✓ right: August uses the word "maybe." It sounds like he wishes he didn't care about his friends' parties, but he kind of does.**

B. August's friends don't invite him to as many parties as they used to.

*wrong: I can see why you might guess this, but August's friends are not the focus of this sentence. Earlier in the paragraph, he says that a number of friends never invited him to their parties.*

C. Being homeschooled has made August trust his schoolmates less.

*wrong: Interesting guess, idea, but this line isn't really about trust. It's about wanting to be invited to parties.*

D. August exaggerates when he describes what he looks like.

*wrong: Interesting guess, but the text suggests that August is telling the truth about his physical appearance.*



## Teacher Writing Prompt Response Key - Excerpt: *Wonder*

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### Student Writing Prompt

August Pullman says, "The only reason I'm not ordinary is that no one else sees me that way." What does this line suggest about the way August views himself? In your own words, explain how this piece of August's personal philosophy fits with the larger themes of difference and self-esteem in this passage. Use quotations from the text to support your analysis, and consider the way August uses the words "ordinary" and "normal" to describe his life and hopes for the future.

### Response Key

#### Response Thesis Statement

Successful thesis statements will make a claim for how August views himself in the world.

Strong statements should touch on the novel's themes of difference and self-esteem, e.g.:

- *In this passage, Auggie explains that what keeps him from leading an "ordinary" life is other people thinking he's not "normal."*

Strong statements may analyze the significance behind Auggie's claim that "the only reason I'm not ordinary is that no one else sees me that way," e.g.:

- *Auggie's line, "the only reason I'm not ordinary is that no one else sees me that way," suggests that Auggie is unbothered by the world's opinions.*



## Response Evidence and Support

Strong answers will analyze the significance behind Auggie's claim about normalcy and will include examples from the text to illustrate his ideas about how he's perceived in the world.

**Examples from the text that support the claim that Auggie thinks he is ordinary:**

- "I do ordinary things. I eat ice cream. I ride my bike. I play ball. I have an EBox. Stuff like that makes me ordinary. I guess. And I feel ordinary. Inside."
- "I think the only person in the world who realizes how ordinary I am is me."

**Examples from the text that support the claim that Auggie thinks he's not ordinary:**

- "I know ordinary kids don't make other ordinary kids run away screaming in playgrounds. I know ordinary kids don't get stared at wherever they go."
- "Via doesn't see me as ordinary. She says she does, but if I were ordinary, she wouldn't feel like she needs to protect me as much. "
- "Mom and Dad don't see me as ordinary, either. They see me as extraordinary."
- He has had 27 surgeries and is often sick due to "medical mysteries."
- He has been homeschooled until the fifth grade.

**Examples from the text that support the claim that Auggie wants to change how he looks:**

- "If I found a magic lamp and I could have one wish, I would wish that I had a normal face that no one ever noticed at all."
- "I won't describe what I look like. Whatever you're thinking, it's probably worse."
- "What I wanted was to go to school, but only if I could be like every other kid going to school. Have lots of friends and hang out after school and stuff like that."





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**Examples from the text that support the claim that Auggie is building his self-esteem:**

- “Here's what I think: the only reason I'm not ordinary is that no one else sees me that way.”
- “But I'm kind of used to how I look by now. I know how to pretend I don't see the faces people make.”
- “I have a few really good friends now.”

**Strong answers will explore how Auggie uses the words “ordinary” and “normal”:**

- He describes wanting to live an *ordinary* life, so that Via wouldn't have to protect him so much, and other people could see how ordinary he feels on the inside.
- He defines *normal* as something that doesn't shock other people, recognizing the constructed nature of the word. August thinks that if his face was considered normal, he would be perceived as ordinary.