

Diary of a Wimpy Kid

THE UGLY TRUTH

Book
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Discussion Guide

to accompany *Diary of a Wimpy Kid: The Ugly Truth* by Jeff Kinney
(978-0-141-34082-1, £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!

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Diary of a Wimpy Kid

THE UGLY TRUTH

Introduction

In the fifth Diary of a Wimpy Kid book we once again get special access to the diary (sorry, journal) of the one and only Greg Heffley.

In this book Greg auditions for a local ice-cream company advertisement but fails his audition due to being too old (the part is for a 3-6-year-old). He explains that his family also discriminate against him because of his age, saying he was the centre of attention when he was younger and is now ignored because of Manny, his younger brother.

Greg is then informed that his Uncle Gary will marry for the fourth time, and that the wedding reception will be held at the home of Greg's great-grandmother Gammie, a polite but sly and clever old woman. When that time comes, Greg is dreading getting 'the Talk' from Gammie, which everyone in the family gets when they're about Greg's age.

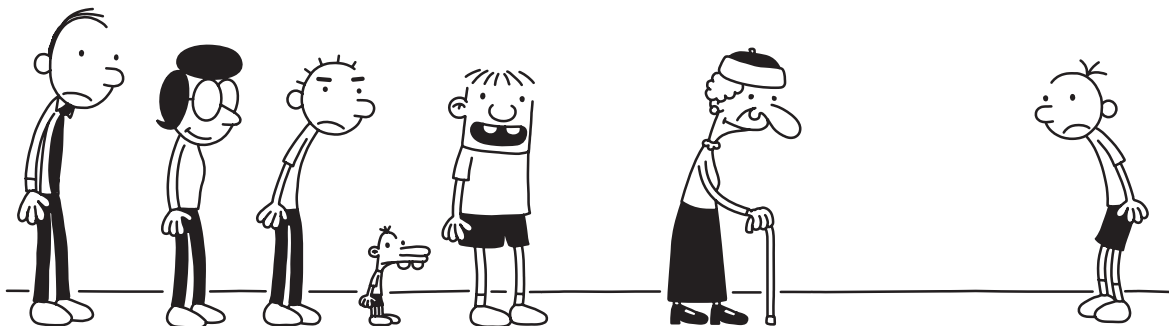
Mom announces that she will be going back to college and that the Heffley men must take care of themselves, with disastrous results. Greg is left with few clean clothes to wear, their attempts at cookery are a disaster, and Dad sprains his ankle when they try to go out to eat.

Greg also complains that he must stay up late trying to finish his homework, since Mom often helps (by giving him all the answers). In his sleep-deprived state Greg accidentally sets off the fire alarm at school and the entire school has to evacuate.

There are even more problems at school when Greg fails a Health class assignment, where he must take care of an egg like it is a baby (Mom cooks him scrambled eggs for breakfast using the egg), and at home where he has to deal with an extremely lazy maid who refuses to do Greg's laundry, hogs the TV and takes naps in Greg's bed.

At school, a 'Lock-In' is organized where boys and girls have a supervised sleepover in the school hall. It turns out to be a disaster - there are practically no girls, too many chaperones, and all technology is confiscated, making the event very boring for Greg.

Rowley comes to school with a large pimple on his forehead, which makes Greg wonder about his growth spurt. At Uncle Gary's wedding, Greg is given 'the Talk' by Gammie who explains the physical and mental stress and horrors of becoming an adult. Greg decides to try and enjoy his childhood for now and the book ends with Mom's return from college and Greg mending his friendship with Rowley.



