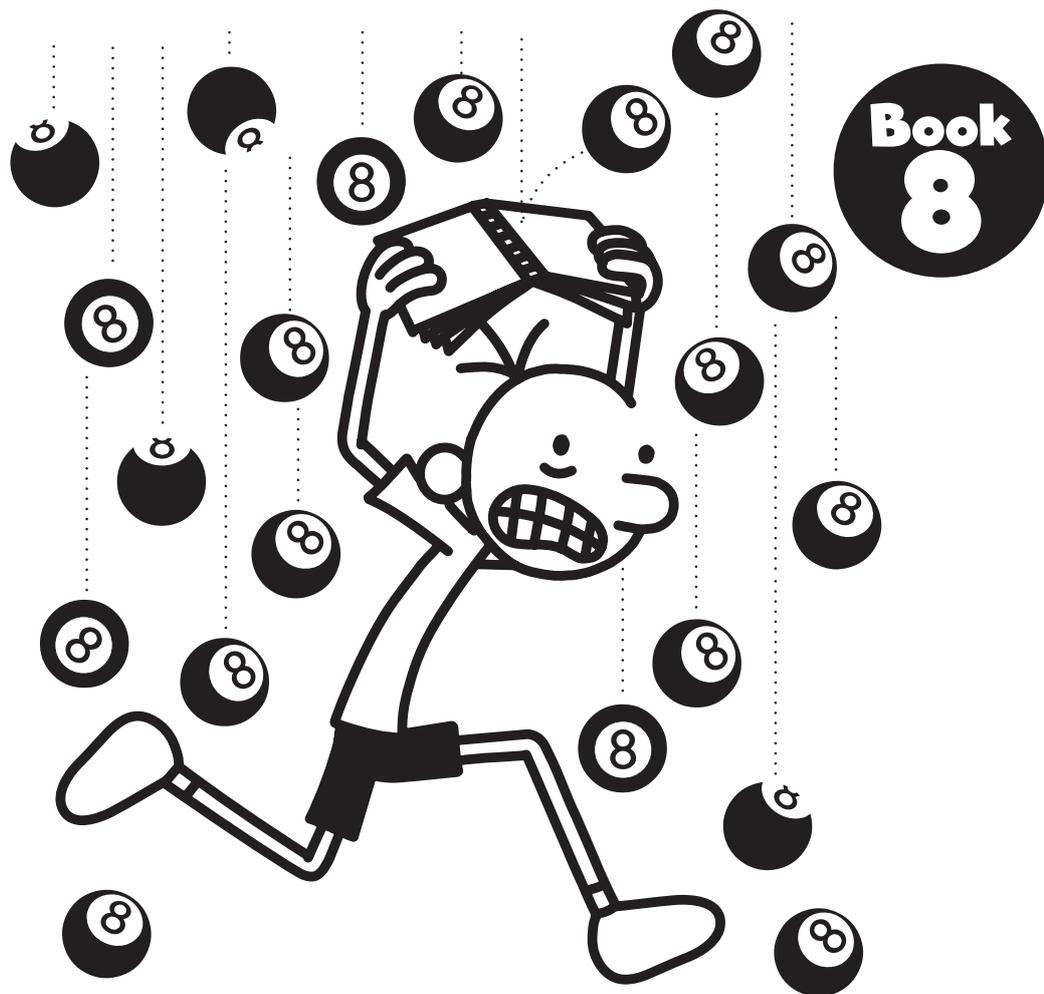


Diary of a Wimpy Kid

HARD LUCK



Discussion Guide

to accompany *Diary of a Wimpy Kid: Hard Luck* by Jeff Kinney
(978-0-141-35548-1, £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.

