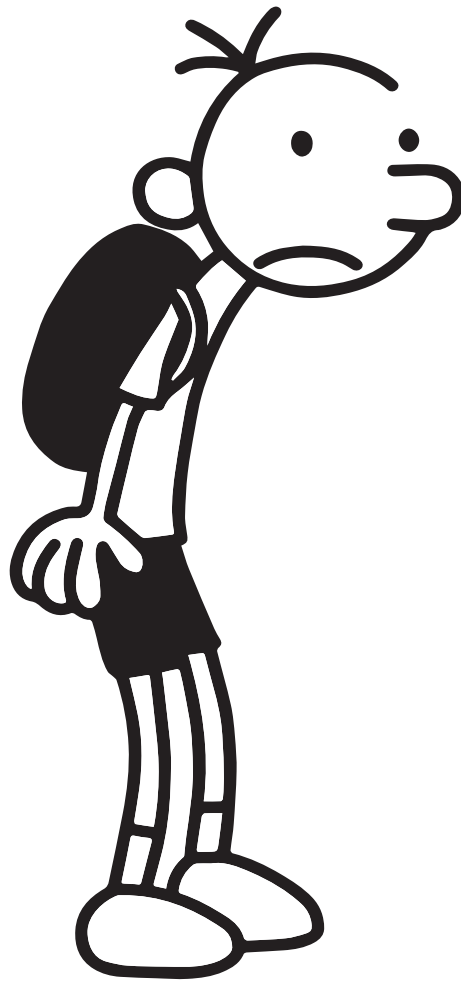


DIARY of a Wimpy Kid

Book
1



Discussion Guide

to accompany Diary of a Wimpy Kid by Jeff Kinney
(978-0-141-32490-6, £6.99)

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About the Diary of a Wimpy Kid and this guide.

Jeff Kinney's Diary of a Wimpy Kid series is one of the most popular series of children's books currently on the market. Alongside the books, published in the UK since 2007, there have also been three films, stationery ranges, calendars, board games, apparel and other merchandise. As of 2015, there were over 150 million Diary of a Wimpy Kid books in print worldwide.

The humorous nature of the books provides a familiar context through which universally recognisable childhood issues, both at home and at school, can be addressed without children feeling threatened or awkward. Consequently the books are enjoyed by children, parents and teachers alike. The fictional experiences of Greg Heffley, the main character, mirror events in children's own lives and they therefore find it very easy to relate to the antics in which Greg becomes involved.

Jeff Kinney's cartoons, which reinforce the text, provide a visual reference, helping the children to understand what they are reading and adding to their enjoyment as they picture what Greg, his friends and family are up to. For many children, especially younger or more reluctant readers, the addition of the cartoons helps to make the books accessible and ensures greater engagement with these hilarious stories.

The Diary of a Wimpy Kid books make excellent starting points for discussion. These guides outline a host of ideas for discussions and other activities that can be used in the classroom, in a reading group or at home.

The activities within the guides are suitable for ages 7-11. They provide teaching ideas to help you deliver the literacy components of the primary curriculum as well as many additional ideas for PSE, Health and Wellbeing, Drama, Art and Technology. There are lots of ideas for discussion sessions, both to help the children further understand the texts they are reading and to probe more deeply into the problem areas with which the characters engage. The guides provide stimulating ideas which will encourage collaborative learning and real engagement with the books.

We hope you will find the ideas useful when planning for your students' activities as our aim is to ensure learning is fun!

