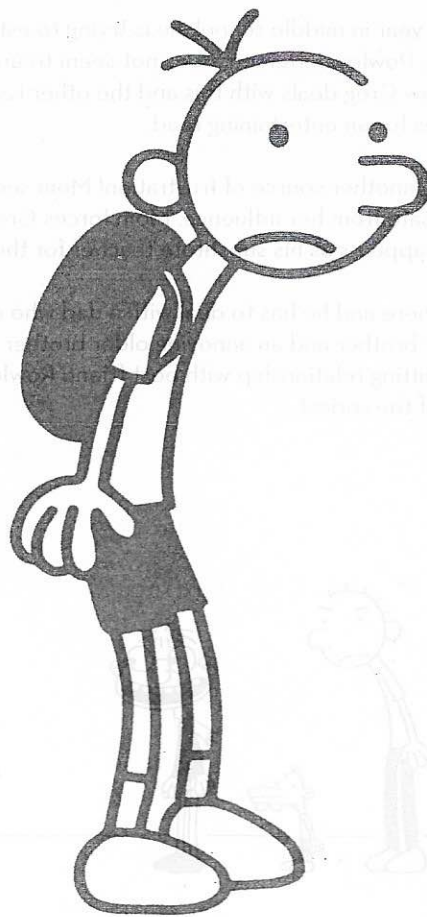


# DIARY of a Wimpy Kid

Book  
**1**



## Discussion Guide

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

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# DIARY of a Wimpy Kid

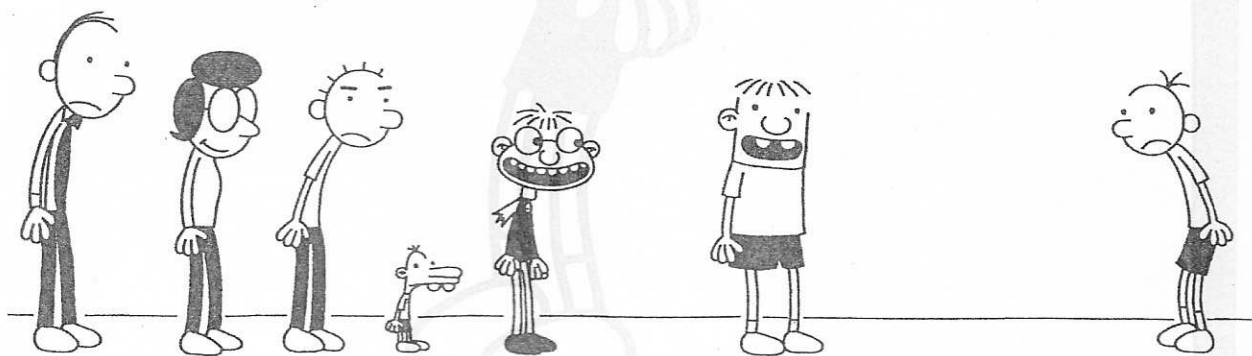
## Introduction

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.

