

Diary of a Wimpy Kid



By

Jeff Kinney

A Novel Study
By Nat Reed

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About the author: Nat Reed was a member of the teaching profession for more than 35 years. He was a full-time instructor at Trent University in the Teacher Education Program for nine years. For more information on his work and literature, visit novelstudies.org.

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Suggestions and Expectations

This 70 page curriculum unit can be used in a variety of ways. Each chapter of the novel study focuses on one chapter (Month) of *Diary of a Wimpy Kid* and is comprised of five different activities:

- Before You Read
- Vocabulary Building
- Comprehension Questions
- Language Activities
- Extension Activities

A principal expectation of the unit is that students will develop their skills in reading, writing, listening and oral communication, as well as in reasoning and critical thinking.

Links with the Common Core Standards (U.S.)

Many of the activities included in this curriculum unit are supported by the Common Core Standards. For instance the *Reading Standards for Literature, Grade 5*, makes reference to

- a) determining the meaning of words and phrases. . . including figurative language;
- b) explaining how a series of chapters fits together to provide the overall structure;
- c) compare and contrast two characters;
- d) determine how characters ... respond to challenges;
- e) drawing inferences from the text;
- f) determining a theme of a story . . . and many others.

Students can work on the activities at their own pace. Every activity need not be completed by all students. A **portfolio cover** is included as well as a **Student Checklist**.

Themes which may be taught in conjunction with the novel include humor, growing up, family, making difficult choices, friendship and loyalty, peer pressure and conformity.

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List of Skills

Vocabulary Development

1. Locating descriptive words/phrases
2. Listing synonyms/homophones
3. Identifying / creating *alliteration*
4. Use of capitals and punctuation
5. Identifying syllables
6. Identify *foreshadowing*.
7. Use of exaggeration/expressions
8. Use of singular/plural nouns
9. Listing compound words
10. Identifying parts of speech
11. Determining alphabetical order
12. Identification of root words
13. Identify/create *similes*
14. Identify *analogies*.

Setting Activities

1. Summarize the details of a setting

Plot Activities

1. Complete a *sequence chart* of events
2. Identify conflict in the story
3. Predict upcoming events
4. Create a synopsis
5. Identify *cliffhangers*
6. Identify the climax of the novel.
7. Complete a *5 W's Chart*

Character Activities

1. Determine character traits
2. Cast the main characters for movie roles
3. Relating personal experiences

Creative and Critical Thinking

1. Research
2. Write a newspaper story
3. Write a letter to a friend
4. Create weight-training equipment
5. Conduct an interview
6. Write about personal feelings
7. Write a book review
8. Complete an Observation Chart

Art Activities

1. A Storyboard
2. Create a collage
3. Design a cover for the novel
4. Create a comic strip

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Synopsis

Greg Heffley is a grade six student trying desperately to make his mark in the highly demanding and competitive world of Middle School. *Diary of a Wimpy Kid* describes the adventures of Greg as he copes with wrestling lessons in Phys Ed class; almost being mugged by a gang of teen-agers on Halloween; acting in the school musical production of *The Wizard of Oz*; and coping with the antics of his persecuting big brother, Rodrick.

The Diary also describes Greg's tenuous relationship with his best friend, Rowley, and some of the responsibilities he takes on to make himself immortal when his school days are done. These include running for Treasurer on the School Council; volunteering for Safety Patrol; and competing for the title of Class Clown.

Diary of a Wimpy Kid is a humorous, endearing story of an imaginative con-artist, and some of the hard-won lessons he learns as he charts a troubled course through grade six.

Author Biography

John Boyne

Jeffrey Patrick Kinney was born in College Park, Maryland in 1971. Jeff Kinney is a full-time online game designer, as well as the author of the immensely popular Wimpy Kid books. Jeff also developed the Poptropica website for kids (<http://www.poptropica.com/>)

Jeff Kinney attended the University of Maryland at College Park in the early 1990s. It was here that he developed the comic strip Igdoof for the college newspaper. Although he was unsuccessful in getting his comic strip syndicated, his writing career got off to a tremendous start with the publication of *Diary of a Wimpy Kid* in 2007. Since then he has had three additional novels in the series published as well as a do-it-yourself book. In 2009 Kinney was named one of Time magazine's 100 "Most Influential People".



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Student Checklist

Student Name _____

Assignment	Grade / Level	Comments

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Name: _____

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September



Before you read the chapter:

The title of Jeff Kinney's novel is certainly eye-catching, isn't it? In your opinion, what might there be about a kid that would make him/her wimpy? (Think of two different traits.)