MILLIONS OF KIDS ARE READERS BECAUSE OF THESE BOOKS



**BOOK 10 COMING
NOVEMBER 2015**

Find more resources at wimpykidclub.co.uk/teachers

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DIARY of a Wimpy Kid

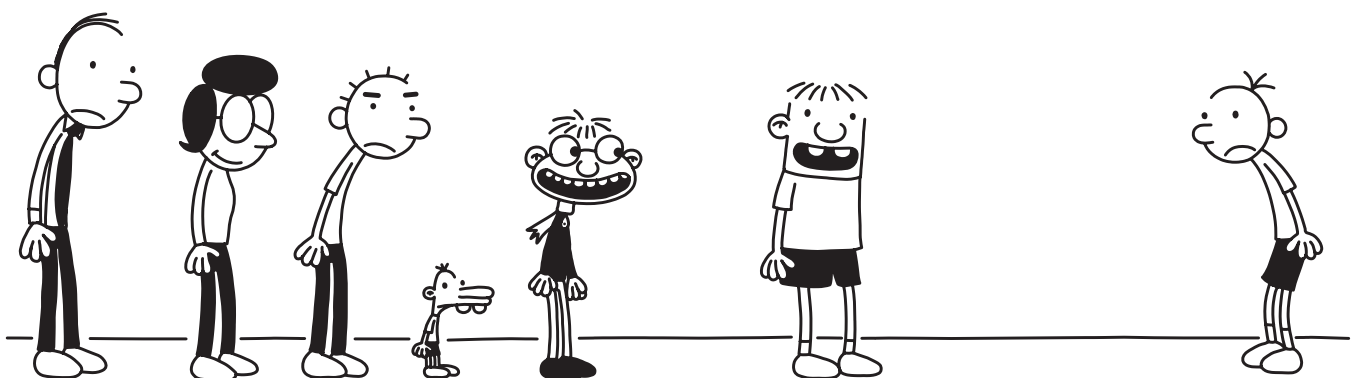
Introduction

This hilarious book, written as a personal diary that includes the type of cartoons one might expect from a middle-grade (or primary-school) child, follows antihero Greg Heffley as he moves from one crisis to the next in his bid to become popular and to appear cool.

As Greg starts his second year in middle school, he is trying to establish his place in the complex hierarchy of school popularity. His best friend, Rowley Jefferson, does not seem to understand the importance of appearances and is way down the league table. How Greg deals with this and the other issues that affect a boy of his age, such as school tests and avoiding bullies, makes for an entertaining read.

At home, Greg's family are another source of frustration! Mom seems to do everything possible to embarrass Greg. Even at school Greg isn't safe from her influence. Mom forces Greg to audition for the school play and then – the ultimate humiliation – she appears as his substitute teacher for the day!

Greg's trials do not stop there and he has to deal with a dad who does not understand his love of video games, an attention-seeking younger brother and an annoying older brother who plays in a heavy metal band called Löded Diper. However, it is his shifting relationship with best friend Rowley that forces Greg to make some interesting choices in the first book of the series!



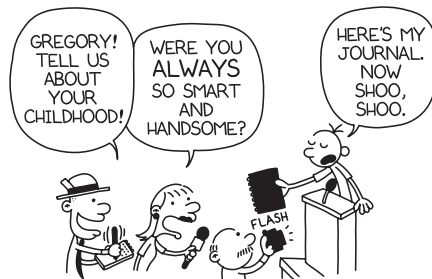
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DIARY of a Wimpy Kid

Understanding the text

1. (Page 2) 'GREGORY! TELL US ABOUT YOUR CHILDHOOD!' Greg imagines that his journal will be useful when he is rich and famous and everyone wants to know all about him. Why do we want to know all about rich and famous people and the details about their early lives? Ask the children to discuss which events in their life people might be interested in if they became rich and famous.



2. (Pages 4-5) Greg gives advice on what to do on the first day of school. Would this be good advice to follow? Ask the children what advice they would give to someone on their first day of school. Encourage them to list up to five things.

Today is the first day of school, and right now we're just waiting around for the teacher to hurry up and finish the seating chart. So I figured I might as well write in this book to pass the time.

By the way, let me give you some good advice. On the first day of school, you've got to be real careful where you sit. You walk into the classroom and just plunk your stuff down on any old desk and the next thing you know the teacher is saying -

I HOPE YOU ALL LIKE WHERE YOU'RE SITTING, BECAUSE THESE ARE YOUR PERMANENT SEATS.

GAAH!



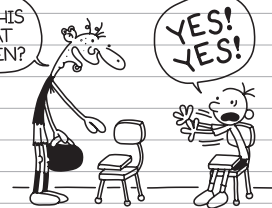
So in this class, I got stuck with Chris Hosey in front of me and Lionel James at the back of me.

4

Jason Brill came in late and almost sat to my right, but luckily I stopped that from happening at the last second.

IS THIS SEAT TAKEN?

YES! YES!



Next period, I should just sit in the middle of a bunch of hot girls as soon as I step in the room. But I guess if I do that, it just proves I didn't learn anything from last year.

GREG, WILL YOU PLEASE PASS THIS NOTE TO SHELLY?

WHY, CERTAINLY! HEH, HEH.



