

Wonder Comprehension

Wonder p. 6-7 'How I Came to Life'.

Part A

1. Do you think there are any pictures of August's birth?

2. What does August mean when he says, 'cracking up'?

3. What phrase tells you that August and Via have heard the story before?

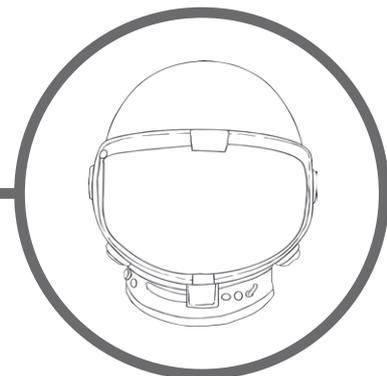
4. What does Mom's expression, 'a walk in the park' mean?

5. Did the video camera break into 'a million pieces'?

6. August/the author uses the words 'fart' and 'farting' a lot in this anecdote. Why?

7. List the events that happened in the delivery room immediately after August was born.

8. Use the **Cartoon Strip Template** to draw these events as a cartoon strip.



Wonder Comprehension

Wonder p. 6-7 'How I Came to Life'.

Part B

1. August says that the room went very quiet when he was born. Why do you think it went quiet?

2. Why does August/the author use multiple short sentences at the beginning of page 7?

3. Why does the author have August say, 'so, so, so, so, funny!' instead of just 'so funny'?

4. What does the nurse mean by, 'Everyone born of God overcometh the world'?

5. What can you work out about the nurse's background from this phrase?

6. Compare Mom's reaction on first seeing August compared to everyone else's reaction.

7. Why does August mention what the rest of his family look like in the final paragraph on p.7?

Wonder Comprehension Answers

Part A

1. Do you think there are any pictures of August's birth?

Example answer: There are unlikely to be any pictures of August's birth because Dad broke the video camera when August was born. The hospital, though, may have taken pictures for medical records in case August needed medical treatment later or Dad may have had another camera.

2. What does August mean when he says, 'cracking up'?

August means he and Via laugh hysterically when the story is told and they can't stop laughing.

3. What phrase tells you that August and Via have heard the story before?

The phrase is 'when Mom tells this story' or 'when Mom tells it'. It implies that she tells the story a lot and has probably told it throughout their childhoods.

4. What does Mom's expression, 'a walk in the park' mean?

Example answer: A walk in the park means something is easy. Compare walking in the park to walking up a mountain – it's much easier. Via's birth was straightforward compared with August's.

5. Did the video camera break into 'a million pieces'?

Example answer: No, the camera didn't break. It's just an everyday expression (idiom) that it fell to bits. It's an exaggeration, to make the story funnier.

6. August/the author uses the words 'fart' and 'farting' a lot in this anecdote. Why?

Example answer: The word 'fart' is funny anyway because it's a bit rude. If you keep on using the word 'fart' a lot it can be even funnier because you're getting away with writing a rude word like 'fart' down (like I have done here!). August is using it a lot because he's a ten-year-old boy and they tend to find that kind of thing funny, so he's using it as much as he can to make the story funnier. The author is using the word because it shows August's character – his sense of humour. He also knows that the readership is either about that age, slightly older or are the parents of a child that age; they'll appreciate the humour that most ten-year-olds have.

7. List the events that happened in the delivery room immediately after August was born.

1. *The doctor fainted.*
2. *The 'nice' nurse rushed August out of the room.*
3. *Dad ran after her.*
4. *Dad dropped the video camera and it broke.*
5. *Mom got upset and tried to get out of bed.*
6. *The 'farting' nurse tried to keep Mom from getting up.*
7. *Mom was hysterical and the nurse was yelling at her.*
8. *The 'farting' nurse shouted at the doctor and 'kicked' him.*
9. *The doctor woke up.*

Not necessarily in this order, but it's likely that the doctor fainted first, as soon as he saw August's face.

Part B

1. August says that the room went very quiet when he was born. Why do you think it went quiet?

Example answer: Everyone was shocked by August's face. They weren't expecting it – they knew something was going to be wrong with his face but weren't prepared for how bad it was going to be. The doctor, who you'd expect to take control in a situation like this, was young and unfamiliar with the case so he didn't say anything.

2. Why does August/the author use multiple short sentences at the beginning of p. 7?

Example answer: Short sentences tend to make the action go quicker and the rhythm can add to the humour of a situation. August tells the story to the rule of three: short question, short answer plus a short detail – a typical joke rhythm. The author also uses them to indicate August's eagerness and excitement at retelling the story.

3. Why does the author have August say, 'so, so, so, so, funny!' instead of just 'so funny'?

Example answer: The author wants to show how excited August is about telling the story, to indicate how funny he thinks it is and to show the way August speaks – like an ordinary ten-year-old boy.

4. What does the nurse mean by, 'Everyone born of God overcometh the world'?

Example answer: The nurse is using a Biblical quotation (1 John 5:4). She's trying to comfort August's mum (and probably herself) and give her hope. She means that since the baby is one of God's children, that all will be well: either that he will die and go to heaven where there is no illness or abnormality or that things will turn out fine in the end. It's more a hope, wish and reassurance than a prediction.

5. What can you work out about the nurse's background from this phrase?

The nurse is probably a Christian. (In fact, she may be a born-again Christian, as this phrase is used widely in evangelical Christian churches).

6. Compare Mom's reaction on first seeing August compared to everyone else's reaction.

Example answer: August's mum had no reaction to August's face other than love. She looked beyond his facial features to focus on the beauty of his eyes. She loves him because she's his mother and nothing else matters to her.

7. Why does August mention what the rest of his family look like in the final paragraph on p.7?

Example answer: August is self-conscious about his looks. He wants the reader to know that his family aren't affected by the same conditions that affect him. He's second-guessing what he thinks the reader is thinking. He's also as proud and protective of his family as they are of him so he wants the reader to think well of them (and looks are something he focuses on because of the way he looks).

★ ★
★ Challenge Task ★

Why do August and Via like the story so much?

Example answer: They like the story because it's a funny one and because it's something the family has always told between themselves – so it's a part of the family's history and love for each other. They like it because the comedy of it takes the sting out of a potentially hurtful memory – the shock of August's birth. August likes it because it gives a light-hearted and loving retelling of his birth – he and the family seem to use humour a lot to help him (and them) understand and cope with his condition. Via likes it because, as a young child growing up, she may, equally, have gained comfort from the retelling – it may have helped her to understand or cope with other people's negative reactions to August.