

Inspirational or Ordinary?

Part A

Task 1: Make a list of your morning routine – the things you do every morning between getting up and arriving at school. Be as detailed as you can.

Task 2: Watch the **video of Nikki Lilly** (Nikki Christou), a girl with facial disfigurement.

Make a list of the ordinary things she does in this video.

What things does Nikki do in the video to show that she values her appearance?

Task 3: Watch the section again where Nikki is applying make-up and looking at her clothes and jewellery. Why might Nikki want to make herself look good?

Task 4: What would you like to do that's extraordinary? What's stopping you from doing that? Discuss your ideas with the rest of your group.

Inspirational or Ordinary Answers

Part A

Task 1: Make a list of your morning routine – the things you do every morning between getting up and arriving at school. Be as detailed as you can.

Various answers.

Task 2: Watch the **video of Nikki Lilly** (Nikki Christou), a girl with facial disfigurement.

Make a list of the ordinary things she does in this video.

- *Gets up*
- *Checks her phone (3 times)*
- *Makes her bed*
- *Makes banana pancakes with blueberries*
- *Eats her breakfast*
- *Cleans her teeth*
- *Washes her face*
- *Pulls a face in front of the mirror*
- *Does her hair*
- *Does her make-up*
- *Shows off her clothes, watch and necklace*
- *Write a note*
- *Reads a book*

What things does Nikki do in the video to show that she values her appearance?

She does her hair and make-up and shows off her clothes, watch and necklace.

Task 3: Watch the section again where Nikki is applying make-up and looking at her clothes and jewellery. Why might Nikki want to make herself look good?

Example answer: Nikki is an ordinary 11/12 year old girl. Just because she has a facial disfigurement and a medical condition, doesn't mean that she shouldn't care about her appearance. Nikki's looks are different to most other people because of her medical condition and they're just that – different, neither 'good' or 'bad'.

Task 4: What would you like to do that's extraordinary? What's stopping you from doing that? Discuss your ideas with the rest of your group.

Part B

Task 1: Pass around the **Nikki Lilly Fact Cards** and each person read aloud the facts about Nikki Lilly. Discuss the differences between yourselves and Nikki.

Task 2: Is Nikki extraordinary or is she extraordinary only because of her medical condition? Discuss this question in your group and record your own ideas below:

Example answers:

Nikki is extraordinary because of her work on her blog. Very few children her age have done this and been so successful.

She is also extraordinary because of her achievement on Junior Bake Off – winning the competition. She must be a good baker if she won that.

That Nikki has a medical condition which has included 30 operations and yet has still achieved so much is even more impressive. This has been recognised by her two awards.

Nikki is brave and powerful to be presenting herself on her blog when others with her facial disfigurement might shy away from being seen in public (August wore the astronaut helmet, for example).

Nikki is particularly extraordinary since she is giving make-up tips on her vlog. This shows that she cares about her appearance not in spite of her facial disfigurement but proudly presents it as part of who she is.

Task 3: Why might CBBC have invited her to compete in Junior Bake Off? Discuss this question in your group and record your own ideas below:

Example answers:

Nikki is a good baker and probably won heats to enter the competition.

CBBC wants to present a range of people to its audience and celebrate difference.

CBBC just treated her like any other contestant. Her facial disfigurement has nothing to do with her baking skills.

Task 4: Discuss with your group how August might be thought of as both ordinary and inspirational. You should use evidence and incidents from the book to back up your points. Consider these questions:

- How does his life and the way he tackles his difficulties inspire us with our own difficulties?
- Is August an admirable person? Why?
- How is he just like any other 11-year old?

Example answers:

August doesn't shy away from going to school. He wants to be just like any other child his age and does it.

August has a great sense of humour and he's intelligent too. He helps other people out in lessons and makes people laugh.

August has the same feelings as anyone else. He laughs, he is hurt by others' unkindness, and he loves and is loved by his family.

August has lived with great pain, inconvenience and emotional difficulty (from others' treatment of him) but has come through it. The medical treatments he has had to have must have been very hard to cope with but we don't hear him complaining about it – he's very matter of fact.

It's clear that those who know him love and like August. He describes how the people in his neighbourhood are nice to him, the way he plays with his friend, Christopher and the way he interacts with Jack and Summer in the first half of the book.

August's attitude to his difficulties – he tries not to let them get in his way, even though they are clearly hard to deal with – inspires us to deal with our own difficulties in the same way.

★ ★
★ **Challenge Task** ★

Compare the way Nikki Lilly deals with her facial disfigurement to the way August has dealt with his so far in the book. Consider: does Nikki have it easy compared to August or have they reacted differently? Research the difficulties Nikki has had to deal with in her life. You can discuss this orally in your group and/or write down your thoughts.

Various answers.