

Reading Questions: Prompt Sheet

Wonder by R J Palacio

p. 153–183 Partners, Detention, Season's Greetings, Letters, emails, Facebook, texts, Back from Winter Break, The War, Switching Tables, Why I Didn't Sit with August the First Day of School, Sides, August's House

Content Domain Focus: 2d. Make inferences from the text/explain and justify inferences with evidence from the text.

p. 153–154 Why do August and Jack go out of the room so quickly? Give two reasons for each of them.

- Suggested answer: August was embarrassed, surprised and probably annoyed that he'd got to work with Jack. He didn't want to see him and talk to him about the project because they hadn't been speaking for a long while – and he still didn't want to speak to him.

Jack wants to get away from Julian and his scheming. He knows if he stays in the room, then Julian will try to get the teacher to split up August and Jack. He's also probably angry with Julian and wants to get away from him.

p. 155–157 The chapter, 'Detention', is a chapter of two parts. Can you explain why?

- Suggested answer: At the beginning of the chapter, Jack is digging his heels in and is still angry. Mr Tushman and his mum are putting pressure on him and making him face up to what he's done. Then Jack cries. After this, the adults are more understanding and supportive and come to a solution.

p.158 Do you think August sent the holiday card to Jack? Explain your answer.

- Suggested answer: August's mum probably sent the card. It's addressed to the family and August would still have been at the point of blanking Jack when it was sent. Besides, August wouldn't have been likely to send a picture of himself, since he's ashamed of his looks.

p. 163 How do you know that Jack's parents got the email from Julian's mum? And which of Jack's parents wrote the email?

- If you look at the cc on Julian's mum's email, it's addressed to Jack's dad and his mum. So they also got a copy of the email addressed to Mr Tushman. They'll have received Mr Tushman's reply also because they were cc'd into that. The email came from Jack's dad's email account, so he probably wrote it but signed it from both parents. Note that his dad looks like he works in a school so he will have an idea what's going on. His paragraph about Jack's friendship with August looks a bit sarcastic – he says he's 'touched' by her concern. He's not!

p. 168–169 What does Jack's experience remind you of?

- This is just how August was treated. He was shunned by the other kids earlier in the book, partly because Julian had told them to. Jack says he didn't expect it to happen to him – that's because he's always been a popular kid.

p. 170–173 Charlotte is nervous. Find evidence for this and explain why she is nervous.

- Suggested answer: Charlotte leaves a note in Jack's locker instead of speaking to him publicly, she looks to see if anyone saw them go into the room and then locks the door so that no-one can see them talking. She bites her nails as she talks and when she leaves the room, she makes sure she's not seen with Jack. Charlotte is afraid that if she's seen talking to Jack, word will get back to Julian and she'll be shunned by everyone in the same way.

p. 177 Summer tells the boys that Charlotte made the list. Why is this not a surprise?

- Charlotte is a bit of a busybody. From the beginning, she's been shown as an organiser and to be controlling. That she's make this kind of list is just like her character.

p. 180–183 Why might Jack envy August? Find evidence.

- August has a cute dog, he's got his own bedroom, he's got a much better computer, an Xbox 360 and Halo (which it doesn't sound like Jack's got). August is also smarter than Jack and he's also got a better work ethic (Jack just wants to do what's easier, he gets lower marks than August and he wants to play instead of work).

Deeper Reading

p. 154 Why does Jack punch Julian? Give three reasons.

- Suggested answer: Jack is annoyed with Julian for trying to stir it with the teacher and not taking no for an answer. He's told him several times that he doesn't want to swap partners but Julian has deliberately ignored him. He's also upset and in shock after realising why August isn't talking to him, so he's in no mood for any of Julian's scheming. Jack probably holds Julian partly responsible for what happened in the Bleeding Scream scene where August heard Jack talking about him. He realised just what Julian's like and is sick of him.

p. 155-157 Mr Tushman is in a dilemma in the chapter. What do you think is going through his mind?

- Suggested answer: Mr Tushman is puzzled as to what has been going on. He knows that Jack is a good kid and that punching Julian is out of character. He's probably got a pretty good idea that Julian is a stirrer and deserved what he got (though we don't have any evidence for that other than Mr Tushman being astute - we do get evidence later on p. 161). However, he's also got to follow the school rules and be fair to Julian as the victim of the attack and keep Jack out of school for what he's done. He may be frustrated that he can't get to the bottom of it immediately but the letter he's asking Jack to write might give Jack time to give him more information that Mr Tushman can use to investigate further and get to the bottom of the situation.

p. 161-163 Do you sense any conflict between Julian's mum and Mr Tushman in the emails between them? Explain your answer.

- Julian's mum doesn't agree with Mr Tushman's admitting August to the school in the first place - she doesn't think he should be there. She objects to Julian and other children being asked to support/befriend August. She also plays a bit of a power game by reminding him that she is a member of the school board. This would have annoyed Mr Tushman. He argues strongly in his email that August doesn't have special needs (as Mrs Albans had suggested) and questions her reason for complaining in the first place. He is probably being a little sarcastic about Julian in his comment towards the end of the email that 'it would teach them a thing or two...'. His praise for Jack having these qualities highlights, without saying it openly, that Julian doesn't have these qualities. It's a veiled insult!

p. 172-176 Charlotte says that Julian intends Jack to have a 'wake-up call'. Do you think Jack has a wake-up call in the chapters from p. 153 - 183? Page 176 might give you a clue! Explain your answer.

- Suggested answer: Jack has always been one of the more popular children. He's not known what it was like to be socially isolated in a way that August has been (or even the two Max's). Julian intends for Jack to be pressured into rejecting August but actually it makes Jack understand August's position much better and to re-evaluate his actions previously in the book (such as not sitting next to August in the lunch room). He contrasts himself with Summer, who has been kind and genuine throughout. Jack's learning to be a better, more empathic person in these chapters because he's suffering.

p. 179-183 At the end of p. 179 and p. 183, August says something funny. Explain why either of them is funny.

- On p. 178-179, the three of them talk about dating and August joins in by saying that babes keep throwing themselves at him. This is very unlikely of course. He's making a joke at his own expense that he's super attractive to girls because of his looks, when everyone knows that this isn't the case. He uses the word 'babes' as if he's super experienced in the dating game. He makes Jack explode with laughter.
- On p. 183, he just says, 'both'. It's a really short joke (though it's true) to make Jack feel bad (in a funny way) that his sister hates him and knows all about what he's done. It's funnier because Jack thinks August's sister is 'hot' and he'd want to impress her. It's also funny because we know how angry Via gets when people insult her brother and Jack's probably a bit scared of her because he's seen it for himself. That August manages to capture all this in a single word - 'both' - is funny and witty.