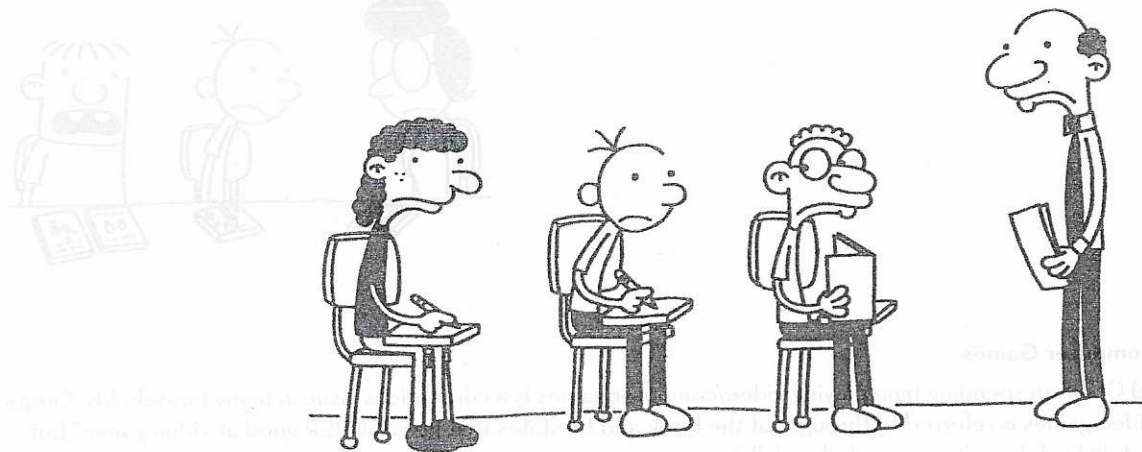
At home, Greg's family are another source of frustration! Mom seems to do everything possible to embarrass Greg. Even at school Greg isn't safe from her influence. Mom forces Greg to audition for the school play and then - the ultimate humiliation - she appears as his substitute teacher for the day!

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!



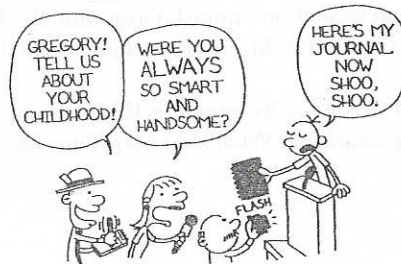
► What's the difference between a Journal and a Diary?  
And a Blog?

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS



1. *Diary of a Wimpy Kid* is subtitled "a novel in cartoons." How do the cartoons affect the story? Besides the cartoons, in what ways do you think the book is different from other novels you have read?
2. With the title *Diary of a Wimpy Kid*, what do you think the author is trying to tell you about Greg Heffley? How would you define wimpy?

3. (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?

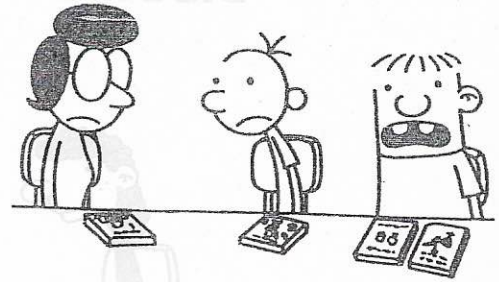


4. (Pages 4-5) Greg gives advice on what to do on the first day of school. Would this be good advice to follow?

### Popularity

5. (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?
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.
7. (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?

- 8 (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?



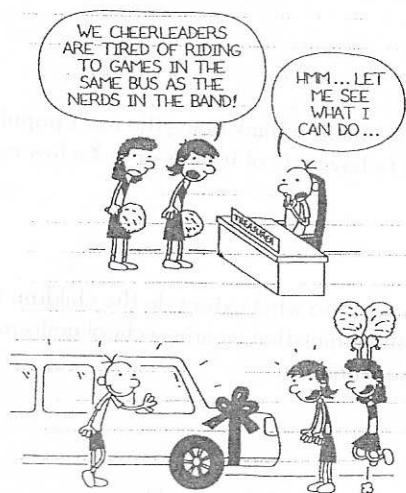
### 9 Video/Computer Games

(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!

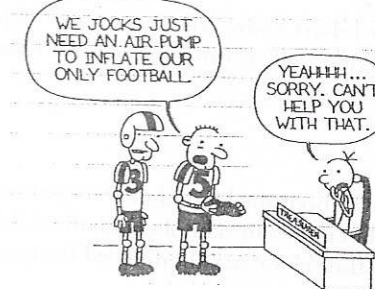
Why does Dad think differently from Greg on this topic? What would Dad rather he was doing? What argument does Greg have for being allowed to spend all his time playing video games? What opinion does Rowley's dad hold? Is it the same as Greg's dad's view?

