

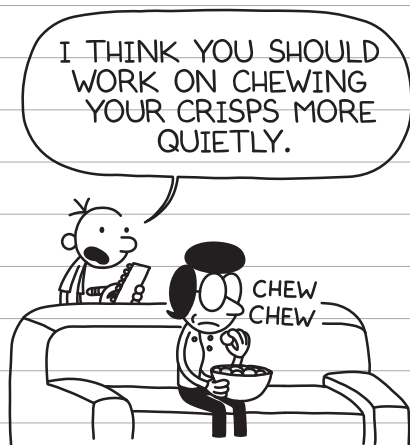
JANUARY

New Year's Day

You know how you're supposed to come up with a list of "resolutions" at the beginning of the year to try to make yourself a better person?

Well, the problem is it's not easy for me to think of ways to improve myself, because I'm already pretty much one of the best people I know.

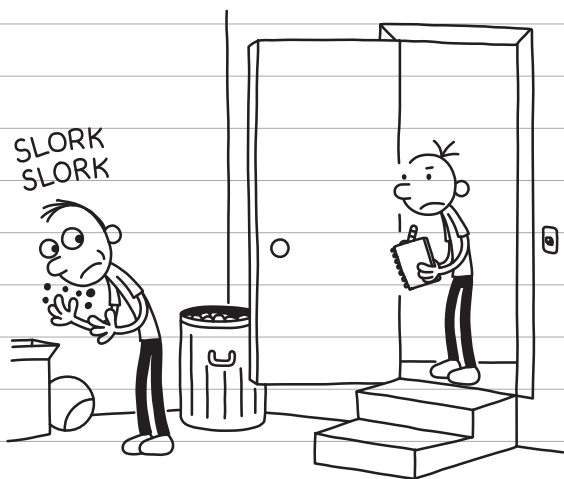
So this year my resolution is to try to help OTHER people improve. But the thing I'm finding out is that some people don't really appreciate it when you're trying to be helpful.



One thing I noticed right off the bat is that the people in my family are doing a lousy job sticking to THEIR New Year's resolutions.

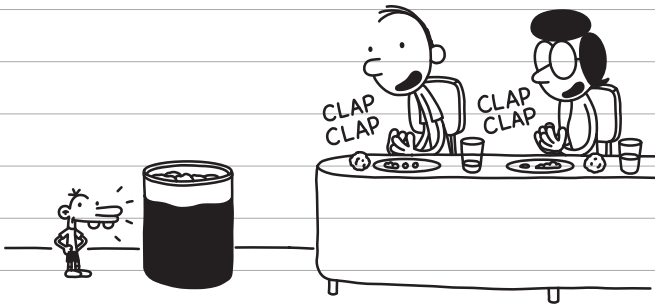
Mom said she was gonna start going to the gym today, but she spent the whole afternoon watching TV.

And Dad said he was gonna go on a strict diet, but after dinner I caught him out in the garage, stuffing his face with brownies.

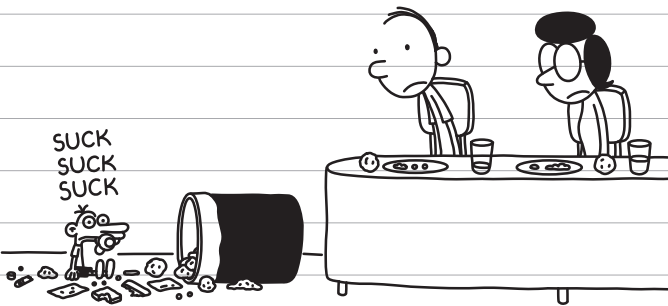


Even my little brother, Manny, couldn't stick with his resolution.

This morning he told everyone that he's a "big boy" and he's giving up his pacifier for good. Then he threw his favourite binkie in the trash.



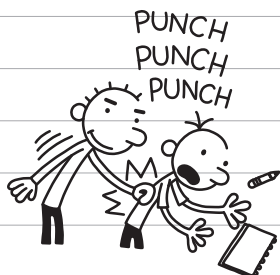
Well, THAT New Year's resolution didn't even last a full MINUTE.



The only person in my family who didn't come up with a resolution is my older brother, Rodrick, and that's a pity because his list should be about a mile and a half long.

So I decided to come up with a programme to help Rodrick be a better person. I called my plan "Three Strikes and You're Out". The basic idea was that every time I saw Rodrick messing up, I'd mark a little "X" on his chart.

Well, Rodrick got all three strikes before I even had a chance to decide what "You're Out" meant.