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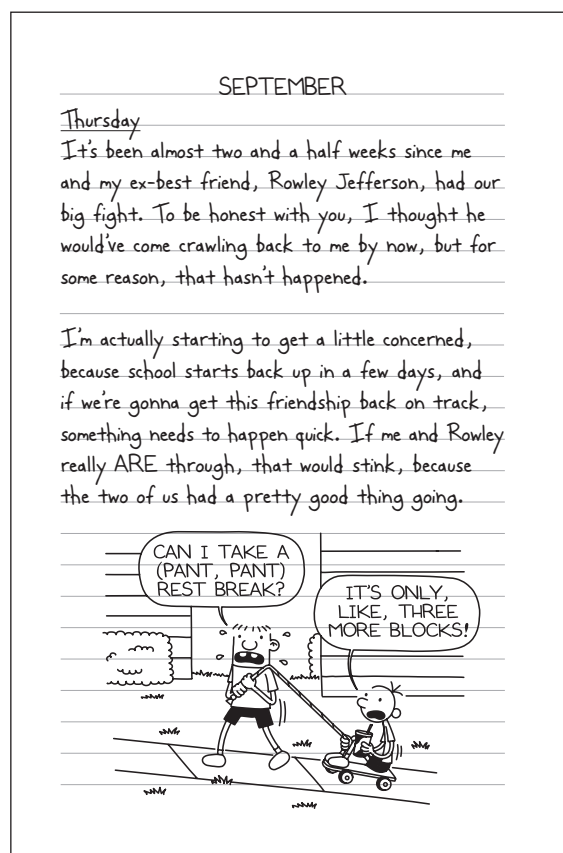


Diary of a Wimpy Kid

THE UGLY TRUTH

Understanding the text

1. (Page 1) 'To be honest with you, I thought he would come crawling back to me by now.' Greg and Rowley had not spoken in two and a half weeks. Do the children think that Greg was right to expect Rowley to make the first move towards reconciliation? Have they ever fallen out with someone and expected them to apologize?



2. (Page 7) Rowley and his mother have different ideas of what a role model should be. Why do the children think that is? Do they have a role model that they look up to? What characteristics do they think are important in a role model?
3. (Page 12) 'The reason me and Rowley didn't make it is because we were equal partners in our friendship.' Do the children think that Greg and Rowley had an equal friendship? Why (or why not)? What benefits does being equal bring to a friendship?

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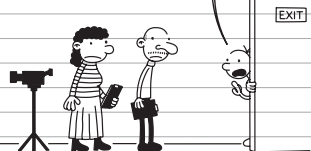
THE UGLY TRUTH

Understanding the text

4. (Pages 30-32) 'This isn't the first time I've been discriminated against because of my age.' Greg feels that as he grows older he is less interesting to his family, especially since little brother Manny came along. Do the children think Greg is being 'discriminated' against? Have they ever experienced discrimination due to their ages? How do they think Greg's family could reassure Greg?

My opportunity was slipping away, so I did what I could to improve my odds.

I'M PRETTY SURE THE NEXT KID IN LINE IS ALLERGIC TO PEACHES.

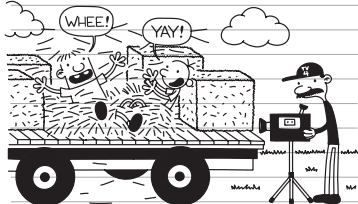


But it looks like the job is gonna go to a younger kid after all, which really stinks.

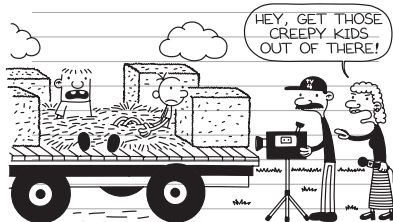
You know, this isn't the first time I've been discriminated against because of my age, either. Last October me and Rowley heard that our local news station was going to be at the Red Apple Farm to shoot footage of kids carving pumpkins and making scarecrows and stuff like that.

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We knew this was our big chance to be on TV, so we plopped ourselves in front of the news camera and really hammed it up.

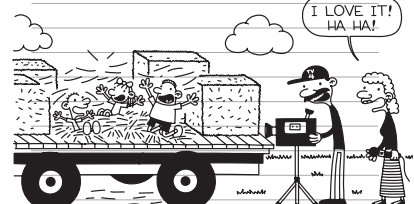


But it took about five seconds for the news people to kick us out.



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Then they brought in some little kids to take our place, and they did the same EXACT thing me and Rowley were doing.



And sure enough, those kids were on the news that night.

The truth is, this kind of thing has been going on for a long time. And where it's worst is in my own family.

