

# Diary of a Wimpy Kid

## THE LONG HAUL

Book  
9



## Discussion Guide

to accompany Diary of a Wimpy Kid: The Long Haul by Jeff Kinney  
(978-0-141-35421-7, £12.99, Hardback)

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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.

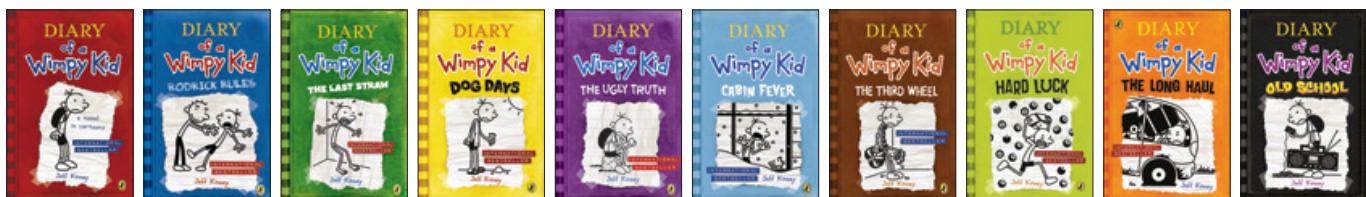
Jeff Kinney's cartoons, which reinforce the text, provide a visual reference, helping the children to understand what they are reading and adding to their enjoyment as they picture what Greg, his friends and family are up to. For many children, especially younger or more reluctant readers, the addition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



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# Diary of a Wimpy Kid

## THE LONG HAUL

### Introduction

*The Long Haul* is the ninth book in the Diary of a Wimpy Kid series and provides us with another peek into Greg Heffley's hilarious personal diary, complete with its illustrative cartoons.

Greg's summer holidays have arrived and long days of doing exactly what he wants stretch out invitingly before him. However, Mom has very different ideas and Greg is forced to join his family on a summer road trip, which Mom thinks will help promote family 'bonding'. Unsurprisingly, the Heffley family road trip is doomed to end in disaster ...

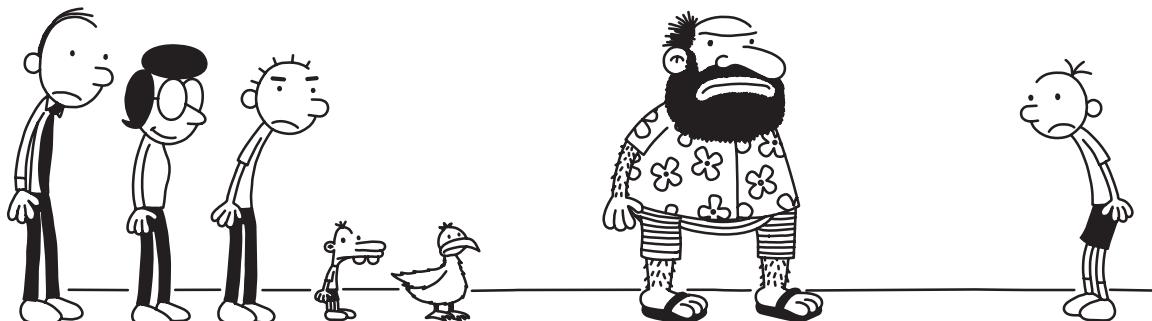
Like all families, fitting the luggage in the car is the first big problem, which Dad solves by using his boat as a trailer, having to empty out the junk first. Once underway, it becomes clear that Mom wants to turn the car journey into an educational experience, much to Greg's disgust, even putting maths cards in his lunch bag.

Mom is trying to save money, so the Heffleys opt for budget accommodation. It is here that Greg meets the 'Beardo' family. When the Beardos children create a noise in the middle of the night and wake Greg, he tells them off, making them cry. And Mr Beardo is not too happy about it!

The road trip continues the next day and, to Greg's horror, the Beardos seem to be travelling in the same route, popping up next at the County Fair, where Manny wins a pig. The addition of the pig causes even more problems in the car and at the motel. Eventually, despite Manny being upset, it is given to an animal sanctuary.

When the car develops a fault, the Heffleys stop at a water park, but even here the Beardos appear again and Greg blames them when their locker key (and all their possessions, including Dad's wallet) go missing. Spying the Beardo truck at a motel, they break in to the room to try to retrieve everything. Nothing is to be found there, but the Beardos return and The Heffleys make a quick exit.

