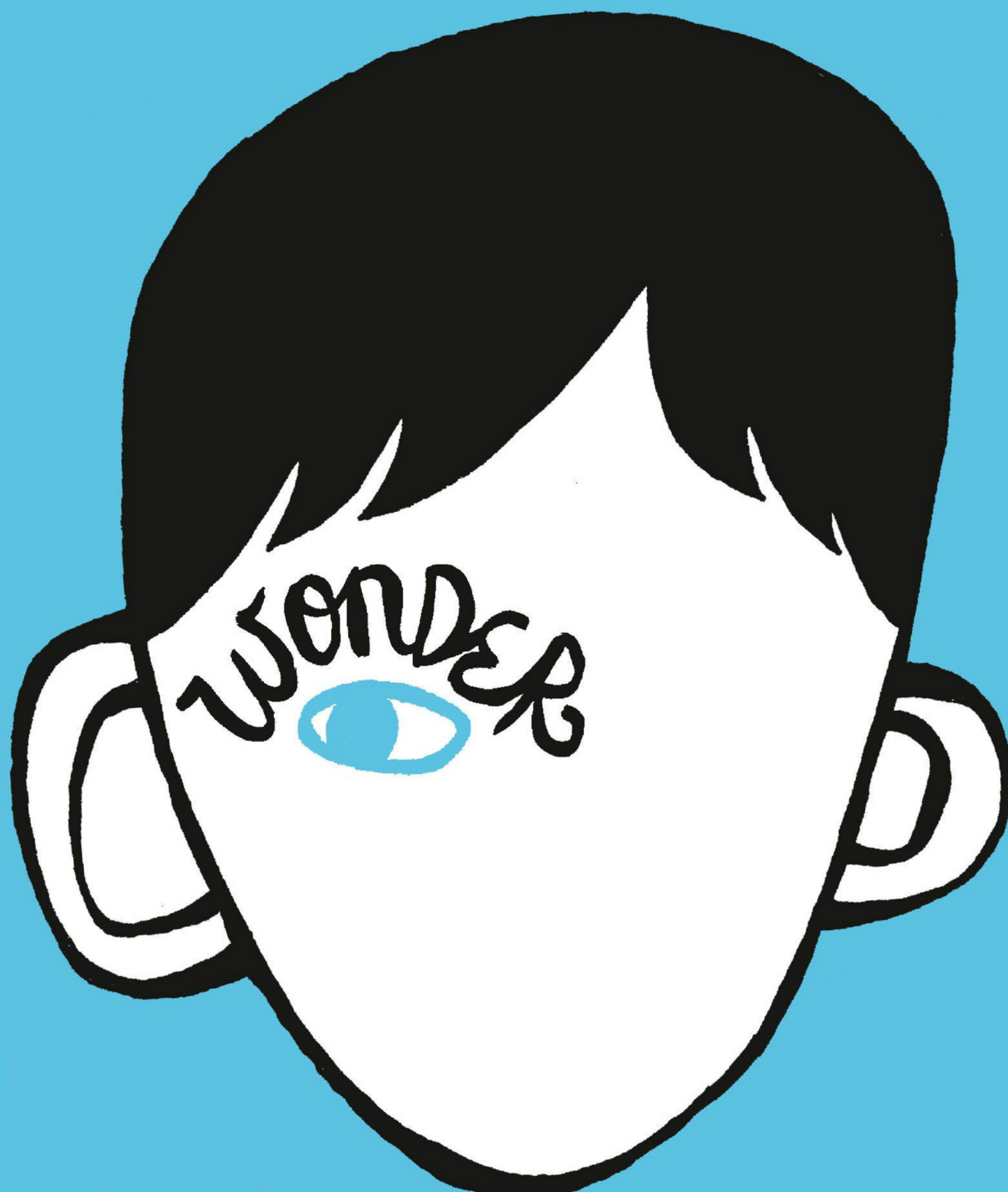


R.J. PALACIO'S

WONDER

GUIDE FOR STUDENTS, TEACHERS,
CAREGIVERS, AND FAMILIES



LITERATURE GUIDE

www.oneworlduv.org

a note from the editors



Dear Reader,

This guide is designed to bring literature to life in every aspect of a student's life: **in the classroom, in the home, amongst their teachers, and between their caregivers.** As teachers ourselves, we believe in the power that literature has to create pathways for otherwise difficult conversations. Using characters from a book can create space to discuss real issues without the stigma associated with real people. Based on the **latest research** out of the **Harvard Graduate School of Education**, this literature guide is a multi-dimensional approach to building moral capacities in both youth and adults alike.

We hope that you find this literature guide a useful tool in your classroom, teams, and home.

Sincerely,

Lindsey Pockl and Emilija Lafond

acknowledgments

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[HGSE X-Media Lab](#)

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user's guide

This guide is designed for teachers and parents to help integrate the book "Wonder" into their classrooms, homes, and every day lives. Each section is designed to fit the needs of each environment. The classroom section follows the guided reading read-aloud guidelines for a roughly 20 minute read aloud, complete with vocabulary, discussion questions, and journal response. The educators, caregivers, and family guides are split into 4 parts and are complete with activities and discussion questions to facilitate deep dialogue between adults and between adults and children.

Although we designed the guide with these four groups in mind, feel free to mix-and-match between sections! The important guiding principle is developing moral capacities both within ourselves and within the youth in our lives. Stay true to you...and when given the choice between right and kind...

CHOOSE KIND.



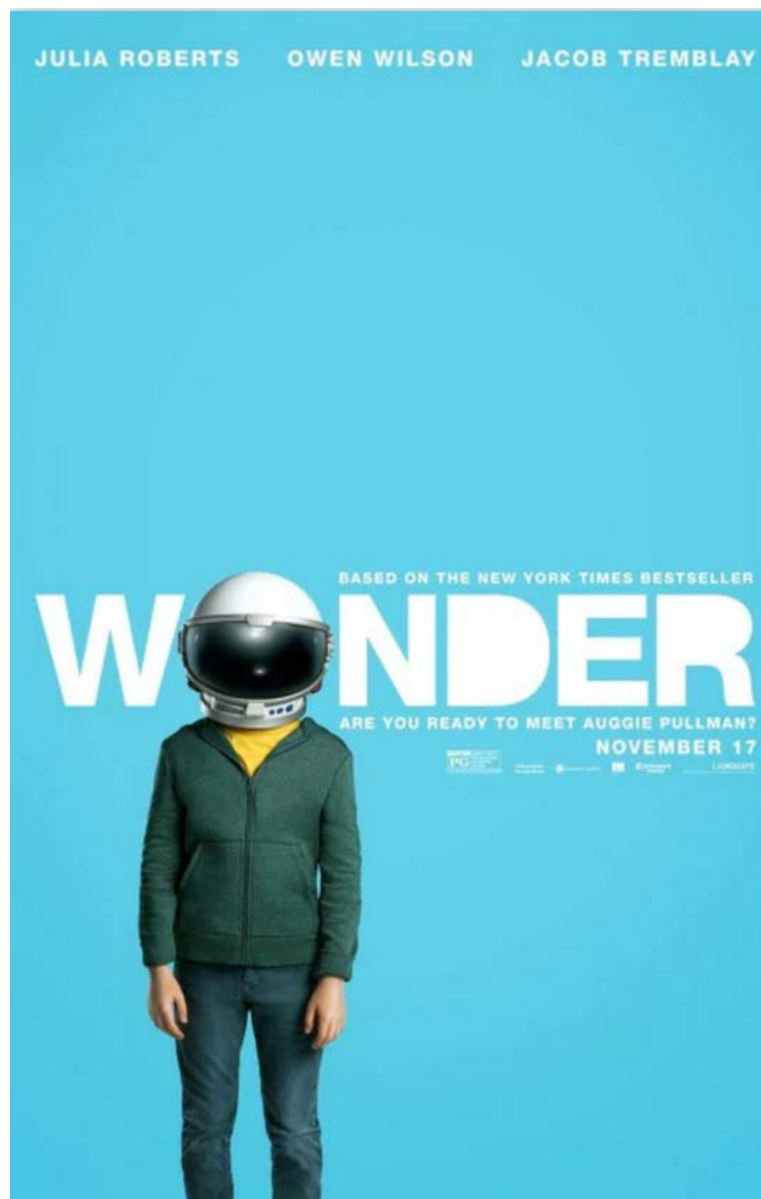
about the...

book

After being home-schooled for four years, Auggie, who suffers from a severely deformed face, enters the fifth grade at Beecher Prep School and does his best to be just an ordinary kid with an extraordinary face.