5

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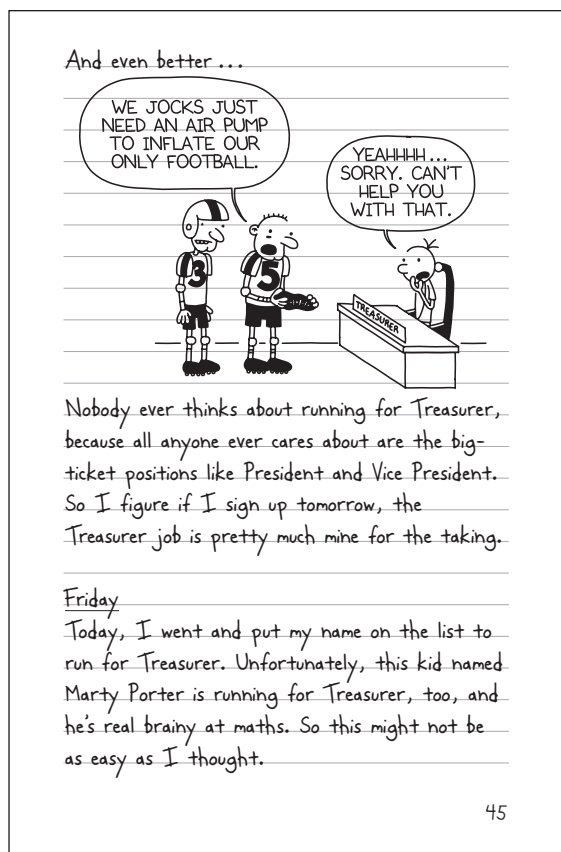
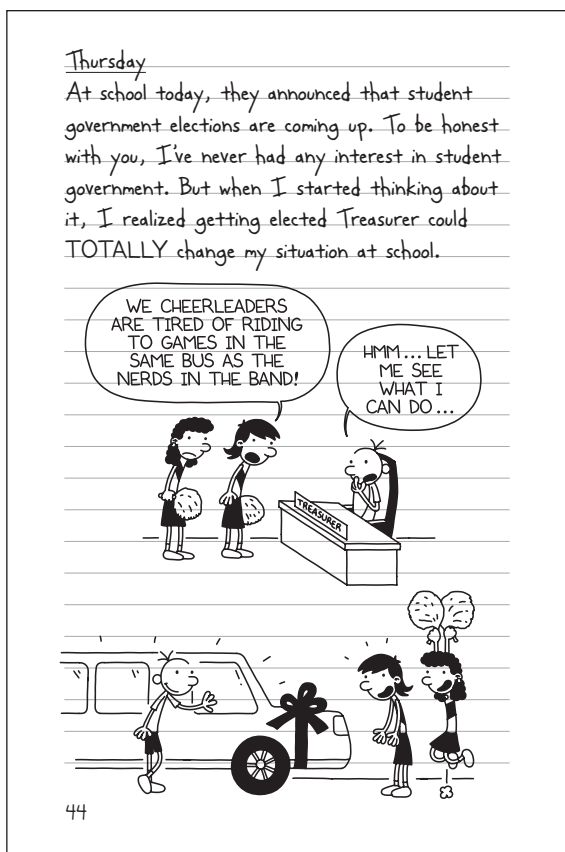
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Understanding the text

3. (Page 15) 'But if there's one thing I learned from Rodrick, it's to set people's expectations real low so you end up surprising them by practically doing nothing at all.' Do the children agree with this statement? Why would it feel good if people didn't expect much of them? Could holding this sort of opinion of someone actually stop them reaching their potential? Why might this be the case?
4. (Pages 17-18) Greg had been trying to avoid Rowley since the first day of school. Do the children think his reasons for this were fair? What would they do in his situation? What was wrong with Rowley asking Greg to 'come over to my house and play'? Does it matter what others think?
5. (Page 40) Mom and Dad have different ideas on punishment. Does the class agree with Mom or Dad's way of dealing with things? Is it fair for Mom to wait and punish Greg when he least expects it? Have the class discuss what punishments they think would be suitable for different misdemeanours!
6. (Pages 44-45) Why does Greg want to run for Treasurer? Is this the right reason to want to sign up? Why should people want to be part of a school parliament? What kind of qualities do the children think a Treasurer should have?