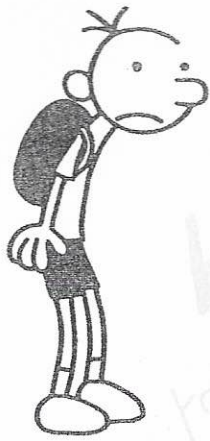
- 10 (Page 40) Mom and Dad have different ideas on punishment. Does the class agree with Mom or Dad's way of dealing with things? Is it fair for Mom to wait and punish Greg when he least expects it? Have the class discuss what punishments they think would be suitable for different misdemeanours!

- 11 (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?



And even better ...





# DIARY of a Wimpy Kid

Draw a poster

A large, empty rectangular box with a thin black border, intended for drawing a poster. It occupies most of the lower half of the page.



12

(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.

13

(Page 62) Greg comments, 'I've never had a store-bought costume before.' Discuss whether Halloween costumes should be home-made or store-bought.



14

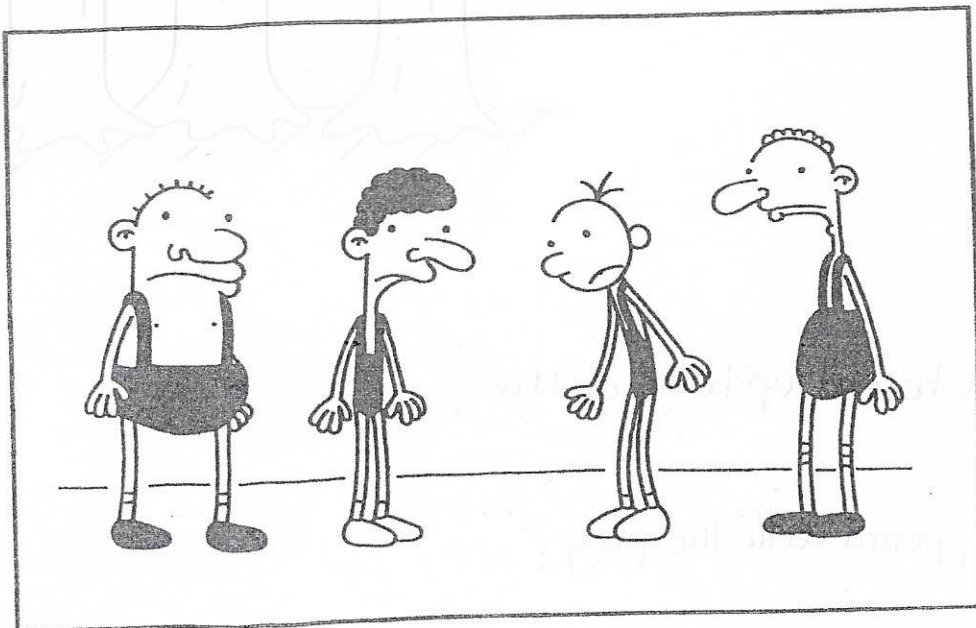
Greg doesn't seem to have much imagination when it comes to Halloween costumes. Individually or in groups, the children could design a new Halloween costume for him. They might like to try making a mock-up of it using craft materials.

NOVEMBER

### CAPTION THE COMIC

What's going on here? You read the book, so you should know!

A caption is text that helps you understand the message of a picture.



► Why does he want to go into sports? Form a semantic field with all the words that appear in this passage related to SPORTS