The chaos continues as the car breaks down and the Heffleys are rescued by two Spanish men who speak no English. When they finally arrive home to 'normal' life Greg makes a discovery that could change everything. Will he do the right thing? Only time will tell ...



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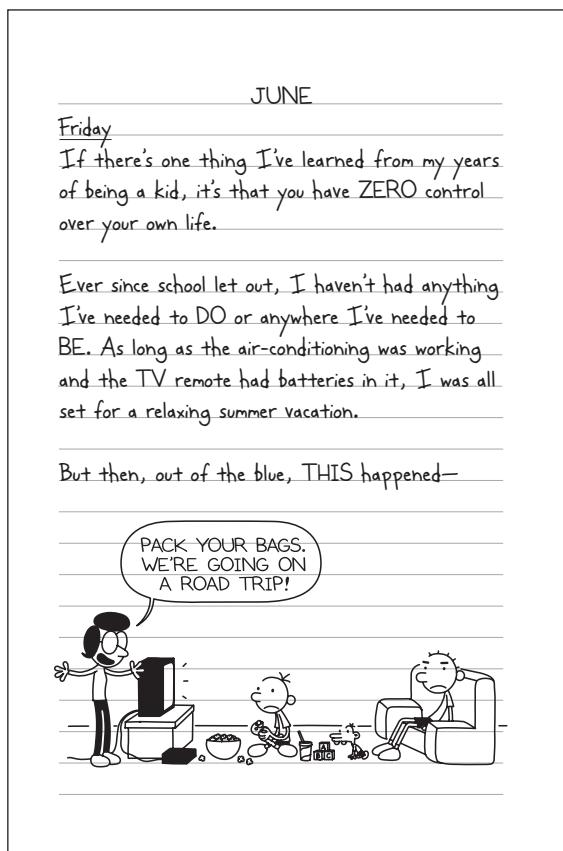


# Diary of a Wimpy Kid

## THE LONG HAUL

### Understanding the text

1. (Page 1) As the book starts we discover that Greg was 'all set for a relaxing summer holiday'. Discuss whether Greg's summer holiday ideas are good ones or not. Do the children agree or disagree with Greg? Ask them to work in their discussion groups to identify what they feel would be a perfect summer holiday and report back to the class.



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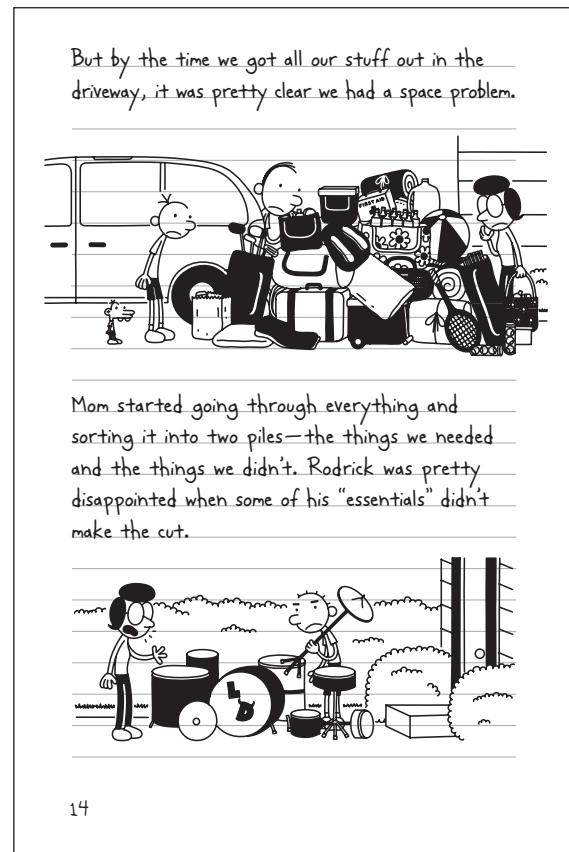


# Diary of a Wimpy Kid

## THE LONG HAUL

### Understanding the text

- 2. (Page 14)** When packing for the road trip Rodrick was ‘pretty disappointed when some of his “essentials” didn’t make the cut’. What is the different between essentials and non-essentials? What was Rodrick made to leave behind and why was it not considered an essential? Working in pairs, the children should make a list of everything that might be considered an ‘essential’ for a road trip. Now ask them to compare lists with another pair. Discuss similarities and differences and, through discussion, agree on a master list.