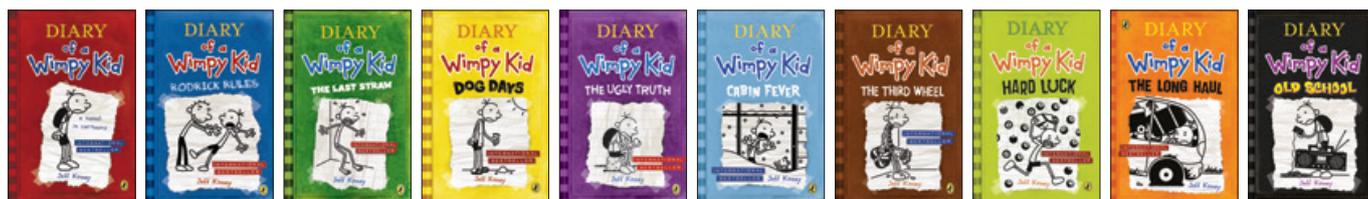
Jeff Kinney's cartoons, which reinforce the text, provide a visual reference, helping the children to understand what they are reading and adding to their enjoyment as they picture what Greg, his friends and family are up to. For many children, especially younger or more reluctant readers, the addition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

MILLIONS OF KIDS ARE READERS BECAUSE OF THESE BOOKS



**BOOK 10 COMING
NOVEMBER 2015**

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Diary of a Wimpy Kid

HARD LUCK

Introduction

Hard Luck is the eighth book in the hilarious diary series featuring middle-school antihero Greg Heffley. The cartoons that Greg uses to illustrate his diaries are stories in themselves and will have you chuckling the whole way through as Greg continues to deal with his family and friends in his usual self-centred fashion!

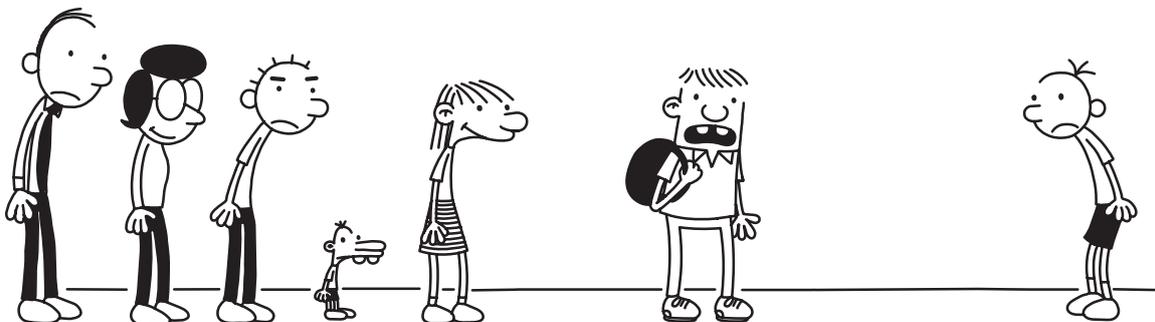
As Greg battles with the ever-changing relationships of childhood, life suddenly becomes much more complicated when his best friend, Rowley, gets a girlfriend and no longer wants to hang out with Greg. Of course, Mom gets involved in trying to improve Greg's friendless state, but he doesn't think much of her ideas and tries his own, including trying to model his weird neighbour Fregley into the perfect best friend, which, needless to say, doesn't work.

Greg's family life is a mess too. Mom announces her relations are coming to stay, much to the horror of the rest of the family. In fact Dad threatens to move into a hotel! The previous family gathering at Meemaw's funeral was a disaster - with the whole family accusing each other of taking Meemaw's missing diamond ring. So, when the annual Easter gathering at Gramma's draws near, Greg wonders what will happen. We discover that Aunt Audra's psychic told her that Meemaw's ring was in a family photo and when the evidence seems to point to the plastic Easter eggs from the Easter Egg Hunt everyone ends up searching, but to no avail.

Nothing is going right for Greg and he still seems to be making all the wrong choices, so he decides to turn his decisions over to fate when he finds a Magic 8 Ball under his brother Rodrick's bed. However, when Greg is caught using the Magic 8 Ball for an exam in school Mom is called in by Vice Principal Roy and Greg is threatened with summer school. Greg realizes he needs to get things back under control so he knuckles down and, with a little help from Mom, gets all his assignments completed and throws the Magic 8 Ball away in Gramma's garden.

