

# **Diary of a Wimpy Kid: The Ugly Truth Study Guide**

**Diary of a Wimpy Kid: The Ugly Truth by Jeff Kinney**

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# Plot Summary

“Diary of a Wimpy Kid: The Ugly Truth” is a young adult novel by Jeff Kinney which follows the growing pains and new experiences Greg Haffley has relating to getting older as he continues middle school. It is the fifth book in Kinney’s “Wimpy Kid” series. When the novel begins, the summer is just ending and Greg has reeling from a fight with best friend Rowley Jefferson. Greg worries about beginning the school year without a best friend, but does his best to remain optimistic. He looks forward to growing older and doing more mature things in life, but other aspects of growing older, such as going through Health class, gross Greg out.

Greg’s mom decides to return to school to further her academic career and to stimulate her mind. She hires a maid named Isabella who Greg dislikes intensely because he suspects her of napping in his bed. Greg, his father, and his brothers Rodrick and Manny must also help out more around the house, and must take care of themselves in many ways that their mother used to. For example, they must now make their own dinner several nights a week and pack their own lunches. They are not always successful at doing this. Likewise, Greg’s dad insists that Greg take on more responsibilities, such as waking himself up every morning. Greg’s dad also begins taking him to an adult dental office, where the humorless Dr. Kagan makes Greg very uncomfortable.

Greg’s parents later go away for a romantic weekend. Though Greg has more responsibilities now than when he was a kid, Grandpa, who has come to watch Greg and his brother while their parents are away, treats Greg as though he is still a little kid. This makes Greg desperate to grow up more. When the school announces a “Lock-In”—an all-night slumber party—Greg is excited because girls will be there, too. Unfortunately, most of the kids who attend are guys, and the girls must sleep in the library media room while the guys crash in the auditorium.

On Monday, Greg stays home sick from school, causing his mother to come home early. There, she discovers Isabella hanging out with several other maids, watching TV and eating snacks. Greg’s mom chases them out and fires Isabella. Greg’s mom later decides to put her academic career on hold.

In school, Greg is annoyed to learn that Rowley has gotten a pimple before he has. Rowley says this is evidence of his growing into manhood. Greg wishes he would get a pimple. Greg is then stunned to learn that he and Rowley, along with other younger middle schoolers, have been invited to one of Jordan Jury’s parties. Jordan is one of the most popular kids in his grade, so Greg and the others are thrilled. Greg is annoyed to learn, however, that he must attend his Uncle Gary’s fourth wedding and so cannot attend the party. After the wedding, Greg’s great-grandmother Gammie dispenses some advice to him, reminding him to value his youth and to enjoy it. Greg ultimately decides to do so, and patches up his friendship with Rowley.



## Section 1: Pages 1 – 45

### Summary

It is September. Greg Haffley has been in a fight with his best friend, Rowley Jefferson, and now worries about going to school without a best friend. Greg considers becoming best friends with either Christopher Brownfield, Tyson Sanders, or a kid named Fregley. But Christopher is a summertime friend, Tyson uses urinals with his pants pulled all the way down, and Fregley is weird. Rowley, thanks to his parents, is now hanging out with a teenager named Brian, part of the Cool Brian big-brother/mentor-for-hire company. It angers Greg.

Still, Greg hopes it will be a good year. Greg's math textbook belonged to Jordan Jury, a very popular guy famous for parties, the year before. Greg hopes walking around with a popular kid's math book will make him popular, too. The popular kid in Greg's grade is Bryce Anderson, who has lackeys rather than real friends. Greg considers needing lackeys himself. Greg overhears Rowley talking about going to a rock concert, and is annoyed that it seems like Rowley and every other kid is having more fun in life than Greg—including Rodrick, Greg's older brother who is in a band. In Advanced Health with Nurse Powell, the kids learn about puberty. Some of it grosses Greg out. Rowley faints. It causes Greg to think about how immature Rowley can be.

The newspaper carries an ad for Peachy Breeze Ice Cream, which is seeking a new spokeskid. The current kid is getting older and creepy, and his commercials annoy Greg's dad. Greg's auditions, but it does not go well. The company is seeking a younger kid, preferably between the ages of 3 and 6. At home, Greg's younger brother Manny now gets all the attention. At dinner, word comes that Uncle Gary is getting married for the fourth time. Gary is a good man, but rushes into things too fast. The wedding will be in November, with the reception at Greg's great-grandmother Gammie's house. Gammie is ninety-five. Gammie is famous for messing people, and is a hero in Greg's eyes for this. As the kids of the family get older, they must sit down for "The Talk" with Gammie. Greg has no idea what it involves, but is nervous about it.

### Analysis

"Diary of a Wimpy Kid: The Ugly Truth" is a young adult novel by Jeff Kinney which follows the growing pains and new experiences Greg Haffley continues middle school. When the novel begins, the theme of Friendship immediately takes center stage. Greg has had a recent fight with his best friend, Rowley—a fight so big that it seems as if he and Rowley are no longer friends at all. Greg's primary concern about beginning the new school year is not having a best friend, and so he considers the strengths and weaknesses of various other friends for the position of best friend. No one seems to fit the bill that Rowley did, however, even though it is clear that Greg was annoyed with Rowley's immaturity.



The loss of Greg's best friend, his search for a new one, and the beginning of the new school year are all a part of the theme of Change. There are many changes coming to Greg's life, and he will grow both as a person (the theme of coming of age), and will be faced with new experiences and events in his life (through the theme of Adolescence). Such new changes that Greg encounters in terms of adolescence come through the concept of popularity. Greg longs to be popular like Bryce or Jordan, knowing that Rowley is no longer his best friend. Greg also longs to have fun and is jealous of Rowley going to a rock concert. Greg also experiences change through coming of age, as his growth in age and body also means a growth in maturity, and such growth means that Greg is due for "The Talk" with Gammie.

