

Diary of a Wimpy Kid Series

Jeff Kinney

[Amulet Books, 2007 to present]

Series Summary: Greg Heffley works very hard at trying to get out of doing chores, homework, or anything associated with physical activity. Therefore, when his mom tells him that if he keeps a journal she will excuse him from doing his least favorite household task, he quickly agrees. What starts out as a way to do less work, turns into a humorous account of the struggles that accompany surviving the trials of middle school, the complexities of friendships, and the misery of being a middle child. Told from Greg's self-absorbed point of view and illustrated with his primitive cartoons, the books in this series are popular with a broad range of students.

Lesson I

What if This Book Was About...?

Introduction:

The books in this series all follow the same pattern. Greg has a problem and he tries his best to either ignore it, or make it go away. But what if the titles of the series were for nonfiction books? If *Dog Days* was a book about taking care of pets at a doggy daycare, where would it be found in the library's collection?

Grade Level: 4-6 Time Allocation: 25-35minutes

Objectives:

- The students will review the Dewey Decimal System.
- The students will use knowledge of the Dewey Decimal System to classify hypothetical books based on a brief description.

Materials:

- Visual – What if This Book was About...?
- Activity Sheets – What if This Book was About...?
- Optional – Books in the “Diary of a Wimpy Kid” series for student checkout

Procedure:

1. Introduce the lesson asking the students if they have heard of Jeff Kinney’s “Diary of a Wimpy Kid” series. Ask them if they can remember the titles of any of the books. Explain that this lesson will feature these titles.
2. Display the visual and review its contents with the class. If in a library, point out where the various Dewey Decimal sections are located.
3. Distribute the activity sheets. Students may work in pairs or small groups.
4. Review the directions for the activity. *Note:* This activity may also be conducted with the teacher projecting the activity sheet and filling in student responses.
5. Check for understanding. Answers may vary, but the most common responses are:
1. 800s 2. 500s 3. 100s 4. 200s 5. 000s 6. 600s 7. 700s 8. 300s 9. 900s 10. 400s.

What if this Book...?

The Dewey Decimal System

An American named Melvil Dewey devised the Dewey Decimal System in the late 1800s. This numerical system organizes the books in the library into ten basic categories of knowledge.

- 000-099 – **General Works** (Encyclopedias, Reference Books, Media)
- 100-199 – **Philosophy** (Psychology, Behavior, Paranormal Phenomena)
- 200-299 – **Religion** (World Religion, Mythology)
- 300-399 – **Social Science** (Government, Law, Manners, Folklore).
- 400-499 – **Language** (Dictionaries, Grammar, Foreign Language)
- 500-599 – **Pure Science** (Mathematics, Chemistry, Biology)
- 600-699 – **Applied Science** (How-to Books, Inventions, Health)
- 700-799 – **Arts and Recreation** (Music, Crafts, Sports, Hobbies)
- 800-899 – **Literature** (Poetry, Plays, Short Stories, Jokes)
- 900-999 – **History** (Travel, Geography, Biography)

Note: Books of fiction could be cataloged using the Dewey Decimal number 813. However, because libraries often have so many fiction books, there is usually a section just for fiction. The books in this section will be organized alphabetically by the author's last name.

What if This Book...?

What if the titles of the books in the *Diary of a Wimpy Kid* series were for serious nonfiction books instead of the humorous opinions of Greg Heffley? What Dewey Decimal number would you assign them so that they could be easily located on the library's shelves? Using the chart below and the pretend descriptions, decide what new category each title could be placed under. Be prepared to defend your choices.

000s – **General Works** (Encyclopedias, Reference Books, Media)
 100s – **Philosophy** (Psychology, Behavior, Paranormal Phenomena)
 200s – **Religion** (World Religion, Mythology)
 300s – **Social Science** (Government, Law, Manners, Folklore)
 400s – **Language** (Dictionaries, Grammar, Foreign Language)
 500s – **Pure Science** (Mathematics, Chemistry, Biology)
 600s – **Applied Science** (How-to Books, Inventions, Health)
 700s – **Arts and Recreation** (Music, Crafts, Sports, Hobbies)
 800s – **Literature** (Poetry, Plays, Short Stories, Jokes)
 900s – **History** (Travel, Geography, Biography)