The first few days of school are more than difficult. Try as he might to ignore them, Auggie must endure the looks and whispers—even the cruel game, "The Plague," where everyone is afraid to touch him. Julian especially causes Auggie's days to be miserable, making references about Auggie's face and veiled threats to harm him. The flip side is that Auggie has the steadfast support of his first friend, Summer, and his best friend, Jack, and his teachers and the principal like him. But for every positive, there is a negative: Jack betrays him, a gang of kids try to hurt him, and some particularly insensitive parents even try to have him removed from the school. Yet, Auggie shows amazing understanding and compassion. As the school year progresses, Auggie learns that, though there will always be people who want to taunt him and make his life miserable, he can have true friends despite his looks. The wonder of Auggie's extraordinarily unique presence is that the people around him learn what it is to be kind and to be courageous.

text taken directly from THE WORLD OF WONDER PDF (n.d.)



film

Based on the New York Times bestseller, this movie (2017) tells the incredibly inspiring and heartwarming story of August Pullman, a boy with facial differences who enters the fifth grade, attending a mainstream elementary school for the first time.

August "Auggie" Pullman (Jacob Tremblay) is a 10-year-old boy living in North River Heights in upper Manhattan, New York, with his mother Isabel (Julia Roberts), father Nate (Owen Wilson), older sister Olivia "Via" (Izabela Vidovic), and dog Daisy. He has a rare medical facial deformity, which he refers to as "mandibulofacial", and has undergone 27 different surgeries as a result. Auggie has been home-schooled, but as he approaches fifth grade, his parents decide to enroll him in Beecher Prep, a private school. Before the school year begins, Auggie meets with Mr. Tushman (Mandy Patinkin), the principal, who arranges a tour for him with three other students: Jack Will (Noah Jupe), Julian Albans (Bryce Gheisar), and Charlotte Cody (Elle McKinnon). When school starts, Auggie is initially ostracized by nearly the entire student body, but soon forms a close friendship with Jack. Directed by Stephen Chbosky.

text take directly from from IMDb. (n.d.) PLOT SUMMARY

author

R. J. PALACIO lives in NYC with her husband, two sons, and two dogs. For more than twenty years, she was an art director and graphic designer, designing book jackets for other people while waiting for the perfect time in her life to start writing her own novel. But one day several years ago, a chance encounter with an extraordinary child in front of an ice cream store made R. J. realize that the perfect time to write that novel had finally come. Wonder is her first novel. She did not design the cover, but she sure does love it.

text taken directly from THE WORLD OF WONDER PDF (n.d.)



photo credit: <https://wonderthebook.com/about>

moral capacities



moral literacy

Moral literacy is knowing the basic values- e.g. honesty, caring, fairness. By the time children are 5-6 years old, they understand these values are important, but that does not mean these values become a part of their identity.



moral identity

Moral identity is a deep, abiding commitment to values such as honesty, caring, fairness and justice. These values are such an integral part of a person's identity that they are willing to sacrifice on behalf of them, e.g. they're willing to be caring and fair even at times at a cost to themselves.



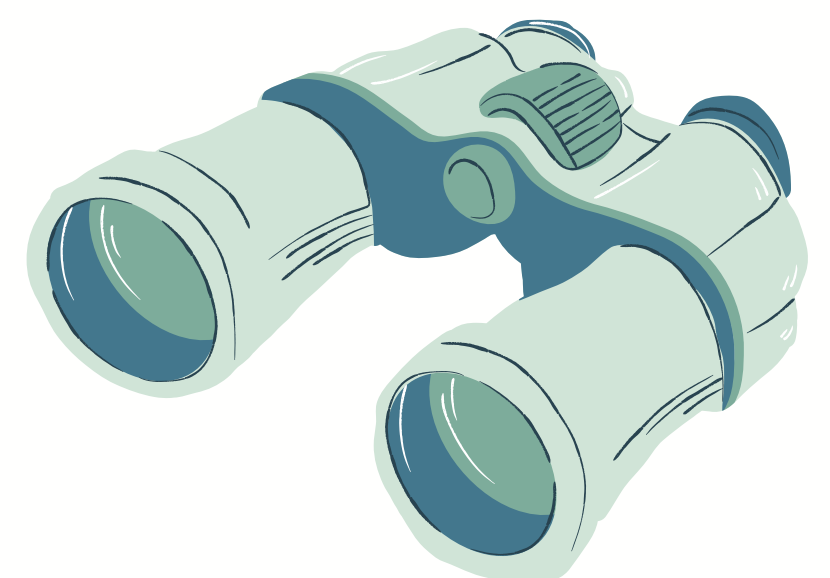
circle of concern

Empathy is the capacity to experience what other people feel, to understand their perspectives and to value others. It thus has an emotional component, a cognitive component and an ethical component. It's important to develop in children not only the capacity for empathy but the capacity to empathize with those who are different from them and/or who may not be on their radar, to expand their circle of concern.



moral awareness

Moral awareness is the capacity to identify ethical issues and the potential for harm in situations where one has previously not perceived ethical issues or this risk of harm. For example, research indicates that many young men believe that young women are flattered by catcalling, while many young women find catcalling offensive and frightening. It's critical that boys/men become aware of girls/women's reality and this harm.



definitions taken from Harvard Course H611: "Becoming a Better Person and Living a Good Life" (Prof. Richard Weissbourd)

moral capacities



managing destructive emotions

Managing destructive emotions is the capacity to effectively manage anger, frustration, jealousy, shame and other emotions that can cause us to violate our ethical standards and to harm others. It's vital to help children manage these feelings and to work to create environments that don't generate intense levels of these feelings.



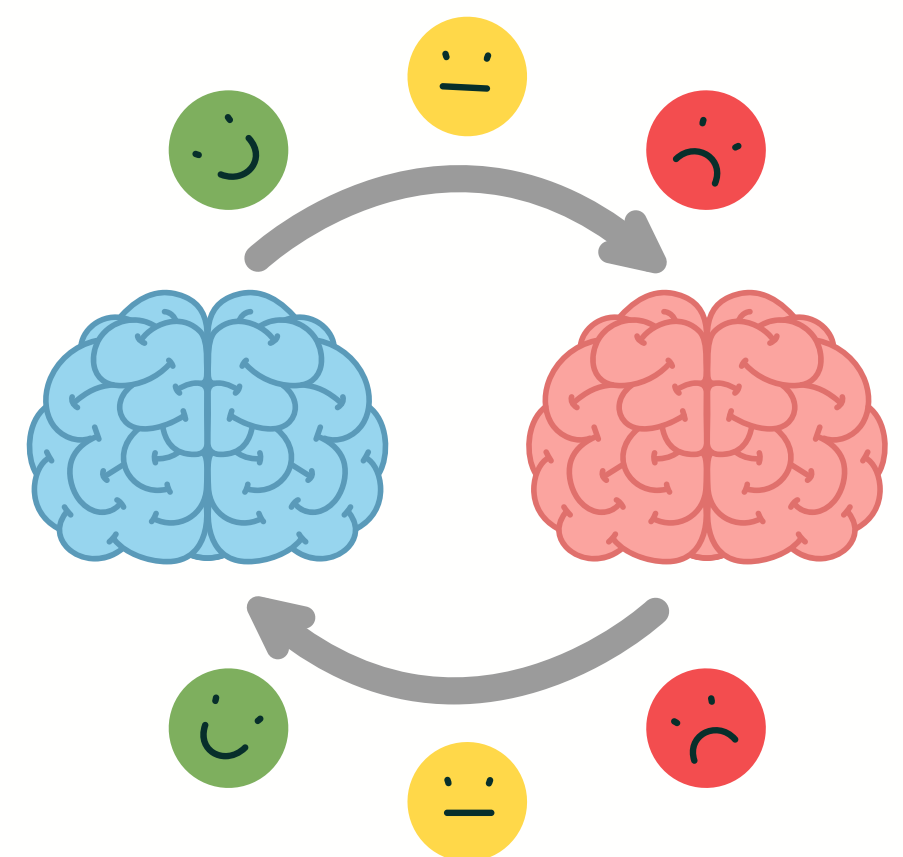
moral reasoning

Moral reasoning is the capacity to reason effectively when faced with moral dilemmas, especially situations where ethical values conflict, e.g. when values like honesty and loyalty collide. Our goal as adults is to help children develop more complex forms of moral reasoning that will help them resolve these dilemmas in way that are increasingly fair and just.



