

Reading ^{with} Relevance

Building INDEPENDENT READERS and THINKERS

A TEACHER'S GUIDE FOR

Wonder

A novel by R.J. Palacios



Recommended for:
Grade Levels
4th-6th

A tool to inspire change

This literacy curriculum is constructed around a content-rich novel that builds students' literacy skills and supports their character development and self-confidence. Students are motivated to read because they relate to the strong, diverse, and resilient characters featured in our selected novels and because each session gives them the opportunity to connect what they've read to their own lives.

Developed, field-tested, and refined in our own tutoring and mentoring programs, this Common Core Standards curriculum has inspired persistently low-performing students to engage with literature, make meaning in their lives, and improve their English language arts skills. Now, *Reading with Relevance* is available to help you dig deep into the social, emotional, and academic needs of your students, whether in your classroom, after-school program, or youth development agency!



Wonder introduces us to the unforgettable and exceptional August Pullman, a smart and funny fifth grader with a severe craniofacial difference. The story traces his sometimes challenging, sometimes heartwarming journey through his first year attending school. We chose this novel for its thoughtful attention to some powerful social and emotional themes: empathy, kindness, resilience, bullying, friendship, and family. While *Wonder* is a story about a one-of-a-kind kid, this curriculum will help students build connections between Auggie's inspiring story and their own.

This teacher's guide includes:

- A facilitator's guide with tips and resources for implementing the curriculum.
- A map of Common Core Standards addressed through this program.
- Fifteen individual lesson plans, including vocabulary, discussion questions, journal prompts, extension activities, and all handouts.
- Two assessments to monitor student progress throughout the program.
- Regular checkpoints to help teachers assess their students' progress on ELA standards.
- A culminating essay-writing unit.
- An appendix with additional teaching resources and activities to continue exploring this novel.

Session 2

pages 27-50

Vocabulary

tilted (pg. 27) adj.,
leaning to one side

eyed (pg. 31) v., looked at
with focus

nudging (pg. 33) v.,
pushing slightly

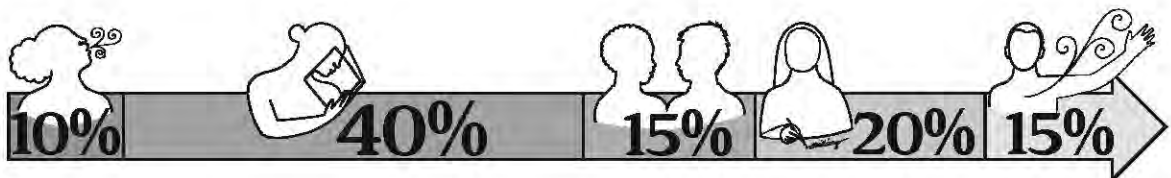
scrunch (pg. 41) v., to
squeeze together

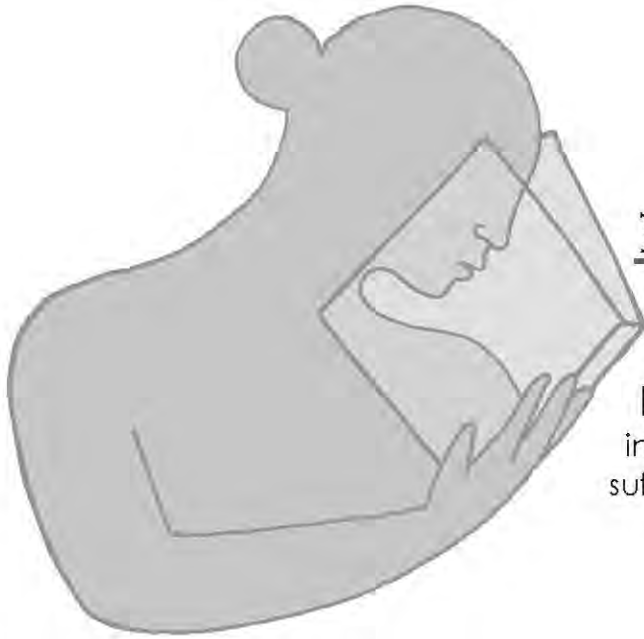
Today's Theme

Today's theme is **kindness**. On August's first day of school, he must cope with students being unkind to him. Some students are overtly mean like Julian with his comment about Darth Sidious. Other students, while not overtly mean in the same way, still choose not to practice kindness by sitting near August. Mr. Browne's September precept also connects to the theme of kindness. He says, "When given the choice between being right or being kind, choose kind." Talk with your students about the value of practicing kindness. How does seeing the impact of unkindness on August help inspire us to practice more kindness?

