**Lesson 1: Introducing Wonder**

**Lesson Objective:** This lesson aims to introduce *Wonder* to the students and consider the central themes and motifs used in the text. By the end of the lesson the students should:

1. Understand the context of *Wonder* and the effect it has on the book
2. Be able to name at least three central themes of the book and explain the way in which these themes are explored and developed
3. Be able to confidently compare the moral of *Wonder* with that of *Holes* and *War Horse* and to consider and contrast how the authors explore similar themes (i.e. friendship)

**Plan:**

* Begin the class with a general discussion of the book. What did the students enjoy about the book? What did they not enjoy? What was interesting about the way the book was written? Ask the students to note down three things they liked and three things they did not and discuss this as a class
* Remind students of the concept of a semantic field. Brainstorm what would be in the semantic field encompassed within *Wonder,* what recurring symbols, themes and motifs can they find in the book (i.e. acceptance, popularity, otherness)?
* Discuss the context of *Wonder.* Play the class the song ‘Wonder’ which the author has said inspired her in writing the book. Can they think how this connects to the novel? Distribute the lyrics and watch the interview with R. J. Palacio on why she wrote *Wonder.*
* Introduce some information about children with facial disfigurement, in particular Treacher Collins Syndrome, which is what Auggie has in the book. Discuss why Palacio might have wanted to tell the story of people with physical disabilities.
* Returning to the brainstorm made at the beginning of the lesson about themes, ask the students to pick one theme and find two different examples within the book where this theme is explored or developed. Demonstrate an example of this with the theme of “popularity”, using two extracts from the text to highlight the theme’s effect.
* Read the poem *I Am Too Pretty for Some “Ugly Laws”,* discuss how this relates to the themes, and what it tells us about living with disability.
* Open up a discussion about the theme of otherness in *Wonder,* can the similarities between us overcome the differences? How does Palacio develop the theme of otherness through the use of symbols? What symbols can they identify? Write a P.E.E. paragraph on this as a class
* Drawing on the past few lessons, what do they think the moral of *Wonder* is?

**Homework:** Do you think Auggie ultimately sees himself as ordinary, or extraordinary? Explain your answer with reference to the text and the wider context of the book, remember to use quotations and language analysis.

**Lesson 2: Exploring Style and Narrative**

**Lesson Objective:** This lesson aims to enable to students to think more broadly about the way in which *Wonder* is written. By the end of the lesson the students should:

1. Be able to draw inferences from the text about the different characters and identify the way in which Palacio uses language, symbols and techniques to explore it
2. Be able to identify examples of literary techniques within *Wonder* and write a P.E.E. paragraph explaining the effect
3. Be able to talk confidently about narration and perspective in *Wonder,* and to compare the narrative voice in *Wonder* with the narrative voice in *War Horse* and *Holes*

**Plan:**

* **As a starter, the students should speed-write three adjectives to describe each character from the top of their head**
* **Draw up a list of the first impressions of different characters in *Wonder* and match up the quotations with the inferences that can be drawn from them as class**
* **Now ask the students to write a list of questions for one of the characters. One student should volunteer to be in the Hot Seat and pretend to be that character. Students should now ask the person in the Hot Seat the questions that they have. The student in the Hot Seat should base their answers on the work around inferences**
* **Now consider the fact that we never get to see the story from Julian’s perspective. Read the excerpt from *Wonder,* and discuss it in relation to what would change if Julian was the narrator. The students should now re-write the passage from Julian’s perspective, considering how the language, feelings and thoughts used might change**
* **Discuss how characters are built in *Wonder.* How important is description? How important is their language? Why might Palacio have made this choice?**
* **Discuss how the fact that the story is told by so many narrators feeds into how we perceive characters. Why might Palacio have made this choice? How does the fact we never hear directly from any adults in *Wonder* play into the themes? Compare this to the narrative voice in *War Horse* and *Holes,* what is different about the perspective of both novels?**
* **Now, hand out a sheet with literary techniques used in *Wonder,* discuss any techniques they might be unfamiliar with. The students should find examples of these techniques, and link each technique they find to one theme (i.e. foreshadowing links to the theme of fate)**
* **Watch the video from the film of *Wonder,* considering how the different narrative styles have been translated, if the characters are how they expected them to be and if the adjectives they wrote at the beginning of the lesson match up with how they feel now.**

**Homework:** Why do you think R.J. Palacio choses to tell the story through so many different narrators and from so many different points of view**?** Explain your answer with reference to the text and the wider context of the book.

**Lesson 3: Close Textual Analysis**

**Lesson Objective:** This lesson will aim to make students more comfortable with close textual analysis and how to incorporate it into their essays. By the end of the lesson the students should:

1. Be able to describe the effect of Palacio’s style, language and exploration of themes through the motif of precepts
2. Be able to think broadly about symbols in *Wonder* and how they act as the vessels for the larger themes in the text
3. Be able to start thinking about how to write a review, and consider how to debate and review an aspect of *Wonder*

**Plan:**

* Start the lesson by thinking about Mr Browne’s precepts. What role do they play in the book? Put a collection of them up on the board and talk through how the themes of the novel are explored through each precept. How important is this for the character development in the book?
* Ask the class to write their own precept in the style that Palacio writes. They should make sure that their precept explores similar themes to *Wonder*.
* Now brainstorm with the class: how do symbols function in *Wonder?* What symbols can they identify? Go over how symbols function in relation to the theme
* The students should select one symbol used repeatedly in *Wonder* and write a P.E.E. paragraph on which theme this supports (i.e. the symbol of shoes and the theme of otherness)
* Discuss the question “why is it important to *choose kind*” and open up a debate on this, telling the students that half of them will argue that it is important to choose kind and half of them will argue that it is not
* Bring up the Guardianreview of *Wonder* and read it as a class. Ask the students to note down any effective adjectives used by the author. Make sure to emphasise where P.E.E. has been used and where themes have been discussed
* Afterwards ask the class to write a brief review, based on the debate they had and what they have read in the Guardian article, on the question “how effectively does *Wonder* communicate its message that it is important to choose to be kind”
* For the last ten minutes of the lesson, facilitate a wider discussion on what they have learnt from *Wonder,* what they think is the most powerful theme or message and why. Did they prefer *Wonder, Holes* or *War Horse.* Why?

**Homework:** What role do masks play throughout the story? How do masks help or hurt Auggie? Explain your answer with reference to the text and the wider context of the book, making sure to include a discussion of the themes.