

Teacher Guide

Grades 5–6

Diary of a Wimpy Kid

Jeff Kinney

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DIARY OF A WIMPY KID

by
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Teacher Guide

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Note

The 2007 Amulet Books hardback edition of the novel, © 2007 by Wimpy Kid, Inc., was used to prepare this guide. Page references may differ in other editions. Novel ISBN: 978-0-8109-9313-6

Please note: Parts of this novel deal with sensitive, mature issues. Please assess the appropriateness of this book for the age level and maturity of your students prior to reading and discussing it with them.

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Skills and Strategies

Comprehension

Creative thinking, identifying attributes, predicting, inferring, supporting judgments, problem solving

Literary Elements

Story mapping, setting, characterization, conflict, theme, figurative language

Vocabulary

Syllables, sorting, definitions, synonyms, word maps, slang

Listening/Speaking

Discussion, oral presentation, drama

Writing

Creative writing, personal narrative, character journal, thank-you notes, journalism, short story, essay, poetry

Critical Thinking

Brainstorming, research, analysis, evaluation, compare/contrast, cause/effect

Across the Curriculum

Social Studies—relationships, middle-school culture, campaign advertising; Health—wrestling, weightlifting, mental health (bullying, self-esteem, jealousy, journaling); Music—music history; Math—computation; Art—design, illustration, basic shapes, comics, cartoonists

March–June

Rowley is suspended from Safety Patrols for terrorizing kindergartners, when it was actually Greg who chased the kids with worms. Greg does not want to tell the truth, but Mom tells him “to do the ‘right thing,’ because it’s our choices that make us who we are” (p. 182). Greg decides the right thing to do is let Rowley take the blame. Rowley becomes popular as school cartoonist with “Zoo-Wee Mama” comics. Tension between Rowley and Greg increases when Rowley refuses to give Greg any credit for the comic idea. The high school students from Halloween night force Rowley to eat the Cheese; Greg’s plea that he’s allergic to dairy products spares him the same fate. When classmates realize the Cheese is missing, Greg protects Rowley’s reputation by claiming to have thrown away the Cheese. Greg now has the Cheese Tumor, though it isn’t as bad as he’d feared. Rowley and Greg are friends again, and Greg vows to keep Rowley’s ego in check by reminding him of the Cheese incident.

Vocabulary

witnessed
disrespected
privileges
Promotion
anonymous
culprit
promotion
maniac
immaculate
execute
chaperone
foiled
hocus-pocus
taunting
theories

Discussion Questions

1. Mom tells Greg that he “should only do the ‘right thing,’ because it’s our choices that make us who we are” (p. 182). What does Greg decide is the right thing to do regarding the worm-chasing incident? Considering his mother’s advice, how are Greg’s actions humorous? (*Greg decides to let Rowley “take one for the team this time around” [p. 183]. Answers will vary. Greg’s main concern seems to be as trivial as not eating the privileges. In middle school, all privileges seem to carry significant weight. This is part of the author’s parody of middle school. The trivialization of his friendship with Rowley is understatement [a type of humor] because the reader knows the friendship is actually important to Greg. Discuss whether students see life as Greg does: Everyone gets away with stuff except for . . .*)

2. Why doesn’t Greg tell Mr. Winsky the truth when he knows he will eventually be identified as the real culprit in the worm-chasing incident? (*Answers will vary. Greg may just take the easiest way out, which in this case is to keep quiet. Though Greg knows he will be in trouble, he either hopes he will get lucky and the truth won’t come out, or he is willing to delay the inevitable. Intuitive readers know that once again Greg’s choices, as in many episodic stories, drive the humor of the plot, often with disastrous results.*)

- When Rowley is accused of terrorizing the kindergartners, his punishment is a one-week suspension from Safety Patrols, but Greg’s punishment results in permanent removal from Patrols. How do you think Mr. Winsky decides on each boy’s punishment? (*Answers will vary. Mr. Winsky may consider a one-week suspension as the appropriate punishment for the incident but thinks Greg deserves a harsher punishment for not telling the truth. He seems to base punishments on character, as shown by Rowley’s promotion for handling himself with dignity.*)
- Greg thinks Rowley needs a lesson in loyalty and that Rowley is acting like a jerk. Do you agree with Greg? What can you infer from Rowley’s actions? (*Answers will vary. Some students may agree with Greg, although most will realize Greg’s actions are hypocritical, as he has not been a very good friend to Rowley, either. Rowley seems to have had enough of Greg. By becoming friends with Collin Lee, Rowley could be sending a message to Greg, or he may be ready to permanently end his friendship with Greg.*)

14. **Prediction:** Will Greg keep Rowley's secret about eating the Cheese?

Supplementary Activities

1. **Writing:** Everyone comes up with crazy theories about why the Cheese is missing. Write a school newspaper article reporting the event. Include interviews with Greg's classmates.
2. **Literary Analysis:** Complete the Literary Devices chart on page 28 of this guide.
3. **Compare/Contrast:** Originally, Greg's adventures were published online at <http://www.funbrain.com/journal/Journal.htm?ThisJournalDay=1&ThisPage=1> (active at time of publication). Compare one or two of your favorite parts from the novel with the online version. Write a brief explanation of the differences between the two versions, and tell which you like better.
4. **Comprehension:** Write the opening to a story about what could happen if Greg had also been forced to eat the Cheese. Write for five minutes, and then exchange papers with the student next to you. Read what that student wrote, and add to his or her story. After writing for another five minutes, exchange papers with a different student. Continue exchanging papers according to what others have written. Return stories to the original writer. Write a conclusion to the story that you started. Read the finished story to the class.
5. **Writing:** The author of *Diary of a Wimpy Kid* wishes he'd kept a journal as a kid. Start your own journal. Use it to learn about yourself as you grow up and to enjoy when you are an adult.

Word Map

Directions: Complete the word map below by filling in information for the chosen vocabulary word.

Synonyms _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____	Magazine clipping, drawing, or symbol that shows what the word means
Definition in your own words _____ _____ _____ _____	Word used in a sentence _____ _____ _____ _____

Literary Devices

Directions: Authors use literary devices to make their writing interesting and descriptive. Read the definitions of the literary devices listed below, and then find an example of each in the novel. Include the page number where you found the example.

Literary Device	Example
<p>Flashback: The story switches to an event from the past, and then returns to the present. (Look for clues such as "She remembered the last time..." followed by a scene from the past.)</p>	
<p>Foreshadowing: An event hinted about before it happens. (Example: His plan would work unless his mother found out about it.)</p>	
<p>Metaphor: A comparison is made between two unlike objects. (Example: He was a human tree.)</p>	
<p>Simile: A comparison is made between two unlike objects using the words "like" or "as." (Example: The color of his eyes was like the cloudless sky.)</p>	
<p>Onomatopoeia: Words sound like what they mean. (Examples: buzz, hiss)</p>	
<p>Idiom: A phrase or expression that has a meaning different from the individual words that make up the phrase. (Example: It's raining cats and dogs.)</p>	