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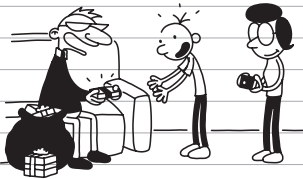
DIARY of a Wimpy Kid

Understanding the text

7. (Page 62) Greg comments, 'I've never had a store-bought costume before.' Discuss whether Halloween costumes should be home-made or store-bought.
8. (Page 95) Mom wants Greg to audition for the school play, but he does not think it is a good idea. If you have a specific talent, to what extent do you think you should be encouraged to develop it? When does encouragement change to become 'forcing' by parents?
9. (Page 117) Greg said he was told to 'start my wish list over and pick some toys that were more appropriate for boys'. Why do Mom and Dad hold different opinions on this? Do the children think there should be specific toys for girls and boys? And why (or why not)?
10. (Pages 123-124) On Christmas Day, Greg doesn't think much of his presents. 'I guess I didn't do a good job of hiding my disappointment and Mom got mad.' Was Greg ungrateful? Should we hide our real reactions to gifts?

The rest of the relatives started showing up around 11:00, and Uncle Charlie came at noon.

Uncle Charlie brought a big trash bag full of gifts, and he pulled my present out of the top of the bag.

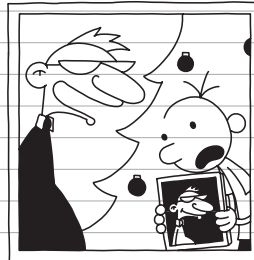


The package was the exact right size and shape to be a Twisted Wizard game, so I knew Uncle Charlie came through for me. Mom got the camera ready and I tore open my gift.



123

But it was just an 8 x 10 picture of Uncle Charlie.



I guess I didn't do a good job of hiding my disappointment, and Mom got mad. All I can say is, I'm glad I'm still a kid, because if I had to act happy about the kinds of gifts grown-ups get, I don't think I could pull it off.



124

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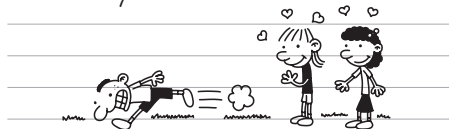
In-depth discussion points

Popularity

(Page 6) 'Man, I don't know WHAT is up with girls these days.' Do the children think being the most popular at school matters? Why does who is the most popular change? Is it important to have lots of friends or just a few really close friends?

Man, I don't know WHAT is up with girls these days. It used to be a whole lot simpler back in elementary school. The deal was, if you were the fastest runner in your class, you got all the girls.

And in the fifth grade, the fastest runner was Ronnie McCoy.



Nowadays, it's a whole lot more complicated. Now it's about the kind of clothes you wear or how rich you are or if you have a cute butt or whatever. And kids like Ronnie McCoy are scratching their heads wondering what the heck happened.

The most popular boy in my grade is Bryce Anderson. The thing that really stinks is that I have ALWAYS been into girls, but kids like Bryce have only come around in the last couple of years.

6

(Page 6) 'Now it's about the kind of clothes you wear or how rich you are...' To what extent do the children think wearing the right clothes to school could affect their popularity? Do they think that wearing school uniform helps make everyone the same? Ask them to list the pros and cons of a school uniform.

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In-depth discussion points

Video/Computer Games

(Page 24) Children spending time playing video/computer games is a contentious issue in many households. Greg's love of video games is referred to throughout the book and he states that he is 'SUPER good at video games' but unfortunately Dad doesn't appreciate his skills!

Why does Dad think differently from Greg on this topic? What would Dad rather he was doing? What argument does Greg have for being allowed to spend all his time playing video games? What opinion does Rowley's dad hold? Is it the same as Greg's dad's view?

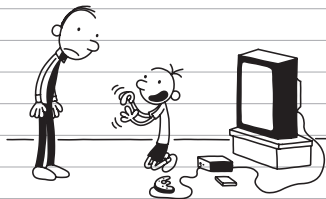
Split the children into small groups and ask them to compare the different opinions held by the adults and the children in the story. They could hold a debate on the subject.

Tuesday

I don't know if I mentioned this before, but I am SUPER good at video games. I'll bet I could beat anyone in my grade head-to-head.

Unfortunately, Dad does not exactly appreciate my skills. He's always getting on me about going out and doing something "active".