SEL skills

Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) skills are the skills needed to treat people with care and decency day to day, for example, knowing how to help someone without patronizing them, how to praise and criticize effectively and respectfully, how to be a good listener and how to navigate difficult peer situations that may be harmful to oneself or others.



moral idealism

Moral idealism is the capacity to imagine a more just world (moral imagination), the commitment to pursue this vision (a form of moral motivation) and the confidence that one can pursue that vision effectively (moral agency).



definitions taken from Harvard Course H611: "Becoming a Better Person and Living a Good Life" (Prof. Richard Weissbourd)

guide for classrooms



In this section, you will find a conversation guide following the **30-45 minute guided-reading/read aloud model**. Connected to the moral capacities, this guide is complete with **daily vocabulary, guiding questions for group discussion**, and **writing prompts**.

These questions, formulated using the latest research from Harvard's Graduate School of Education, are **developed for teachers, by teachers**, to ensure successful conversations for real classrooms.

suggestions

- 1 15-20 minute read aloud time** | We know that read aloud time is short, so we designed each section to fit a 15-20 minute time for auditory reading.
- 2 10 minute group discussion** | With carefully chosen vocabulary words as a base, each group discussion is designed to create space for text-to-self and text-to-world connections.
- 3 10 minute writing time** | Age-appropriate journal prompts are designed to help students connect with the text on a personal level.

guiding questions



before reading

Circle of Concern

empathy (noun)

the capacity to experience what other people feel, to understand their perspectives and to value others

Group Discussion

On a poster, draw a circle in the center and write the term "**empathy**" inside. Ask students to share what they believe empathy is. After allowing some time to share, write the definition of empathy. Again, ask students to share examples of empathy. Around the circle, write down the ideas, terms, drawings, and definitions that students share.

Treacher-Collins Syndrome

- Ask the students if they have heard of Treacher-Collins Syndrome. Read the article from 11-year old Victoria Dicken who lives with Treacher-Collins Syndrome (Dec. 21, 2017).
 - [View Resource here: https://nortonchildrens.com/news/treacher-collins-syndrome-victoria-dicken/](https://nortonchildrens.com/news/treacher-collins-syndrome-victoria-dicken/)
- Watch the video "Jacob Tremblay and Nathaniel Newman speak together onstage at WE Day Seattle" [2:53]. Jacob Tremblay, who played Auggie in the hit movie Wonder, speaks on-stage with Nathaniel Newman (who lives with Treacher Collins Syndrome) live from WE Day Seattle at KeyArena, Seattle, WA (May 3, 2018).
 - [View Resource here: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=41U_bCnsouY](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=41U_bCnsouY)

Journal Time

Reflect on a time where you saw someone who looked different from you. How did you react? What did you say/do/think/feel?

If that person knew your thoughts or feelings, how do you think it would make them feel? Is this a model of empathy?



pages 3-18

Circle of
Concern

Group Discussion

In this section, August discusses the issue of him going to school.

- Why has he never gone to school?
- What are some of the fears that August has?
- Do you think he should go to school? Why or why not?

first person narrative

mode of storytelling in which the storyteller recounts events from their perspective, using words such as "I", "me", "us", and "we".

Journal Time

Empathy Building | Put yourself in Auggie's "shoes". Rewrite this section of the story from **first-person narrative**, pretending that you are August. Focus on what you are **thinking, feeling, and saying**. After writing, reflect on what it was like to put yourself in his shoes.

Circle of
Concern

pages 19-34

Group Discussion

Write the term "**sensitivity**" on a poster or paper. Discuss the definition and what it means for students. Then, discuss the following:

- What was Auggie's tour of the school like?
- How was Julian rude?
- Describe Auggie's relationship with Daisy.
- Why does Auggie want to go school?

sensitivity (noun)

awareness of the needs and emotions of others

Journal Time

Write about August's interactions with one of the following characters: Mom, Julian, Daisy, or Via. Draw each character and write 5 descriptive qualities of each. Then, answer the following questions: What is their relationship like? Is this person sensitive of August's needs? How or how not?



Text-to-Movie Connection

Content taken with permission from Harvard Graduate School of Education X-Media Lab. (2019). *The Wonder Project*. HGSE X-Media Lab. <https://xmedia.gse.harvard.edu/currently-wonder-project>

Watch the film clip of the opening of *Wonder* (0:1:06 - 0:4:45). Ask students to list as many images and sounds as they notice in the sequence of shots during the opening. They may record their observations during and after viewing the segment.

Q1: What do you notice from the images and sounds in the opening of the movie?

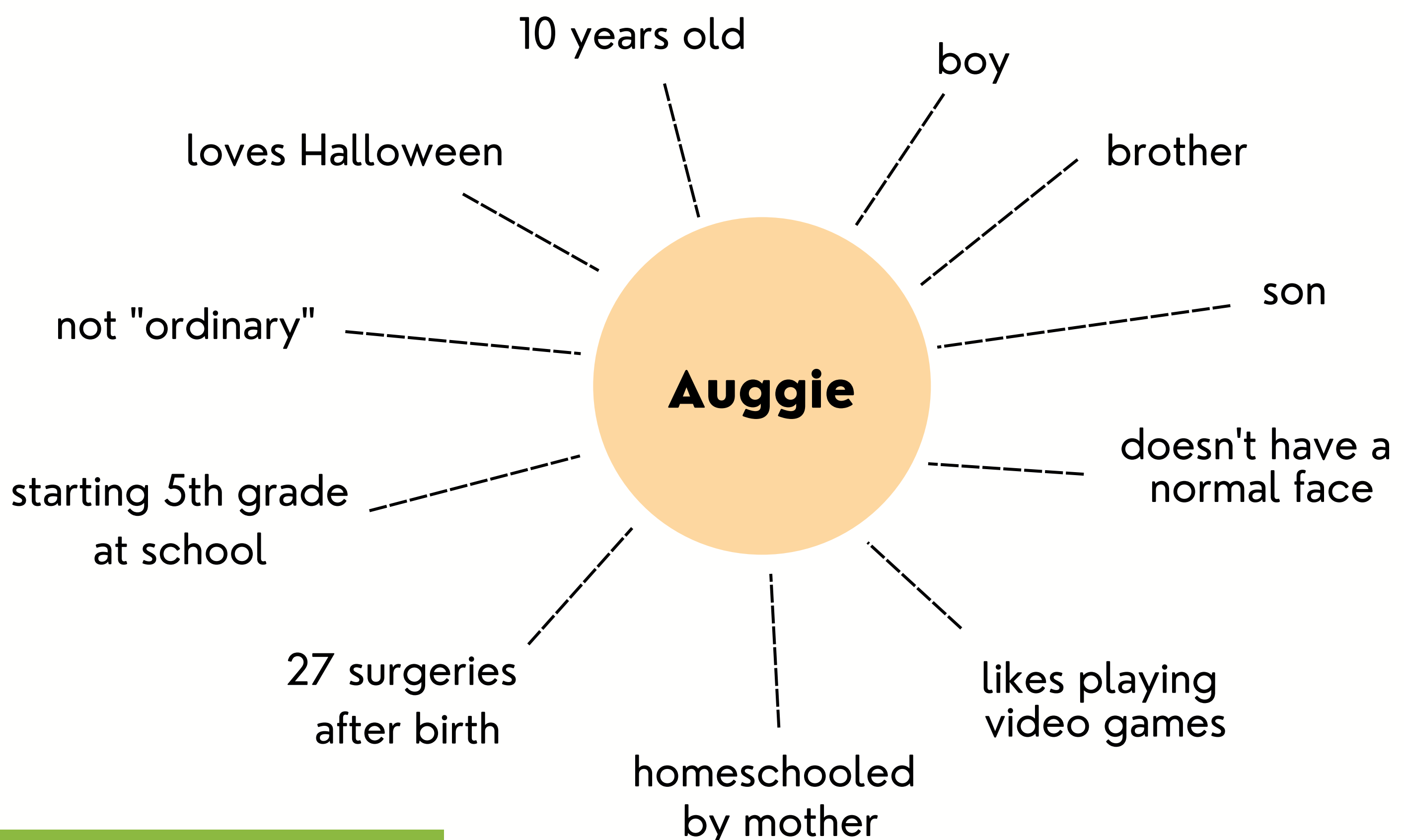
Q2: What can you conclude about Auggie from the images and sounds?