Up until I was eight or nine, I was the star of every family gathering. It seemed like nobody could get enough of me.

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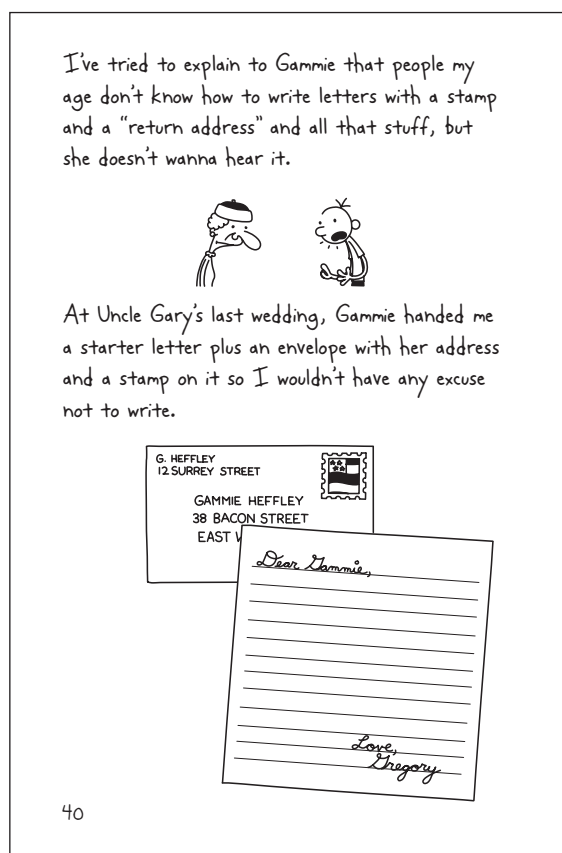


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Understanding the text

5. (Page 40) Can the children remember the last time they wrote a letter to someone? With the technology we have now (email, texting, etc.), do they think it is less important to be able to write a letter? What are the benefits of being able to hand-write a letter?



6. (Page 55) Greg was used to Mom always being there for him after school. Do the children think Greg took Mom for granted? Have they ever taken their family for granted? Do the children think that mothers should stay at home and take care of their family? Or is it OK for them to go to college or work?

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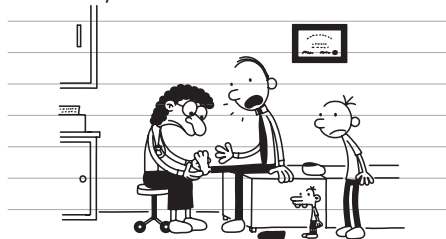
Understanding the text

7. (Pages 59-60) Why do the children think Greg and Dad didn't want to tell the truth about their accidents? Should we always tell the truth? Can the children think of examples of when it's OK to not tell the truth and list possible reasons to support these examples?

Dad chased Rodrick around the parking lot, but Rodrick is actually pretty fast, and Dad couldn't catch him. Then Dad tripped over a curb and twisted his ankle.



So Rodrick had to drive Dad to the emergency room. When the doctor asked Dad how he hurt his ankle, Dad said he wasn't looking where he was going and he stepped on one of Manny's trucks in the driveway.



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I can kind of understand why Dad didn't want to tell the truth. One time I broke my wrist, and I told everyone I broke it in a fistfight. What REALLY happened was that I tried to stand up after my legs fell asleep from sitting on the toilet too long. But I liked my version better.



So it's only been a few days without Mom, and things are already starting to fall apart. We've got one serious injury so far, and who knows what's in store down the road.

Thursday

We brought back leftovers from the Spaghetti Barn, and that's what we had for dinner tonight. Dad had to stay late at work, so he called Rodrick and told him to warm up everyone's spaghetti in the microwave.

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8. (Page 63) Greg thinks that Mom is better than Dad at helping with homework because she basically gives him the answers. Should parents help children with their homework? How much help is too much? Do the children ever need help with their homework?

