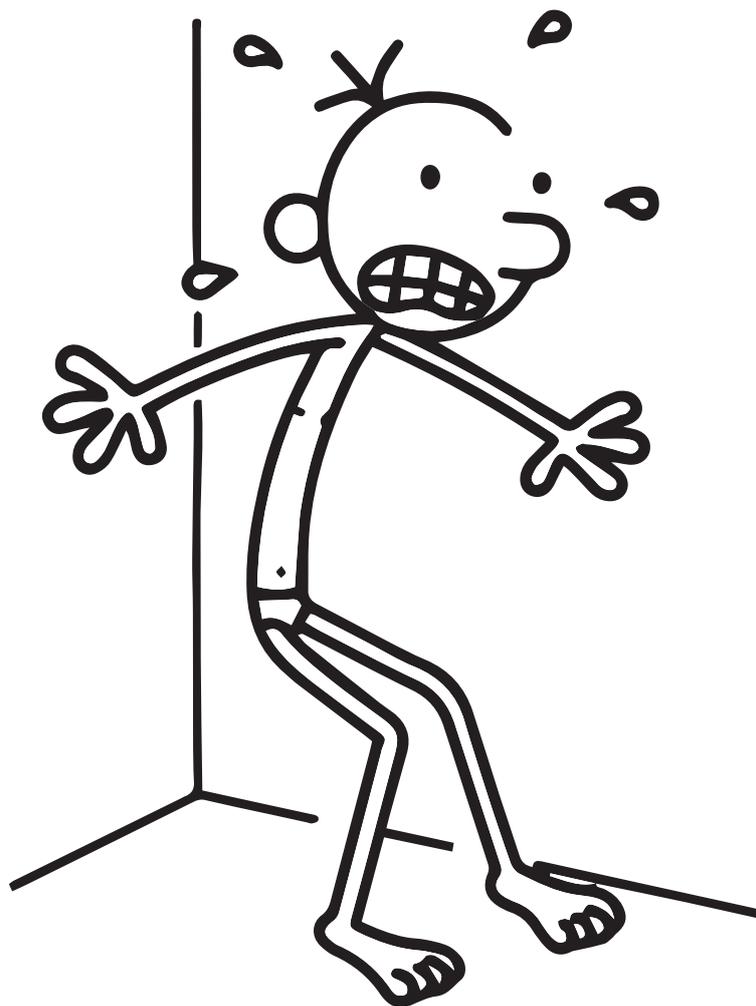


Diary of a Wimpy Kid

THE LAST STRAW



Book
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Discussion Guide

to accompany *Diary of a Wimpy Kid: The Last Straw* by Jeff Kinney
(978-0-141-32492-0, £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.

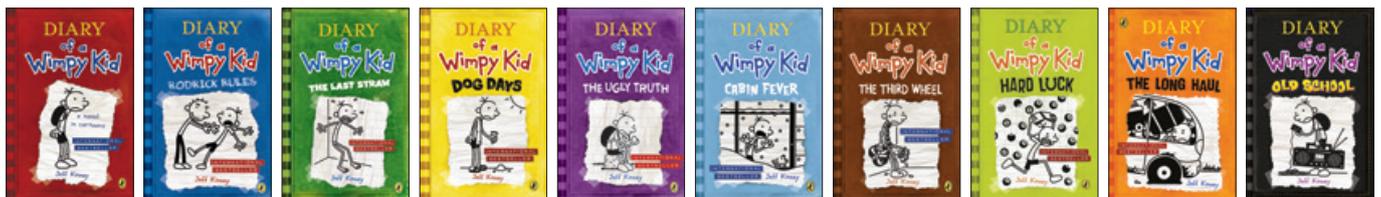
Jeff Kinney's cartoons, which reinforce the text, provide a visual reference, helping the children to understand what they are reading and adding to their enjoyment as they picture what Greg, his friends and family are up to. For many children, especially younger or more reluctant readers, the addition 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