Q3: What might you wonder about Auggie after watching the opening of the movie?

identity chart

The Strategy of Identity Chart is adapted from ©Facing History and Ourselves.
<https://www.facinghistory.org/resource-library/teaching-strategies/identity-charts>

Ask students to draw an Identity Chart of Auggie. Students are also encouraged to add on what they learn about Auggie in the book. This Identity Chart can be revisited and altered as students move on.





pages 35-50

Moral Awareness

Group Discussion

- Is it natural to react to someone who has an abnormal face? How might you get over your first reactions? What can classrooms and schools do to help?
- Do you think the reactions of Auggie's schoolmates can be regarded as bullying? Why do you think so?

Journal Time

Imagine you are in Auggie's classroom at his first day of school. How would you introduce yourself to your classmates? What are two things you would say? Why these two things?

Content taken with permission from Harvard Graduate School of Education X-Media Lab. (2019). The Wonder Project. HGSE X-Media Lab. <https://xmedia.gse.harvard.edu/currently-wonder-project>

Class Activity

Mr. Browne's September precept is "When given the choice between being right and being kind, choose kind." Create something (draw a picture, write a letter, decorate a letter) which shows what this precept means to you. Use all of the creations to decorate your classroom door or wall. As a class, be sure to write the quote big enough for everyone to see!

Moral Awareness

pages 51-65

Group Discussion

Discuss the following:

- Why does Auggie use a simile to compare himself and Summer as "Beauty and the Beast"?
- Why does Auggie cut off his braid? What pressures were put on August which made him cut off his braid? Who put the pressure on him? Could it have been avoided?

Journal Time

Mr. Browne's October precept is "Your deeds are your monuments". Write about a deed that you have either done or would like to do. Tell about how your chosen deed would out-live you (be your monument).

peer pressure

the pressure a person feels to conform (to do what others are doing) in order to feel accepted or valued by others



pages 66-80

Moral Awareness

Group Discussion

In this section, two big things happen: August learns that other students are afraid to touch him, playing a game similar to "The Cheese Touch" and he overhears his friend, Jack, say something very terrible.

Discuss how both of these scenes make you feel. Allow students to discuss if they can personally relate or if they have seen this in other ways.

Journal Time

Take some time to reflect on this chapter. Some of you might have had this lived experience, others may have seen it happen to someone, and some may have only witnessed it in other books/movies. Write or draw out your thoughts and feelings.

check in

This is the end of August's point of view. Reflect on if it feels easier to practice empathy than at the beginning of the book.

Circle of Concern

pages 81-96

Group Discussion

We now get to hear from Via's point of view.

- What is it like to hear from a different point of view?
- How does Via explain August's position in the family?
- Describe Gran.

Journal Time

On page 91, she says, "I'm always going to be the sister of a kid with a birth defect; that's not the issue. I just don't always want to be defined that way." What does Via mean by this statement? Write about how you think it feels to be Via.

perspective shift

seeing the same situation through a different lens. In this case, a different character's point-of-view.



pages 97-117

Moral Reasoning

Group Discussion

Watch the film clip Via's Grandmother (0:40:25 - 0:43:15).

- How much do you know about Via from this clip? What more would you want to know about Via?
- What other evidence can you find in the book/film that suggests Via is not "being seen" by her parents?

kindness (noun)

the quality of being friendly, generous, and considerate

Journal Time

In this chapter, we learn more about Via's

- How does Via react to Auggie's deformity? How are her reactions different from other characters in the story?
- Do you think Via's reactions are fair? If you were Auggie's sibling, what are some struggles you think you would face?

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Moral Identity

pages 118-132

Group Discussion

We now get to hear from Summer's point of view. Write the term "**integrity**" on a poster or paper. Discuss the definition and what it means for students. Then, discuss the following:

- Describe Summer. Create an Identity Chart for her.
- Why do you think Summer is able to be kind to August when other kids can't? What peer pressures might Summer be feeling? Why do you think she can overcome it?

integrity (noun)

doing the right thing when no one is watching, even in the toughest of situation

Journal Time

Know Yourself | It is really hard to go against what everyone else is doing. Do you think you would be able to befriend Auggie the way that Summer did? What challenges would you face? What support would you need?



pages 133-148

Moral Reasoning

Group Discussion

We now get to hear from Jack's point of view.

- Why does Jack agree to show Auggie the school at the beginning of the year?
- How does Jack feel about Auggie as a friend and ex-friend?

Journal Time

In befriending Auggie, Jack is faced with the same dilemma as Summer, however, he handles the peer pressure differently. Make a Venn-Diagram with Summer on one side and Jack on the other. How are these two characters similar? How are they different?

If you were Summer, would you have hinted to Jack about why Auggie is mad? Do you think it is OK that Summer tells Jack even though Auggie asked her not to?

dilemma

a situation in which a difficult choice has to be made between two or more equally "bad" alternatives

Moral Reasoning

pages 149-167

Group Discussion

MANY things happen in these pages.

- Think about Jack's attitudes towards Auggie before and after the Halloween incident. Why do you think Jack Will bad-mouthed Auggie?
- What does Jack Will learn about what it means to be a true friend?

Journal Time

Understanding Peer Pressure | Is it only Auggie who wants to be "ordinary"? What about other kids, including Jack Will? Sometimes, the desire to belong in a group can change one's behavior. In a bullying scenario, this desire can turn a kid who defends the victim into a kid who assists bullying.

betrayal (noun)

breaking the trust of a friend by doing something that hurts another, either intentionally or unintentionally

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Text-to-Movie Connection

Content taken with permission from Harvard Graduate School of Education X-Media Lab. (2019). The Wonder Project. HGSE X-Media Lab. pg. 41-42. <https://xmedia.gse.harvard.edu/currently-wonder-project>

Watch the film clip Punching Julian (1:09:13 - 1:10:37) and read the book Part 4: Jack - Letters, Emails, Facebook, Texts.

Q1: After science class in the hallway, Jack Will punches Julian. Compare and contrast the scene in the movie and in the book.

Q2: Are you obligated to take a friend's side when he or she has a dispute with someone else?

debate

Should Jack be punished for punching Julian?

Have a class debate. Create an argument for whether or not you believe that Jack should be punished for punching Julian. Have either a small group or whole group debate.

