

CULTURE

ENGLISH LITERATURE

1 In pairs, ask and answer the questions.

- 1 What books do you like?
- 2 Who wrote them?
- 3 Can you name some famous authors from your country?

2 Have you heard of R. J. Palacio? Have you read any of her books or seen films of them? Read the text and complete the fact file.

R. J. Palacio

R. J. PALACIO was born in New York and still lives there with her husband, two sons and two dogs. She studied at the High School of Art and Design and worked for many years as a graphic designer, creating book covers. She wrote her first book, *Wonder*, in 2012. R. J. is also the author of several short stories and has recently published a picture book for younger readers called *We're All Wonders*, combining her writing and artistic talents. She wanted to be a writer for many years

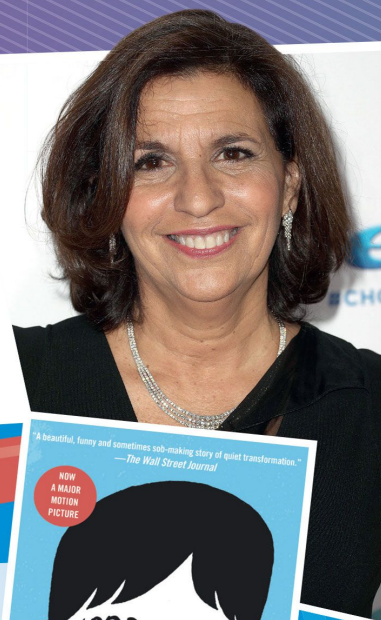
but never found the time until one day she decided to write *Wonder*. She says, 'This story was something that I wanted to say and I needed to say.' The book is about a boy who looks very different to other teenagers and his experiences when he first goes to school. The film of the book came out in 2017.

FACT FILE R. J. Palacio

Nationality: (1) _____
 First job: (2) _____
 First book (name and date): (3) _____
 Other books: (4) _____
 Date of film: (5) _____



135



THE INTERNATIONAL BESTSELLER

My name is August.
 I won't describe what I look like.
 Whatever you're thinking,
 it's probably worse.

'Has the power to move hearts
 and change minds'
 Guardian

'Destined to go the way of
 The Curious Incident of the Dog
 in the Night-Time
 and then some' The Times

'It wreaks emotional havoc' Independent



3 Look at the cover of *Wonder* and the words on the back cover. What do they tell you about:

- 1 the main character's name?
- 2 what he looks like?
- 3 how good the book is?

4 Put the sentences about the beginning of the story in the correct order.

- a ☐ He feels lonely sitting on his own, but then he meets a friendly girl called Summer.
- b ☐ Jack is sorry and he and August become friends again.
- c ☐ When he arrives, the principal of the school asks three students to look after him,
- d ☒ It's August's first day at his first school.
- e ☐ He also meets another boy, Jack,
- f ☐ who is nice to him at first but then is horrible.
- g ☐ but they don't sit with him at lunch.
- h ☐ August is upset because his friend isn't nice to him and runs away from school.

5 Read and listen to part of Chapter 2 of *Wonder*. Guess any words you don't know, or ignore them! Answer the questions.

- 1 Why didn't August go to school before fifth grade?
- 2 Where did he study before?
- 3 Why doesn't his mother draw anything now?

Why I didn't go to school



Next week, I start fifth grade. Since I've never been to a real school before, I am pretty much totally and completely petrified. People think I haven't gone to school because of the way I look, but it's not that. It's because of all the surgeries I've had. Twenty-seven since I was born. The bigger ones happened before I was even four years old, so I don't remember those. But I've had two or three surgeries every year since then (some big, some small), and because I'm little for my age, and I have some other medical mysteries that doctors never really figured out, I used to get sick a lot. That's why my parents decided it was better if I didn't go to school. I'm much stronger now, though. The last surgery I had was eight months ago, and I probably won't have to have any more for another couple of years.

Mom homeschools me. She used to be a children's-book illustrator. She draws really great fairies and mermaids. Her boy stuff isn't so hot, though. She once tried to draw me a Darth Vader, but it ended up looking like some weird mushroom-shaped robot. I haven't seen her draw anything in a long time. I think she's too busy taking care of me and Via.

I can't say I always wanted to go to school because that wouldn't be exactly true. What I wanted was to go to school, but only if I could be like every other kid going to school. Have lots of friends and hang out after school and stuff like that.

PROJECT

A book blurb and author fact file

6 Read the text again and choose the correct options.

- 1 August feels *worried* / *confident* about going to school.
- 2 He has spent a lot of his life in *hotels* / *hospitals*.
- 3 He didn't go to school because he was often *ill* / *unhappy*.
- 4 His mother is good at drawing pictures for *girls* / *boys*.
- 5 August wants to go to school to *make friends* / *learn more*.

A blurb is a short description about a book on the back of its cover. It should make you want to read the book! Write a blurb of no more than 50 words about your favourite book.

Include:

- an outline of what happens in the book
- why it is a good book

Find out about the book's author and write a fact file to go with your blurb. Tell your class about your favourite author and read your blurb.



TALKING POINTS

Would you like to read the book? Why / Why not?