It is also in this section of the novel that the reader is introduced to the various members of Greg's family: his father, Frank; his mother, Susan; his older brother, Rodrick; his younger brother, Manny; and his extended family including Gammie and Uncle Gary. Uncle Gary's November wedding should be noted by the reader for the significance it will have in affecting Greg's social life by the end of the novel. It is Gary's fourth wedding, which in and of itself makes the event rather ordinary. Note that Greg is more worried about a chat with his great-grandmother than having to attend a wedding.

## Discussion Question 1

Why is Greg searching for a new best friend at the beginning of the novel? Who are his prospects? Why does he not follow through with them?

## Discussion Question 2

How does Greg view popularity in the novel? How does popularity differ between Jordan and Bryce? Which person would Greg rather be like? Why?

## Discussion Question 3

Why does Greg seem to be so worried about "The Talk" with Gammie? Why is he more preoccupied with "The Talk" than Uncle Gary's wedding?

## Vocabulary

autobiography, accurate, translate, popularity, irks, contagious, seedy-looking, obligations, gimmick, expiration, miscommunication



## Section 2: Pages 45 – 92

### Summary

Mrs. Mackelroy is the new math teacher and complains about her kids being in gym right before her class. The principal decides Greg and his classmates must shower, but only Rogert Townsend, held back two years, is okay with it. The rest of the kids just wet their hair to give the appearance of having showered, but they are still smelly. This reminds Greg of crawling through the drainage pipe in the neighborhood to avoid Fregley during the summer, resulting in Greg's being smelly, and his mom giving him deodorant and a book about puberty called "What the Heck Just Happened to my Body?" as a gift.

Greg's mom calls a family meeting. She announces she will be returning to school to stimulate her mind. This means that a few nights out of the week, the men must care for themselves. Their first few nights alone are disasters. They end up having to go out to eat once. Greg and the other men also begin taking over other chores, such as packing lunches, folding laundry, and Greg's dad helping out with homework. This is especially tricky in math as Greg's dad grew up using the traditional methods, while Greg has been taught the modern methods. Greg's dad reminds him he needs to be more responsible as he is getting older.

Responsibility includes Greg getting himself up in the mornings. To make sure he must actually get up to turn off his alarm, Greg puts his clock under his bed, but the ticking keeps him up all night. In school the next day, while waiting for an assembly, Greg sleepily leans against the wall and sets off the fire alarm. In Health, permission slips are sent out for the "Facts of Life" unit. Greg and the others are disappointed because the class is scientific rather than illustrative. Greg loves going to the dentist, not for the science of keeping his teeth clean, but because he has a major crush on Rachel, the hygienist. Greg is dismayed when his father takes him to an adults' dentist, Dr. Salazar Kagan. The experience horrifies Greg.

### Analysis

As the novel continues, the theme of Change remains strong. Greg's body, and the bodies of the other boys in school, continue to change, while changes at home are also apparent as Greg's mom decides to return to school. The changes in Greg's body reflect the onset of puberty. This can be seen in the way Greg and the other boys begin to smell badly after gym class, and is when the principal intervenes to demand they shower before returning to normal classes, something which did not have to happen before. This also coincides with Greg's mother giving him the book "What the Heck Just Happened To My Body?" and a stick of deodorant.



Greg's mom, Susan, deciding to return to school also brings about significant changes for the family, all of whom save Susan are male. Her absence from the home is a striking change for Greg, for it means his own responsibilities will be increasing. Greg here experiences change in adolescence—growing older and having more required of him—and changes in general, as he is expected to do things he never did before, such as folding laundry and waking himself up. As his father notes, Greg is getting older and must now take on more responsibilities. It is all a part of growing up and things changing. Yet, it is clear that Greg wants to be older to enjoy all the benefits without having the responsibilities.

Getting older also means other changes as well. Greg has a huge crush on Rachel, the hygienist at the dentist's office, an indication that he is starting to notice girls as he is aging and beginning to go through puberty. (The fact that Greg's dad begins bringing Greg to an adult dental office as well is another clear sign of change, one which Greg decidedly dislikes not only because Dr. Kagan is less than friendly, but because Rachel is not there.) The changes that Greg experiences are reflected in some ways in the Health class he is required to take. Many of the changes that Greg is—and will be going through—are discussed in his health class. Yet, for Greg, the classes are more of a gross-out than informational.

## Discussion Question 1

Why does Greg's mom buy him the book "What the Heck Just Happened to My Body?" What is Greg's reaction to this book? Why?

## Discussion Question 2

Why does Susan decide to return to school? How does Greg react to his mom's decision? What does Susan's going back to school mean for Greg and the other men in the house?

## Discussion Question 3

Greg's father contends that growing older means more responsibilities. How does Greg feel about this? Why?

## Vocabulary

adolescence, transition, stimulates, foolproof, responsibility, evacuate, zygotes, chromosomes



## Section 3: Pages 93 – 145

### Summary

Greg is terrified about seeing Dr. Kagan. Kagan gets right down to business and is straight to the point. While taking X-Rays, Greg accidentally bites down on Kagan's hand. Kagan tells Greg's dad that Greg has a bad overbite which needs correcting with headgear. Greg loses his headgear by Monday morning. In Health, Greg's class moves into a baby care unit. The kids are given eggs in place of babies with the assignment of returning them in perfect condition the following day. At home, Greg worries about where to put his egg. He figures hiding it in plain sight in the refrigerator is the best idea, but his mom uses the egg to make him breakfast. It makes Greg sick because the egg assignment counts for 25% of his grade.

Greg's parents go away for a romantic weekend, while Grandpa comes to the house to watch Greg and his brothers. Rodrick heads out to hang with his band, leaving Greg and Manny with Grandpa. Grandpa tucks Greg in, and wants to read him a bedtime story at 7:00. Greg lets him. The next morning, Greg discovers a guide his mom made years ago for taking care of him and Rodrick when they were little kids, a guide which Grandpa is still using to care for them. Greg updates the entry on television to allow him to watch as much as he wants. When Greg's parents get home, they announce they are hiring a maid named Isabella—domestic help—since the guys can't keep up with the house. They clean the house for her arrival, which means she has no work to do. Greg hopes he can trick Isabella into doing his laundry for him. It doesn't work. He also comes to suspect Isabella has been napping in his bed, because he found a dirty pantysock there. He urges his mom to fire Isabella, but his mom won't hear of it.