THE LAST STRAW

Introduction

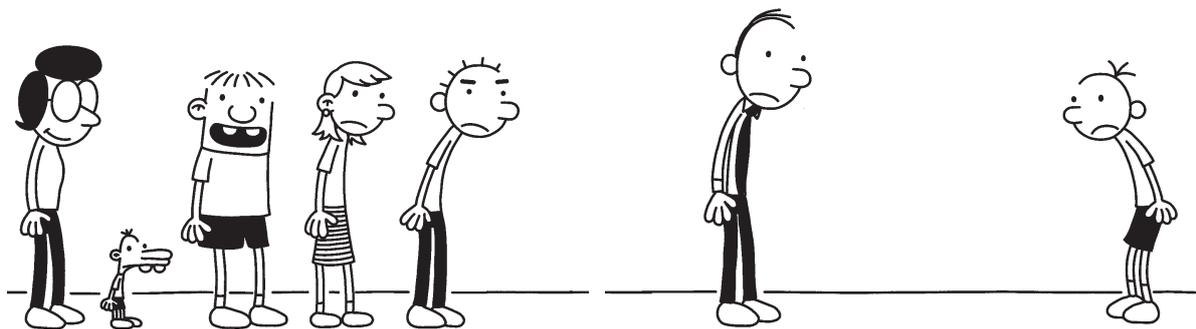
Greg Heffley returns in the third book of the Diary of a Wimpy Kid series, but is this the last straw? Greg begins by making some New Year's resolutions to help others improve (because he is already perfect). However, his family don't really appreciate him pointing out their flaws.

Greg has to start doing his own laundry this year, which is a task he does not relish. In fact, instead of cleaning his clothes, he decides to wear everything he owns, including some rather fetching Wonder Woman underwear!

After the Christmas holidays, Greg makes a nasty discovery one morning at the school bus stop - and he's going to have to walk to school from now on. Instead of enjoying the walk, though, Greg moans and groans and even makes best friend Rowley give him a piggyback ride! All this extra exercise means that Greg has started napping after school and now has even less time to do his homework.

Despite Greg's grumbling, Dad makes him join the soccer team and initially Greg spends most of his time on the bench, where he likes it. But, after a complaint from a parent, all children have to play in the games, so Greg decides he wants to be the goalkeeper, expecting to never be called. However, when he is called to play, he seems far more interested in the dandelions growing by the goal posts.

Poor Dad has had enough in the end. Greg has got to toughen up, shed his wimpy ways and change his attitude. Will joining the Boy Scouts be good enough for Dad, or will military academy be the only solution?



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Diary of a Wimpy Kid

THE LAST STRAW

Understanding the text

1. (Page 1) 'You know how you're supposed to come up with a list of "resolutions" at the beginning to the year to try and make yourself a better person?' Ask the children: why are you supposed to come up with resolutions? Do the children think they really make you a better person? Ask them to explain their answers.

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.

I THINK YOU SHOULD WORK ON CHEWING YOUR CRISPS MORE QUIETLY.

CHEW CHEW

1

2. (Page 4) 'Everyone can't be as perfect as you, Gregory.' Does Mom really mean this? Have the children give reasons for their answers.

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Understanding the text

3. (Page 49) 'See, I used to do my homework when I got home from school, and then I watched TV at night. Lately I've been trying to do my homework WHILE I watch TV, and sometimes that doesn't work out too good.' Greg doesn't really have good habits for completing his homework properly. Can the children think of some better homework tips? What advice would they give to Greg?

See, I used to do my homework when I got home from school, and then I watched TV at night. Lately I've been trying to do my homework WHILE I watch TV, and sometimes that doesn't work out too good.

TO MAKE SURE CARISSA STICKS AROUND FOR ANOTHER WEEK, DIAL "492" OR TEXT THE WORD "CARISSA" NOW!



I had this four-page Biology paper due today, but last night I kind of got caught up in this show I was watching. So I had to try to write the whole thing in the computer lab during recess today.

I didn't have a lot of time to do any research, so I played with the margins and the font size to stretch what I had to four pages. But I'm pretty sure Ms. Nolan is gonna call me on it.

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4. (Page 61) 'Yesterday in the cafeteria, when I emptied out my lunch bag, I got TWO FRUITS - and no snacks. This was a pretty big problem. Mom always packs cookies or sugar wafers or something in my lunch bag, and it's usually the only thing I eat. So I had no energy for the rest of the day.' Greg claims he needs a boost from sugar to get him through his school day. Do the children think this is true? Could he get the same benefits from fruit? Is it healthy that a sugary snack is usually the only thing Greg eats? What other things could he eat at lunch to help him stay focused?

