

Wonder Comprehension

Wonder p. 249-267

Part A

1. Give three reasons August mentions on pages 250-251 why he might be afraid of going to the school retreat.

2. p. 251. Give three reasons from your own ideas why August might be excited to go to the retreat.

3. p. 252. August says that Star Wars is 'special' to the doctor who put his hearing aids in, earlier in the book. Do you think the doctor likes it as much as August?

4. On p. 253, why does August correct Mom – “Three days and two nights”?

5. p. 257. Why hasn't Julian come on the trip?

Wonder Comprehension

6. p. 258. August mentions that he's seen the sky look like this in Montauk. When has he been to Montauk and who lived there? You'll need to scan through the book for earlier mentions of 'Montauk'.

7. p. 265. Why are the events on p. 265 such a shock? Think about what has happened to August between p. 249 and p. 264.

Wonder Comprehension

Wonder p. 249-267

Part B

1. p. 252. Why do you think the author mentions Lego Star Wars on p.250? Give two reasons.

2. p. 253. Why do you think the school doesn't allow mobile phones while the children are away at the retreat?

3. p. 253-255. In this scene, you could say that August and his mum are dealing with him transforming from a child to a teenager (one of many scenes in this part of the book). Complete the table by picking out evidence to support this argument from pages 253-255.

Child	Teenager

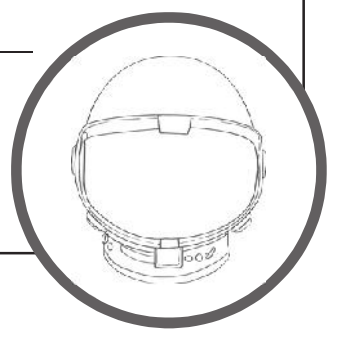
4. p. 257-258. The author mentions the woods and August's hearing aid here. Why? There's an easier answer and a difficult one.

5. p. 262. Things seem to be going very well at this point. If you've not read further than this point, do you have any suggestions as to roughly what might happen next? If you have read on, what effect does this 'going very well' have on the structure of the story?

6. Compare the pace of p. 263-264 and p. 265-267. How has the author written the two sections to create this contrast in pace?

★ Challenge Task ★

Compare Eddie and Julian. In what ways are they similar, in what ways different? What might have stopped Julian becoming an Eddie?



Wonder Comprehension Answers

Part A

1. Give three reasons August mentions on pages 250-251 why he might be afraid of going to the school retreat.

Answers from: He's never slept away from home before. There might be medical problems. His mum and dad might have to come and pick him up like they did from Christopher's. He might get panicky in the middle of the night like he did at Christopher's. It's a long way away (4 hours). Most others have already had sleepovers, so they know what it's about but he doesn't.

2. p. 251. Give three reasons from your own ideas why he might be excited to go to the retreat.

Various answers from own experience or empathising with August's feelings. For example: The campfire atmosphere. Sleeping in a cabin on bunk beds with his friends. Walking through the woods – being out in nature. Being with his friends 24/7. Being grown-up and away from home.

3. p. 252. August says that Star Wars is 'special' to the doctor who put his hearing aids in, earlier in the book. Do you think the doctor likes it as much as August?

Example answer. It may be that Star Wars is special to the doctor – he did know a bit about the characters after all. But it's likely that the doctor was just picking up on what August was interested in so that he'd accept the hearing aid. August doesn't know that the doctor was 'playing' him, but we as readers do, if we infer correctly.

4. On p. 253, why does August correct Mom – “Three days and two nights”?

Various answers. For example: He's afraid of how long he's going to be away and it's preying on his mind. Ten-year olds can be a bit like that – contrary to their parents.

5. p. 257. Why hasn't Julian come on the trip?

Example answer. Julian says it's because the trip is 'dorky' but he's probably losing his popularity and power with the other kids because of his behaviour to Jack Will and August. He doesn't want to be confronted by the fact and lose face in front of everyone. Julian's a bit of a snob anyway – he's always talking about the amazing places he's visited, so he wouldn't be impressed or excited by the retreat like August is.

6. p. 258. August mentions that he's seen the sky look like this in Montauk. When has he been to Montauk and who lived there? You'll need to scan through the book for earlier mentions of 'Montauk'.