15

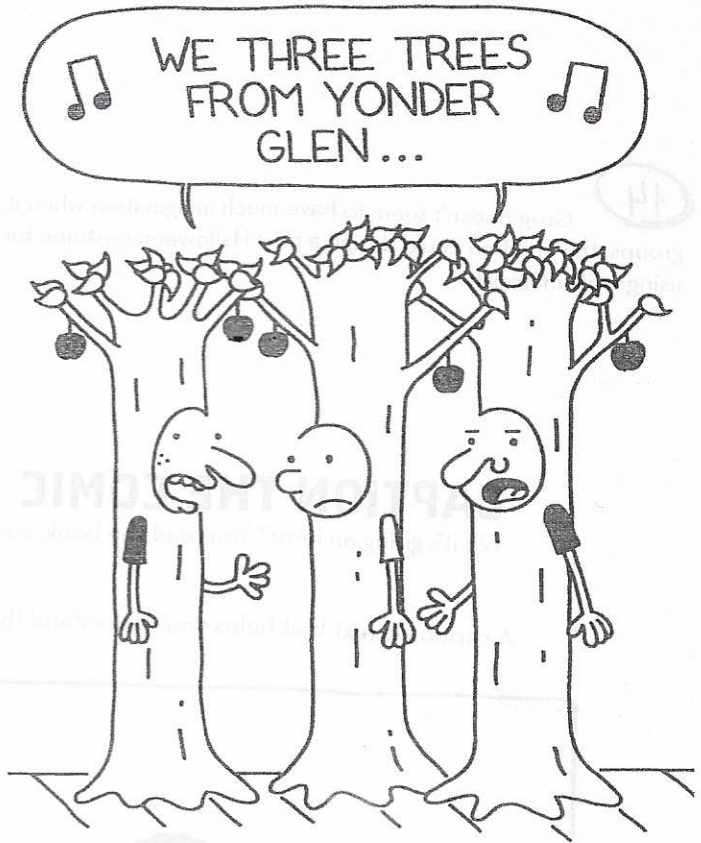
(Page 95) Mom wants Greg to audition for the school play, but he does not think it is a good idea. If you have a specific talent, to what extent do you think you should be encouraged to develop it? When does encouragement change to become 'forcing' by parents?

## GREG THE ACTOR

Luckily for Greg, everyone who tries out for the school play gets a part.

Write down here all the vocabulary related to the Theatre.

NOVEMBER



Why did he end up being a tree?

What happened with the play?

### GROUP PROJECT:

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.

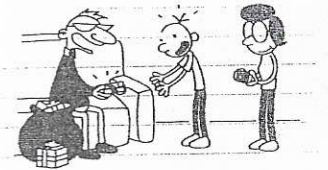
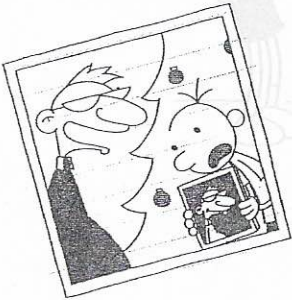


16

(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)?

17

(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?



# JANUARY

(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.

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

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!

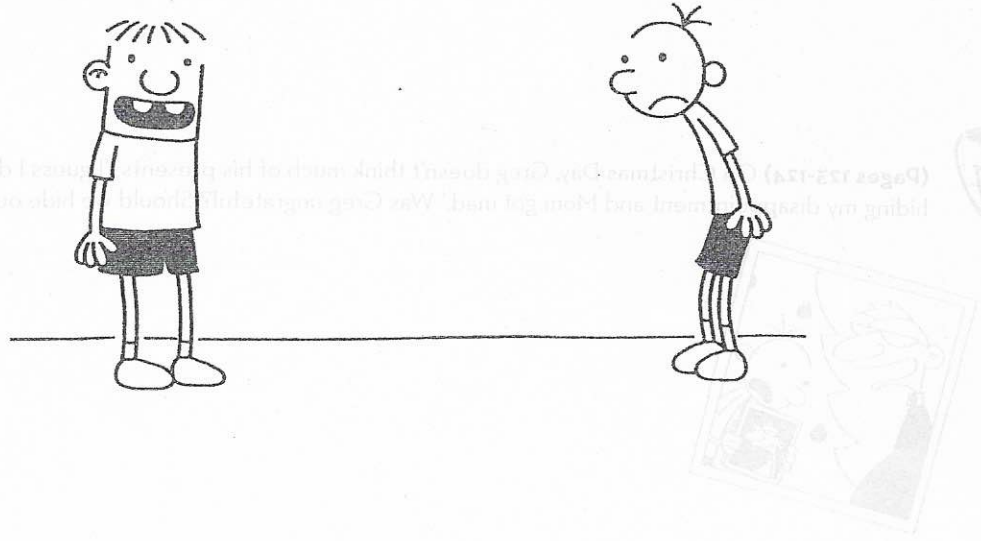
Sincerely, Greg

81

81

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.