At school, a Friday night Lock-In is announced, a slumber party for boys and girls in the auditorium, which excites Greg. Unfortunately, very few girls attend, and Rowley is also in attendance. There are many chaperones, mostly parents and teachers. At 9:00, party games are announced. Mr. Tanner takes away all electronic devices to make kids to be sociable. The teachers also confiscate snack foods from the kids. Mrs. Carr begins with icebreakers, getting the kids to get each other nicknames relating to their personalities. Mrs. Libby gives Greg the nickname "Jolly Greg". Mrs. Dean then announces the game "Guess Who?" in which teams of kids take close-up pictures of themselves, and the other team has to guess who is who. They are given instant cameras to do their work.

### Analysis

As the novel continues, Greg continues to experience changes. Such a change is with the humorless Dr. Kagan in a new dental office, a far cry from Rachel. Greg, who is getting older, has essentially outgrown the child dental care facility he was previously attending. With puberty come other changes in the body—changes which lead to





adolescent ideas and feelings, such as having crushes on girls. As kids get older, the possibility of pregnancy becomes real, and Nurse Powell breaks out the egg assignment to demonstrate the responsibility required of having a baby, a dose of reality for kids being ruled by hormones and adolescent pop culture.

Such adolescent behavior is exemplified by the Lock-In. Greg's primary concerns about the Lock-In have to do with wondering about which girls will be there. Unfortunately for Greg, there are very few girls who are present. But such boy-girl gatherings are nevertheless typical of adolescence, and are a change from Greg's childhood. Until Greg realizes there are so few girls, the Lock-In might well almost be one of Jordan Jury's parties in Greg's mind. However, the Lock-In turns lame quickly as Greg receives a dumb nickname, snack foods are taken away, and all electronics are confiscated. The Lock-In, barely begun, turns out to be nothing like one of Jordan's parties.

It is also in this section of the novel that the theme of family becomes strong once more. Greg's parents go away for a romantic weekend while Greg and his brothers must be watched by Grandpa. It is clear that, although Greg loves his grandfather, he would rather not be spending time with Grandpa because Grandpa still treats Greg as if Greg was a little kid. Yet it is also clear how much care and concern Grandpa has for Greg as Grandpa does his best to follow the old guide put together by Greg's mother. While the family may not be on the same page, their love and loyalty for one another are clear – something Greg is slowly beginning to understand.

## Discussion Question 1

How is growing up reflected by the egg assignment given out by Nurse Powell? How does the assignment go over with Greg and the other kids? Is anything learned from the assignment? Why or why not?

## Discussion Question 2

Why is Greg so excited about the Lock-In? What is reality like instead?

## Discussion Question 3

Although Greg is not thrilled about spending the weekend with his grandfather, the stay reveals some important things about family. What are these important things? Why do they matter?

## Vocabulary

sarcastic, diagnosis, flunk, accessorized, generation, ridiculous, chaperone, immaculate, confiscated, riot



## Section 4: Pages 145 - 183

### Summary

Greg and his group try to determine whom they should take a picture of, and what part of that kid they should take a picture of. They take a picture of Tyson's bent arm, but it looks like a butt to Mr. Tanner. As a result, Mr. Tanner disqualifies their group and threatens to call their parents. The kids in the group all run. They are rounded up and brought to the library. The truth of Tyler's elbow is made known, and Tanner apologizes for jumping to conclusions. By 11:00, the kids prepare for sleep. Greg is unhappy to learn the girls must go sleep in the media room.

The guys goof around, and their immaturity annoys Greg. This continues when the boys bed down for the night and intentionally try to pass gas. When the heat goes off in the middle of the night, the boys get very cold and speak of escaping. At some point, Mr. Palermo's car is towed because it is parked in a handicap spot. Around 3 in the morning, angry parents arrive to bring their kids home for not answering texts or calls because their phones have been taken. Only those without cell phones—Greg and Rowley—stay. It is very awkward for Greg. Greg is sick on Monday morning. His mom is unable to stay home and take care of him. She does come home early, and catches Isabella and several other maids snacking and watching TV. She chases them all out and fires Isabella.

At school the next day, Rowley shows Greg his pimple, and says he is now becoming a man. This annoys Greg because Rowley keeps trying to impress people with his pimple and becoming a man but still sleeps with stuffed animals. Greg is jealous, and wants his own pimple. Greg becomes anxious to get older. Greg is disappointed to learn his parents were both late-bloomers. Likewise, Greg should not expect to grow much facial hair, which disappoints Greg. The next day, Greg is stunned to be invited with Rowley to one of Jordan Jury's parties. Greg can't go, however, as that is the weekend of Uncle Gary's wedding. Rowley decides to go to the party without Greg, which upsets Greg. Knowing he is due for Gammie's "Talk" also worries Greg. However, Greg hopes to be a groomsman for the wedding, so he tries to be optimistic.

### Analysis

As the novel continues, so too does the Lock-In. Greg's previous assumptions about the Lock-In, that it would involve lots of girls and would be a good chance for socialization, all fall apart. The girls are forced to sleep separately from the guys, while most of the guys spend the night goofing around. Greg is put off by the immaturity of his fellow males, evidence of his growing up, evidence of adolescence, and evidence of change.

While Greg is clearly more interested in chatting up girls, the other boys are more interested in being obnoxious. Not only is Greg more interested in chatting up girls, he is



aware of the changes that are taking place by way of his own maturity level, which underscores the theme of coming of age. It is for this reason that he is disappointed to learn the girls will be sleeping separately.