1. *Diary of a Wimpy Kid* - What if this is a poetry book written from the point of view of a scrawny baby goat? _____
2. *Rodrick Rules* - What if this is a book about a new mathematical process devised by Dr. Ivan B. Rodrick? _____
3. *The Last Straw* - What if this book is about the specific events that cause stressed out people to behave in an unusual manner? _____
4. *Dog Days* - What if this book is about Argos, Anubis, Cerberus, Sirius, and the other legendary canines found in ancient mythology? _____
5. *The Ugly Truth* - What if this is a reference book that features unpleasant facts and disgusting information for grumpy people who dislike pleasant truths? _____
6. *Cabin Fever* - What if this book is about the cures and remedies available to get healthy after contracting a dreaded winter related illness? _____
7. *The Third Wheel* - What if this book describes a new sport based on the competitive use of three hula hoops? _____
8. *Hard Luck* - What if this book contains folktales from around the world that share the common theme of the main character overcoming unfortunate events? _____
9. *The Long Haul* - What if this is a history book that describes the hardships of the pioneers traveling on the Oregon Trail? _____
10. *Old School* - What if this is a spelling and grammar book used in a one-room school house during the Great Depression? _____

Lesson II

Greg Heffley Records His Life Diary, Journal, & Blog

Introduction:

Middle school student Greg Heffley promises his mother that he will keep a diary. However, the decision to keep a record of his life is based on his belief that in the future he will be a celebrated millionaire. He assumes that a written record would allow him to give his adoring public some insight to what propelled him to fame and fortune.

Time Required: 20-25 minutes.

Objectives:

- The students will be introduced to definitions of journal, diary, and blog and participate in a teacher directed activity.
- The students will write a creative journal entry.

Materials:

- Visual- Diary, Journal & Blog
- Activity Sheet- Write an Entertaining Entry
- Optional: Popular book series' that are written as diaries, journals, or character correspondences

Examples:

- *43 Old Cemetery Road Series* by Kate Klise
- *Dear Dumb Diary Series* by Jim Benton
- *The Dork Diaries Series* by Rachel Renée Russell
- *The My Life Series* by Janet Tashjian
- *Timmy Failure* by Stephan Pastis

Procedure:

1. Introduce the lesson by showing the students the cover of the first book in the "Wimpy Kid Series", *Diary of a Wimpy Kid: A Novel in Cartoons* by Jeff Kinney. Read the first two pages of the book to the students. These pages explain how Greg Heffley began keeping a journal.
2. Display the visual Diary, Journal & Blog. Read the definitions to the class.
3. Ask students if they know of any examples of diaries, journals, or blogs.

4. Conduct a classroom discussion using the three listed questions. While answers may vary, certain responses are common. Examples:

How are the definitions of a diary, journal and blog alike? *They are collected records, observations, opinions, and memories.* **Note:** Students have pointed out that today documentation of one's observations does not need to be written. Video and audiotapes are methods of recording things for future reference.

How are they different? *Diaries and journals are written down on paper. A blog is written on a website and is more public than a diary or journal.*

What are some reasons a person might want to keep a diary, journal or blog? *To help them remember what happened. To keep a record of what happened for future reference. Journals help keep people busy during stressful or sad times. A person may just love to write or share their opinions.*

Why would keeping diaries, journals, and blogs be important to writers? *Writers may want to remember interesting and funny things that happened in the past.*

5. Solicit responses for the question asked in *What Do You Think* section of the visual. It does not matter that the students may not know these names from literature or history because there are no right or wrong answers. There are, however, some that work better than others. Students should be able to articulate the reason they chose diary, journal or blog.

Anne Frank, Jewish girl in hiding during World War II. *The Diary of Anne Frank* has become a classic description of the will for survival and the cruelty of war. She died in a German Concentration Camp.

Jeff Kinney, the author of the *Diary of a Wimpy Kid* series. The author maintains a blog on his website to keep in touch with his fans and help promote his books.

Captain Meriwether Lewis, 18th Century Explorer Lewis was the leader of Thomas Jefferson's Corps of Discovery and kept a daily **journal** during his quest to discover the new nation's interior.

Tom Riddle, a fictional student at Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry. (From *Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets*) He created a magical **diary** that allowed him to come back to life.

6. Distribute the activity sheets to the students. Remind them that they are to write in first-person using the pronouns me and I. Encourage them to write an entry that is witty and humorous. However, they are to be sensitive to the feelings of others.

Diaries, Journals, & Blogs

Diary - a daily record of personal activities, reflections, or feelings

Journal - an account of day-to-day events, experiences, ideas, or reflections kept for private use

Blog - a regularly updated webpage that is written in an informal or conversational style that shares the opinions and observations of the writer with others

For Discussion

- How are the definitions of a diary, journal and blog alike? How are they different?
- What are some reasons a person might want to keep a diary, journal or blog?
- Why would keeping diaries, journals, and blogs be important to writers?

