

R.J. Palacio

WE'RE ALL WONDERERS

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Educators' Guide

Includes Ideas
for Reading Buddies
and School- and
Community-Wide
Reading Programs



The world is big enough for all kinds of people.

Art © 2017 by R. J. Palacio



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ABOUT THE BOOK



The unforgettable bestseller Wonder, soon to be a major motion picture, has inspired a nationwide movement to Choose Kind. Now educators can introduce the importance of choosing kind to younger readers with this gorgeous picture book, featuring Auggie and Daisy on an original adventure, written and illustrated by R. J. Palacio.

A boy whose face doesn't look ordinary likes to do the same things that other kids do. But the other kids don't see past his facial difference. They don't invite him to play, and they point at him and call him names. When he is feeling especially lonely, he and his dog put on space helmets and fly through the atmosphere. They land on Pluto, where they play with old friends. As they float back to Earth, the boy sees a world big enough for all kinds of people. The boy's mother calls him unique and a wonder, and he begins to think about the other kids and how they might change their view of him. Kindness is the underlying theme in this nod to a younger Auggie Pullman, the main character in *Wonder*.



IN THE CLASSROOM

All children are exposed to school-yard or neighborhood bullies. They may even know what it feels like to be excluded from a game or activity. But they may not realize how someone with physical differences feels when others point and call them names. It's natural for children to be curious about those who have differences, like Auggie in *We're All Wonders*. This guide offers ideas that focus on the need to belong, individual differences, dealing with personal challenges, and kindness.

It's important that students learn how to read the pictures and connect what they see to the literary elements of the story. The text of this book is simple, but the message is ageless. For this reason, some of the activities are designed to support the learning environment of older students. Teachers are encouraged to choose the activities appropriate for their class. *We're All Wonders* allows younger children to be included in school- and community-wide groups that are reading *Wonder* and sets the stage for reading more about Auggie Pullman when they are older.

PRE-READING ACTIVITIES

Discuss the cover of the book. What is different about the boy? Have the class brainstorm words that best describe him. Then have students use the descriptive words and write a paragraph that portrays the boy. Make a concluding sentence that expresses an opinion about why he is wearing a space helmet.

Correlates to Common Core Standard ELA-SL.1-2.1; W. 1-2.1.

Read aloud the title of the book. Have students write a paragraph that states what they think the book is about. Allow time in class for students to share their writing.

Correlates to Common Core Standards ELA-W.1-2.1.

QUESTIONS FOR GROUP DISCUSSION



- 1. What does the first line in the book reveal about the boy?
- 2. Define *ordinary*. In what way is the boy an ordinary kid? How is he extraordinary?
- 3. How does the author-illustrator reveal the boy's name?
- 4. Study the illustrations at the beginning of the book, and point out Auggie's best friend. Follow Auggie and Daisy through the entire story. Explain why Daisy isn't in the pictures at the end of the book.
- 5. Take a look at the pictures of Auggie's classmates. Describe each student. How are they all different? What might they have in common?
- 6. Discuss the meaning of *unique*. Why does Auggie's mother think that he's unique? Look at the illustration where Auggie is standing on top of the world. Explain the crown on his head. Why does he have a star on his shirt?
- 7. Discuss the meaning of *wonder*. Explain why Auggie's mother calls him a wonder. What is the first hint that other people don't see Auggie the way his mother sees him?
- 8. Study the illustration that shows how the other kids see Auggie. Which kid really doesn't want to see him? Which kids are astonished? Which kid is about to laugh? Which kids are frowning? How are their facial expressions rude?
- 9. Which illustration reveals how sad Auggie feels when people treat him rudely?
- 10. Explain how the space helmet and the water tower reveal what happens next in the story.
- 11. Describe the friends he encounters on Pluto. What does this say about Auggie's need to belong? How does Auggie show kindness to them?
- 12. Follow the bird throughout the story. Explain why the bird is in flight at the end of the book when Auggie says, "We're all wonders."
- 13. Explain what Auggie means when he says, "People just need to change the way they see." At the end of the story, Tadeo offers Auggie a ball. How is this a gesture of friendship? Discuss how Tadeo changes the way he sees.
- 14. Look at the last illustration. Why is Auggie's eye a globe? How does this explain the way he sees? Explain how the book ends with hope.