Vocabulary:

Choose a word from the list to complete each sentence.

definitely	campaign	complicated	dismantle	stressful	hover
expectations	technically	considerate	intelligence	specific	treasurer

1. Did my father give you _____ directions on how to start that lawnmower?
2. Had I known that the instructions were so _____ I never would have attempted the repair.
3. Tim's mom likes to _____ over her guests when they visit.
4. I found saying the speech in front of so many people to be extremely _____.
5. I doubt if Marcia's _____ about getting a gift were very high.
6. I have always found Jack to be a very _____ boy.
7. The modern computer is _____ far superior to those made ten years ago.
8. In my opinion Jesse is _____ a better tennis player than her sister.
9. "Behave yourself," Georgia told him, "Or I'll _____ the racing track I gave you for your birthday."
10. Surely he has enough _____ to know a good thing when he sees it.
11. The responsibility of the _____ is to look after the funds of the committee.
12. "Who will you appoint to run your election _____?" his brother asked.

Questions



Part 1 (From Tuesday through Sunday)

1. Describe the setting of the story for the first two days of Greg's journal.

2. Give an example of an occasion in this section where the author uses **exaggeration** for effect.

3. Greg has some good advice for students entering their classroom on the first day of school. Think of an additional piece of good advice you might give to a person in this situation.

4. Why did Greg think it was unfair that Bryce was now so popular with the girls in his grade?

5. Describe the prank that Rodrick played on Greg.

6. Describe Greg's strategy when it came to reading groups. What was the result?

Part 2 (From Monday to the end of the month)

7. What was one of the things about Greg's little brother, Manny, that bugged him?

8. Why did Greg's dad object to him playing video games? Do you agree with his dad? Explain your answer.

9. During the month of September the author introduces a number of characters. In the chart below give one important piece of information about each person.

Rowley	
Greg	
Greg's Dad	
Manny	
Rodrick	
Fregley	

10. Describe what happened when Greg tried to listen to his brother's CD on the stereo.

11. How did Manny get Rodrick into trouble?

12. How did Greg's attempt at being elected Treasurer of the student government come unglued?

Language Activities



A. The author loves to use unusual **expressions** in this novel. Several examples of this are featured in the first chapter. Put them in your own words.

<i>it goes in one ear and out the other</i>	
<i>decided to take him under my wing</i>	
<i>Mrs. Craig . . . caught us red-handed</i>	
<i>after I got done mopping the floor with Rowley</i>	

B. Place the following words from this chapter in **alphabetical order**.

someone	1.
school	2.
something	3.
stepped	4.
subject	5.
started	6.
soccer	7.
spelled	8.
shake	9.
stuff	10.

C. Simile

A Simile is a comparison using the words “like” or “as”. An example from this chapter is: “watching Manny play them (educational games) is like torture.”



What two things are being compared in this example?

Invent your own **similes** comparing the following items with something from your imagination:

a) the odor of a skunk

b) the screech of a car's tires

D. A **quintet** is a five-line verse that tells a story. The quintet has a syllable pattern and can bring an exciting scene to life. (It doesn't have to rhyme.)

Line 1 – tells when , 3 syllables Line 2 – tells where , 5 syllables Line 3 – tells what , 7 syllables Line 4 – describes activity , 9 syllables Line 5 – contains a thought , 3 syllables.	Now create a quintet poem using ideas from recent events in <i>Diary of a Wimpy Kid</i> .
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TITLE: _____

E. 5 Ws and an H.

Choose an event from this section that you thought was really important and/or exciting. Using facts that you gleaned from reading about this event, fill in the balloons below, summarizing what you learned.

A large, empty circle with a thin black outline, intended for writing the answer to the question 'WHO?'.

WHO?

A large, empty circle with a thin black outline, intended for writing the answer to the question 'WHAT?'.

WHAT?

A large, empty circle with a thin black outline, intended for writing the answer to the question 'WHEN?'.

WHEN?

A large, empty circle with a thin black outline, intended for writing the answer to the question 'WHERE?'.

WHERE?

A large, empty circle with a thin black outline, intended for writing the answer to the question 'WHY?'.

WHY?

A large, empty circle with a thin black outline, intended for writing the answer to the question 'HOW?'.

HOW?

Extension Activity

Storyboard

A storyboard is a series of pictures that tell about an important event in a story. A storyboard can tell the story of one scene – or the entire novel.



Complete the storyboard below illustrating the events described in the first chapter of our novel. You may wish to practice your drawings on a separate piece of paper.

1	2
3	4
5	6