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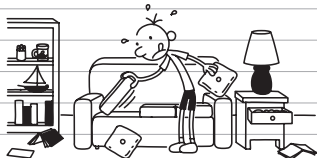
Understanding the text

9. (Pages 72-73) Why do the children think that older children are expected to take more responsibility around the house? What do the children understand by the word 'responsibility'? Discuss things that children should be responsible for and at what age (e.g. buying their own clothes, travelling by bus to school, vacuuming their rooms, etc.).

I've heard this sort of thing from Dad before. The last few weeks of the summer, our neighbor, Ms. Grove, hired me to take care of her plants while she was on a business trip. Well, I did it for the first few days, and then I guess you could say I got busy with other things.

When Dad asked me how the plants were doing, I realized I hadn't been over there in at least a WEEK. I went to grab Ms. Grove's key so I could water her plants, but the key wasn't in its usual spot.

I practically turned our house upside down looking for that key, but I couldn't find it.



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It turns out the reason I couldn't find the key was because it wasn't in our house. I'd left it at Ms. Grove's, and she found it when she got back from her trip.



Ms. Grove was pretty mad that her key was in the front door, but the way I see it, she should've been happy nobody robbed her house.

She was mad about her plants, too, because unfortunately most of them didn't make it. I suggested that maybe she should buy a cactus or another plant that doesn't need a lot of water to survive.

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Understanding the text

10. (Pages 81-82) A rumour spreads around Greg's school about the fire alarm, resulting in the school being shut down early. Why is spreading rumours a bad thing? What are the possible consequences of spreading rumours? Have the children ever heard a rumour and believed it? What happened next?

I don't know much, but what I DO know is that you shouldn't announce what the punishment is gonna be BEFORE you ask people to turn themselves in. So I decided it would be smart to keep quiet and let this all blow over.

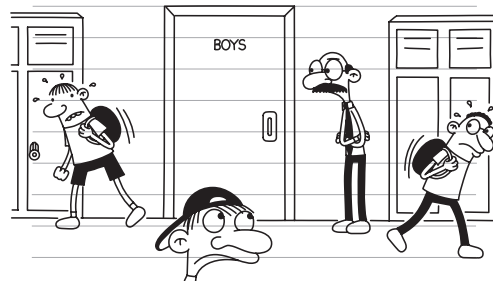
After third period, a rumor started going around school that the fire alarm squirts out invisible liquid when you pull the handle, and that the teachers had some sort of special X-ray wand they could use to see the liquid on somebody's hand. So it was only a matter of time before they found the culprit.



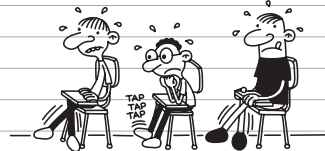
Then everyone started wondering if it was the TEACHERS who started the rumor and it was just a trick to see which kid would go to the bathroom first to wash his hands.

81

So that got everyone REALLY paranoid.



Then NOBODY would go to the bathroom, and everyone who actually needed to go decided to just hold it until the end of the day.



The principal eventually had to shut the school down early because nobody was washing their hands and we're right in the middle of flu season.

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11. (Page 214) 'That's been the whole problem this year. There's been a lot of change all of a sudden.' Do the children think change is a good thing or a bad thing? Should some things always stay the same? Why do they think we resist change? Ask the children to think of an event in their lives that had a large impact (e.g. moving house, starting a new school, making a new friend). How did that change make them feel? Was the change for the best?

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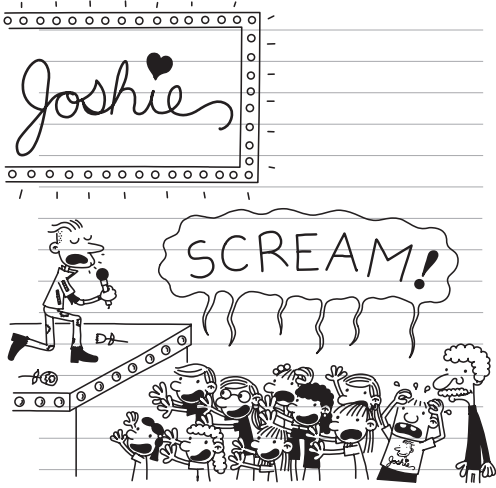


Diary of a Wimpy Kid

THE UGLY TRUTH

In-depth discussion points

1. (Pages 13-16) Greg decides to post pictures of himself having fun online. Do the children ever post pictures of themselves online? What are the dangers of posting pictures and comments online? Explain that there are often age limits that prevent children from accessing certain websites. Discuss why that might be the case. Should parents allow their children to post things online or access certain websites (e.g. Facebook) before they are old enough? Rodrick is finding it difficult to get a job due to his online pictures. Should employers judge potential employees based on their pictures?