Session 1 Recap

In the opening chapters, readers meet August, who has a craniofacial difference. August has to deal with people staring at him and children saying mean things about his appearance. August's mom believes that for fifth grade, August should go to a mainstream school instead of being homeschooled. August is hesitant at first, and does not want to go to a mainstream school. But he visits Beecher Prep and meets Mr. Tushman, Mrs. G, and some of his future classmates.





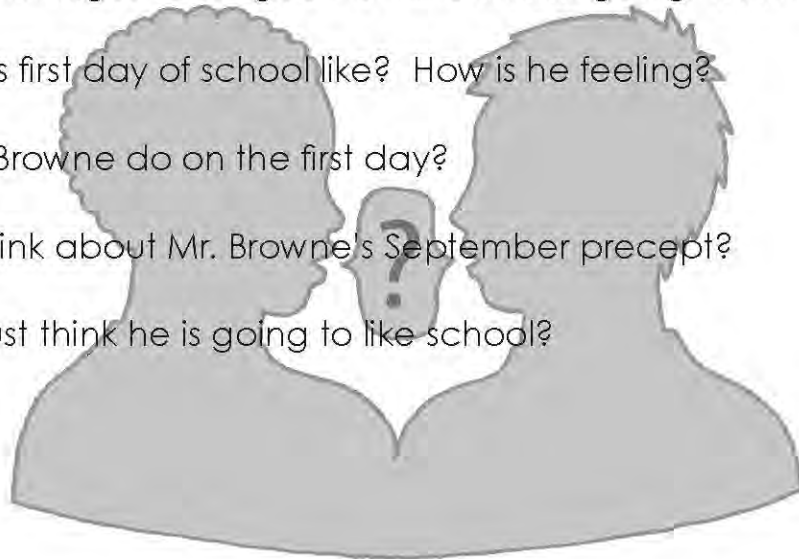
During Reading

schlep (pg. 32): to move slowly or awkwardly

Darth Sidious (pg. 44): a character in the *Star Wars* movie series who is evil and suffers severe injuries

Discussion Questions

- How is Julian's treatment of August different than Jack Will's?
- Why do you think August changed his mind about going to school?
- What is August's first day of school like? How is he feeling?
- What does Mr. Browne do on the first day?
- What do you think about Mr. Browne's September precept?
- Why does August think he is going to like school?



BEING UNKIND

- Many of the students are unkind to August on his first day. Some of them, like the ones who stare, probably do not even realize they are being unkind.

What do you think you would do if a kid like August came to your school?

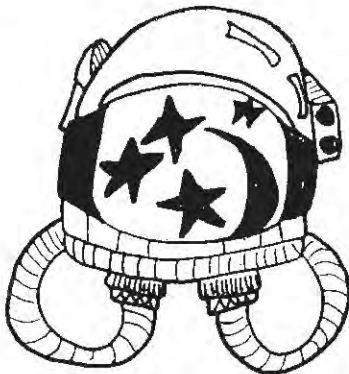
- » What would your first impression of this new kid be? How do you think you would react to meeting him?
- » If you could talk to the kids at Beecher Prep who were unintentionally unkind to August, what would you say?
- » Is there anyone in your life to whom you might have been unkind? How could you make it right?

NERVOUSNESS

- August says on the first day of school, he is so nervous "that the butterflies in my stomach were more like pigeons flying around my insides." He is really nervous!

What are some ways you help yourself stay calm and focused when you feel nervous or scared?

- » When was a time you were really nervous? What happened?
- » How do August's family try to help him manage his nerves?
- » What might have helped August feel less nervous on his first day of school?