Correlates to Common Core Standards ELA-RL.1-2.1, 1-2.3, 1-2.4, 1-2.6, 1-2.7; L. 1-2.1, 1-2.4; SL. 1-2.1, -2.2, 1-2.4.

CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES

- 1. Invite a teacher who works with students with physical or learning differences to speak to the class. In what ways are these kids ordinary? How are they different? Ask the teacher to help students understand what they can do to make those with differences feel that they belong. *Correlates to Common Core Standards ELA-SL.1-2.1.*
- 2. Display photographs and books that show all kinds of people. Engage students in a discussion about the people they see in the pictures. How are the people unique? Have students cut out a full-body silhouette the size of a paper doll. Then have them write on the doll five things that make them unique. Display the dolls (holding hands) on the wall or bulletin board to celebrate unity. *Correlates to Common Core Standards ELA-SL.1-2.1.*
- 3. Read aloud *Swimmy* by Leo Lionni. Allow students to work with a partner and ask them to compare Swimmy to Auggie. How is Swimmy different from the other fish? Explain how he becomes part of the group. Then have them create a dialogue between Swimmy and Auggie about being different and wanting to belong. *Correlates to Common Core Standards ELA-RL.1-2.9; SL. 1-2.1.*
- 4. The pictures of Auggie's classmates reveal their reaction to his facial difference. Divide the class into small groups and ask them to create five questions that are appropriate to ask Auggie. Instruct the groups to choose words that are kind and gentle. Allow time in class for the groups to share their questions. *Correlates to Common Core Standards CCSS-ELA-SL. 1-2.1.*
- 5. What might Auggie's and Daisy's hearts desire? Have students cut out stars and write what Auggie and Daisy might wish upon a star. Create a display of stars. How many different wishes did the students create? *Correlates to Common Core Standards CCSS-ELA-L.1-2.1, 1-2.2.*
- 6. Take a careful look at the boy that offers Auggie the ball at the end of the story. Then refer back to the pictures of Auggie's classmates to identify him as Tadeo. Have students share what they think Tadeo says to Auggie when he hands him the ball. *Correlates to Common Core Standards CCSS-ELA-SL. 1-2.1.*

USING *WE'RE ALL WONDERS* AND *WONDER TOGETHER*



Wonder is truly a portrait of and tribute to a community, which has led to its being selected for countless common reading programs. The publication of *We're All Wonders* will give even younger readers a chance to be involved.



For Reading Buddies Programs

- 1 The word *buddy* implies friendship and belonging, which are underlying themes in *We're All Wonders* and *Wonder*. Sharing a favorite book is the best possible introduction for newly formed buddies. Pair an older and younger student, and encourage them to share a favorite book. Advise older buddies to select books they read when they were younger to simplify the conversation and create a truly shared experience.
- 2 Illustrations tell much of the story in picture books. Have reading buddies read the illustrations in *We're All Wonders*. How is Auggie different? Which illustration reveals how lonely and sad he feels?
- 3 Suggest to older readers that they do a two-minute book talk about *Wonder* after reading *We're All Wonders* with their younger reading buddy. Then the two should engage in a conversation about ways to help someone like Auggie feel as though he belongs.
- 4 Instruct reading buddies to locate five other picture books about belonging and kindness to use after reading *We're All Wonders*. Talk about the books and what they communicate about kindness to others. How is helping someone belong about being kind?
- 5 Ask reading buddies to plan ways they can demonstrate kindness to others. Then have them log their acts of kindness for a week.

School- and Community-Wide Reading Programs

- 1 Define *inspiration*. How is Auggie an inspiration to readers of all ages? How might his story inspire a school- or community-wide conversation about the way we treat those who are different?
- 2 Throughout the year, there are awareness days, weeks, and months to highlight issues related to public health or social causes. National Bullying Prevention Month is commemorated in October. Sponsor a school- or community-wide event where a panel of speakers with physical and cultural differences talk about the way they have been treated by others. What ways might the school and community improve issues related to bullying?
- 3 Talk about ways that murals tell stories and communicate themes. Suggest that schools and communities provide spaces for students and citizens to contribute to murals that depict the following themes: diversity, kindness, caring, friendship, and belonging. Then prepare a brief speech that dedicates the murals to Auggie Pullman.
- 4 Sponsor a school- or community-wide kindness day. Plan activities for all ages that are inclusive and encourage kindness. This might include a "Run for Kindness" race, or team activities like sack races. It might also include a sing-in where songs like "We Are the World," "The More We Get Together," and "It's a Small World" are sung.
- 5 Suggest that older students use Auggie as inspiration and create a rap titled "Changing the Way I See." Ask them to teach the rap to younger and adult readers. Then tape a school- or community-wide rap performance.