- 3. (Page 15-16)** ‘Mom wouldn’t let me and Rodrick take any electronics on the trip.’ Discuss the benefits of taking ‘electronics’. Do the children agree with Mom that ‘kids these days don’t know how to socialize’? Hold a class debate on this issue. Children could work in small groups to produce the speeches for each side.

- 4. (Page 40)** Mom makes Rodrick phone and apologize for covering an old lady’s house in toilet paper. Why did he do it? What was it about this prank that was particularly bad? Was he genuinely sorry for his actions or just sorry he had been found out? What other punishments could Mom have devised to stop Rodrick doing something similar again?

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### Understanding the text

- 5. (Page 53)** Greg likes the Underpants Bandits book series and wrote the author a fan letter. Do the children think this is a good idea for a series of books? Encourage them to justify their point of view. Can they agree on a 'suitable' book list for their age group? Ask them to work in groups to discuss what they would include on this list. Set the number of books on the list depending on the age of the children.
- 6.** How difficult is it to please everybody in the family when taking a road trip? Why is it difficult? Can the children come up with a way to satisfy everyone?
- 7. (Page 89)** Rodrick won the 'foulest footwear' competition at the County Fair. What type of competitions have the children seen at a fair? Why do they think that funny competitions like this help to make a local fair good fun? Ask the children to come up with some funny competitions that could be included in a school fair.

Right before we got to the judging table, we reached a compromise where I'd get 10% of the prize as Rodrick's agent.

Some of the other shoes looked a lot worse than Rodrick's, and I was losing confidence that he'd win. But when the judges got to the smell test, it was all over.

Rodrick won first prize, which turned out to be a coupon for one deep-fried butter on a stick. I told Rodrick he could have it all to himself, because the thought of eating any more butter made me feel a little nauseous.

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### Understanding the text

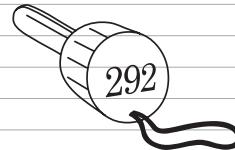
8. Throughout *The Long Haul* the 'Beardos' cause Greg a number of problems. Do the children know why Greg gave the family this name? Encourage the children to discuss to what extent they think that Greg was the problem! Or do they think he was blameless?
9. Most people use a GPS (satnav) device when they are going on a long trip. Why does such a device help people? Read **page 192** and discuss why it became a problem for Greg and his family when the device didn't know where they were. What would the children have done in the Heffley family's situation and why? Have they ever been in the car and the GPS took them to the wrong place? What happened?
10. (**Page 216**) 'Now that I have the key, I have a tough decision to make.' What choice do the children think that Greg should make? Why? Do they think Greg will do the right thing or not? Why do they think this? What is it about Greg's character that makes them think he might act in a certain way? How important is it to do the right thing? Is the right thing always the 'correct' choice?

I was going through the clothes I wore on the trip, and when I picked up my shorts, something small fell out onto the floor.

It was the KEY from Soak Central.



I couldn't believe I had the key all along. It turns out I was wrong about the locker number. But I should get SOME credit for being CLOSE.



Now that I have the key, I have a tough decision to make. It feels like a page from one of those Choose Your Own Adventure books.

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### In-depth discussion points

#### FAMILY TIME

**(Page 6)** 'Spending a lot of time together in the car will be a "bonding" experience for the whole family.' Discuss what is meant by 'bonding'. Was Mom's idea a good way to ensure family bonding or not? Are some activities better than other for family bonding? Does it really matter what activity is chosen? Make the link to spending quality time together. Ask the children to work in groups to identify different ways to ensure successful bonding time for families and share these with the other groups. Together as a class you could discuss which are the most important points and compile a checklist of what is essential to ensure quality family time, whatever the activity.

#### DREAMS

**(Page 9)** Dad's dream had been to own a boat. Everyone has dreams they would like to see come true. Ask the children to share some of their dreams with their peers. Discuss which dreams are more likely to come true than others. What will it take to achieve these? Are they all equally easy to achieve or will some take more work than others? Are dreams the same as targets and goals, or are they different in any way?