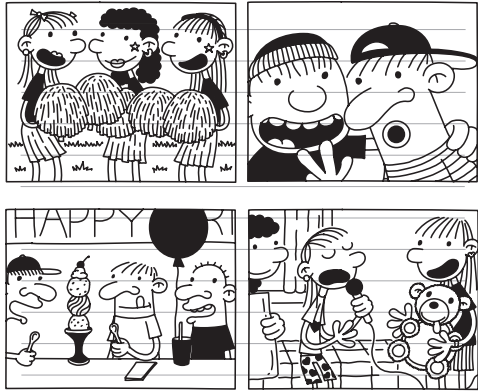


Still, it kind of irks me that Rowley is having more fun than I am. In fact, it seems like **EVERYONE** is having more fun than me these days.

There are some kids in my grade who post their pictures online.

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And from the looks of things, they're all having a WAY better time than I am.



I don't want people thinking MY life is lame, so I decided to take some pictures to show how great things are going for me.

All you really need is a digital camera and a photo-editing program and you can make it look like you're having a total blast.

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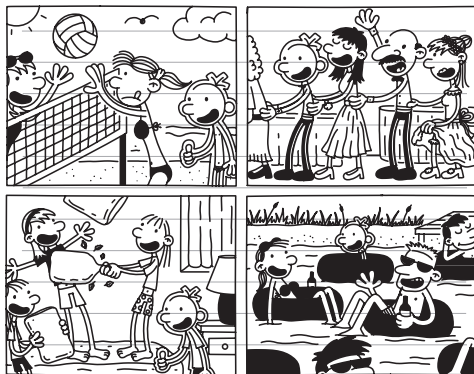
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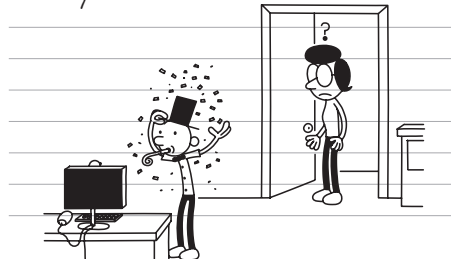
Diary of a Wimpy Kid

THE UGLY TRUTH

In-depth discussion points

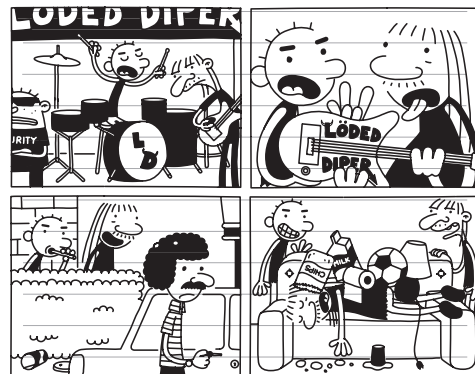


Tonight I was right in the middle of creating a wild New Year's Eve party scene when I got busted by Mom.



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Oh well. Mom won't let me post photos on the computer anyway, because of "privacy" and all that. Or maybe it's because she learned her lesson after letting my older brother, Rodrick, post HIS pictures.



Rodrick's been trying to get a job so he can buy a new drum set, but nobody will hire him. Mom told him that nowadays employers look up the people they're thinking of hiring and that his pictures are probably hurting his chances.