BECOME A CERTIFIED KIND CLASSROOM



R. J. Palacio's *Wonder* has spread kindness in classrooms and communities across the country and inspired the Choose Kind anti-bullying initiative. The Certified Kind Classroom Challenge is a fun way to instill the spirit of *Wonder* into your classroom by promoting, recognizing, and celebrating acts of kindness among peers throughout the school year.



Here's How Your Classroom Can Become Certified Kind:

1. Label an incentive jar with an official Certified Kind label.
[Download labels at choosekind.tumblr.com](http://choosekind.tumblr.com).
2. Challenge students to do kind deeds in order to fill the jar with marbles (1 kind deed = 1 marble).
3. Post pictures and anecdotes about your classroom's progress on social media using the hashtag #choosekind.
Please make sure that any people in your pictures are 18 or older.
4. When the jar is full, take a photograph and email it to certifiedkind@penguinrandomhouse.com along with your name, grade taught, school name, and mailing address. Post the photograph on social media using the hashtag #choosekind.
5. You will receive an email confirmation that your classroom is Certified Kind, as well as a certificate of achievement. Your class will be listed on the Certified Kind Classroom Registry at choosekind.tumblr.com/map.



DOWNLOAD THE FREE DAILY WONDER APP

Available for iPad and iPhone

Receive a daily inspirational quote in stunning graphics from both everyday kids and figures like Mahatma Gandhi, Martin Luther King Jr., Mother Teresa, and more!



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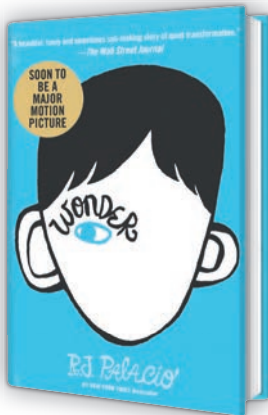
ABOUT THE AUTHOR

R. J. Palacio was born and raised in New York City. She attended the High School of Art and Design and the Parsons School of Design, where she majored in illustration with the hopes of someday following in the footsteps of her favorite childhood author-illustrators, Antoine de Saint-Exupéry, Maurice Sendak, and the D'Aulaires. She was a graphic designer and art director for many years before writing *Wonder*.

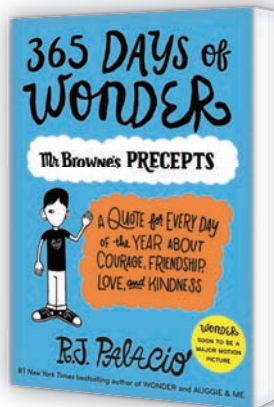
We're All Wonders, which is based conceptually on the themes of her novel, represents the fulfillment of her dream to write and illustrate her own picture book. Palacio is also the author of *Auggie & Me: Three Wonder Stories* and *365 Days of Wonder: Mr. Browne's Precepts*. She lives in Brooklyn, where she is surrounded by magical water towers, with her husband, their two sons, and their two dogs, Bear and Beau. Learn more about her at rjpalacio.com or on Twitter at @RJPalacio.

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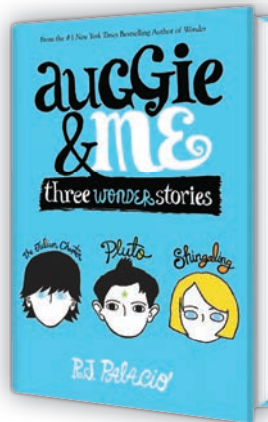
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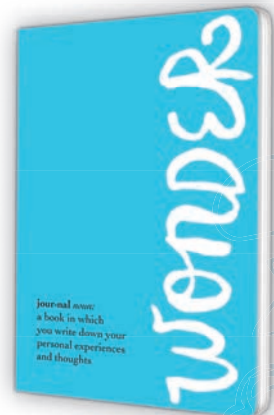
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