Challenge: Argue against the point of view you actually believe...argue against yourself!!

write a letter

Notice the different writing formats in the book chapter, especially the letter and the email. What are some essential elements that distinguish the two? Notice the difference in language when Jack wrote to Mr. Tushman and when Jack wrote to Auggie. What did you find?

Q3: Suppose you were Auggie's friends and had heard about the Halloween Incident and Jack's true thoughts. What would you say to Auggie? How would you explain Jack's behavior to him? Write Auggie an email or a letter.



pages 168-183

Moral Reasoning

Group Discussion

Describe "The War". Who is definitely involved? Who isn't involved? Who is stuck in the middle?

Oftentimes we are the "**bystander**". As a class, role-play as the different positions. Someone "stuck in the middle" should try and either convince the boys to stop or find a way to step out of it. What are some different approaches to leaving the position of bystander?

bystander (noun)

a person who is present at an event or incident but does not take part

Bystanders are Essential

Check out the article "[Bystanders are Essential to Bullying Prevention and Intervention](#)" by **StopBullying.gov**

Journal Time

Rewrite the war from the point of view of one of the bystanders. What are you thinking? Feeling? What actions could you take?

Moral Literacy

pages 184-199

Group Discussion

We now get to hear from Justin's point of view.

- What is different about Justin's chapters?
- Describe Justin's family relationships.
- What does Justin do for Jack?

Journal Time

This chapter is an example of a specific aesthetic device used in the book - a form of visual representation that can be expressed in print. How does this change the way you read Justin? Write a short story using no punctuation or capital letters. How does it change the way you think while writing?

Here is R. J. Palacio, the author's response for reference:

"I played trombone for seven years through middle school and high school. And I remember thinking back then, especially when I would get into the really low notes, that notes on a musical staff looked a little like lowercase letters of the alphabet. I don't play anything now but I can still read music, and I still think that way. Ascenders and descenders remind me of half note and quarter notes, depending on where they fall on the staff. The baseline of a letter is a bit like a ledger line. Certain serif faces even have strokes that call to mind that graceful little flag on top of the stem of a note. Maybe it's because I've been a graphic designer for so many years, but I'm trained to see typefaces and fonts not just as communication devices, but as visual cues for other things. **So when it came to writing from Justin's point of view, because he's a musician, someone who thinks in musical terms, it just seemed natural for me to use lowercase letters to represent his thoughts in a very visual way. He's the kind of person who doesn't talk a lot, because he's naturally shy, but has a lot going on inside. The running monologue inside his head has no time for capital letters or punctuation: it's like his thoughts are streaming inside his mind.**"

R.J. Palacio (Nov 25th, 2012) Wonder FAQ retrieved from <http://rjpalacio.tumblr.com/post/36554274751/wonder-faqs>

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pages 200-215

Circle of Concern

Group Discussion

In this section, there is a comparison of the relationship between parents and the relationship between kids. Draw a Venn-Diagram of the similarities and differences of the types of relationships. Then, think about what qualities make a good friend. What makes a good friend? How can you be a good friend?

friendship (noun)

a relationship of mutual affection
between two people

Journal Time

Talk with an adult in your life (grandparents, parents, guardian, aunt/uncle, etc.) about who their friends were both growing up and presently. Write a list of questions that you would like to know about them. Then, set up a time to talk with them either on the phone or in person. Finally, share with your class some of the similarities and differences you have found between your life and theirs!

Managing Destructive Emotions

pages 216-230

Group Discussion

Two major things happen in this chapter, both which warrant discussion:

- Discuss the grief of the death of a pet. Oftentimes, pets are as much a member of the family as humans.
- Siblings fight, and it is hard to deal with. Role play from Via's point of view (the older sibling), Auggie's point of view (the younger sibling), and the Mom's point of view (parent's).

grief (noun)

deep sorrow, especially caused
by someone's death

Journal Time

Write about either the grief of losing a pet or the grief of fighting with a sibling or friend. Both of these are difficult emotions to deal with. What are some coping mechanisms (things that you do to make yourself feel better) when dealing with hard times? Make a list of things you can do when you face hard times to help you get through.



pages 231-246

Managing Destructive Emotions

Group Discussion

Friendships can be challenging and can change over time. This is especially true throughout Middle and High School.

- What happened between Via and Miranda?
- Why does Miranda pretend to be sick on Opening Night?
- Do you think it is fair that Via resented Miranda for the last few months? Would you forgive Miranda if you were Via?

resentment (noun)

bitter feelings at having been treated unfairly

Journal Time

Write about a time when you had a conflict with a friend or about someone who you used to be close with but no longer are. First, write from your point of view: why do you think the friendship grew apart? Then, write from their point of view: what do you think they would say are the reasons why the friendship grew apart?

After, discuss: Do you think it is fair to "hold resentment" towards the other person? What would it take to forgive and move forward?

Moral Reasoning

pages 247-262

Group Discussion

This is another action packed couple of pages! Take some time to debrief (1) after Auggie decides to go on the trip and (2) after the incident in the woods.

- How does Auggie feel about going on the school trip?
- What happens at the nature retreat?
- How was courage shown in both of these situations?

courage

the choice and willingness to confront agony, pain, danger, uncertainty, or intimidation.

Journal Option 1

Spending the first night away from home can be scary for most people. What advice would you give someone who is going to spend their first night away from home?

Journal Option 2

A few lessons ago, we discussed the term "bystander". Retell the story from the bystander's point of view. Discuss how (1) Julian's friends have changed and (2) what the bully's friends could say or do to stand up for Auggie/Jack?



pages 263-280

Moral Idealism

Group Discussion

The Beecher Prep school culture changes after coming back from the field trip:

- How do people's actions change?
- How does the school culture change?
- Do you think it is possible to create a positive school culture without people first getting hurt? How so?

Journal Time

As a class or in small groups, look at your school culture. In what ways is the school a safe community for all? What are some ways that it is not? Create a plan for something that your school can do or change in order to create a more accepting school environment for all.

Check out this Making Caring Common Resource on how to create a [School Climate Committee](#)!

school culture

the guiding beliefs and values evident in the way a school operates; all the attitudes, expected behaviors and values that impact how the school operates.

Moral Awareness

pages 281-297

Group Discussion

In this section, Jack discloses that he has a crush on Summer. This is an incredibly normal thing to feel, however, different people are on different timelines of these feelings, express feelings differently, and sometimes it feels very confusing.

As a class, use this time to open up space about (1) having a crush, (2) expressing romantic feelings, (3) accepting rejection, and/or (4) changing friendships. This is a good place to bring in a school nurse or counselor. Be sure to make resources available to students who may be struggling with identity related issues.

Journal Time

Use this time to journal about your thoughts, feelings, and questions that you have about romantic relationships. You can keep this journal entry private or share it with an adult who can help answer your questions!

acceptance (noun)

- (1) the quality or state of being accepted or acceptable;
- (2) the act of accepting something or someone

Check out the work of
[Justine Fonte](#)
for more resources!



pages 298-313

Moral
Idealism

Group Discussion

Discuss the following:

- What does Mr. Tushman say during his speech?
- How does Auggie feel about the award?
- Do you think Auggie deserves the award? What does the award stand for?

generosity (noun)

the act of being kind or generous; willingness to give or to share; an act of unselfish giving

Journal Time

Rewrite Mr. Tushman's speech in your own words. If you were the principal of the school, what would you want your students to know? How would you want them to act? What would you want them to do? What kind of people do you want them to grow up to be?

Moral
Identity

Reflect

Final Reflection

Throughout the book, Mr. Browne gives a precept every month. He asks his students to write a precept and send it to him over the summer.