So tonight after dinner when Dad started hassling me about going outside, I tried to explain how with video games, you can play sports like football and soccer, and you don't even get all hot and sweaty.



But as usual, Dad didn't see my logic.

24

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In-depth discussion points

Doing the Right Thing

(Page 182-183) Greg was worried about what to do in his 'tough situation' as he tried to decide whether or not to tell the truth about chasing the kids with the worms. Although Mom didn't know what the exact issue was, she advised Greg to 'do the right thing'. Can the children think of reasons why they think he did, or did not, do the right thing? What might have happened if he had done the right thing in the first place?

Ask the children to discuss this statement: 'Adults are forever telling children to do this or that in specific situations.' Do the children agree or disagree with the statement? Why do adults tell children what to do in a specific situation?

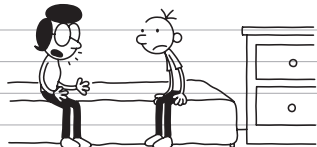
Greg eventually tells Rowley the truth about what happened. Was Rowley's reaction surprising or to be expected? Were Rowley's next actions justified? Can the children think of a different way to punish Greg?

I knew I should probably just tell Mr Winsky it was me who chased the kids with the worms. But I wasn't ready to set the record straight just yet. I knew if I confessed, I'd lose my hot chocolate privileges. And that right there was enough to make me keep quiet for the time being.

At dinner tonight, Mom could tell something was bothering me, so she came up to my room afterwards to talk.

I told her I was in a tough situation, and I didn't know what to do.

I got to give Mom credit for how she handled it. She didn't try to pry and get all the details. All she said was that I should try to do the "right thing", because it's our choices that make us who we are.

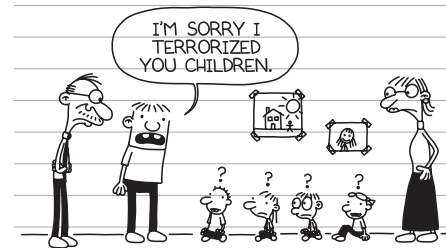


182

I figure that's pretty decent advice. But I'm still not 100% sure what I'm going to do tomorrow.

Thursday

Well, I was up all night tossing and turning over this Rowley situation, but I finally made up my mind. I decided the right thing to do was to just let Rowley take one for the team this time around.



On the way home from school, I came clean with Rowley and told him the whole truth about what happened, and how it was me who chased the kids with the worms.

183

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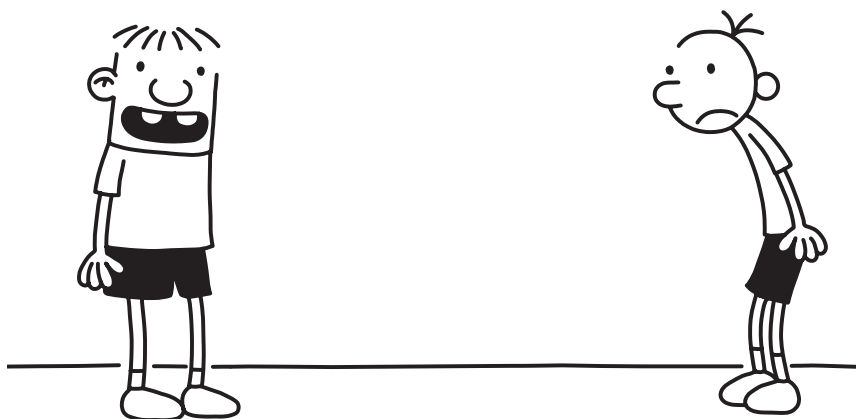


DIARY of a Wimpy Kid

In-depth discussion points

Relationships

The relationship between Greg and Rowley is one of the central themes of the book. Working together, the children could make a comparison chart showing the differences between the two characters and use this as a central point for a display. How does the relationship between Greg and Rowley alter as the story progresses? Was what happened between them in the story surprising or not? Creating a cause-and-effect flow chart as you read the book could help the children understand why the relationship alters as Rowley becomes more confident and popular. You could also relate what happened in the book to the children's own experiences.



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DIARY of a Wimpy Kid

Main project

SCHOOL COUNCIL - IT'S ALL ABOUT ADVERTISING!

Objective:

Organize a pupil council/school government election for your class/school.

Curriculum areas:

Literacy, expressive arts, ICT.