#### PETTING ZOOS

**(Page 122)** On their road trip, the family leave the pig in a petting zoo. What is the difference between a normal zoo and a petting zoo? Most of the children will have visited both types. Identify all the positive things about a petting zoo. Are there any negative points? Do the children agree with the fact the animals can be handled by lots of different people or not? Ask them to explain their point of view. Working in same-opinion discussion groups, ask them to identify all the points that support their argument and then choose one person to present their case to the class. Do the groups all still hold the same opinion at the end? Has anyone changed their mind?

#### RUNNING AWAY

**(Pages 130-133)** Greg tells us, 'When I was Manny's age, I used to get mad at Mom and Dad and try to run away all the time.' However, he never got very far. Manny also tried to run away and Mom bought him a retractable leash! Was this a dangerous thing for Greg and Manny to do? Why? Some children do run away from home. Why might they do this? How else could they deal with any problems they were having? Who are the 'safe' adults they can talk to? What things can the children do to ensure their personal safety? The discussions around these points can be targeted to the age of the children.

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# Diary of a Wimpy Kid

## THE LONG HAUL

### Main project

#### WIMPY WATER WORLD - THE ULTIMATE WATER PARK!

**Objective:**

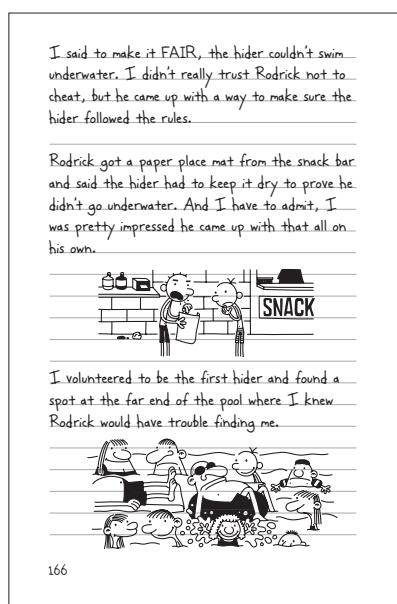
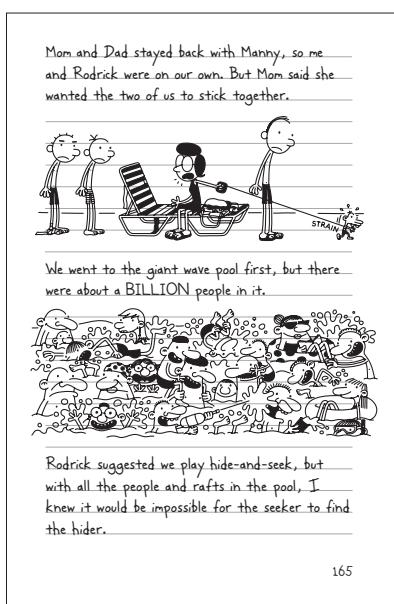
Create a design for a new water park.

**Curriculum areas:**

Literacy, art and design, ICT.

**Starting point:**

(Pages 164-180) Greg's family visit a water park while their van is being fixed. Ask the children to discuss what they would expect to find at a water park.



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What I DIDN'T know was that Rodrick had written something on the place mat before giving it to me. Unfortunately, everyone AROUND me noticed before I did.

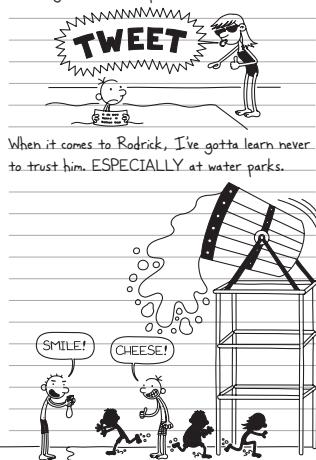


What he wrote would've been bad enough on its OWN, but the misspelled word somehow made it WORSE.



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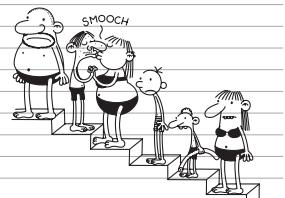
And even MORE embarrassing was when the lifeguard got down from her chair and told me I had to get out of the pool.



When it comes to Rodrick, I've gotta learn never to trust him. ESPECIALLY at water parks.