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2. (Page 129) Split the class into groups and explain that they are going to plan their own 'Lock-In' event to raise money for a charity. Ask them to discuss which charity they would choose to donate to and why, encouraging them to research their charity online and explain the charity's work to the rest of the class.
3. (Page 181) Greg was annoyed that he couldn't go to Jordan's party and told Rowley that he couldn't go either as it wouldn't be fair. Rowley explained he was 'practically a grown-up' and could make his own decisions. At what age do the children think people should be allowed to make their own decisions? Should you always make them on your own? What decisions do they think should be made with the advice of someone else?
4. (Page 182) Greg got a lecture from his Uncle Joe about planning for his future. Have the children thought about their futures (e.g. college, jobs, where they will live)? Why (or why not)? At what age do they think you should start to think about your future? How should you plan for your future and what should you think about in that plan? Work with the class to think about different career ideas and create different plans for those types of futures.

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THE UGLY TRUTH

Main project

CREATE A MEDIA CAMPAIGN FOR A NEW PRODUCT

Objective:

As a group create and present a media campaign using a variety of advertising methods, e.g. radio, television, posters, online, etc.

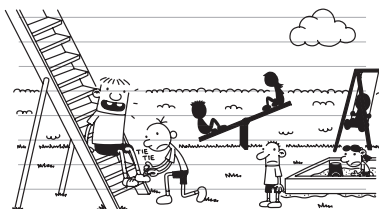
Curriculum areas:

Literacy, expressive arts, ICT.

Starting point:

Read **pages 22-24** and discuss how the Peachy Breeze Ice Cream advertisement opportunity caught Greg's attention. What did Greg do to prepare for the job and make himself appealing? What obstacles did he face? What could we learn from this?

Last year Rowley's mom bought him sneakers with laces, and I can't even tell you how many times I had to bail him out.



I guess it probably should've been a warning sign that my best friend was impressed that I knew how to tie my own shoes.

Thursday

Today I was reading the comics in the newspaper, and I saw an ad that caught my attention.

It was for Peachy Breeze Ice Cream, and apparently they're looking for a new spokesperson.

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COULD YOUR CHILD
BE THE NEXT



PEACHY BREEZE
KID?

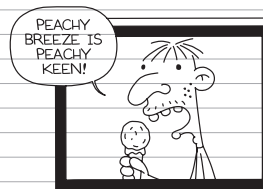
Open tryouts at the Liberty
Street Mall this Saturday!

Peachy Breeze has those commercials on TV that run nonstop, with that kid with the freckles and the high-pitched voice.



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The Peachy Breeze Kid used to be kind of cute, but over the years he's gotten a little seedy-looking.



So I guess they're looking for someone to take his place.

Well, I'd be PERFECT for the role. First of all, I LOVE ice cream, so it wouldn't be hard for me to do the acting part. Second, I would be willing to miss a lot of school to fulfill my Peachy Breeze obligations.

And they wouldn't have to worry about me getting too old for the part, because I'd take whatever I needed to take to stop growing.

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THE UGLY TRUTH

Main project

CREATE A MEDIA CAMPAIGN FOR A NEW PRODUCT

Main Activities

1. Using Worksheet 1, children should brainstorm ideas to create an advert suitable to a specific media audience. Some starting ideas are:
 - Decide on their product
 - Unique selling points (USPs) of their product
 - Agree on their demographic (target audience/buyers)
 - Decide on their slogan
2. Allocate specific jobs within the groups (use Worksheet 2 to make a note of these). For example, there should be a marketing manager whose job will be to ensure that everyone meets the deadlines the group sets. Explain to the groups that they should have regular meetings with the marketing manager to ensure they all meet the set deadlines.
3. Re-examine the Peachy Breeze advert in the book. Encourage the children to think about other media that might have been suitable for advertising that product (e.g. posters, leaflets, websites).
4. Now the children should create an advert suitable for their media stream. Explain that they need to consider things like how to make their advert attractive, what makes a good spokesperson, what to include in the advert etc. Suggest different publishing programmes they could use in developing their ideas.
5. All good media campaigns need a catchy, interesting and vibrant advert. Discuss how to create an advert to meet such criteria. How do advertisers try to differentiate their products from each other? What tricks do advertisers use to entice people in to purchasing their products? Display examples of different media campaigns. Encourage the children discuss the features of different adverts and what elements made the adverts more appealing to the children. Discuss the persuasive tactics of advertisers. What are the possible negative aspects of media advertising? For example, showing toys adverts at Christmas time and how the target audience might feel under pressure from these. Use Worksheet 3 to keep notes about these discussions.
6. Lights, camera, action! The groups should be given the opportunity to film, record and publish their adverts and present them to their classmates.
7. The other groups could pretend to be from the company that requested the media campaign. They could offer constructive criticism and praise of the adverts presented.