Starting point:

Read **pages 44 to 45** to the class. After reading the extract, discuss why Greg was interested in standing for the pupil council in the first place. What did he do to try and get himself elected? What mistakes did he make? What can we learn from this?

Thursday

At school today, they announced that student government elections are coming up. To be honest with you, I've never had any interest in student government. But when I started thinking about it, I realized getting elected Treasurer could TOTALLY change my situation at school.



44

And even better...



Nobody ever thinks about running for Treasurer, because all anyone ever cares about are the big-ticket positions like President and Vice President. So I figure if I sign up tomorrow, the Treasurer job is pretty much mine for the taking.

Friday

Today, I went and put my name on the list to run for Treasurer. Unfortunately, this kid named Marty Porter is running for Treasurer, too, and he's real brainy at maths. So this might not be as easy as I thought.

45

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DIARY of a Wimpy Kid

Main project

SCHOOL COUNCIL - IT'S ALL ABOUT ADVERTISING!

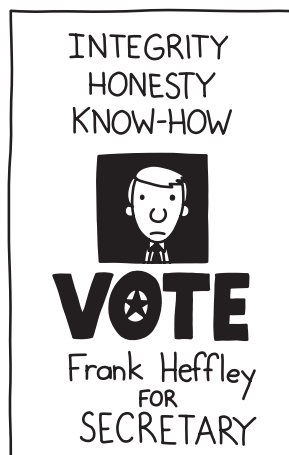
Project outline:

Split the children into groups and give them the following scenario:

Imagine your school is setting up a pupil council and needs a committee to organize the election procedure. The children should discuss as a group what they would need to do and make a list of their ideas. Then the children should allocate jobs for each group member to complete and agree the timescales.

Main Activities

1. Children brainstorm everything they might need to do to set up their own election. Some starting ideas are:
Decide on location for the election and voting procedures (including the ballot papers)
What marketing materials, such as leaflets and posters, would be needed?
Candidate selection - how could they go about this? Would they need to have class speech days to decide who the main candidates would be?
2. Allocate specific jobs. There must be a project manager whose job will be to ensure everyone meets the deadlines the group sets. Have regular meetings with the project manager to ensure the arrangements are in place for the big day.



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DIARY of a Wimpy Kid

Main project

SCHOOL COUNCIL - IT'S ALL ABOUT ADVERTISING!

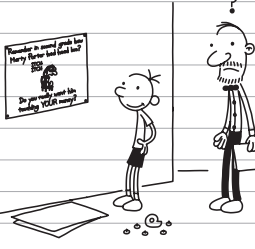
3. Re-examine Greg's poster campaign. Ask the children to think of more appropriate ideas that he could have included.

Monday
I brought my posters in to school today, and I have to say, they came out pretty good.



47

I started hanging my posters up as soon as I got in. But they were only up for about three minutes before Vice Principal Roy spotted them.



Mr Roy said you weren't allowed to write "fabrications" about the other candidates. So I told Mr Roy that the thing about the head lice was true, and how it practically closed down the whole school when it happened.

But he took down all my posters anyway. So today, Marty Porter was going around handing out lollipops to buy himself votes while my posters were sitting at the bottom of Mr Roy's trash can. I guess this means my political career is officially over.

48

4. Encourage the children to create a poster to put their group's candidate forward for election. What ideas could they include? How could they use graphics and text to make it more interesting and eye-catching? Suggest they use a publishing programme (e.g. Microsoft PowerPoint, Word or Publisher) to give this a professional look, or use the template provided.
5. All good committee members make great speeches! Discuss how to structure these and what sort of things they should include. How do these speeches differ from the marketing posters? How do we keep the audience interested? Prompt the children to imagine they are Greg and write his election speech! Discuss what they could include. To help the children with this planning lesson, it would be a good idea to have some examples to show them so that they really understand what they are aiming for.

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DIARY of a Wimpy Kid

Main project

SCHOOL COUNCIL - IT'S ALL ABOUT ADVERTISING!

Now ask the children to write their own candidate speeches. Suggest a word limit of between 300-500 words, depending of the age and ability of the children involved. You could also treat this as a team-writing exercise if you wanted to limit the number of candidates. You may wish to set aside a couple of lesson slots for this activity. Use the accompanying worksheet to help here.