Rowley is on his own again after being ditched by his girlfriend and Greg can't make his mind up about whether to be his friend or not, so he decides to find the Magic 8 Ball to see what decision it makes. On searching Gramma's garden, he finds one of the plastic Easter eggs - which contains Meemaw's missing diamond ring! He quickly hides it again so the family don't start arguing over it.

As we end the story, Greg's friendship with Rowley seems to be back on track and the relationship is as good as new . . . until the next time they argue that is!



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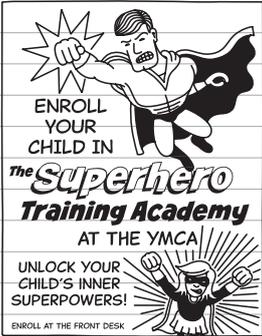


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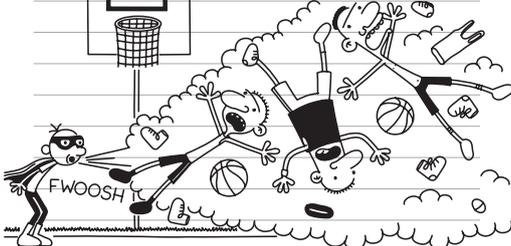
HARD LUCK

Understanding the text

- (Page 1)** 'I love my family and all, but I'm just not sure we were meant to LIVE together.' As a class, discuss the kinds of problems Greg experiences living with his family. What kinds of problems do they think happen all the time in every family? Do they agree with Greg that things get better as a child gets older? Why do they think things often seem to improve when people grow up and move out of the house?
- (Page 9)** Greg is upset because he no longer gets to walk to school with Rowley. Do the children think his reasons for being unhappy about the new situation are selfish? Ask them to discuss what benefits there are in walking to school with friends.
- (Page 35)** 'I couldn't wait to graduate from the Superhero Training Academy.' Why did Greg think this was going to be a good idea? Did the experience live up to his expectations? The children could discuss what superhero powers they would like to have and what they would do with them.



I couldn't WAIT to graduate from the Superhero Training Academy and show Leon and his gang a thing or two.



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HARD LUCK

Understanding the text

- (Page 51)** 'Now, instead of punishing kids for acting mean to each other, they're rewarding kids for being NICE.' Discuss with the class the issues that occurred with the Hero Points system. Why do they think this happened? Can the children suggest a better system for rewarding people for being nice?
- (Page 74)** Greg's best friend, Rowley, was spending more time with his girlfriend than with Greg. But when Greg complained about being bored Mom just suggested that he could clean the oven! Ask the children to discuss in groups how important it is to have friends to play with. Do they think they could be happy with their own company or would they get bored? Do they always feel the same? Why (or why not)?
- (Page 102)** Greg bought a rabbit's foot, which was supposed to bring him good luck. However, it didn't seem to work. Do the children believe that certain objects can bring people good (or bad) luck? Why do they think this?
- (Page 140)** Greg thinks using the Magic 8 Ball to make decisions is a good idea. Examine the different decisions he used it to help him with in *Hard Luck*. Do the children think he was right to use the Magic 8 Ball or not? Can a Magic 8 Ball actually make a decision? Were any of the decisions the right ones? Why did some of the decisions cause Greg problems in the long run?

It was one of those Magic 8 Balls. I think Rodrick got it as a present one year and must've forgotten all about it after it rolled under his bed.



I was pretty excited to find it, because I've never got to play around with one of those things before.

The way you use the Magic 8 Ball is by asking it a question, then shaking it and waiting for your answer to appear in a little window at the back.

I was curious to see if it actually WORKED, so I gave it a try. I thought up a question and concentrated real hard, then gave the Magic 8 Ball a good shake.