I was done with Rodrick after the place mat thing and didn't care if Mom said we needed to stick together. I left him behind and went to a waterslide by myself.

I hadn't realized how long the line was until I got halfway up the stairs. But by then a ton of people were BEHIND me, and there was no turning back. So I was packed in with these people until I got to the top.

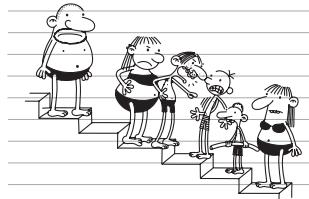


It was really hot, and people were starting to get agitated by how slow the line was moving.

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Then the kid right behind me poked the lady in FRONT of me in the butt with a pool noodle, and she thought it was ME.

So then I had her BOYFRIEND to deal with.



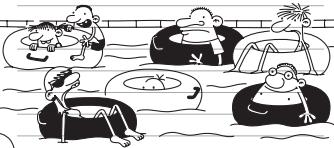
I really didn't want to get into a fight over something like this, but luckily it didn't come to that. We were at the top of the stairs, and it was time to go down the slide.

Unfortunately, the raft was a four-seater, which made things pretty awkward on the ride down.

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The slide emptied out into an area where there were a ton of rafts, which was great because it gave me a chance to hide from that woman and her boyfriend. I went around the lazy river twice to make sure I'd lost them.



I'd had enough with the water after that, so I went back to our lounge chair to get my clothes.

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But the chair was GONE, and all our stuff was lying in a pile on the ground.



I found the rest of my family at the snack bar getting lunch and told them what happened with our lounge chair.



Mom said it wouldn't be hard to figure out who TOOK it because of the broken straps.

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#### WIMPY WATER WORLD - THE ULTIMATE WATER PARK!

We spread out to look for it, and I searched the area by the wave pool.

Sure enough, our lounge chair was there. But I couldn't BELIEVE who was SITTING in it.



I don't know what the odds are of running into the same people again and again, but this was starting to get RIDICULOUS.

I figured it was best to just let the Beeldos HAVE our lounge chair and not make it into a big deal. So when I caught back up with my family, I pretended I didn't have any luck finding our chair.

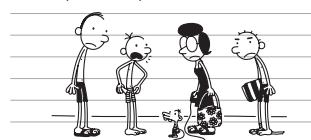
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By now our food was getting cold, and we still didn't have anywhere to eat. We eventually found a place to sit behind the snack bar.



Everyone seemed ready to leave after that. Mom asked for the key to the locker so she could get our stuff. But I told her I didn't HAVE it.

She said she had given me the key, but I turned both pockets of my bathing suit inside out to prove they were empty.



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I was pretty sure she'd given the key to RODRICK, but he said HE didn't have it, either.

Everybody searched themselves for the key, but we all came up empty-handed. This was a HUGE problem, because Mom and Dad's cell phones and wallets were in that locker, so we couldn't leave until we found it.

We went to an employee at the front counter and told him we lost our key.



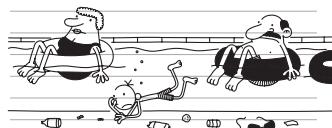
But when he asked what our locker number was, none of us could remember. There were hundreds of them, and they all looked exactly the same.

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He said the locker number was written on the key, but of course THAT information wasn't getting us anywhere.

The guy said the only thing we could do was try and FIND the key, so we split up and retraced our steps across the water park.

Rodrick went to the wave pool where we played hide-and-seek, and I went to the lazy river but didn't have any luck.

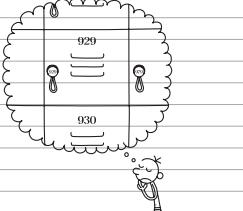


When we met back up, nobody had found the key. Mom said maybe we accidentally threw it away after we ate, so we dug through the trash near where we sat.

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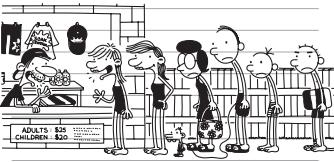
Mom said we should all concentrate real hard and try to remember which locker we put our stuff in, and when I did, I could suddenly see it clearly in my mind.



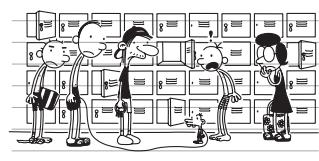
I told Mom, and we went straight to locker 929. Sure enough, it was locked, and there was no key in the door.