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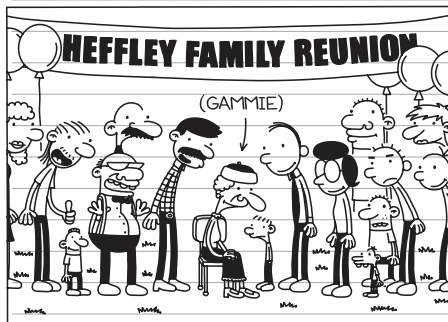
Other Project Ideas

1. (Page 39) Gammie still likes to hand-write letters. Encourage the children to write a letter to a friend or family member, asking the recipient to hand-write a reply to them.

Tuesday

I found out that Uncle Gary's wedding is gonna be in November, and the reception will be at my great grandmother Gammie's house, like last time.

Gammie is ninety-five years old, but she still lives in the big house where she grew up. She's like the official head of the whole Heffley family.



Gammie is one of the only people in the world who still writes letters. And when she writes you a letter, she expects you to write one BACK.

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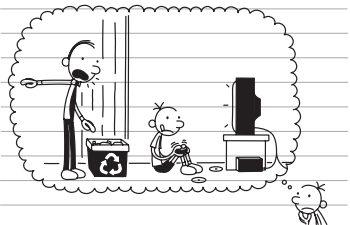


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Other Project Ideas

2. (Pages 69-71) Do the children like Greg's idea for remembering things? Do they use a particular method for learning or remembering things? Encourage the class to compare and discuss the best ideas.



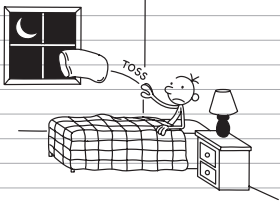
If I DID forget, it wasn't my fault. I actually have a really GREAT system for remembering things.

You know how some people leave notes for themselves when they need to remember something? Well, I think that's a lot of work, and it's a waste of paper, too.

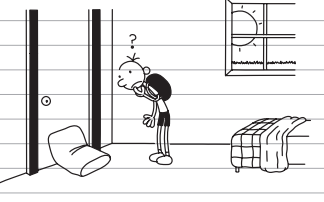
So let's say I'm in bed and Mom walks into my room and tells me I have to bring a permission slip to school in the morning. I don't get out of bed and write a note.

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I just throw one of my pillows across the room.



Then, when I wake up in the morning and go to walk out the door, I see the pillow and think, "Hey, what's this pillow doing here?"

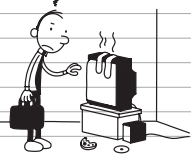


70

Then I remember, "Oh yeah, I have to bring a permission slip to school." See what I mean? It's totally foolproof.

Now that I think of it, I DID leave myself a reminder to take out the recycling. I SPECIFICALLY remember putting my socks on the TV before I went to bed, to remind myself in the morning.

And if Dad did something to mess up my system, he's only got himself to blame.



But Dad wouldn't let it go. He said now that I'm getting older, I need to start being more "responsible."

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3. (Page 115-116) Ask the class to work together to create a 'Taking Care of Me' manual, inspired by what happens in *The Ugly Truth*. This could be an A to Z, including information on what foods they like to eat, what times they have to go to football/netball, what TV they are allowed to watch, etc.

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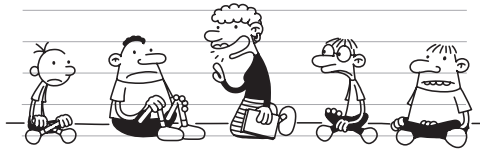
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Other Project Ideas

4. (Page 137) The class could play their own version of Mrs Carr's name game. What nicknames could they come up with for themselves and their friends?