Now it is your turn! Draw a post-card with your favorite scene of the book. In the center, choose one of the "core value" terms learned throughout the book. On the back, write a precept. Explain you why you chose the core value and the scene.

gratitude (noun)

the quality of being thankful; readiness to show appreciation for and to return kindness



Text-to-Movie Connection

Content taken with permission from Harvard Graduate School of Education X-Media Lab. (2019). *The Wonder Project*. HGSE X-Media Lab. pg. 57. <https://xmedia.gse.harvard.edu/currently-wonder-project>

the graduation ceremony

Watch the film clip of Mr. Tushman's Speech (1:42:05 - 1:43:45)

- Q1:** How do you understand this precept: "Greatness lies not in being strong, but in the right using of strength?"
- Q2:** When Mr. Tushman is delivering the speech, what images accompany his words?
- Q3:** Miranda reflects that "the universe is not kind to Auggie," while Justin says "the universe takes care of all its birds." How do you understand these two statements?
- Q4:** At the start of the book, Auggie introduces himself as "I am not an ordinary ten-year-old kid" (page 3). At the end of the book, he says, "I'm just me..an ordinary kid" (page 306). What does "ordinary" mean here? What has changed regarding Auggie's view of himself? What is the difference between "ordinary" at the beginning and the end of the story?

"I wasn't even sure why I was getting this medal, really. No, that's not true. I knew why. It's like people you see sometimes, and you can't imagine what it would be like to be that person, whether it's somebody in a wheelchair or somebody who can't talk. Only, I know that I'm that person to other people, maybe to every single person in that whole auditorium. To me, though, I'm just me. An ordinary kid."

-August Pullman, *Floating* (pg. 303)



one world core values

acceptance

(1) the quality or state of being accepted or acceptable;
(2) the act of accepting something or someone

courage

the choice and willingness to confront agony, pain, danger, uncertainty, or intimidation.

empathy

the capacity to experience what other people feel, to understand their perspectives and to value others

friendship

a relationship of mutual affection between two people

generosity

the act of being kind or generous; willingness to give or to share; an act of unselfish giving

gratitude

the quality of being thankful; readiness to show appreciation for and to return kindness

sensitivity

awareness of the needs and emotions of others

other terms



betrayal

breaking the trust of a friend by doing something that hurts another, either intentionally or unintentionally

bystander

a person who is present at an event or incident but does not take part

dilemma

a situation in which a difficult choice has to be made between two or more equally "bad" alternatives

first person narrative

mode of storytelling in which the storyteller recounts events from their perspective, using words such as "I", "me", "us", and "we".

grief

deep sorrow, especially caused by someone's death

peer pressure

the pressure a person feels to conform (to do what others are doing) in order to feel accepted or valued by others

perspective shift

seeing the same situation through a different lens. In this case, a different character's point-of-view.

resentment

bitter feelings at having been treated unfairly

school culture

the guiding beliefs and values evident in the way a school operates; all the attitudes, expected behaviors and values that impact how the school operates.

educator

conversation guide



In this section, you will find two conversation guides for educators and school teams and two practical tools taken from the **Harvard Graduate School of Education's "Making Caring Common Project"** for teams and schools alike.

These conversations can be used to help guide educators through self-reflection as well as provide practical tools for schools to build a culture of kindness for all.

suggestions

- 1** **Decide who your "book club" members are.** Ideally, a combination of 3-5 teachers, counselors, and/or administrative staff members who work closely with the same group of students.
- 2** **Put it on your calendar!** As a team, set up 3 dates to meet before, during, and after reading the story.
- 3** **Create an action plan** to ensure every child is seen using Making Caring Common's "Relationship Mapping Tool".

guiding questions



before reading

Review the "moral capacities" on page 4 and 5. Read through each and discuss what they mean to you. According to research done by Harvard Professor Richard Weissbourd (2022), if we want to really raise moral kids, we need to think about ALL of these aspects/moral capacities.

Even though Wonder is typically used to help teach young people moral capacities, we, as educators, are also tasked to look at our own moral capacities and how we have built them. As a group or independently, discuss:

- How specifically did you develop one or more of the moral capacities? Who or what was important to you—a parent, an older sibling, a teacher? What specifically did they do?
- How specifically have you guided or assisted someone else in developing one or more of these moral capacities?

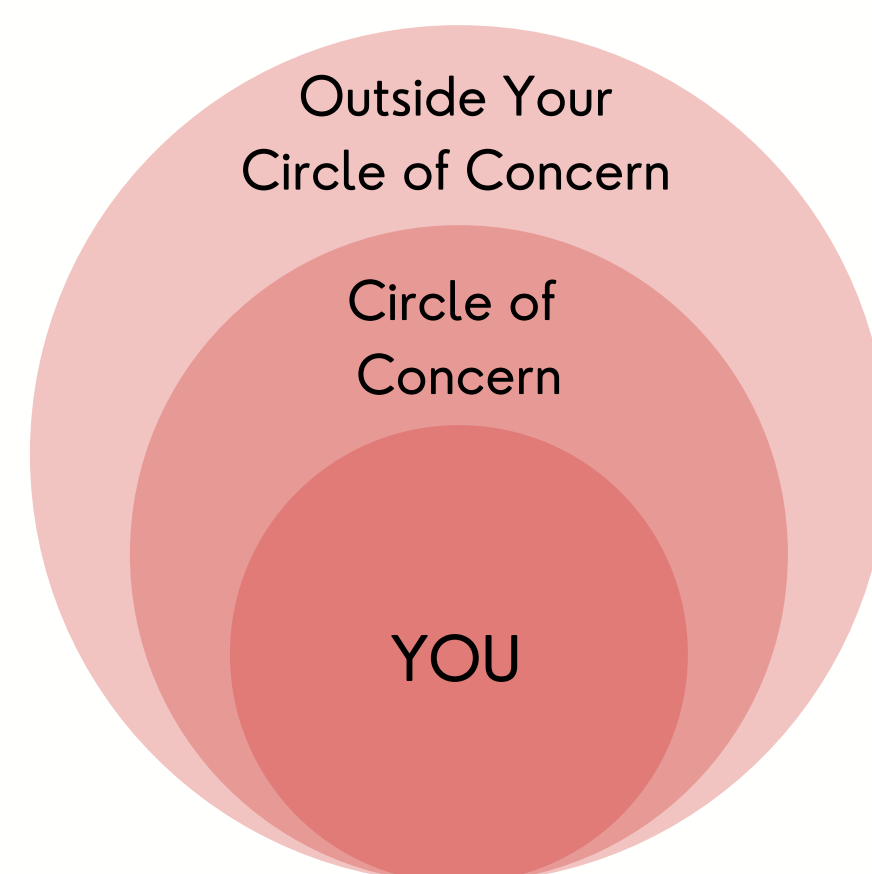
While reading, focus on how the different moral capacities show up both in your life, in your classroom, and in your school (both amongst students and staff).

while reading

Making Caring Common Strategy: **Circles of Concern Strategy Article Here**

Helping students develop greater empathy is essential for building a positive school climate, but equally important is considering who students have empathy for. The Circle of Concern strategy is designed to help children — and adults — become more aware of those for whom they don't have empathy. It is also designed to widen their circle of concern. Although this is a year long strategy, completing Steps 1 and 2 as a team will be beneficial to expanding your circle of concern!

- **Step 1: Understanding Circles of Concern**
- **Step 2: Identifying Circles of Concern**
- **Step 3: Taking Action**
- **Step 4: Reflecting on Circles of Concern**
- **Step 5: End of Year Reflection**



Content taken from Harvard Graduate School of Education. (2021). Making Caring Common. <https://mcc.gse.harvard.edu/>

guiding questions (cont.)



after reading

This story provides a multitude of ways to create a school culture of caring and have tough conversations with students about real issues they deal with daily. As a school, we can make a commitment to creating a culture of acceptance for our students through intentional planning and conversations.

As educators tasked with guiding children in resolving moral dilemmas, how can you as a **team**...