Greg also begins to experience the divide between the social life of an adolescent, and the responsibilities to family of an adolescent. While Greg is thrilled to have been invited to Jordan Jury's party, his mother tells him he cannot go as his Uncle Gary's wedding is that weekend. It is a lesson for Greg that family must always come first. While friends may come and go, such as Rowley, family will always be there. Greg learns this too when his mother comes home early from classes to take care of him. These are other important lessons that help Greg to mature further, and further grow in moral character.

## **Discussion Question 1**

Why is Greg disappointed with the Lock-In, especially when it comes to his fellow guys and where the girls must sleep?

## **Discussion Question 2**

Why is Greg so thrilled to be invited to one of Jordan Jury's parties? Why is Greg unable to attend? What lesson is learned by this?

## **Discussion Question 3**

At the Lock-In, how does Greg differ compared to the other boys his age? Why does Greg seem to be more mature than the other guys?

## **Vocabulary**

obvious, pathetic, disqualified, posterior, panic, commotion, late-bloomer



## Section 5: Pages 184 – 217

### Summary

Greg does his best to continue to be optimistic, hoping to be a groomsman paired with one of Gary's fiancée Sonja's cute bridesmaids. Greg's mom reminds him not to wipe away kisses from relatives because it is rude. Among his relatives present are Great Uncle Arthur, who makes strange sounds; Cousin Terrance, who looked exactly like Greg as a child; Uncle Charlie, who always has candy; and Sonja, who is clearly crazy about Gary. Gary hates staying at Gammies, because he always has to share a room with all the other single men. He ends up spending the night in the bathtub instead. While Greg loves Gammie, everything in Gammie's house is old—including the candy she keeps, which Greg ate the previous year and got sick from.

Greg is stunned to learn that he will not be a groomsman, but an assistant flower boy. At the reception, Leonard, Gary's best man, tells the story of Gary and Sonja getting engaged. At a baseball game, Gary was planning on breaking up with Sonja, but a plane and banner flew across the sky with the words "Marry Me Sonja?" meant for another Sonja. Instead of breaking up with Sonja, Gary was then engaged to her. Greg now believes there will be a fifth wedding. After the reception, Gammie has "The Talk" with Greg. She tells him to enjoy childhood, that his body was going to change, and how being old brings about things like hemorrhoids. Greg quickly excuses himself.

In school on Monday, the kids are all talking about Jordan's party. Greg ends up being glad he didn't go, because the younger kids who were invited were forced to be servants. The new Peachy Breeze Kid is Scotty Douglas, who lives down the street from Greg. Greg is thrilled, though, to learn that his mom will be putting her academic career on hold to spend more time with the family. Greg doesn't like how so many things have changed through the autumn. He knows he is growing older, and decides to take Gammie's advice about enjoying youth. Greg and Rowley patch things up, and decide to be friends again on a month-to-month basis. Greg refuses, however, to wear the "Best Friends" matching-heart locket that Rowley wants him to wear.

### Analysis

In the final section of the novel, family emerges as a very important theme. Almost the entire family has gathered together for Uncle Gary's wedding, though Greg comes to suspect that there will be a fifth after the story of how Gary and Sonja became engaged is told. It is clear that although Greg dislikes receiving kisses from his female relatives that he is still happy to be around the people who he loves, and who love him in turn. The visit has its downsides, however—the reality of life, to be sure—such as all the single men having to sleep in one room.



Arguably the most touching moment (barring the later graphic descriptions of what comes with being old which grosses Greg out though it makes its point) of the family gathering is “The Talk” that Gammie has with Greg. Essentially, Gammie maintains that Greg should enjoy being young while he still can. It is sound and sage advice from a woman who is five years short of being 100, which is no small matter itself.

Greg takes Gammie’s advice to heart by the end of the novel. He recognizes that many things have changed over the past autumn, from losing his best friend to his mother being home less often to his body changing and responsibilities increasing. Greg, who has been in such a rush to grow up, realizes that his childhood is slipping away. His dislike of responsibilities is reflective of the parts of childhood he is already missing. As the novel ends, Greg knows he will one day be older and have many responsibilities, and must deal with the things that adults do. For now, he can still be a kid and decides that this piece of advice from Gammie is worth following.

## **Discussion Question 1**

Why advice does Gammie give Greg? Does Greg heed this advice? Why or why not?

## **Discussion Question 2**

What does Greg come to realize about growing up by the end of the novel? What comes to be his opinion about the changes that he has had to deal with over the past few months? Why?

## **Discussion Question 3**

Why does Greg decide to reconnect with Rowley? What is the result of this attempt to resume their friendship? Why?

## **Vocabulary**

sensitive, disrespectful, bachelors, hemorrhoids, academic



# Characters

## Greg

Greg Heffley is the main character and narrator of the novel “Diary of a Wimpy Kid: The Ugly Truth.” Greg is the son of Frank and Susan, is the younger brother of Rodrick, and the older brother of Manny. He is also the grandson of Grandpa, and the great-grandson of Gammie. Greg, who seems to be about eleven or so, begins the school year without a best friend, for he and his best friend Rowley have had a friendship-ending fight. Greg is primarily concerned with finding a new best friend and being popular when the novel begins—both signs of Greg’s getting older and heading into adolescence.

The novel comprises many changes that Greg goes through, such as seriously beginning to notice girls and taking on more responsibilities as his mom leaves home more often now to attend classes. Greg, who has been anxious to get older, suddenly wonders if it is truly what he wants. After his Uncle Gary’s wedding, Greg has a long talk with Gammie. Gammie reminds Greg that youth is not something to be wasted, and that Greg should enjoy being young while he can. It is advice that Greg ultimately takes to heart. By the end of the novel, Greg and Rowley have reconciled, and are best friends again on a month-to-month basis.