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Understanding the text

8. (Page 209) Greg struggled to finish his science project on time because he had left it to the last minute. He didn't have time to type up his report but found Mom had done it for him. Do the children think that Mom did the right thing? Would it have been okay for Mom to write the project too? How much help do they think parents should give their children with homework projects? What is fair?
9. (Page 214) Greg found Meemaw's diamond ring inside a plastic egg. Was it a good idea to hide it again and not tell anyone he found it? What might have happened if he had given it to Mom?
10. (Page 158) Greg finds his toy 'Tickles' in Mom's cupboard. In fact he finds five of them! Why do you think Mom had so many copies of this toy? Do the children have a favourite toy? Are cuddly animals a good thing for children to become attached to? What problems might this attachment cause? What are the benefits?

But, hidden away behind Mom's books, there were FIVE stuffed monkeys that looked EXACTLY like Tickle.



So that means Mom must've gone out and bought a bunch of replacement monkeys right after I lost the original.

Who even KNOWS which version of Tickle is sitting on the shelf in my closet right now.

In fact, now that I think about it, I remember a time when Mom had to wash Tickle because I'd spilled some chocolate milk on him. When she opened the washing machine door, it looked like a pillow had exploded in there.

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Diary of a Wimpy Kid

HARD LUCK

In-depth discussion points

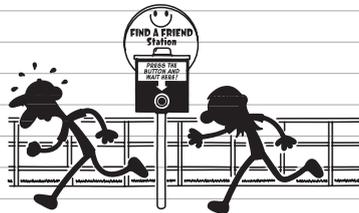
RELATIONSHIPS

(Page 2) Greg's relationship with Rowley has changed - 'And it's all because of a GIRL.' Ask the class what they think about Rowley leaving Greg on his own. Do they agree with Rowley having a girlfriend at his age or do they think that girls and boys should be just friends and spend time in larger friendship groups? Get the class to discuss the different viewpoints in groups and see if they agree on the best age to have a girlfriend or boyfriend.

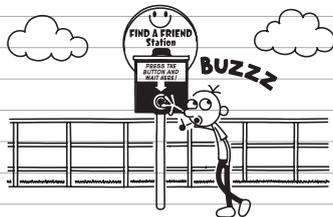
FRIENDSHIP

(Page 43) Brainstorm as a class: why is friendship so important to us? Is the Find a Friend Station a good idea? What problems could it create/solve?

I think the school realized there are some kids who have trouble joining in with the others at recess, so a few weeks ago they turned the bully-reporting station on the playground into a "Find a Friend" station.



I always thought the Find a Friend station was a lame idea, but it's not like I have a lot of options these days.



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Lately Mom's been giving me tips on how to make new friends at school.

I think her heart is in the right place, but the advice she gives me would NEVER work with kids my age. For example, Mom said that if I'm just really nice to everyone I meet, then word will spread and I'll become the most popular kid at school in no time.



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Read **Page 49**. Mom's ideas about how to make friends differs from Greg's. Ask the children their opinion on whether Mom's ideas will work. Why do they think this? What ideas do they have for making friends? Is making friends easier at home or at school? Why?

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HARD LUCK

In-depth discussion points

FAMILY

(Page 97) 'Mom said we're family, and family should be together.' Why might Dad want to move into a hotel room when Mom's extended family comes to visit? Do you agree with Mom or are your sympathies with Dad? Why? Why is family so important? How could you make a big family visit work for everyone? What strategies could you have for coping?

SCHOOL UNIFORM

(Page 57) Greg doesn't like going 'back-to-school clothes shopping'. Why might this be? Some schools have a strict uniform policy. Do the children agree with this? What are the benefits of wearing school uniform instead of choosing whichever clothes you like to wear to school? Split the class into two groups - one for and one against school uniform - and hold a debate about this issue. Which side won? Did anyone change their opinion after the debate?



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Diary of a Wimpy Kid

HARD LUCK

Main project

CLASS YEAR BOOK

Objective:

Create a class yearbook.

Curriculum areas:

Literacy, art and design, ICT.

Starting point:

(Page 169) Read the extract about Greg's involvement with his school yearbook. Explain that the class are going to make their own yearbook.

I got a lot of "No"s and a few "Ask Again Later"s, but I finally got a "Yes, Definitely" when I was in front of the Yearbook Club door.