6. Speech Day! The children should present their election speeches to their peers. Get them to focus on delivery techniques. If they have been writing as a team, encourage the team to work with the candidate to ensure he/she knows how to deliver the speech to best advantage.
7. The Big Event! Hold an election and elect your candidate(s)! You may wish to use the detailed Wimpy Kid Elections resources at wimpykidclub.co.uk/teachers to help here.
8. Become a reporter. Ask the children to write an article for the school newspaper. They could interview the different candidates or write a piece on the winner. They could also write a radio interview script and record this to play to the class.



TEACHER'S NOTE:

Please visit wimpykidclub.co.uk/teachers to find the Diary of a Wimpy Kid Election Pack. This is a series of lesson plans to help pupils vote for their favourite Wimpy Kid book, while learning about different voting systems and processes.



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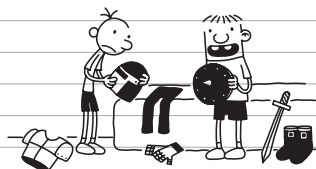


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Other Activity Ideas

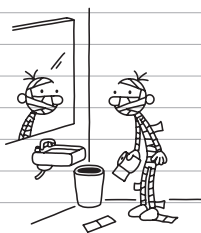
1. Split the children into groups and ask them to choose a scene from the book to turn into a drama script. Encourage them to write scripts and perform these to their peer group.
2. **(Page 62)** Greg doesn't seem to have much imagination when it comes to Halloween costumes. Individually or in groups, the children could design a new Halloween costume for him. They might like to try making a mock-up of it using craft materials.

His knight outfit came with a helmet and a shield and a real sword and EVERYTHING.



I've never had a store-bought costume before. I still haven't figured out what I'm gonna go as tomorrow night, so I'll probably just throw something together at the last minute. I figure maybe I'll bring back the Toilet Paper Mummy again.

But I think it's supposed to rain tomorrow night, so that might not be the smartest choice.



62

3. **(Page 58)** Greg's and Rowley's ideas for their haunted-house activities were not very good. Ask the children to design their own haunted house activities.

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DIARY

of a Wimpy Kid

Other Project Ideas

4. (Pages 138-139) Greg has to write thank-you letters for some unwanted Christmas gifts. After reading this section, ask the children to think of some presents they would be unhappy to receive and prompt them to write humorous thank-you letters for the gifts. Or try writing a poem in the style of 'Christmas Thank Yous' by Mick Gower.

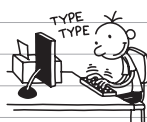
I thought I could just crank out my thank-you cards in a half hour, but when it came to actually writing them, my mind went blank.



Let me tell you, it's not easy writing thank-you notes for stuff you didn't want in the first place.

I started with the non-clothes items, because I thought they'd be easiest. But after two or three cards, I realized I was practically writing the same thing every time.

So I wrote up a general form on the computer with blanks for the things that needed to change. Writing the cards from there was a breeze.



138

Dear Aunt Lydia,

Thank you so much for the awesome encyclopedia!
How did you know I wanted that for Christmas?

I love the way the encyclopedia looks on my shelf!

All my friends will be so jealous that I have my very own encyclopedia.

Thank you for making this the best Christmas ever!

Sincerely, Greg

My system worked out pretty well for the first couple of gifts, but after that, not so much.

Dear Aunt Loretta,

Thank you so much for the awesome pants!
How did you know I wanted that for Christmas?

I love the way the pants looks on my legs!

All my friends will be so jealous that I have my very own pants.

Thank you for making this the best Christmas ever!

Sincerely, Greg

139

5. (Page 147) Greg and his friends came up with a list of things they would like their robot to be able to do. Ask the children to work in groups to create a list of things they would want their own robot to do for them. They could work together to create a storyboard with robot design ideas and then build one out of junk materials.