## Susan Heffley

Susan “Sue” Heffley is the mother of Greg, Rodrick, and Manny, and is the wife of Frank. Susan is a kind and patient woman who loves and cares deeply for her family. Despite this, she longs for her mind to be stimulated, and so decides to go back to school. This means she will be home less, and the responsibilities for the men in the house increase. When Susan discovers this arrangement isn’t working, she hires a maid to tend to the house. When the maid doesn’t work out, she fires the maid and finishes up the semester at school. Susan then decides—because she misses her family, and because the men simply cannot keep up with the house—to take a break from her academic career to reorient herself with her family.

## Frank Heffley

Frank Heffley is the father of Greg, Rodrick, and Manny, and the husband of Susan. He is also the brother of Gary and Joe. Frank is a kind man who is very responsible, and very loving toward his family. When his wife decides to return to school, Frank rallies the men of the family together to help tend to the house in her absence. While they are not always successful, it is clear how deeply Frank loves and supports his wife in his attempts to lessen her burden at home while she is in school. As the novel unfolds, it is Frank who reminds Greg that with age come responsibilities.



## Rodrick

Rodrick Heffley is the older brother of Greg and Manny, and is the son of Frank and Sue. Rodrick is a moody teenager who would rather spend time with friends than family. When he is with family, Rodrick is known to play jokes on, and make fun of Greg. Rodrick is also a member of a local band, “Loded Diaper.”

## Manny

Manny Heffley is the younger brother of Greg and Rodrick, and is the third child of Frank and Sue. Manny is a quiet toddler who has the ability to find toys and important items that have been hidden away. This causes Greg to hide his egg baby in the refrigerator. His mom then accidentally turns the egg into breakfast.

## Gammie

Gammie is the ninety-five year-old great-grandmother of Greg, Rodrick, and Manny. She is the grandmother of Frank. Gammie is a sweet, gentle woman who speaks frequently of the numerous ailments she faces from old age, such as hemorrhoids. Gammie is known for her “Talks,” which she gives to each of the family kids as they are around eleven or twelve years old. Greg receives such a talk in which Gammie reminds him to enjoy his youth while he can.

## Rowley

Rowley Jefferson is the former best friend of Greg. Rowley is a kind and gentle kid who is tall and often quiet. He is less mature than Greg, which annoys Greg to no end. For example, Rowley passes out while watching a video about bodily changes in Health class. Rowley is later proud of getting a pimple, claiming it is proof he is becoming a man. As the novel ends, Greg and Rowley patch things up, agreeing to be friends on a month-to-month basis. Rowley hopes to wear matching best friends lockets, but Greg refuses to go this far.

## Uncle Gary

Uncle Gary is the younger brother of Frank and Joe. He is known for his refusal to settle down and have a normal life. He gets married for the fourth time during the novel, to a woman named Sonja. It is revealed that Gary had taken Sonja on a date to a baseball game, during which a plane and banner flew overhead asking Sonja for marriage. Sonja believed it was directed toward her, so she and Gary ended up engaged. Greg thinks the revelation of this story means there will be a fifth marriage to come.



## Grandpa

Grandpa is the grandfather of Greg, Rodrick, and Manny. When Frank and Sue go away on a romantic weekend, Grandpa watches the kids. Grandpa is very kind and loving, but he treats Greg as if Greg were still a little kid, based on the old care guide Sue put together for babysitters.

## Fregley

Fregley is the weird kid in the neighborhood and at school. He seems to be a constant loner because of his weirdness. For example, on the night of the Lock-In, Fregley spends his time in the ball pit in the near-darkness, just watching everyone else. Greg goes out of his way to avoid Fregley.





# Symbols and Symbolism

## Diary

The diary is kept by Greg Heffley and details his experiences from the month of September to the month of November. The diary contains written and drawn entries, and comprises the novel itself. The diary is kept by Greg in his bedroom and is written from Greg's perspective. The diary gives Greg a space to reflect on his daily life and the people he interacts with. He can sort through his feelings this way. This allows Greg a place for self-reflection as he matures.

## What the Heck Just Happened to My Body?

"What the Heck Just Happened to My Body?" is a book about puberty for boys that Greg's mom gives to Greg (in addition to a stick of deodorant) after Greg is crawling through the sewer. The book is full of graphic illustrations that Greg remembers seeing in Rodrick's copy of the book. These are things which Greg never wants to see again.

## Best Friends locket

A Best Friends matching heart locket is kept by Rowley. When Greg and Rowley become friends again, Rowley urges Greg to wear half of the locket, but Greg refuses. This is simply too much, too immature, and too girly for Greg.

## Taking Care of Gregroy and Rodrick: A to Z

"Taking Care of Gregory and Rodrick: A to Z" is a guide put together by Susan. It contains, in alphabetical order, instructions, tips, and hints for caring for Greg and Rodrick when they were both very young years before. The guide is meant for family members and babysitters who may have been watching Greg and Rodrick. However, Grandpa still uses the guide in the present day, concerned about properly caring for Greg and Rodrick. As a result, Greg gets a 7:00 bedtime and a bedtime story.

## Jordan Jury's old math book

A math book used by Jordan Jury the year before is obtained by Greg in math class. Greg hopes walking around with the book formerly used by the most popular kid in the next grade up will translate into popularity for him. This never happens.



## Facial hair

Facial hair is greatly desired by Greg, who is dismayed to learn from his father that the men in the Heffley family do not get much facial hair at all. This makes Greg reconsider the notion that he can be anything he wants to be in America, since without facial hair, it will be hard to be a pirate, a lumberjack, or a criminal.

## Peachy Breeze Ice Cream

Peachy Breeze Ice Cream is a popular brand of ice cream which is seeking a new spokeskid in the novel. Although they are hoping for a kid between the ages of 3 and 6, Greg still decides to apply for an audition. He does not get the part, though he continues to love Peachy Breeze Ice Cream.

## Old candy

Old candy is kept on the fireplace mantle by Gammie. Greg is very cautious not to eat the candy, for it is literally decades old, around since Frank was a little kid. Greg once ate a piece of candy from the mantle, and had to lay down for hours until his stomach settled. The candy is used for comic effect.