I walked inside, and the staff looked like it was in the middle of a meeting.



I waited at the back until the meeting broke up, then went to the editor-in-chief, Betsy Buckles, and asked if I could join.

She said the yearbook was almost finished, but they needed a few more photos for the "Candid's" page. Then she said the school would pay five bucks for every photo that ended up in the yearbook, and I was sold.

If I can avoid the Mingo kids AND get paid, that's a win-win.

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TEACHER'S
NOTE:

It is important that you organize your class into mixed ability groups so those who would find this type of task more challenging are supported at all stages. If you have a younger class, the focus may be on producing a photo- and cartoon-style yearbook, where the written information takes the form of captions rather than a more detailed write-up.

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Main project

CLASS YEAR BOOK

Main Activities

PLANNING

Sections: Hold a class discussion about all the sections the children could include in their yearbook. Make a list of all of these (e.g. on a whiteboard or the worksheet provided) and ask the children to decide which section they feel they could contribute most to. Some of the sections could be:

- Class trips
- Class activities
- Class involvement in whole school projects
- The playground
- Class responsibilities
- Our class members
- Individual awards

There are many more options, but go along with what interests the children.

Time frames and editors: Ask the children how they will put the yearbook together and what the time frame will be. Do they need an editor? Might it be best to have two children in charge of this? What skills will these individuals need? You may need to work closely with the editors at the start until they understand their tasks. Once the editors have been chosen, allocate the different sections to the remaining children.

Production: It is important that you have a class discussion about how the yearbook will be produced. Will it be word processed? Will a publishing programme be used? Or will it be done by hand? If you are using computer packages and cameras, ensure the children know how to use all relevant functions. The children also need to agree on a common visual theme, i.e. graphics, fonts etc. Shared folders must be created so the editors can monitor progress, comment on what is being written and enable them to check that deadlines are being met.

WORKING ON THE DIFFERENT SECTIONS

Content: The different groups must decide on what they will include. They should brainstorm what will be appropriate to put into their section. Use Worksheet 2 to help here.

For example, 'Class Trips' might include a short write-up about what they did for each trip and include photos that were taken. It may also include little cartoon illustrations, just like Greg does in his diary, to highlight funny things that happened! 'The Playground' section could be split into sub-sections with photos showing what takes place in each area of the playground, accompanied by short write-ups highlighting funny incidents that took place.

The children must consult the editors on how much space is being allocated to them so they can make decisions about content and layout.

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HARD LUCK

Main project

CLASS YEAR BOOK

Individual Jobs: Once the children have a plan for their section, each group should decide how to best utilize individual talents so they can produce the best-quality content. They need to decide who would be best working as the photographer, the designer, the copywriter, the copyeditor and the cartoonist. You may have to explain the terms 'copywriter' and 'copyeditor' to the children. This is a great exercise in children identifying their own strengths and those of their peer group. It might be useful to explain that this is how things will happen when they are older and go out to work.

Keeping on schedule: Each group member needs to estimate how long it will take them to complete their section of the work so that they can let the editors know. They now need to work hard to meet these deadlines. The editors should have frequent meetings with the groups to check how things are going and to give suggestions if necessary. As the content comes in, the editors need to proofread the content and go back to the individuals if changes need to be made. This might be a good time to explain how to feed back instructively.

Production: This can be dealt with in a number of ways and it depends on how far you wish to take this:

- Produce one class copy, printed in school;
- Produce a copy for each child, printed in school;
- Produce a copy for each child, but printing out-sourced.

If each child is to get a copy, how will the funds for the printing be raised? Will each child (or their parent) be charged for their copy, will the class run an enterprise to raise the money? Or will the Parent Council be approached for funding?

CELEBRATE!

It is a lot of work putting a yearbook together so the class should take the time to really look at what they have achieved. Get them to identify which skills they have used and what they personally feel they have improved on through involvement in this project. You could ask the children to nominate the person whom they feel has contributed most, been the best team worker, best motivator, etc., and display these on your bulletin board.