18

• What are the characteristics of a good friend? How do you think Rowley feels about his friendship with Greg? If

19

(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.

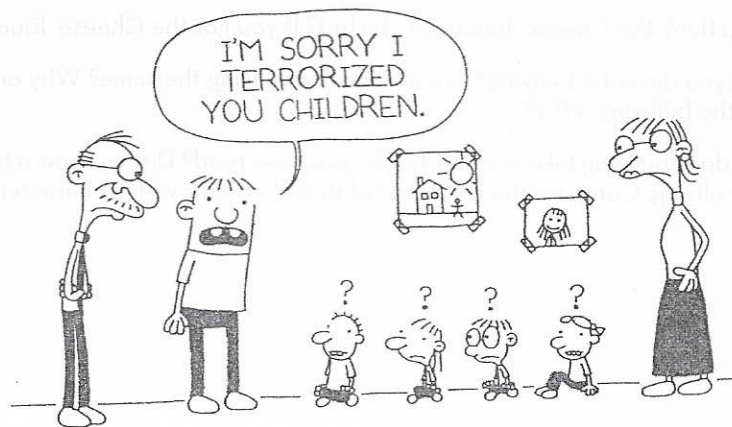
## GREG THE CARTOONIST

► Can you draw a comic strip that you would turn in to be the cartoonist in the school newspaper?

► Graphic information can also help students infer the meaning of idiomatic expressions.

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.



Check students' familiarity with the expression "take one for the team" and share examples of how idioms work in daily life and culture. Discuss what other kinds of information can help readers infer the meaning of idiomatic expressions. Look together for additional examples in the book including "take him under my wing" (page 19), "mopping the floor with him" (page 26), "caught red handed" (page 30), "take matters into my own hands" (page 89), "had this one in the bag" (page 93), and "get out of hand" (page 193). Then give them a chance to show what meaning they draw from your discussions on inference and idioms.

### ► BACK TO THE DRAWING BOARD

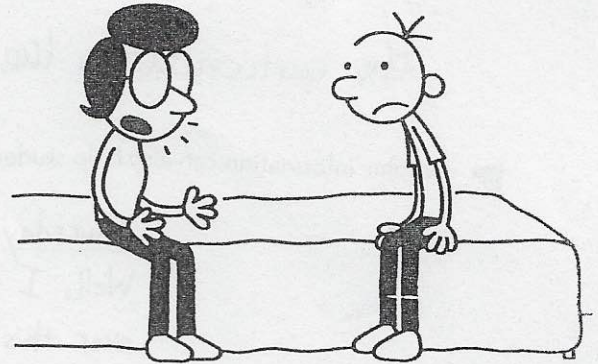
Idioms are expressions that have meanings beyond the actual words used in the phrase, such as "caught red handed." Literally interpret some of your favorite idioms used in *Diary of a Wimpy Kid* and illustrate them in a Wimpy Kid-style. Also, put each idiom and drawing on a separate page along with its figurative definition. All pages will be collected to create an illustrated book of idioms.

### 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?



- Do you think this book is funny? Why or why not? Discuss a part of the book that made you laugh and explain why you thought it was funny. If something similar happened in your own life or to a friend what would your reaction be?
- Why do you think the Cheese Touch got started? If you got the Cheese Touch, how would you react?
- How would you describe bullying? Are all kinds of bullying the same? Why or why not? Who gets bullied in the book? Who does the bullying? Why?
- What form does bullying take in other books you have read? Discuss how a fictional character from a different book deals with bullying. Compare the response of that character with a character in *Diary of a Wimpy Kid*.