

Wonder Comprehension

Wonder p. 15-23 Paging Mr Tushman, Nice Mrs Garcia, Jack, William, Julian and Charlotte.

Part A

1. Even though he wasn't there, how had Dad helped August cope with the meeting with Mr Tushman on page 15?

2. Do you think Mr Tushman makes a good impression on August? Find three pieces of evidence on pages 15 and 16 to support your opinion.

3. On page 17, why doesn't August look at Mrs Garcia's face?

4. On page 19, what does Mr Tushman's office tell you about his attitude to his students?

5. On page 20, what is a jack-o'-lantern?

6. On page 20, why does August shake his head and cover his mouth? Does this action remind you of any other character's actions earlier in the book?

7. Why didn't Mr Tushman tell August about meeting the other children at the beginning of the visit?

Wonder Comprehension

Wonder p. 15-23 Paging Mr Tushman, Nice Mrs Garcia, Jack, William, Julian and Charlotte.

Part B

1. August calls his mum and dad 'Mommy' and 'Daddy' on pages 15-16. What does this tell you about the way he's feeling on visiting his new school?

2. At the bottom of page 16, August says the school smells like a hospital. Why do you think he uses this comparison?

3. On page 18, August's mum admires the picture of Mrs Garcia's grandson and Mrs G is about to say something else about him. Why do you think she doesn't?

4. Describe the change in August's behaviour with Mr Tushman on page 20 with how he reacted to him on pages 15 and 16. What has caused this change?

5. On page 20, immediately after Mr Tushman and August joke together, August hears kids' voices outside the office. Why does the author position these two scenes right next to each other?

6. There's a lot of tension on page 21. Find three pieces of evidence that illustrate the tense mood.

Wonder Comprehension Answers

Part A

1. Even though he wasn't there, how had Dad helped August cope with the meeting with Mr Tushman on page 15?

Example answer: Dad had made fun of Mr Tushman's name in the car in the previous chapter. August was concentrating on that rather than being worried about meeting him.

2. Do you think Mr Tushman makes a good impression on August? Find three pieces of evidence on pages 15 and 16 to support your opinion.

Evidence from: Mr Tushman looks right at him and smiles, without any embarrassment; He tries to shake August's hand – he treats him with respect; He speaks to him normally, without any embarrassment or being patronising; He gets down to August's level so they can be face to face; He's kind, and interested in August; He's encouraging.

3. On page 17, why doesn't August look at Mrs Garcia's face?

Example answer: He doesn't want to see the expression on her face. He's seen her do 'that thing' where her eyes dropped as she looked at him for the first time. He doesn't want to see any more discomfort on her face so he avoids looking at all.

4. On page 19, what does Mr Tushman's office tell you about his attitude to his students?

Mr Tushman respects students because he's got their drawings and paintings framed on the wall 'like they're important'. He understands what children that age like because he's got 'cool stuff' in his office – the floating globe and the Rubik's-type cube.

5. On page 20, what is a jack-o'-lantern?

A jack-o'-lantern is a pumpkin that's been carved out to make a lantern, like those you make at halloween.

6. On page 20, why does August shake his head and cover his mouth? Does this action remind you of any other character's actions earlier in the book?

Example answer: August is about to say that Mr Tushman does look like a pumpkin but stops himself just in time, since he realises it might be rude. It reminds me of when Mrs Garcia is about to continue talking about how beautiful her grandchild is but stops herself at the last minute.

7. Why didn't Mr Tushman tell August about meeting the other children at the beginning of the visit?

Example answer: Mr Tushman and August's mum probably thought that August wouldn't have stayed to meet the children if he'd have known about it. He was very nervous at the beginning of the visit. Mr Tushman has been trying to win his trust and to get him to relax so that he would accept meeting the other children.

Wonder Comprehension Answers

Part B

1. August calls his mum and dad 'Mommy' and 'Daddy' on pages 15-16. What does this tell you about the way he's feeling on visiting his new school?

Example answer: He's using 'childish' language for his mum and dad here. This hints that he's feeling scared and vulnerable and he wants to be protected like he was when he was younger.

2. At the bottom of page 16, August says the school smells like a hospital. Why do you think he uses this comparison?

Example answer: August has spent a lot of time in hospitals in his life. They wouldn't have been pleasant places for him to be since he'd have likely been in pain or uncomfortable. He feels similarly uncomfortable in this situation.

3. On page 18, August's mum admires the picture of Mrs Garcia's grandson and Mrs G is about to say something else about him. Why do you think she doesn't?

Example answer: August's mum has mentioned how beautiful he is, and normally Mrs Garcia would probably have agreed and carried on talking about how lovely looking the baby was (and maybe how the boy still is). But she may have thought that this might have been upsetting or embarrassing for August and his mum – it's clear that she's embarrassed about the situation herself. She doesn't want to make an embarrassing mistake.

4. Describe the change in August's behaviour with Mr Tushman on page 20 with how he reacted to him on pages 15 and 16. What has caused this change?

Example answer: On page 20, August is laughing with Mr Tushman, making jokes and asking questions. He's even laughing at him. On pages 15 and 16, August hardly says anything and is reluctant even to look at Mr Tushman. He's fearful in the earlier scene, but now he's enjoying himself.

Mr Tushman has won August over with his patience, kindness and good humour. Funny jokes have melted the ice too!

5. On page 20, immediately after Mr Tushman and August joke together, August hears kids voices outside the office. Why does the author position these two scenes right next to each other?

Example answer: The author wants to create an instant change of mood. One minute August is laughing and comfortable with Mr Tushman, the next his heart is pounding with fear. It takes the reader by surprise and helps them to understand August's own feelings, where fear of meeting strangers can come over him instantly.

6. There's a lot of tension on page 21. Find three pieces of evidence that illustrate the tense mood.

Evidence from: August asks, 'Who's here?' – a short, panicky sentence; August looks over at Mom and tells her that he doesn't want to meet anyone; Mr Tushman works fast – he's over to reassure August before August realises and he opens the door to the kids before August can change his mind; The kids don't look at August or his mum, they stare straight at Mr Tushman; The kids just nod. They don't say anything.

7. On page 22, neither August nor the author describe the children's faces. Why not?

Example answer: August doesn't look at people's faces when he first meets them, so he isn't going to be able to give a detailed description of them. August describes their shoes instead, which shows where he is looking (Charlotte's bright green Crocs and Mr Tushman's red Adidas trainers). The author has perhaps deliberately left these descriptions out to show how self-conscious and fearful August is of meeting other people and making face to face eye-contact. In fact, we've not had a description of August's face so far.

Challenge Task

Find out who Mr T is and what his catchphrase was, then read the bottom of page 19 again. What is Mr Tushman doing when August asks about Mr T and why has August no idea what he's talking about?

Example answer: Mr T is a (retired) larger-than-life actor in a TV series called The A Team and a Rocky boxing movie from the 1980s (nearly 40 years ago). His catchphrase was 'I pity the fool'.

Mr Tushman is doing an impression of Mr T. He's trying to be funny and make August laugh. He remembers it because he's a middle-aged man but August is too young to have heard of the 'famous' Mr T, so he doesn't get the joke.