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HARD LUCK

Other Project Ideas

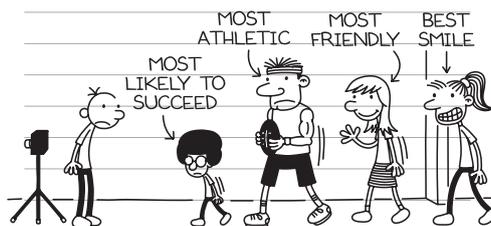
- (Page 194)** Greg becomes the photographer for the yearbook and has to take photos of the 'class favourites,' such as 'Best Smile,' 'Most Friendly,' 'Most Athletic' and 'Cutest Couple'. Ask the children what they think makes a good photograph. Many local authorities operate an equipment loan scheme. Try to get a class set of cameras for a couple of weeks and set up a photography workshop. Ask some local photographers to come in and work with different groups. You could ask a newspaper photographer, family portrait photographer, photographic designer and a photographer from the local camera club or contact your local college to see if they can help.

Today during recess I was in the library trying to get ideas for my Science Fair project, and Betsy Buckles came in to say they needed me in the yearbook office.



She said the Class Favourites results were in, and she asked me to take pictures of the winners.

I didn't bother to vote this year, so I wasn't even sure who was on the ballot. But, once the winners started filing in through the door, it wasn't too hard to figure out who had won what.



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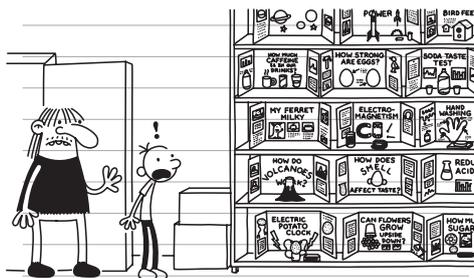
Other Project Ideas

2. (Page 201) Greg's school holds a Science Fair and, because he has left it to the last minute to complete his project, he considers buying an idea from other pupils on the schools' 'black market'. Ask the children what they think of Greg's approach. Were they pleased or surprised when Greg did the right thing and worked on his own project, albeit with Mom's help? (Pages 208-211.) Suggest to the class that they hold their own Science Fair. Have the children work together to set out the guidelines for this activity and to write the assessment criteria. You could use the idea of the water park from the book and have them focus on water power and how this could be used within the concept of the water park. When the projects have been submitted, hold a Display Day and invite the rest of the school to view the completed work. You could also have another class act as the judges, using set criteria, to identify which project is the winner.

There were old book reports and history papers, —
and a bunch of other stuff, too. —

The person who seemed to be in charge was —
Dennis Denard, who's in eighth grade but got —
held back twice. I'm guessing he stayed in middle —
school on PURPOSE because he's got such a —
good racket going on. —

Erick told Dennis I needed a Science Fair project, —
and he took me to a separate area in the back —
where there were SHELVES of old ones. —

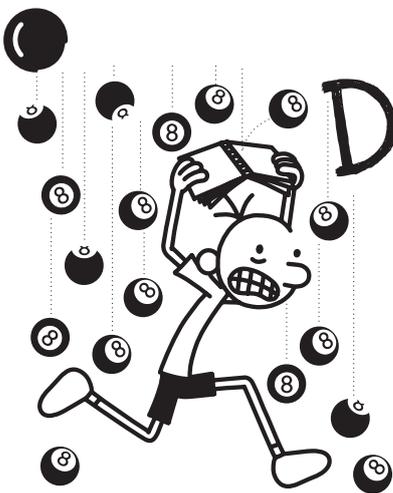


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3. Hold an Easter Egg Hunt. Instead of using chocolate inside the plastic eggs, you could have clues that help the children solve a puzzle or an anagram related to *Hard Luck*. Each egg could be numbered and left in position so that the children could work in teams competing against each other. You could have a prize for the winning team.
4. Greg has issues with the Mingo kids as he walks home from school. Many children have problems with this type of bullying at some point as they go through school. Have any of the children had to deal with a similar situation? Ask them to design posters that offer advice to others should they experience bullying themselves.