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We went back to the guy at the counter to tell him which locker was ours, but we had to wait a long time before we could get his attention.



When we told him our locker number, he got out the master key and walked over to number 929 with us. But by the time we got there, the key was back in the slot and the locker was EMPTY.



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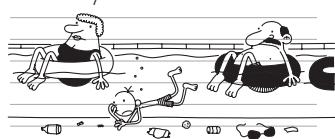
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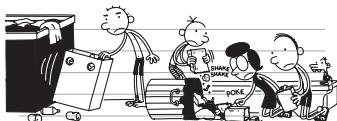
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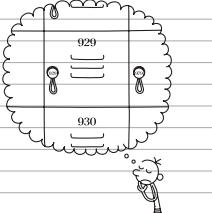


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### Main Activities

The children should work in groups to design a water park.

### THE BIG IDEA!

Ask the groups to come up with a theme for a water park. To help them get started, show a few examples of websites for existing parks. Each group should agree on their theme and a suitable name for the water park. Explain to the children that all water parks have easily recognizable signs that show their logo/name. For younger children you may have to give examples of logos. Disney and McDonald's have good logos to illustrate what you mean. Ask them to design the logo and main sign for their park, using Worksheet 1 to help them.

### RIDES!

A great water park needs some fabulous rides! Using Worksheet 2 to help, ask them to brainstorm ride ideas, with suitably themed names. Now, working in pairs, encourage them to design the various rides in their park. You may wish to specify the number of rides you want. Explain that they need to:

- Make a drawing of the ride, showing the route it will take and what it looks like
- Design the sign for it. Use Worksheet 3 to help here.

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#### FOOD

Throughout the trip Greg often thinks about food, but things never seem to work out the way he wants. In the water park his family even had to eat sitting beside the bins behind the snack bar! Generally, though, every great water park has good food outlets for when you get hungry. What type of food outlets do the children think Greg might include if he were planning a water park? What type of food outlets would the children include in their park? Remind them they need to cater for families on a budget as well as people with a bit more money to spend. Ask them to create three outlets to cater for different budgets and needs. Each outlet needs a themed name and some themed food items. Ask them to design the sign for each outlet and a sample menu. Use Worksheet 4 for this part of the project.

#### THE MAP

When you go to any water park, it always has a map that shows you where all the main rides and facilities are located. Ask the children to work in groups to discuss what is meant by 'facilities' and make a list of what they would include in their park, and then share their list with the other groups. Have they forgotten anything?

Next they need to create a map for the water park. Suggest to them that they put every place on a separate slip of paper so they can plan their locations more easily. Once the group agrees the locations, it is time to discuss how to draw the map! They need to agree the overall look before they start. Will they use just names, or names and pictures? Remind them to include the pathways too! Use Worksheet 5 for this.

#### PRESENTATION

The children should imagine that they are presenting their idea to investors who will give them money to build the park if they like their ideas. They need to present their designs and tell the investors all about their park in a way that is interesting and exciting. You could make it a competition, with only one park to be given the investors' seal of approval!

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### Other Activity Ideas

1. Create a TV advert for the water park. The children must ensure that everyone in the group is involved. They should script the advert idea and then film it to show it to the rest of the class. Discuss whose advert was the most successful. They should justify their opinion.
2. Lifeguards are essential at a water park. Discuss with the children what a lifeguard does. If you live near to a facility that employs lifeguards you could invite one of them to talk to the children about water safety, or organize a trip to visit a local swimming pool. Ask the children to draw water-safety posters after the talk/trip and display these in the classroom.
3. Ask the children to write an adventure story that takes place at a water park. They could illustrate their writing with cartoon pictures in a similar style to *The Long Haul*. Identify that the cartoons illustrate main points in the story and add to the written text.
4. Working in pairs, ask the children to build a model of one of the water park rides using junk and craft materials. The complexity of the models will depend on the age of the children involved. Encourage the children to organize a Show and Tell event, where they present their work to another class, or even have a Water Park Fair and invite the whole school to see their work. They could use the school hall to give them room to display all their planning as well as their models.