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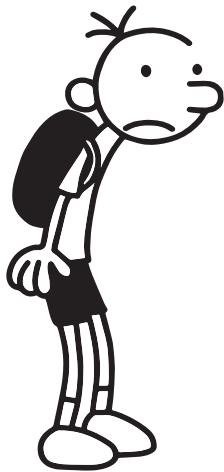


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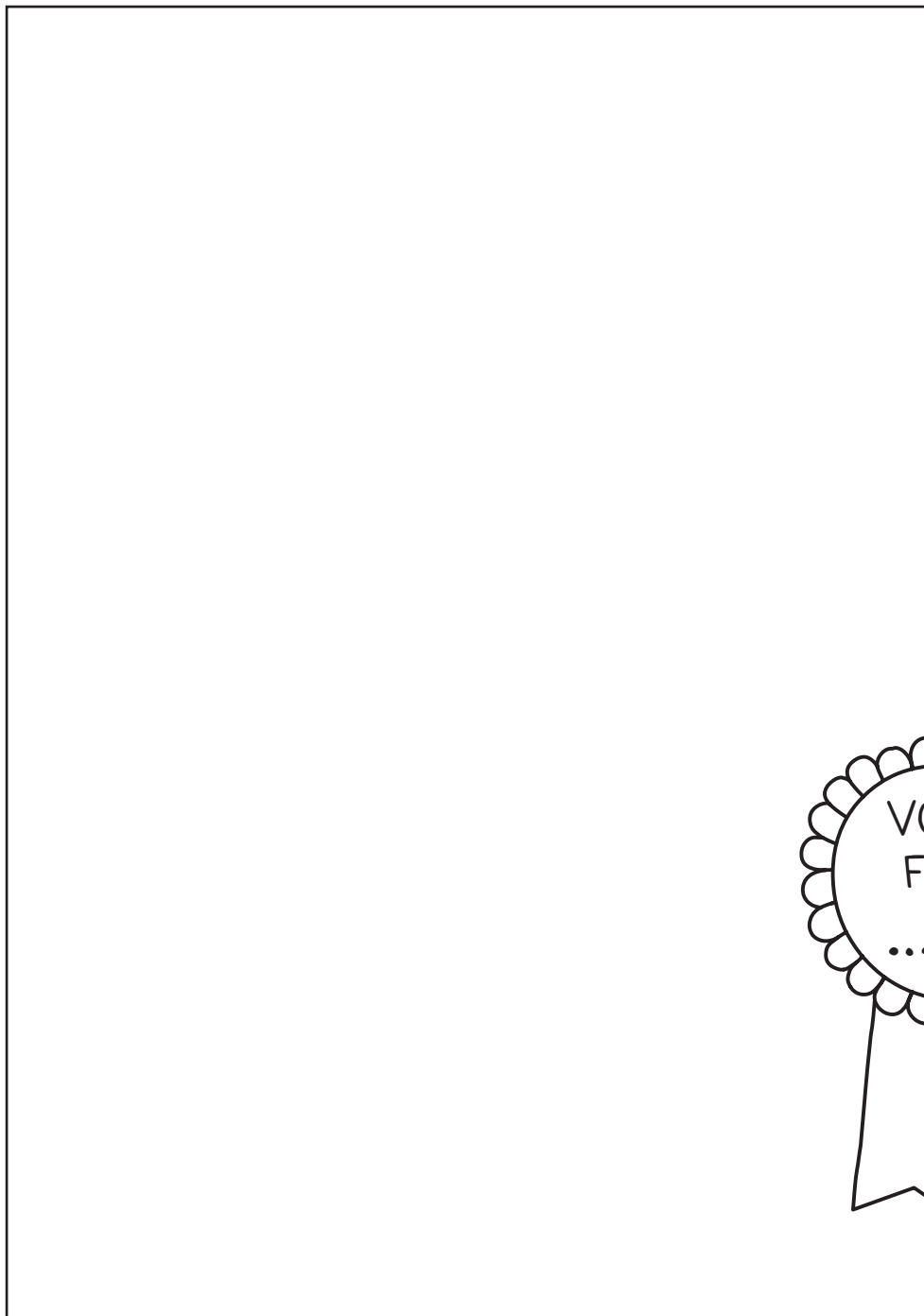
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Draw a poster



MAIN
PROJECT
WORKSHEET
1.



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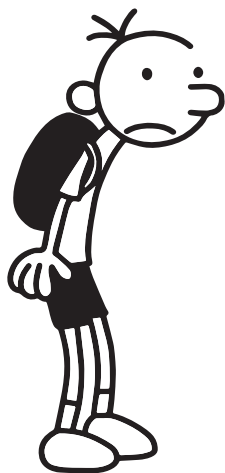
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Greg's Election Speech





DIARY of a Wimpy Kid

My Election Speech by

MAIN
PROJECT
WORKSHEET
3.

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