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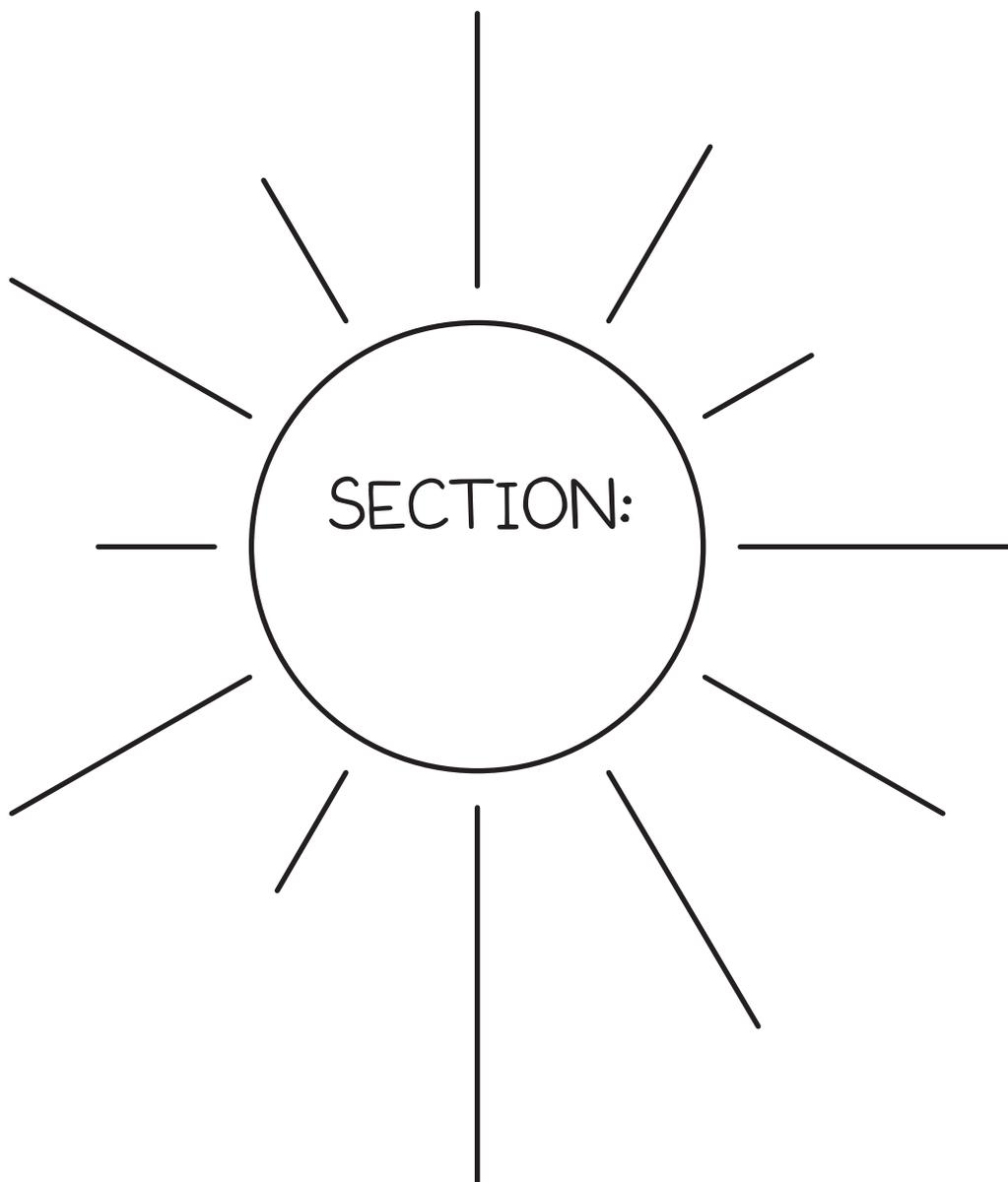


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Yearbook Content Brainstorm

MAIN
PROJECT
WORKSHEET
2.



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