Then we all sat in a circle in the middle of the auditorium. Mrs. Carr said we were gonna play some "icebreakers" that would help us get to know each other better.



But the truth is, all of us kids know one another really well, because we've been together since preschool. In fact, I think we know each other TOO well.

Mrs. Carr said we were gonna start with something called the "Name Game," where everyone goes around and gives themselves a nickname that starts with the same letter as their first name, like "Sporty Seth" or "Funny Fred" or something like that. The idea was that your nickname would say something about your personality.

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5. (Page 206) The pupils could work in pairs to write their own 'Best Friend' speech, like in the book. They could write about some things they have done together, what activities they do together, what sports their friends are good at and what they think they will be when they grow up.

#WIMPYKID



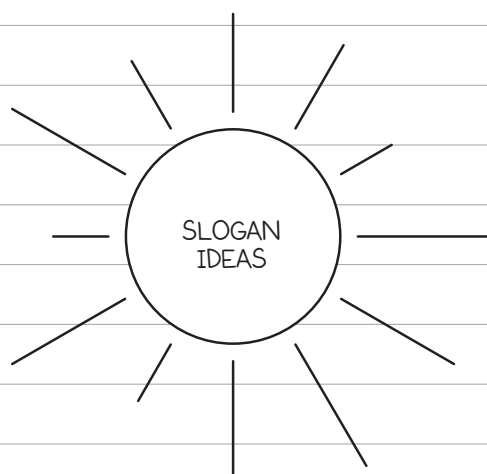
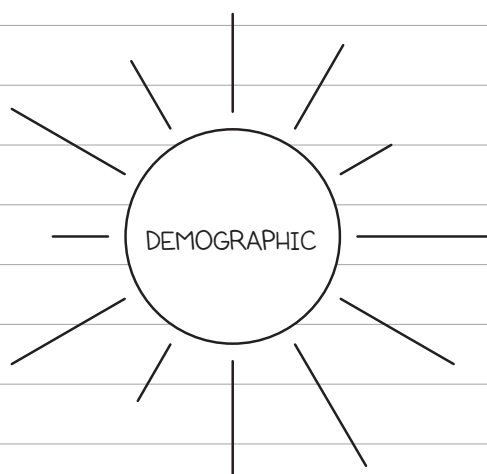
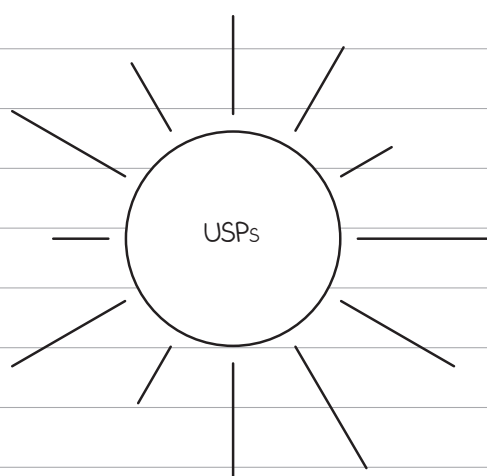
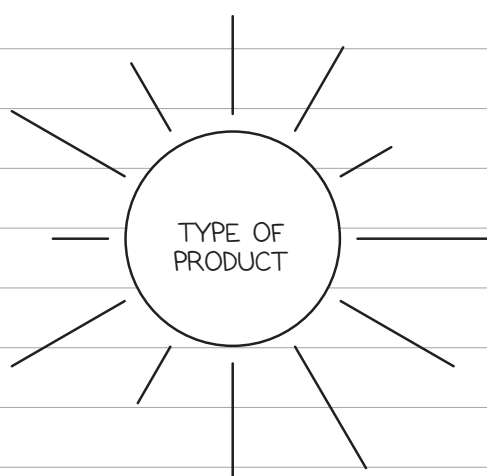


Diary of a Wimpy Kid

THE UGLY TRUTH

Advert Brainstorm

MAIN
PROJECT
WORKSHEET
1.



#WIMPYKID





**MAIN
PROJECT
WORKSHEET
2.**

#WIMPYKID





Our Advert Ideas