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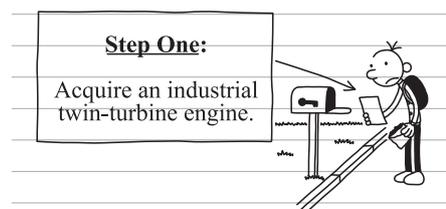
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Understanding the text

5. (Page 69) 'Today, when I got home from school, Mom was waiting for me, and she didn't look too happy. It turns out the school sent home mid-term report cards, and she got the mail before I could intercept it.' What does 'intercept' mean? And why would Greg want to intercept his report card before Mom could get it?

Well, I got the package today, but there wasn't a hovercraft inside. There was just a blueprint for how to BUILD a hovercraft, and I got stuck on Step One.



I just can't believe the people who write those ads can get away with lying to kids like that. I thought about hiring a lawyer to sue those guys, but lawyers cost money and, like I said before, the Cash Machine was a piece of garbage.

Thursday

Today, when I got home from school, Mom was waiting for me, and she didn't look too happy. It turns out the school sent home mid-term report cards, and she got the mail before I could intercept it.

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6. (Page 121) 'So the next time Mr Litch yelled for us to get our butts over there, I ran with my rear end pointed at him. But the other guys TOTALLY hung me out to dry.' What do the children think the expression 'hung me out to dry' means? Do they think the other guys did the right thing or should they have gone along with Greg's idea?

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Understanding the text

7. (Page 151-153) Read the extract. Greg's team loses a soccer match because Greg wasn't paying attention. He doesn't tell Dad the truth and when Dad finds out why they lost he is mad at Greg. Do the children think Dad should be mad with Greg? Or maybe he should be disappointed? Greg didn't want to play anyway, so should Dad have listened more to what Greg wanted?

Monday

Well, yesterday we had another soccer game, and luckily Dad wasn't there to see it. We lost our first game of the season, 1-0. Somehow the other team got the ball past me in the last few seconds, and they won. So that ruined our perfect record.

Afterwards, everyone on my team was in a sour mood, so I tried to cheer them up.

WELL, IT'S JUST A STUPID GAME, RIGHT, FELLAS?



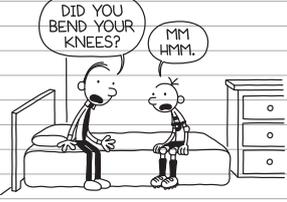
My teammates thanked me for being positive by pelting me with orange peels.

Back at home, I was nervous to tell Dad about the game.

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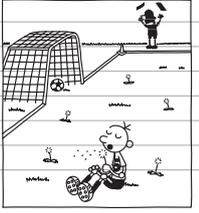
I guess he seemed a little disappointed, but he got over it pretty quick.

DID YOU BEND YOUR KNEES?
MMM HMM.



But tonight, when Dad got home from dinner, he looked really mad. He plopped the newspaper down in front of me on the kitchen table, and here was the picture on the Sports page -

A "Blown" Opportunity
Red Socks goalie Gregory Heffley takes a break from the action as a fifty-yard kick by Demon Dawgs midfielder James Byron rolls in. The score ended the Socks' bid for an undefeated season.



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Apparently, Dad found out about the paper from his boss at work.

GREAT SON YOU GOT THERE, FRANK!



OK, so maybe I didn't tell Dad ALL the details of the game.

In my defence, though, I didn't really know what happened until I read about it in the paper myself.

Dad didn't say a word to me for the rest of the night. If he's still mad at me, I just hope he gets over it pretty quick. Twisted Wizard 2 finally came out today, and I'm kind of counting on Dad to float me some money so I can get it.

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Diary of a Wimpy Kid

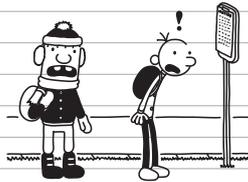
THE LAST STRAW

In-depth discussion points

1. (Page 13) Read the extract. Greg is really not happy at having to walk to school. What do the children think are some of the pros and cons for both walking to school and taking the bus? Is a quarter of a mile very far? How many of the children walk to school and do they know how far it is? For those children who don't currently walk to school, would they consider it? Why (or why not)?