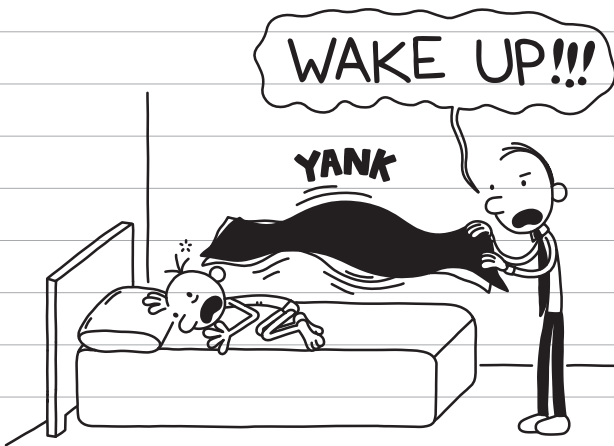
Anyway, I'm starting to wonder if I should just bag MY resolution, too. It's a lot of work, and so far I haven't really made any progress.

Besides, after I reminded Mom for like the billionth time to stop chewing her crisps so loud, she made a really good point. She said, "Everyone can't be as perfect as YOU, Gregory." And from what I've seen so far I think she's right.

Thursday

Dad is giving this diet thing another try, and that's bad news for me. He's gone about three days without eating any chocolate, and he's been SUPER cranky.

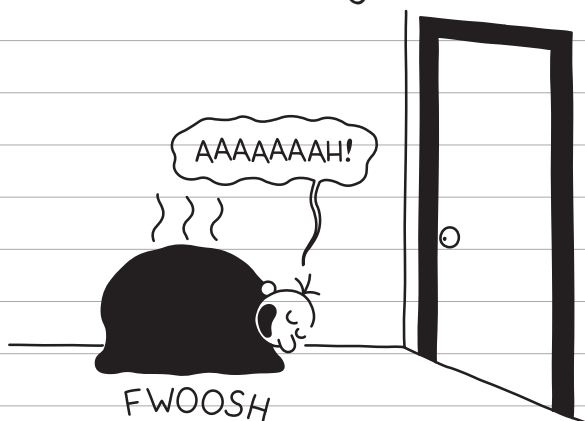
The other day, after Dad woke me up and told me to get ready for school, I accidentally fell back asleep. Believe me, that's the last time I'll make THAT mistake.



Part of the problem is that Dad always wakes me up before Mom's out of the shower, so I know that I still have like ten more minutes before I need to get out of bed for real.

Yesterday I came up with a pretty good way to get some extra sleep time without making Dad mad. After he woke me up, I took all of my blankets down the hall with me and waited outside the bathroom for my turn in the shower.

Then I lay down right on top of the heater vent. And when the furnace was blowing, the experience was even BETTER than being in bed.



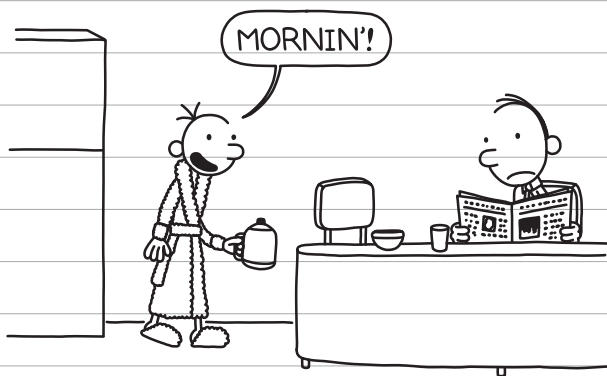
The problem was the heat only stayed on for about five minutes at a time. So when the furnace wasn't running, I was just lying there on this cold piece of metal.



This morning, while I was waiting for Mom to be done with her shower, I remembered someone gave her a bathrobe for Christmas. So I went into her closet and got it.

Let me just say that was one of the smartest moves I've ever made. Wearing that thing was like being wrapped in a big, fluffy towel that just came out of the dryer.

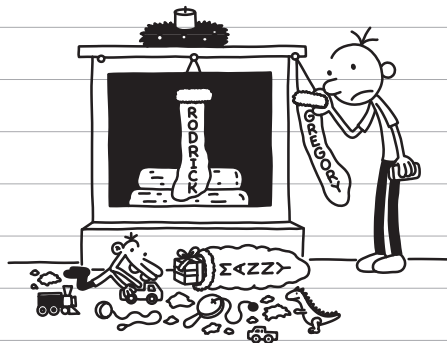
In fact, I liked it so much, I even wore it AFTER my shower. I think Dad might've been jealous HE didn't come up with the robe idea first, because when I came to the kitchen table, he seemed extra grumpy.



I tell you, women have the right idea with this bathrobe thing. Now I'm wondering what ELSE I'm missing out on.

I just wish I had asked for my own bathrobe for Christmas, because I'm sure Mom is gonna make me give hers back.

I struck out on gifts again this year. I knew I was in for a rough day when I came downstairs on Christmas morning and the only presents in my stocking were a stick of deodorant and a "travel dictionary".



I guess once you're in middle school, grown-ups decide you're too old for toys or anything that's actually fun.