Example answer. Grans lived in Montauk. It's mentioned on p. 85. August will have been there as a child visiting his grandmother.

7. p. 265. Why are the events on p. 265 such a shock? Think about what has happened to August between p. 249 and p. 264.

Example answer. In the earlier pages, August has been having a great time. Everyone in school has accepted him and his face isn't an issue – it's hardly mentioned. Then suddenly there's a terrible reaction to August's face, like a magnification of the reactions we've seen before.

Part B

1. p. 252. Why do you think the author mentions Lego Star Wars on p.250? Give two reasons.

August (and Christopher) are obsessed with Star Wars when they're younger. Star Wars is a theme that runs through the book. It's a small 'Chekhov's gun' to set up August moving away from his childish Star Wars obsession and growing up, with the purchase of the new, plain, duffel bag.

2. p. 253. Why do you think the school doesn't allow mobile phones while the children are away at the retreat?

Various answers. For example: The school don't want the children getting upset talking to their parents; they don't want the parents to be concerned about their children and coming out to pick them up; there are no cell phones allowed in school – the teachers are responsible for the children in their care. The children are here to get away from it all – it's a 'retreat' after all. They might phone out for pizza!

3. p. 253-255. In this scene, you could say that August and his mum are dealing with him transforming from a child to a teenager (one of many scenes in this part of the book). Pick out evidence to support this argument from these pages. Draw and complete the table.

Child	Teenager
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mom helps August to pack. • He's asking, 'what if' questions. • Mom calls him 'sweetie' and 'Auggie' and says, 'sweet dreams'. • He wants to bring Baboo. • She tests whether the bag is too heavy for him. • Mom reminds him about bug spray, sunscreen and taking off his hearing aid. • She gives him a kiss on the forehead. • Mom turns on the reading light for him. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The rolling duffel is plain. • Mom tries to deter August from taking Baboo. • They stuff Baboo where he can't be seen. • He's taken down the Empire Strikes Back poster to change his image. • He goes to sleep on his own. • August reads to himself.

4. p. 257-258. The author mentions the woods and August's hearing aid here. Why? There's an easier answer and a difficult one.

Easier: They've gone to the woods for the retreat, so the author is describing the setting. The hearing aid gives August an advantage over the other kids that he's unfamiliar with. His hearing aid also makes the experience much more vibrant for him.

Difficult: I wonder whether this is another Chekhov's gun. Something is going to happen later in the woods so the author is preparing us with a description of the setting. Something's going to happen with August's hearing aid. Mom's mentioned it earlier and Chekhov says that every element in a story must be necessary so it's got to be important to the plot later.

5. p. 262. Things seem to be going very well at this point. If you've not read further than this point, do you have any suggestions as to roughly what might happen next? If you have read on, what effect does this 'going very well' have on the structure of the story?

Example answer. I think that things are going to turn and something dramatic will happen; probably something not very nice. The author is pacing the story and providing some calm and light before she moves the story on suddenly to a crisis. She's done this several times before in the book where there have been good times followed immediately by bad. The calm before the crisis acts to make the crisis more surprising and shocking.

6. Compare the pace of p. 263-264 and p. 265-267. How has the author written the two sections to create this contrast in pace?

p. 263-264 contain mainly description and description of action. Nothing much is happening on these pages. The author makes the pace quite slow but it speeds up a little towards the end, with the short speeches from Jack and August.

p. 265-267 contain lots of short sections of speech and short actions. This makes the pace of the passage very quick. There are lots of full stops which introduces a stop-start feel to the section.

Challenge Task

Compare Eddie and Julian. In what ways are they similar, in what ways different? What might have stopped Julian becoming an Eddie?

Various answers. Compare the violence of the bullying, the length of time and the physical versus psychosocial bullying; the involvement of others and the power structure of the bullying groups.

Example answer: Ironically, August and others' reactions to Julian's bullying of August and Jack Will might have stopped Julian becoming an Eddie when he's older. Julian's had his social power taken away from him by the other kids and he's unlikely to forget that. Eddie still has his social power so is assured in his behaviour in a way that Julian now isn't.