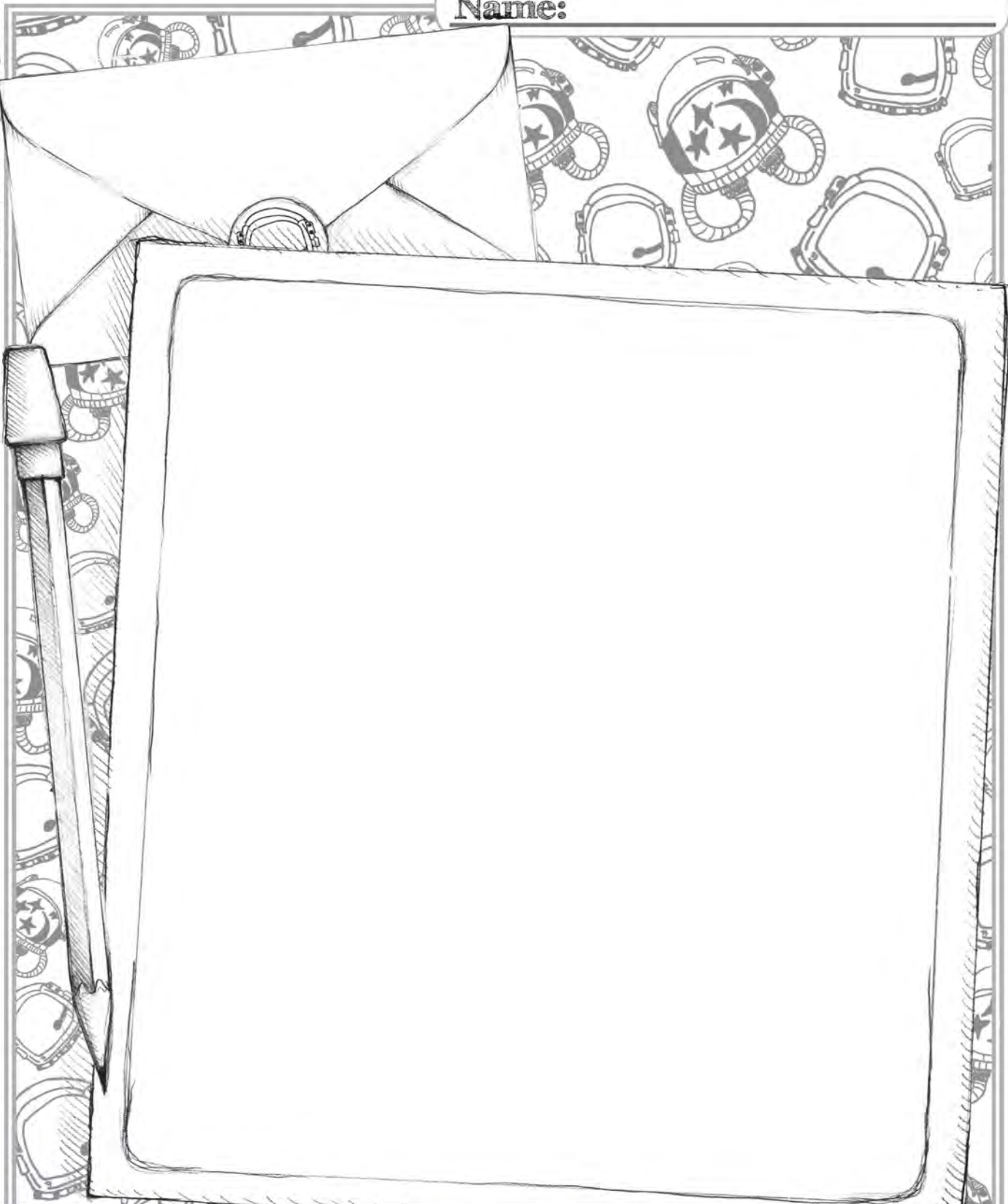
Extension Activity

Students just read about August's first day of school. In today's extension activity, students will write a short story about a first day of school. The story should be either the best first day or the worst first day students can think of, and could be fictional or non-fictional. Instruct students to include a beginning, middle, and end to their story.

Materials:

- » The Best, or Worst, First Day of School Handout

Name: _____



You have read about August's first day of school. Now, it is time to write your own first day of school story. Your story could be real or made up. Describe either the best first day or the worst first day you can think of. What would happen? How would you feel? Don't forget to include a beginning, middle, and end to your story.

The Best, or Worst, First Day of School

Appendix

Additional Activities

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Get to Know MFI

Moving Forward Institute is a nonprofit publisher of social justice educational materials. The organization was created by the founders and staff of Moving Forward Education, a multi-generational tutoring and mentoring organization aimed at fostering academic and emotional success for underserved students in California. Since our founding in 2003, MFE has provided tutoring and mentoring services to thousands of students and has trained hundreds of young adults to enter careers in the educational field. This reading curriculum was developed by our leadership team and its advisory group, including credentialed teachers and college professors. This program has been successfully facilitated throughout California by achieving powerful and measurable results for students and schools. To learn more about our organization, or our research and data, please contact us today.

Our Purpose

At Moving Forward Institute, we know that students can be successful learners when their social and emotional needs are met.

We empower educators to meet the academic, social, and emotional needs of their students by using culturally-relevant and gender-responsive reading curricula.

Training and Professional Development Services

While lesson plans are designed to be easily facilitated by classroom teachers and after-school staff alike, our in-person training and professional development services will ensure fully effective implementation of the literacy curricula.

Additionally, we offer technical support, classroom observation, and program evaluation services to help your program be successful. Contact us for more information about these services!

Contact Us

Contact us today to learn more about how the Moving Forward Institute can support your students and staff!

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If your students liked Wonder. . .

*...they might love some of our other book selections! We suggest that you check out *Walk Two Moons*, *Inside Out & Back Again*, or *Bud, Not Buddy*. Please visit our website today to browse our full selection of socially and emotionally rich novel-based curricula!*