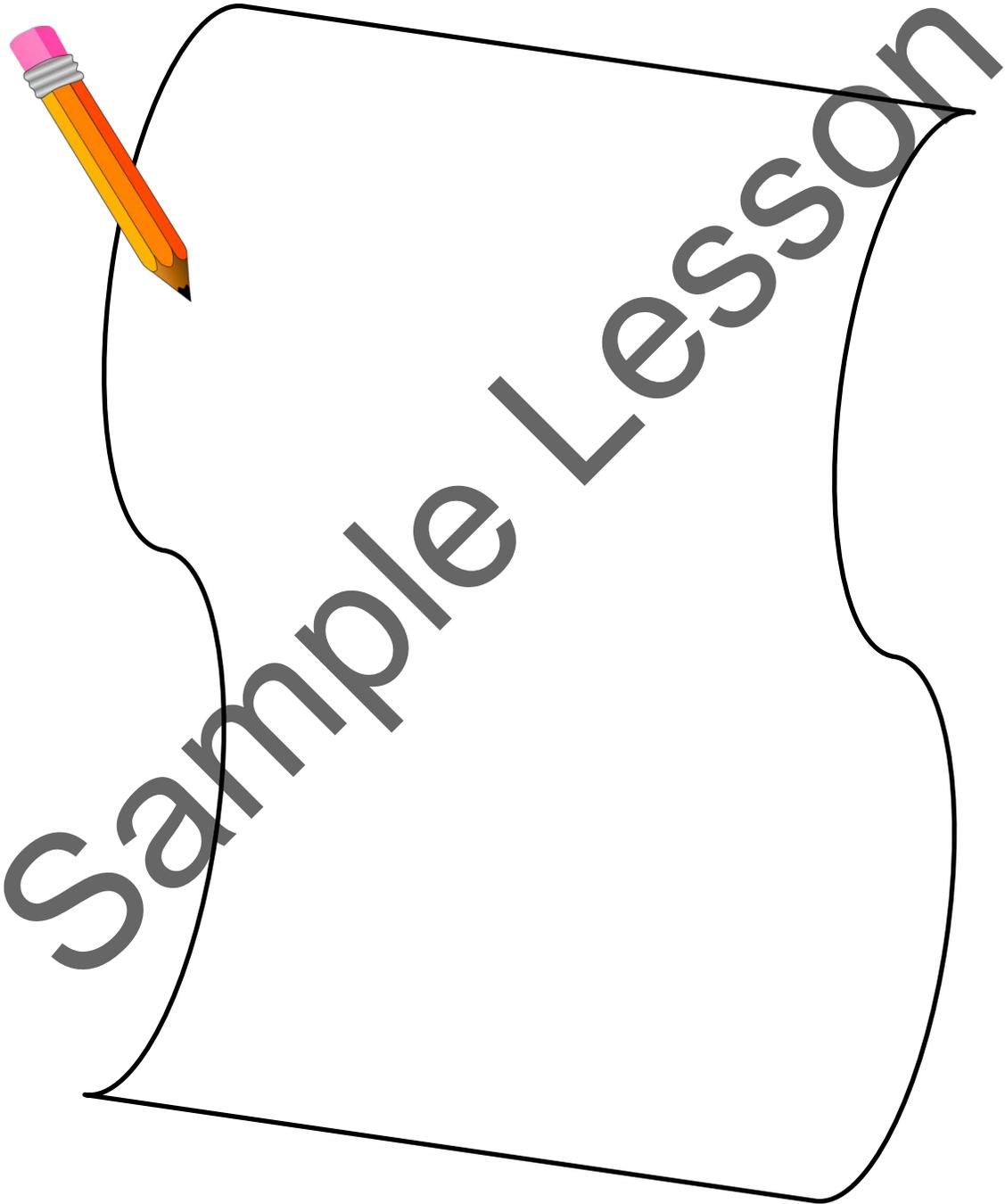
What Do You Think?

If the following people were to record interesting things that were happening in their lives, do you think they would keep a diary, journal or blog? Why?

- Anne Frank, a Jewish girl in hiding during World War II
- Jeff Kinney, the author of the Diary of a Wimpy Kid series
- Captain Meriwether Lewis, 18th Century Explorer
- Tom Riddle, a student at Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry

Write an Entertaining Entry

Pretend you are a new student in your school. Write an entry in your diary, journal, or blog expressing your opinions of the building, teachers, class content, and/or fellow students.