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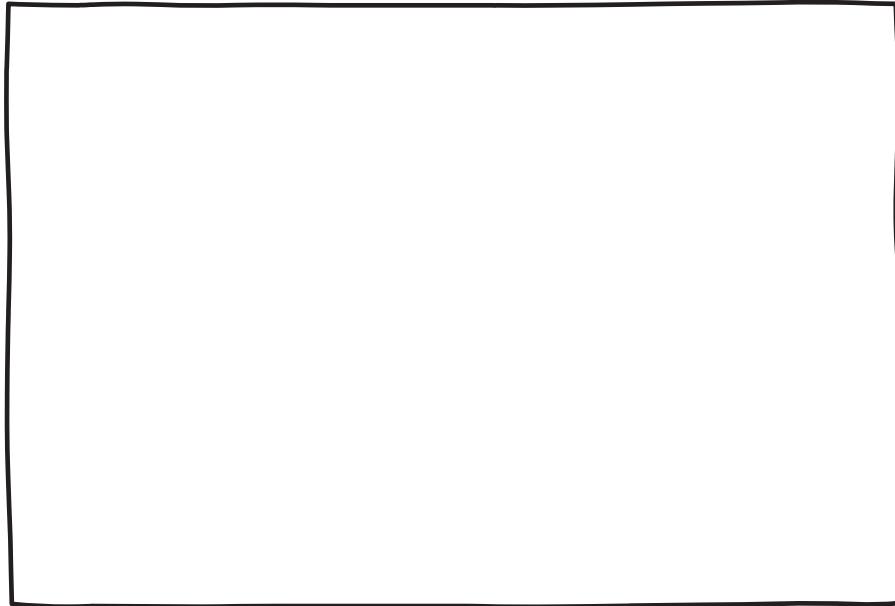
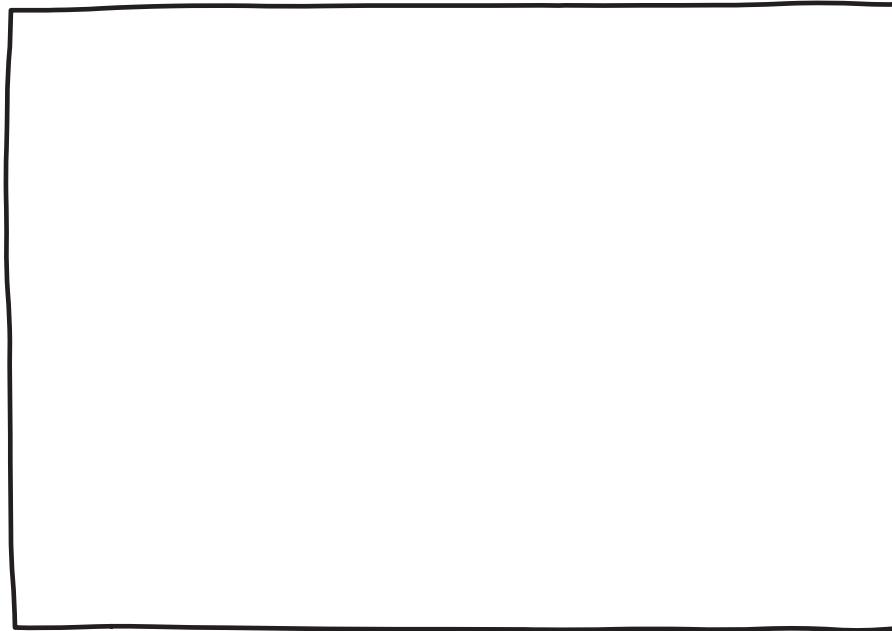


# Diary of a Wimpy Kid

## THE LONG HAUL

Our Water Park Logo and Sign

MAIN  
PROJECT  
WORKSHEET  
1.