Monday

When me and Rowley got to our bus stop today, we found a nasty surprise. There was a piece of paper taped to our street sign, and it said that, effective today, our bus route was "rezoned". And what that means is now we have to WALK to school.



Well, I'd like to talk to the genius who came up with THAT idea, because our street is almost a quarter of a mile from the school.

Me and Rowley had to run to make it to school on time today. And what REALLY stunk was when our regular bus passed us by and it was full of kids from Whirley Street, the neighbourhood right next to ours.

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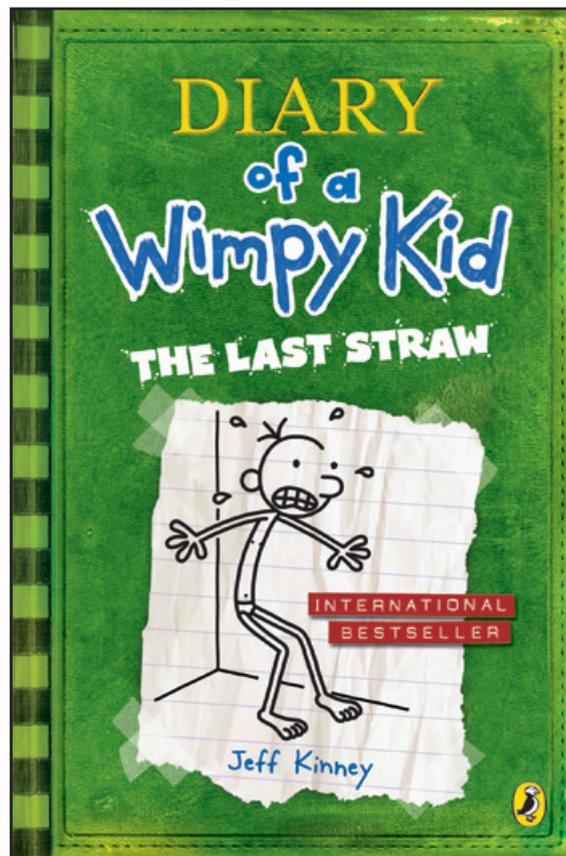


Diary of a Wimpy Kid

THE LAST STRAW

In-depth discussion points

2. The book is called *The Last Straw*. What does that mean? Encourage the children to look it up if they're not sure. Do they think it is a good title for the story? Ask the children to think of all the crazy things Greg does in the book and how it might make Mom and Dad feel, especially when they have two other sons who also do lots of naughty things. Do they think the title might refer more to Greg's parents than to Greg? The class should try to come up with some other potential titles for this book from the perspective of other characters (Rowley, Greg, Mom and Dad, Manny, Rodrick, etc.).



3. Greg joins a soccer team but doesn't really enjoy it and spends a lot of game time sitting on a cold metal bench (which he actually prefers to playing). Eventually another parent complains and soon all the children have to have some game time. Do the children think this is right? Should every child have some game time? Or should it be based on skill alone? Is there something else Greg could have done that meant he was still part of the team but didn't have to play? What would the children do in Greg's situation?

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Diary of a Wimpy Kid

THE LAST STRAW

Main project

TIME CAPSULE

Objective:

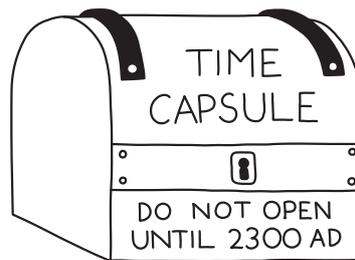
Create a time capsule and bury it somewhere in your school grounds.

Curriculum areas:

Social studies, history.

Starting point:

Greg and Rowley decided it would be a good idea to make a time capsule and bury it in Rowley's garden for future generations to discover. Find out what the children know about time capsules.