## Alarm clock

As Greg gets older, his responsibilities increase. This includes waking himself up in the morning for school. For this, he requires an alarm clock. However, to ensure he actually has to get up to turn off the alarm, Greg puts the clock under his bed. Unfortunately, the ticking keeps him up all night, and he is unable to get any sleep. As a result, he falls asleep against the wall in school the next day, accidentally pulling the fire alarm.

## Eggs

Eggs are distributed by Nurse Powell to the kids in Health. The eggs are meant to be babies and to teach responsibility and alert kids to the consequence of their actions, specifically pregnancy being the result of sex. The eggs are to be returned the following day in perfect condition. Greg decides to hide his egg in plain sight in the kitchen at home so that Manny will not get a hold of it. Unfortunately, Greg's mother uses the egg to make breakfast.



# Settings

## Greg's house

Greg's house is located in one of the many neighborhoods near the middle school. The house appears to be a regular middle-class home with enough bedrooms for each of the kids. Susan tends to cleaning the house and doing all the chores within by herself. When she returns to school, Greg and all of the other males in the family cannot do together what Susan did alone. As a result, Susan hires a maid to help keep the house clean. The house later becomes a hangout for numerous maids, after which time Susan fires her maid and chases the others out.

## School hallways

School hallways are an important setting in the novel. Greg and other students must use the halls to get to their lockers, the bathrooms, and to get to other classes. Jordan Jury can frequently be found hanging out in the hallway with his friends. While traveling the halls, Greg hopes he can be like Jordan one day. Greg also sees Rowley in the halls quite frequently, bragging about his first pimple.

## The auditorium

The auditorium at school is where the Lock-In slumber party occurs. It is where the group of kids (mostly guys) come together for games, activities, and socialization. The auditorium is where the guys sleep for the night, while the girls are taken to sleep alone in the media room. During the night, the heat gives out in the auditorium, causing all the guys to freeze.

## Gammie's house

Gammie's house hosts the members of Greg's family who attend Uncle Gary's wedding. While Greg loves Gammie, he hates her house because it is full of old things, from old furniture to old candy. Greg also dislikes having to spend the night at Gammie's because all the single men must stay in one bedroom, referred to as the "Bachelor's Room." Greg ends up sleeping in the bathtub in the bathroom instead.

## Kagan's Dental Office

Kagan's Dental Office is located near Greg's house. It is where Dr. Salazar Kagan performs general dentistry and surgery. It is a business geared more towards adults than kids, and is where Greg is taken for the first time by his father. Greg is disappointed in the visit because not only is Kagan unfriendly and strictly about his

work, he is also not Rachel, the young woman and hygienist that Greg has a crush on at his old dental office.



# Themes and Motifs

## Coming of Age

Coming of Age is an important theme in the novel “Diary of a Wimpy Kid: The Ugly Truth” by Jeff Kinney. Coming of age involves the personal, spiritual, moral, or emotional growth and maturation of an individual often based on real world experiences, events, or mistakes. In the novel, it is Greg who comes of age in many ways.

When the novel begins, Greg is anxious to grow up. He longs to be popular, attend parties with cool kids, and wants facial hair. As different events such as the Lock-In come around, Greg is anxious to attend because these are things that older kids do, and because it will give him a chance to talk to girls. He wants to rush through the rest of childhood to be able to do more adult things apart from his family.

However, as Greg gets older, his responsibilities also increase. With his mother taking classes, Greg is now responsible for helping out around the house, with everything from laundry to dinner to waking himself up. These are hard lessons for Greg to learn, as with age comes responsibility. Likewise, he learns that family must always come first, no matter what is going on in his life socially. For example, he cannot attend one of Jordan Jury’s parties because he must attend his uncle’s wedding instead.

Yet, it is during the wedding weekend that Greg receives sound and sage advice from Gammie. Gammie essentially reminds Greg that he should enjoy being a kid while he can. All that comes with adulthood will come anyways, but childhood is not something that can be regained. Greg, who loves his family, comes to value Gammie’s advice and takes it to heart. Because of this, Greg has come to value his family even more than he already has—a clear sign of growing up in that he appreciates those closest to him—and in recognizing in a very mature fashion that it is okay to be a kid while he is a kid. Nevertheless, Greg is also more responsible and more mature: from getting himself up to school to being a help, rather than a hindrance, around the house.

## Family

Family is an important theme in the novel “Diary of a Wimpy Kid: The Ugly Truth” by Jeff Kinney. Family involves mutual love, compassion, loyalty towards, and emotional, spiritual, and physical support of individuals who may or may not be blood-related, but who still behave in the fashion of the traditional family unit. Family can be found consistently throughout the novel, and family affects the plot of the novel in various ways.

It is clear that Greg loves his family: his mother, Susan; his father, Frank; and even his older and younger brothers Rodrick and Manny. It is also clear that Greg’s family loves him as well, such as when Grandpa comes to visit for the weekend while Greg’s parents go away. Grandpa is very worried about taking good care of Greg and his siblings.



While the guide Grandpa uses to care for them is out of date, Grandpa's love for his grandchildren is clear.

Likewise, Greg has no idea how much he loves his mother—and relies on her—until she is not around all the time as she attends classes. Everything that she once did, which ranges from laundry to cooking to cleaning, comes down to the men of the house to do. It is clear how much Greg, his father, and his brothers love and need Susan. They come to appreciate her far more when she decides to take a break from academics to return to family life. Susan herself has missed being around her family.

The biggest family event of the novel is Uncle Gary's wedding. Like any family gathering, there are good things, such as being around people who love one another, and bad things, such as all the single guys having to sleep in the same room. Nevertheless, the wedding brings the family together. It reminds Greg that family comes first, and that parties like Jordan's are nothing when compared to family. It is because of Greg being with family that he receives sound and important advice from Gammie, who reminds him to relish his childhood while he can. It is advice he takes to heart and advice that can only come from his Gammie.