- listen/collect information/appreciate/strategize?
- help children realize both (or multiple) values?
- assist children in taking multiple perspectives/considering many factors?
- ask older children to consider principles that underlie a just community?
- self-reflect and consult with colleagues, mentors, peers?
- look for opportunities to build moral capacities?
- provide support around consequences for moral decisions?

reflection

Making Caring Common Strategy: **Relationship Mapping Tool [Article Here](#)**

There may be nothing more important in a child's life than a positive and stable relationship with a caring adult. For students, a positive connection to at least one school adult — whether a teacher, counselor, sports coach, or other school staff member — can have tremendous benefits that include reduced bullying, lower drop-out rates, and improved social emotional capacities. Rather than leave these connections to chance, relationship mapping invests time in making sure that every student is known by at least one adult.

- **Step 1: Mapping** | 20-30 minutes
- **Step 2: Reflective Meeting** | 60-75 minutes
- **Step 3: Follow-Up** | 30-60 minutes

Content taken from Harvard Graduate School of Education. (2021). Making Caring Common. <https://mcc.gse.harvard.edu/>

caregiver

conversation guide



In this section, you will find two conversation guides from **Harvard Graduate School of Education's "Making Caring Common Project"** and four different topics for dialogue from **WonderTheBook.com**.

This is a guide for **guardians to discuss with other guardians**. Although we encourage you to follow the prompts, we also encourage to **allow space for the conversation** to bring up topics that only other caretakers in your community would understand.

suggestions

1

Decide who your "book club" members are. Ideally, a combination of 3-5 guardians who can speak from different experiences.

2

Put it on your calendar! As a group, set up 3 dates to meet before, during, and after reading the story.

3

Create context. Even though the discussion questions are about the book, be sure to relate them to your personal lives and issues that you see your children deal with daily.

guiding questions



before reading

Making Caring Common Strategy:

7 Tips for Raising Caring Kids [Article Here](#)

Research in human development clearly shows that the seeds of empathy, caring, and compassion are present from early in life, but that to become caring, ethical people, children need adults to help them at every stage of childhood to nurture these seeds into full development.

- **Read and discuss the article.** Talk about the 7 strategies and how you are currently using a version of each with your child. Then, choose 1 strategy to try out!
- **While reading**, identify how these strategies are implemented throughout the book.

Bonus: identify scenes where the plot may have turned out differently had a strategy been used!

Content taken from Harvard Graduate School of Education. (2021). Making Caring Common. <https://mcc.gse.harvard.edu/>

while reading

Conversation Starters from "Wonder, The Book"

PDF

FAMILY RELATIONSHIPS

Discuss Auggie's relationship with each of his family members. How does Via react to Auggie's deformity? How is Via's life affected by Auggie's deformity? She says, "I'm always going to be the sister of a kid with a birth defect; that's not the issue. I just don't always want to be defined that way." (p. 91) What does Via mean by this statement? How could her parents help Via's life be more normal even though Auggie's isn't? What sacrifices does Via have to make in her relationship with her parents? What qualities do Auggie's parents possess that help them to be good parents to Auggie? How do respect and trust play a role in their family dynamics?

Content taken from World of Wonder by author RJ Palacio (n.d.). Wonder. <https://wonderthebook.com>

BETRAYAL

Auggie and Jack are great friends; they laugh together, they talk about anything and everything, and they feel comfortable together. So why does Jack betray Auggie by talking badly behind his back? How does Auggie feel when he hears what Jack has said? At the same time Auggie is experiencing betrayal by his friend, Via is also feeling betrayed by her two best friends, Miranda and Ella. How do Miranda and Ella betray Via? What is Via's response? How do Via and Auggie resolve their individual conflicts and cope with the pain of betrayal?

guiding questions (cont.)



after reading

Conversation Starters from "Wonder, The Book", pg.3

PDF

OVERCOMING CHALLENGES

Auggie's attendance at Beecher Prep creates issues for students, parents, teachers, and the principal. What are some of the challenges that arise? How does each group of individuals overcome the challenges? What role does Auggie play in either helping or hurting the situation? What lessons are learned because of Auggie's attendance at the school? In Mr. Tushman's speech at the end of the year, he shares this quote, "Always try to be a little kinder than necessary."

Content taken from World of Wonder by author RJ Palacio (n.d.). Wonder. <https://wonderthebook.com>

BULLYING

Kids that are different are almost always bullied in some way. How does Auggie know the first time he meets Julian that he will be a bully? In what subtle ways does Julian bully Auggie? What purpose does Julian have in bullying Jack? What power does Julian have to force the other students to join in his cruelty toward Auggie and Jack? What prompts the seventh graders to attack and bully Auggie? In general, what is Auggie's response to the bullying?

reflection

Making Caring Common Strategy: [Questions to Ask Schools Article Here](#)

Parents and caretakers want to ensure that their children are safe, respected, and able to learn when they are at school. But many parents and caretakers feel that they don't know what happens inside school walls. When parents and school leaders talk together about what the school is doing to create a safe and caring community, everyone can learn and engage in positive change efforts

- **Remember** that schools and principals are doing the best they can, but that parents can be an important source of needed support!
- **Make a Plan** to continue the parent book club. Next time, try and collaborate with parents and teachers!

Content taken from Harvard Graduate School of Education. (2021). Making Caring Common. <https://mcc.gse.harvard.edu/>

family

conversation guide



In this section, you will find three conversation guides taken from the **Harvard Graduate School of Education's "Making Caring Common Project"** which focus on **building empathy** in children and one family activity taken from **One World's "Random Acts of Kindness"**.

These conversations can be used to help guide guardians to help build moral capacities through different types of discussions and activities with children of all ages.

suggestions

1

Spend 15-30 minutes reading aloud to your child each night. If you follow the "guide for classrooms" page counts above, it should take you about a month!

2

Put it on your calendar! Find a time at the beginning, middle, and end of reading to complete the following activities. We suggest doing one every other week.

3

Create the "Random Acts of Kindness Jar" to continue to build empathy with your child. We suggest doing at least one a week!

guiding questions



before reading

Making Caring Common Strategy:

How to Use Stories to Help Kids Develop Empathy [Article Here](#)

Use story characters to teach about the value of understanding and caring about the feelings and perspectives of others.

- **Step 1: Find a Favorite Story** | Use Wonder as your first story!
- **Step 2: Talk About Feelings** | Use the questions from the article to guide you
- **Step 3: Consider Different Points of View and Lead by Example** | Talk about how different people think and feel differently in the same situation
- **Step 4: Make it a Habit** | Encourage kids to talk about feelings and different perspectives

Content taken from Harvard Graduate School of Education. (2021). Making Caring Common. <https://mcc.gse.harvard.edu/>

while reading

Making Caring Common Strategy:

How to Help Kids Develop Empathy [Article Here](#)

Help kids develop empathy by talking about how to embrace differences and find things in common with people.

- **Step 1: Look Out For Differences Around You** | Explore resources from Brightly, Common Sense Media, Circle Round, and MuseumsUSA
- **Step 2: Look for Things in Common** | "Get to Know You" questions for kids
- **Step 3: Be Aware of Your Biases** | Resources from Learning for Justice, Ongig, and Project Implicit
- **Step 4: Make it a Habit** | Questions to encourage kids to appreciate differences and find similarities

Content taken from Harvard Graduate School of Education. (2021). Making Caring Common. <https://mcc.gse.harvard.edu/>



after reading

Making Caring Common Strategy:

How to Show Empathy through Caring [Article Here](#)

Show empathy by doing something caring—whether for someone or something you care about:

- **Step 1: Notice Caring Moments** | Three Types of Caring Acts
- **Step 2: Have Kids Choose to be Caring** | Print Acts of Caring Cards
- **Step 3: Praise caring periodically, and discuss its effects on others** | Praise kids for being caring in order to help them see themselves as caring people
- **Step 4: Make it a Habit** | Encourage kids to talk about and who acts of caring...get in the habit of encouraging kids to talk about caring and show acts of caring by asking simple questions, such as:
 - Could you do something caring for someone who has been sad or upset lately?
 - Has someone done something caring for you lately? What can I do to show you I care?
 - What caring acts have you noticed lately that made you happy or hopeful?