**Main Activities**

1. Time capsules are usually used as a way of communicating how people live at a certain point in history. Ask the children to research time capsules – have any been discovered in their local area? They should consider what things are usually put in time capsules e.g. newspapers with date, etc.
2. What do the children think people in the future would want to know or see? Make a list of all the things they think they should include in a time capsule.
3. Children will need to think about where they will bury the time capsule and how big it will be. A school garden or grassy area would be an ideal location, if you have either (permission should be sought first, though). However, you may want to think about somewhere in the community.
4. Children should bring in or make things to put in the time capsule. (Note: if children are bringing items from home, ensure that permission from parents has been sought first.) You may want to consider opening this up to the whole school or perhaps even the local community.
5. Once everything has been gathered, the children will need to decide what kind of container they will use, remembering that it will be buried in the ground and possibly exposed to water, animals, etc. Ask them to make a list of materials and decide together on a voting system so they all agree on the most suitable container. (Use the table on the worksheet to help here.)
6. Time to start digging! You could inform local press or get the children to take photos and write their own newspaper report. (Again you could use the worksheet newspaper to help here.)
7. Wait . . . and wait some more! Discuss with the children when they think the time capsule may get opened and how old they will be then. Will they have their own children – or grandchildren even – by then?

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THE LAST STRAW

Other Project Ideas

- (Page 13)** When Greg discovers that he has to walk to school, he is outraged. Children could discuss their own views or pros and cons and have a debate. Children could also set up a debating club and look at other issues that affect them or their school.
- (Pages 19-22)** Read the extract below to the class. Greg thinks it is easy to write a children's story. Do the children agree? Let's find out! Encourage the children to write and illustrate their own picture books for younger classes to read. This could also be linked to World Book Day or a literacy week.

That really did the trick. Ever since then, I STILL don't get out of bed at night, even if I really need to use the bathroom.

I don't think Mom and Dad read Manny any Shel Silverstein books, which probably explains why he keeps getting up after they put him to bed.

I've heard some of the stories Mom and Dad read to Manny, and let me just say that the people who write these books really have a racket going.

First of all, there are hardly any words in them, so I'm sure it only takes about five seconds to write one.

SILLY BEAR YAWNING,
SILLY BEAR SAD.
SILLY BEAR SLEEPING,
SILLY BEAR GLAD!
THE END.



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I told Mom what I thought of Manny's books, and she said that if they were so easy to write, then I should try writing one myself.

So that's exactly what I did. Trust me, it wasn't hard, either. All you have to do is make up a character with a snappy name, and then make sure the character learns a lesson at the end of the book.

Now all I need to do is mail this thing off to a publisher and wait for the money to start rolling in.

**Wise Up,
Mr Shropsharp!**



by Greg Heffley

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Diary of a Wimpy Kid

THE LAST STRAW

Other Project Ideas

Once upon a time there was this man named Mr Shropsharp who thought all these crazy thoughts.

I DON'T KNOW MUCH, BUT I DO KNOW ONE THING: POLAR BEARS ARE SOME USELESS ANIMALS.

And then...

MR SHROPSHARP, YOU WOULD HAVE DROWNED, BUT LUCKILY TOBUK HERE WAS SITTING ON AN ICEBERG, AND HE SAVED YOUR LIFE.

One day Mr Shropsharp took a ride in his car.

HERE I GO...

And so...

BEFORE, I SAID THAT POLAR BEARS ARE SOME USELESS ANIMALS, BUT NOW I CAN SEE THAT NOT EVERY POLAR BEAR IS SO USELESS AFTER ALL.

But then...

OOPS.

THE END

See what I mean? The only thing I noticed after I finished the book was that I forgot to make it rhyme. But the publisher is gonna have to pay me extra if they want THAT.

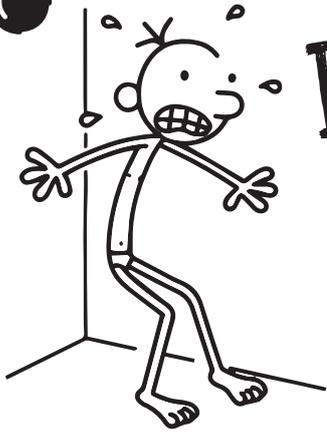
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3. At the beginning of *The Last Straw*, Greg makes New Year's resolutions for his family members. Ask the children to come up with some class resolutions - maybe things they would like to improve together? If you have an older class this could be linked to responsibilities they may wish to have.



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Diary of a Wimpy Kid

THE LAST STRAW

Treasure Map

MAIN
PROJECT
WORKSHEET
4.

Draw a treasure map so future generations can find your time capsule

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