## Friendship

Friendship is an important theme in the novel "Diary of a Wimpy Kid: The Ugly Truth" by Jeff Kinney. Friendship proves to be very important to Greg, both in having friends in general and almost losing his best friend. Both Greg's casual friendships and his lack of a best friend matter greatly in the novel.

When the novel begins, Greg has just come away from a major fight with Rowley, his best friend. What the fight was all about is not stated, but what is known is that the fight is bad enough that Greg believes his friendship with Rowley is over. He begins looking around for a new best friend, worried about starting school without one. However, all potential best friends have some sort of issue, from either being mainly summer friends to using urinals with pants pulled all the way down to just being too weird.

In school, Greg considers the different kinds of friendship that come with being popular. For example, there is Jordan Jury, one of the most popular kids in the upper grades at the middle school. He has many friends and is famous for the parties that he gives. In Greg's own grade, there is Bryce Anderson, whose popularity is based not only having real friends, but lackeys who admire him and follow him around. This sort of friendship is appealing to Greg, but he decides it is not worth it.

At various points throughout the novel, Greg and Rowley end up speaking to one another or in each other's company. Greg is consistently annoyed by Rowley throughout the novel for his immaturity, such as when he passes out in Health class, or his growth toward manhood, such as when Rowley gets a pimple first. However, despite annoyances and despite the fight, Greg misses Rowley. He has too much history to just let go of, and with his own childhood slipping away, Greg doesn't want to waste what



remains. He therefore reestablishes his friendship with Rowley at the end of the novel on a month-to-month basis, but refuses to wear the matching best friend heart lockets Rowley suggests wearing.

## Change

Change is an important theme in the novel “Diary of a Wimpy Kid: The Ugly Truth” by Jeff Kinney. There are many changes in the novel, with all of them affecting Greg in some way or another. The changes that Greg must contend with influence the plot in various ways.

When the novel begins, Greg has lost his best friend and is about to begin a new year at school. Both are changes Greg must face. Losing his best friend was unanticipated, but beginning a new school year was. What Greg did not expect was to begin a new year without a best friend. In school, Greg desires to be older and cool like Jordan Jury. Aging is a change he wants to happen quickly, but it happens frustratingly slow.

Other changes also come to Greg. His body slowly begins to change, and he begins noticing girls. He must now shower after gym class, and he is attracted to girls more and more, from Rachel the hygienist to the girls at the Lock-In. Greg also seems to mature much faster than his fellow male friends, all of whom continue to be obnoxious whether it is passing gas or horsing around.

At home, changes abound. Greg’s mom is home less and less as she tends to going back to school. Greg must help out with the chores and take on more responsibilities both as a matter of getting older and with his mom being gone. Greg must help out with everything from laundry to making dinner to cleaning, things he has never done before. These are changes that Greg does not like.

He would rather be older without the responsibilities, but there is nothing he can do about this. This is in large part why Greg takes Gammie’s advice to heart about enjoying his youth while he can, before all of the responsibilities of adulthood set in. It becomes apparent that one change Greg is not totally ready for is adulthood. Nevertheless, the change is coming and is unavoidable, and so he decides to relish childhood while he can.

## Adolescence

Adolescence is an important theme in the novel “Diary of a Wimpy Kid: The Ugly Truth” by Jeff Kinney. Adolescence in the novel, thematically, includes behavior and activities associated with teenagers and with kids becoming teenagers. These form an important part of the book where Greg is concerned, as Greg desperately wants to be older.

The first hints of adolescence in the novel come in Greg’s observations of Jordan Jury and Bryce Anderson. Greg is worried about popularity, a very adolescent thing. All kids want to fit in somewhere and to have friends. Likewise, Greg is very interested in the



parties that Jordan is famous for throwing, and secretly hopes to be invited to one of Jordan's parties. This doesn't occur until the end of the novel, but Greg is unable to attend.

Greg is unable to attend the party because his uncle's wedding is that weekend. Here, Greg encounters the struggle that many teens face between their social life and their family. Greg comes to learn that family is more important, that family will always be there for him, and that family is not something to waste having. After the wedding reception, Greg has a heart-to-heart talk with Gammie, wherein she tells him to enjoy being a kid while he can.

Adolescence can also be seen in as Greg begins to notice girls. He has a major crush on the young woman who works as a hygienist at the dentist's office. He also looks forward to the Lock-In because the slumber party will be boy-girl. Like many boys, Greg becomes very interested in girls, and is disappointed to learn that so few girls attend the Lock-In. Additionally, these girls are made to sleep separately from the boys, which further disappoints Greg.

This is seen in lieu of the egg-baby assignment, which is meant to teach the kids the consequences of their actions. The assignment does not go over well, with most kids decorating their eggs instead. When it comes to the parties, Greg comes to understand that there will be other parties and other social events over the next several years, and truly appreciates the advice Gammie gives him about not growing up so fast.



# Styles

## Point of View

Jeff Kinney tells his novel “Diary of a Wimpy Kid: The Ugly Truth” in the first-person reflective perspective. The entire novel is composed to resemble a diary, full of written entries and drawings. Because Greg himself is meant to be writing the entries, the perspective is that of first-person. These experiences happened to Greg, and Greg himself is relating them to paper. The reflective aspect of the narration comes from the fact that Greg is writing after the events which he is describing, and so is reflecting on them, recalling them, and thinking back about them as he writes.

## Language and Meaning

Jeff Kinney tells his novel “Diary of a Wimpy Kid: The Ugly Truth” in language that is simple and straightforward. This is done for at least two primary reasons. First, the language used in the novel is reflective of the target audience of the book: young adults. The language used is reflective of their age and level of education. Second, the language used in the novel is simple and straightforward because it is meant to be written by Greg, a boy of about eleven or twelve. As a result, the language employed reflects not only his age, but his level of education as well.