Lesson III

Greg the Entrepreneur

Featuring *Diary of a Wimpy Kid: Dog Days*

Introduction:

Greg Heffley, the Wimpy Kid, wants to make lots of money by being his own boss. However, he does not seem to understand that an entrepreneur needs to organize and utilize productive resources efficiently to make a profit.

Time Required: 25-30 minutes

Grade Level: 4-7

Materials:

- Optional – Copy of *Diary of a Wimpy Kid: Dog Days* by Jeff Kinney
- Visual 1 – Productive Resources Poster
- Visual 2 – Productive Resources Web
- Activity Sheet – Productive Resources Web

Objectives:

- The students will explain how entrepreneurs use productive resources to produce goods and services.
- The students will use a graphic organizer to communicate information.

Procedure:

1. Introduce the lesson by asking the students if they have ever heard of the word entrepreneur. Define entrepreneur as a person who combines productive resources to produce goods and services that they expect to sell for a profit.
2. Share with the students that Greg Heffley, the main character in the book *Diary of a Wimpy Kid: Dog Days*, wanted to be an entrepreneur and start his own lawn mowing business. However, he did not understand that he needed the necessary tools and skills to be successful.
3. Display Visual 1- Productive Resources Poster. (Note: If possible show the students the flyer that Greg made to advertise his business on page 52 of the *Diary of a Wimpy Kid: Dog Days*. Explain that while Greg is a good poster designer, he does not know how to mow grass or even own a lawn mower.)

4. Review the definitions using the poster as a visual aid. Note that the boy is a human resource, the lawn mower is a capital resource, and the grass is a natural resource.
5. Display Visual 2 - Productive Resources Web. Tell the students to pretend that Greg was in the class and was learning how to be an entrepreneur. He now wants to start a new business. If he were to fill in a Productive Resources Web, this is what it might look like.
6. Review the contents of the visual noting the name of the business, the name of the entrepreneur, and the productive resources needed to create the product.
7. Distribute the Productive Resources Activity Sheet. Tell the students that they are to pretend they are entrepreneurs wishing to provide a good or a service so they can make a profit. (Possible goods and services could include a lemonade stand, yard care service, pet sitting, greeting card production, delivery services, jewelry making, and tutoring.) They are to come up with a good or service, provide a catchy product name, and fill in the web graphic with correct examples of human, capital and productive resources.
8. Encourage students to share their completed work with the class.

Sample Lesson

Productive Resources Poster

- **Capital Resources** are manmade resources such tools, buildings, and vehicles used in production. The lawn mower is a capital resource.
- **Natural Resources** are gifts of nature. The bag of grass clippings that can be turned into compost is an example of a natural resource.
- **Human Resources** are people who work. Greg and Rawley would be examples of human resources IF they had any skills.
- **Goods** are tangible things such as food, clothes, and cars. The boys' boots are examples of goods.
- **Services** are physically intangible things such as medical care, haircuts, and education. Mowing lawns is an example of a service.
- **Entrepreneurs** are people who organize, operate, and assume the risk for a business venture. Greg and Rawley would like to be entrepreneurs, but do not know how.



~Productive Resources Web~

Business: Greg's Great Cookies
Entrepreneur: Greg Heffley

Human Resource:



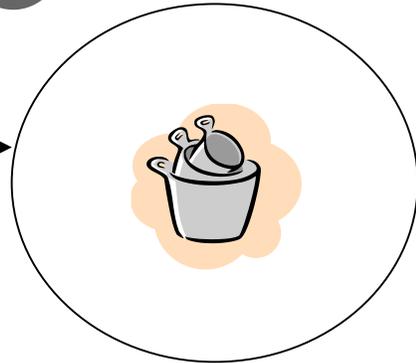
Baker

Good/Service:
Product



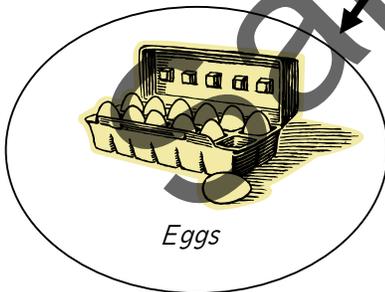
Greg's Great Cookies

Capital Resources:



Measuring Cups

Natural Resources:



Eggs

~Productive Resources Web~

Business:

Entrepreneur:

Human Resource:

Good/Service:
Product

Capital Resources:

Natural Resources:

