



The Ordinary Life of Jacominus Gainsborough by Rebecca Dautremer



9781836270171

Learning Resource Guide for Teachers & Librarians

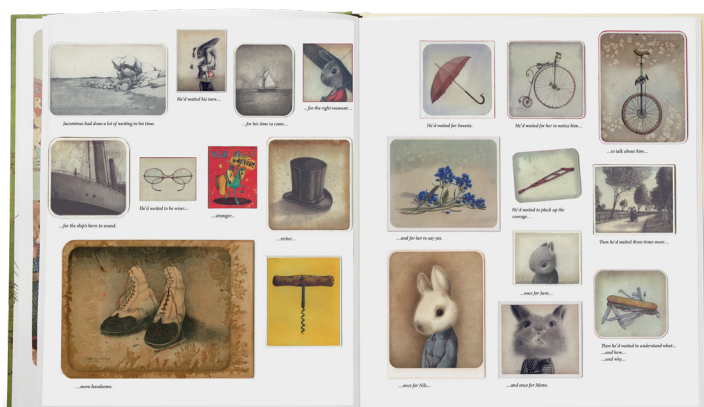
Themes:

- The passage of time
- Finding beauty in simple things
- Family and friendship

This resource guide is for *The Ordinary Life of Jacominus Gainsborough*, a richly illustrated and deeply philosophical picture book by French author and illustrator Rebecca Dautremer.

It offers a range of activities and discussion prompts aimed at UKS2 students, though it can be adapted for both younger and older readers. Through cross-curricular connections – spanning literacy, art, philosophy and social-emotional learning – students are invited to think critically and creatively as they explore Jacominus's world and consider their own.

With its blend of whimsical detail and profound insight, *The Ordinary Life of Jacominus Gainsborough* serves as a powerful tool for fostering empathy, sparking imagination and celebrating the extraordinary in the ordinary.



Contents:

Pre-reading Prompts	p 3
Discussion Questions	p 4
Activity 1: Character Study	p 5
Activity 2: The Beauty of the Ordinary	p 6
Activity 3: A Day in the Life	p 7
Activity 4: Time and Memory	p 8
Activity 5: Life Collage	p 9
Activity 6: Family and Friends Photo Album	p 10
Activity 7: Ordinary Day 'Journal'	p 11



With thanks to SHAPES for Schools for producing this Resource Pack.



www.shapesforschools.com

*The Ordinary Life of Jacominus
Gainsborough* by Rébecca Dautremer.
Text and illustrations © 2018 by
Rébecca Dautremer

Find out more about our books at
www.postwavepublishing.com
[@postwave_books](https://twitter.com/postwave_books)

post wave
children's books



Circle Time:

Foster philosophical inquiry and reflective discussion about some of the themes in the book using a circle time format.

1. Ask students to think about and discuss:
 - What does the word 'ordinary' mean?
 - Can something feel ordinary and still be important?
 - What makes life meaningful?
 - Can a quiet life still be exciting?
 - What matters more: doing great things or being kind?
2. Use sticky notes to write down thoughts, then create a classroom 'Wall of Wisdom'.
3. You might want to return to this discussion after reading.



Take part in a 'picture walk':

Rébecca Dautremer says in her introduction: 'Take your time and look closely as you turn the pages: if you do, you'll notice a lot of things.'

1. As a class, look at the different illustrations without reading the text.
2. Ask students: *What can you tell about Jacominus's life just from the pictures alone?*
3. Create a class display of observations with speech/thought bubbles.

Mapping emotions:

1. Looking only at the illustrations, ask students to find scenes where Jacominus feels strong emotions (e.g. joy, sadness, fear).
2. Discuss how we can identify and understand different feelings from the illustrations.
3. Choose a scene to freeze-frame as a group.



1. **What do you think makes Jacominus's life 'ordinary'? Do you agree that it is ordinary?**
Remind children of the pre-reading discussion around the word 'ordinary'. Emphasise that everyone might define 'ordinary' differently. Can they make comparisons between Jacominus's life and their own lives? Can certain moments be both ordinary and important?
2. **Which moment in Jacominus's life stood out to you the most, and why?**
Encourage students to choose a moment in the story and describe what made it memorable – an emotion, imagery, personal connection. Did it remind them of something in their own life?
3. **How does the author show the passage of time in both the text and the images?**
Guide students to look at how Jacominus ages physically and emotionally across the pages. Prompt: "What changes do you see in how Jacominus looks or acts?" or "What clues in the pictures show time passing?". Discuss techniques like fading colours, the cycle of the seasons and family changes.
4. **What are the important relationships in Jacominus's life?**
Invite students to identify who Jacominus connects with throughout the different stages of his life. Ask: "What makes a relationship important?" or "How does the story show us that someone mattered to him?".
5. **What do you think the author is saying about what makes life meaningful?**
It might benefit students to begin with partner or small-group talks before whole-class discussion. Possible prompts: "What makes life meaningful: the big achievements or the everyday moments?" or "What makes your life meaningful?" or "How can we find joy in the everyday?". Reminder: there is no correct answer!



Create a character map for Jacominus. Include his traits, emotions, relationships, hobbies or interests, the key events in his life and the challenges he has faced.

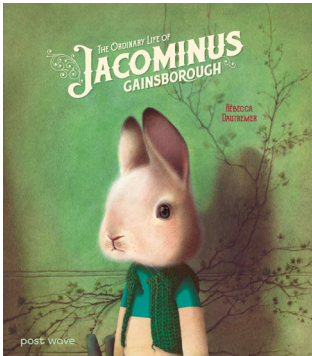
Interests

Key Events

Relationships

Traits

Emotions

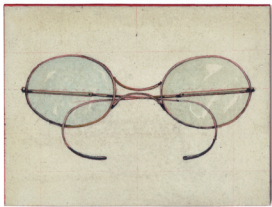


Extension: what does Jacominus learn in his life?

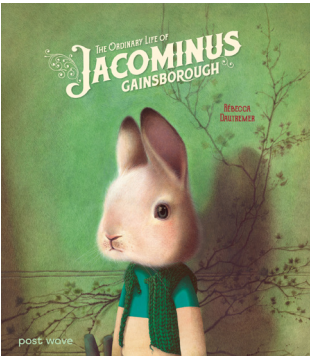
9781836270171

Activity 2: The Beauty of the Ordinary

Using the table below, have students list what events or aspects of Jacominus’s life might seem ‘ordinary’ and discuss why they are actually meaningful. Create a class definition of what makes a moment ‘extraordinary.’ Ask students to write a personal narrative about an ‘ordinary’ moment in their own life that holds special meaning.



'Ordinary' Event	Why it is Meaningful
E.G. Jacominus 'took a little tumble'	



9781836270171

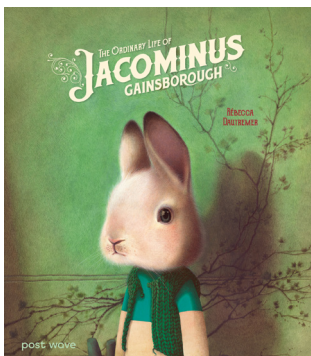


Activity 3: A Day in the Life

Choose a few key illustrations and discuss the use of colour, composition, perspective and how these elements reflect Jacominus's emotional journey. Have students create their own illustrated page about a day in their life.



7

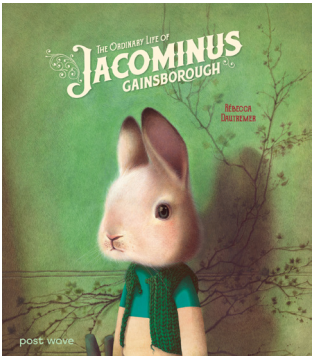


9781836270171



Activity 4: Time and Memory

What does the book tell us about time and memory? Piece together the events of Jacominus’s life in chronological order. Then, ask students to do the same for their own life, noting any important events – e.g. the arrival of a sibling, starting school.

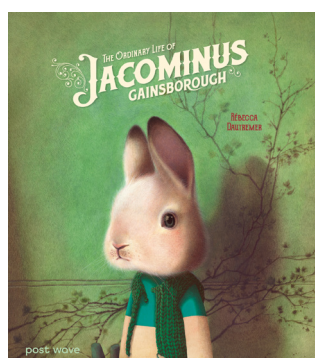


9781836270171

Activity 5: Life Collage

Encourage students to create a visual representation of Jacominus's life or their own, using a collage of drawings, symbols and quotes from the book.

9



9781836270171

Find out more about our books at
www.postwavepublishing.com
[@postwave_books](https://twitter.com/postwave_books)

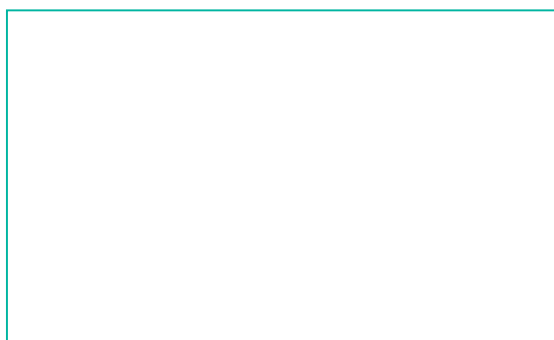
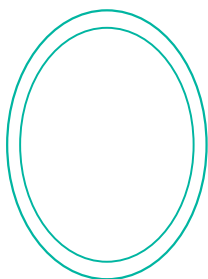
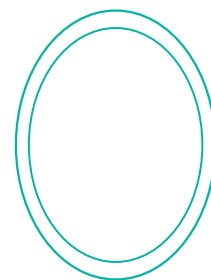
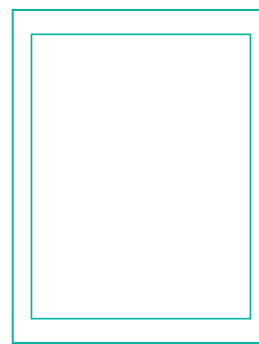
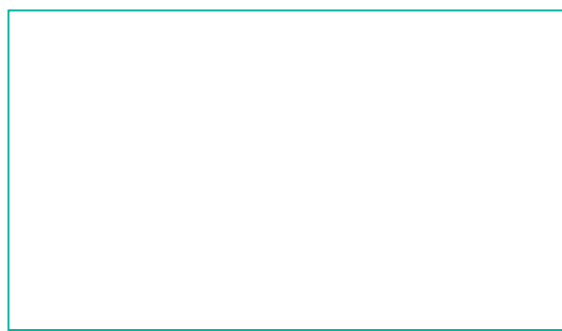
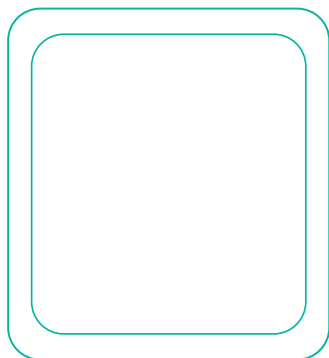
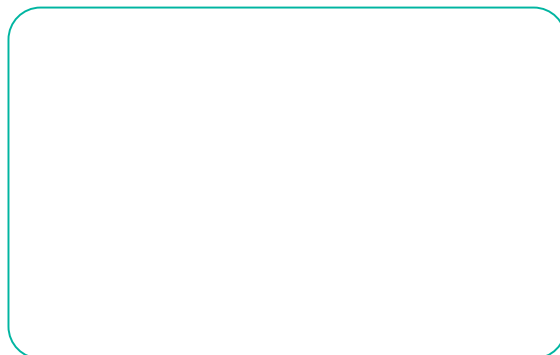
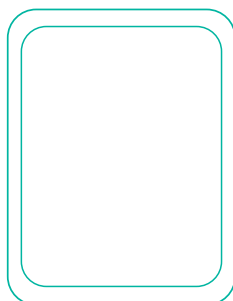
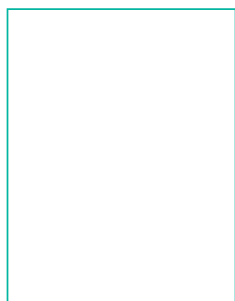
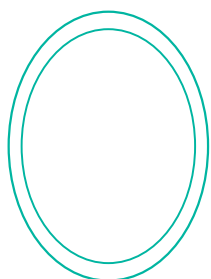
post wave
children's books



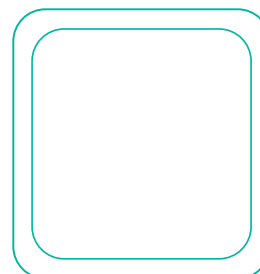
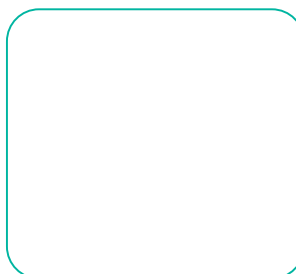
Activity 6: Family and Friends Photo Album.

10

Through the years, Jacominus crossed paths with many people. Encourage students to think about who they have crossed paths with, whether family members, friends, or anyone that has had an impact on their life. Fill the album template with illustrations of these people.



9781836270171



Activity 7: Ordinary Day 'Journal'

11

Keep a journal for a week, writing a short entry each day about something that seemed small but brought joy or meaning. Compile these into a class 'Ordinary Moments' book.



9781836270171

Day of the Week	Diary Entry