## Structure

Jeff Kinney divides his novel “Diary of a Wimpy Kid: The Ugly Truth” into numerous entries noted by day of the week, and sometimes by the month. The diary essentially becomes one long, continuous story reflecting a human life. The diary is host to not only written entries, but dozens of drawings and sketches depicting events, thoughts, and ideas that Greg has as he writes. For example, the entries on page 97 deal with Greg needing headgear, and Greg’s illustrations of headgear.



## Quotes

Now that our friendship is ended, I'm in the market for a new best friend.

-- Greg (Section 1, Page 2 paragraph 2)

**Importance:** As soon as the novel begins, Greg explains that his friendship with Rowley has ended. This has occurred due to a fight, the details of which are not given. As a result, Greg begins the school year without a best friend, and commencing a search looking for a new best friend. It is the first of many changes Greg will encounter through the autumn.

Every time someone in my family gets to be about my age, Gammie sits them down and talks to them about who-knows-what.

-- Greg (Section 1, Page 45 paragraph 1)

**Importance:** As the novel gets underway, Greg relates to his diary that he is now at the age where Gammie has "The Talk" with the kids of the family. Greg has no idea what "The Talk" is about, but it is enough that it worries him. Greg comes to dread "The Talk" across the span of the autumn, until he actually has "The Talk" with Gammie.

Mom said us men are gonna have to make our own dinners a few nights a week and start doing chores that she usually takes care of herself.

-- Greg (Section 2, Page 56 paragraph 2)

**Importance:** When Susan decides to return to school, many of her responsibilities as a mom now fall on the men of the family. Among these are chores and making dinner. Greg and other men in the family end up managing some tasks, but not all of them. As a result, Greg's mom ultimately hires a maid, Isabella. Nevertheless, these new chores and responsibilities, as well as Susan going back to school, are changes that Greg was not expecting, but now must learn to deal with.

But Mom said SHE was the one who took it, and that's what she was making me for breakfast.

-- Greg (Section 3, Page 106 paragraph 3)

**Importance:** Greg's egg homework assignment ends in disaster. Hiding his egg-baby in plain sight in the fridge to avoid Manny getting a hold of it, it is Susan who gets a hold of the egg instead. She uses it to make Greg breakfast, leading Greg to fail his assignment in Health class.

The second I walked through the door, I knew I made a huge mistake. It was, like, 90% boys and 10% girls. And worse, ROWLEY was there.

-- Greg (Section 3, Page 133 paragraph 1)

**Importance:** As evidence of adolescent activity, Greg is looking forward to a boy-girl event, the Lock-In. Unfortunately, Greg is unhappy to learn that most kids attending the



event are guys. Worse yet, Greg is dismayed to see that Rowley has also decided to attend. The Lock-In is not what Greg thought it was supposed to be, and he ends up not enjoying himself at all in the end.

See this it he kind of thing I can't stand about boys my age. When it comes down to it, they're just a bunch of wild animals.

-- Greg (Section 4, Page 156 paragraph 2)

**Importance:** As evidence of Greg's growing maturity, he comments on the activity of his fellow males at the Lock-In. They are running around, chasing each other and horsing around like children. They are not maturing as fast as Greg, and this annoys it. This is yet another reason he would rather be with the girls beyond chatting them up. They are more mature, and are on Greg's level.

Tonight Mom had another house meeting and said that Isabella's services would 'no longer be required' and that we were all going to have to pitch in around the house. I was happy to hear that, because no I can stop checking my bed for panty hose socks.

-- Greg (Section 4, Page 169 paragraph 2)

**Importance:** Greg is thrilled to learn that Isabelle has been fired for bringing other maids over to the house to watch TV and eat snacks. Greg is also thrilled because Isabella has been napping in Greg's bed, having once left a pantyhose sock between the sheets. With Isabella being fired, Greg might have to take on more around the house, but at least he will not have to worry about finding things in his bed that shouldn't be there.

In this country they're always saying you can grow up and be anything you want, but now I realize that's not true.

-- Greg (Section 4, Page 174 paragraph 3)

**Importance:** When Greg learns that he will not be able to grow a tremendous amount of facial hair, he is disappointed not only in his future but in America. He comments on the idea that anyone can be anything in America being wrong. Without facial hair, Greg cannot be a pirate, an artist, or a criminal.

This has got to be some kind of world record for bad timing.

-- Greg (Section 4, Page 179 paragraph 3)

**Importance:** Greg is stunned and thrilled to be invited along with numerous other younger classmen to one of Jordan Jury's famous parties. Unfortunately for Greg, the party is the same weekend as Uncle Gary's wedding, and Greg's mother says Greg cannot attend the party. Greg is heartbroken and annoyed, but is later thankful when he learns the younger kids were invited to the party only to be servants.

Then I looked at the wedding program and saw my name at the bottom: Assistant Flower Boy.... Greg Heffley.

-- Greg (Section 5, Page 204 paragraph 3)



**Importance:** Greg has been hoping that his need for a tuxedo, as well as the fact that there is a wedding, means he will be one of the groomsmen. This, he believes, will help make up for missing Jordan Jury's party. Greg is disappointed to learn, however, that not only is he not a groomsman, but that he is a "flower boy," a job reserved for girls.

Gammie told me that most kids my age are in a big rush to grow up but that if I was smart, I'd enjoy the ride while it lasts.

-- Greg (Section 5, Page 209 paragraph 2)

**Importance:** After the wedding, Greg has "The Talk" with Gammie. Gammie, who is 95 years old, knows a thing or two about getting older. She gives Greg sound and sage advice about enjoying childhood and not growing up too fast. The advice resonates with Greg, and he takes it to heart.

I guess I'm just not in a big rush to grow up right now. And after Gammie showed me what's in store over the next few years, I think I'm gonna take her advice and hang on as long as I can.

-- Greg (Section 5, Page 215 paragraph 1)

**Importance:** As the novel ends, Greg explains that he will be taking Gammie's advice. He reveals that he knows more responsibilities, and the problems that come with getting older, will all come sooner or later. For now, he will enjoy being a kid. Part of this is making up with Rowley, which he does by the end of the novel.