Content taken from Harvard Graduate School of Education. (2021). Making Caring Common. <https://mcc.gse.harvard.edu/>

family activity

One World's

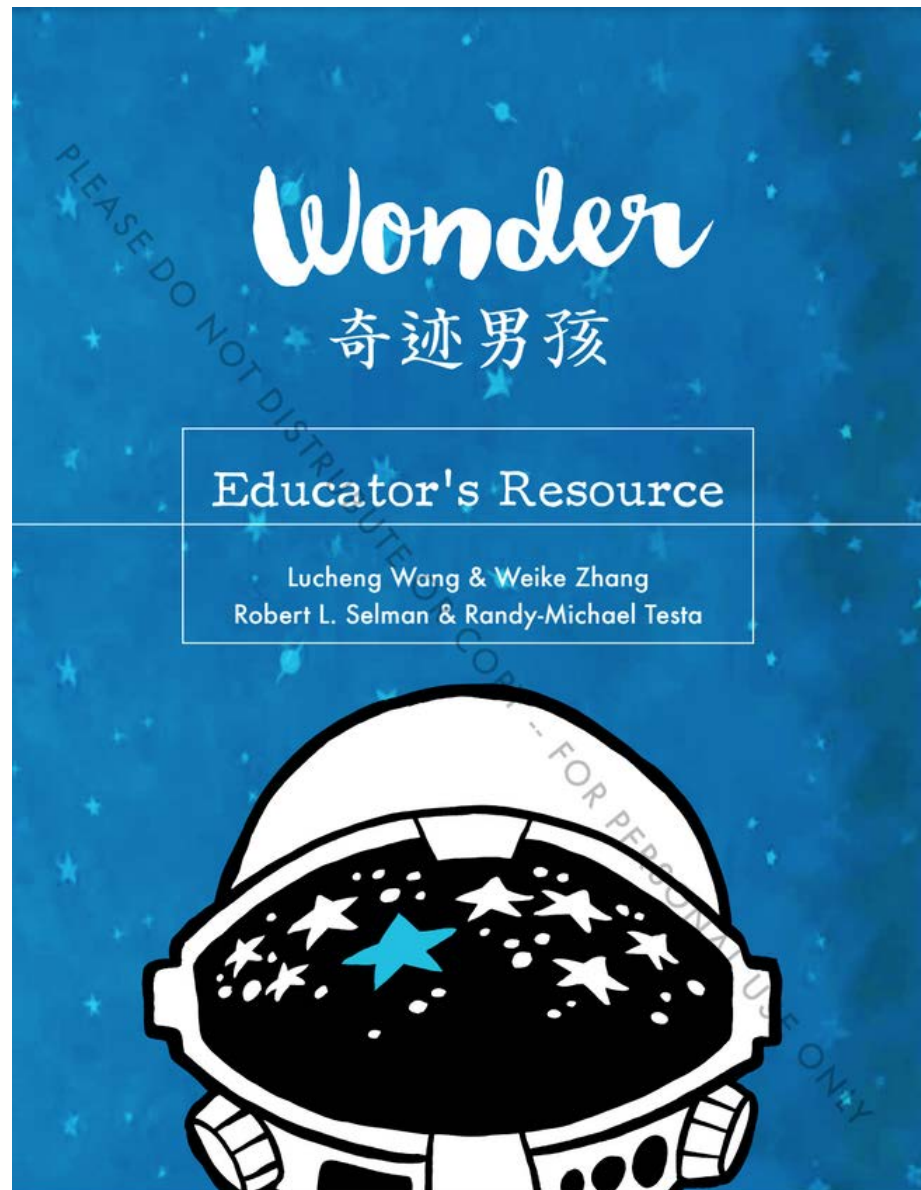
Random Acts of Kindness

Scientific evidence shows us the positive effects of doing kind acts for others as well as receiving or even witnessing kindness. Even the smallest act of kindness can change a life!

- Talk with your child about the meaning of random acts of kindness and give examples
- Together, brainstorm a list of random acts of kindness and write them down
- Start with an empty jar & decorate it however you'd like.
- Ask your child to think of a random act of kindness they performed or witnessed this week. Have them write it down and place the memory in the jar.
- Every so often, reach into the "Random Acts of Kindness" jar and perform the act together!



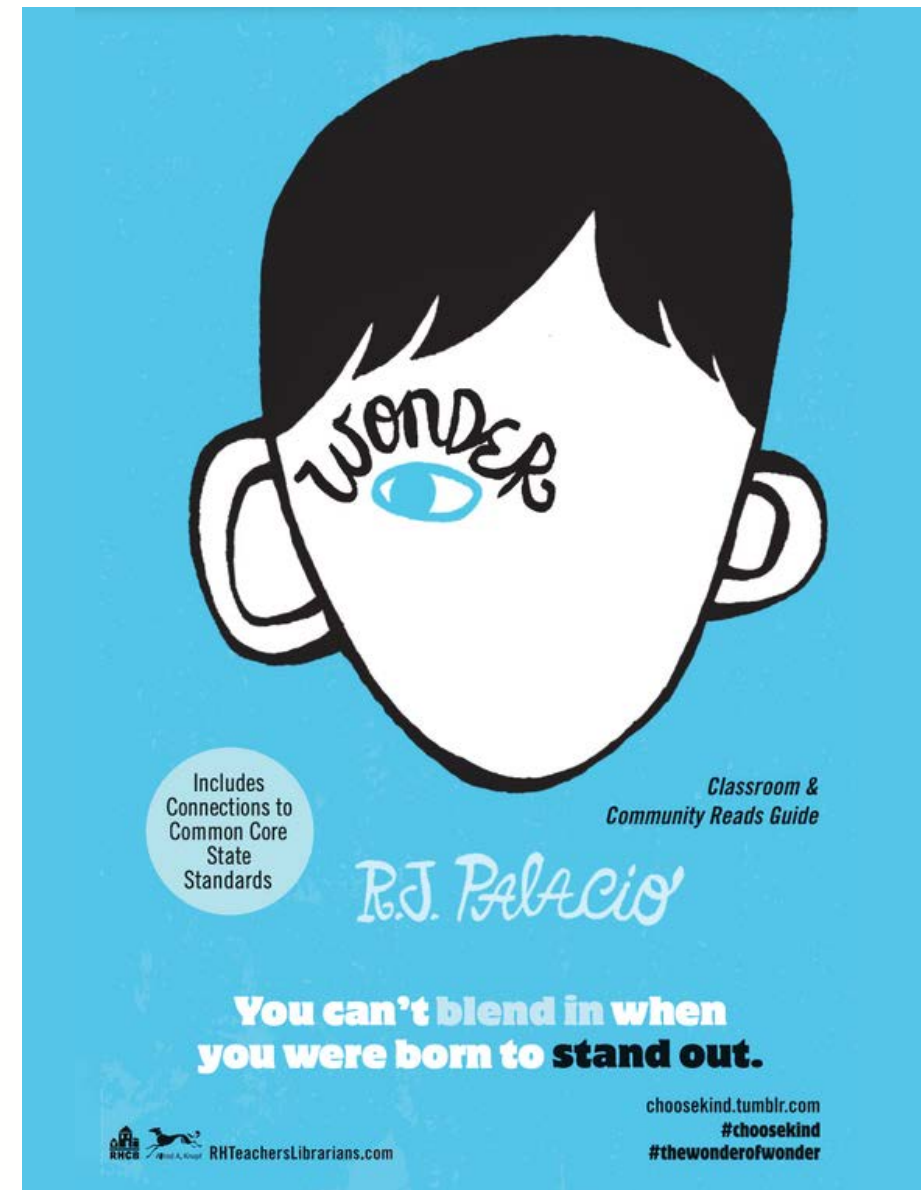
additional resources



Harvard X-Media The Wonder Project

[Webpage](#)

[PDF](#)



Wonder The Book Official Page

[Webpage](#)

[PDF](#)

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