Our Water Park is called:

#WIMPYKID



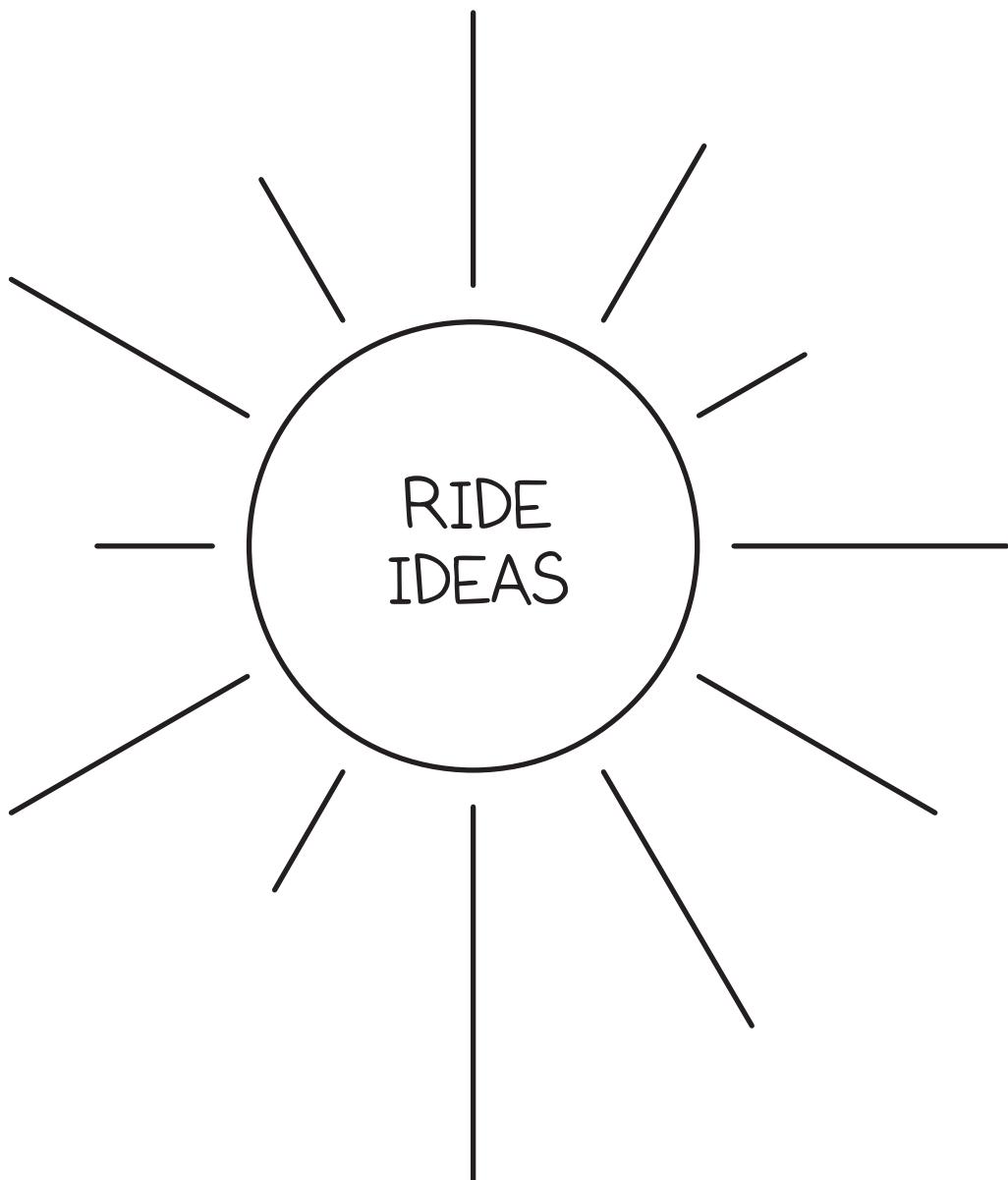


# Diary of a Wimpy Kid

## THE LONG HAUL

Water Park Ride Ideas

MAIN  
PROJECT  
WORKSHEET  
2.



#WIMPYKID





# Diary of a Wimpy Kid

## THE LONG HAUL

Our Rides

MAIN  
PROJECT  
WORKSHEET  
3.


#WIMPYKID





# Diary of a Wimpy Kid

## THE LONG HAUL

### Food Outlets

MAIN  
PROJECT  
WORKSHEET  
**4.**

\$ (cheap)

\$\$ (medium)

\$\$\$ (expensive)

Name:

Name:

Name:

Menu:

Menu:

Menu:



#WIMPYKID





# Diary of a Wimpy Kid

## THE LONG HAUL

## Our Water Park Map

# MAIN PROJECT WORKSHEET 5.

## Facilities & Rides List:

#WIMPYKID



[www.wimpykidclub.co.uk](http://www.wimpykidclub.co.uk)

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