

NCBLA Educational Resources

DIARY OF A WIMPY KID: THE LONG HAUL

BY JEFF KINNEY

This Education Resource Guide includes discussion questions, as well as activities regarding the following three topics related to *Diary of a Wimpy Kid: The Long Haul*. A list of books for further reading and other educational resources related to graphic novels are also included.

- The Spanish Language
- State Fairs
- Heat Expansion

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Pose the following questions to young people:

- How might the Wimpy Kid’s family have diverted “The Long Haul?” In other words, how could they have prevented all the problems they encountered on their trip?
 - Sleeping Schedules
 - Horrible Motels
 - Upset Stomachs
 - Pet Problems
 - Misplacing items
 - Standing in long lines
 - Getting lost
- What are the pros and cons of each of the four “options” the Wimpy Kid details at the end of the book? Do the cons outweigh the pros, or do the pros outweigh the cons?
- How could the family have achieved a “happy” ending to the long haul?
- Would mother’s idea to “scrapbook” have been the best “family” vacation (without the trip)? Why or why not?
- What were the Wimpy Kid’s mother and dad hoping to achieve on the trip? How could they have achieved this goal for the family in a less “disastrous” manner?

ACTIVITY: THE SPANISH LANGUAGE

Many kids in countries around the world are bi- or even tri-lingual! As the Wimpy Kid found out, sometimes it is very important to understand, speak, or write another language! Ask young people if they want to join other kids around the world who speak more than one language. If so, check out the free Spanish-learning websites on TakeLessons.com and get started.

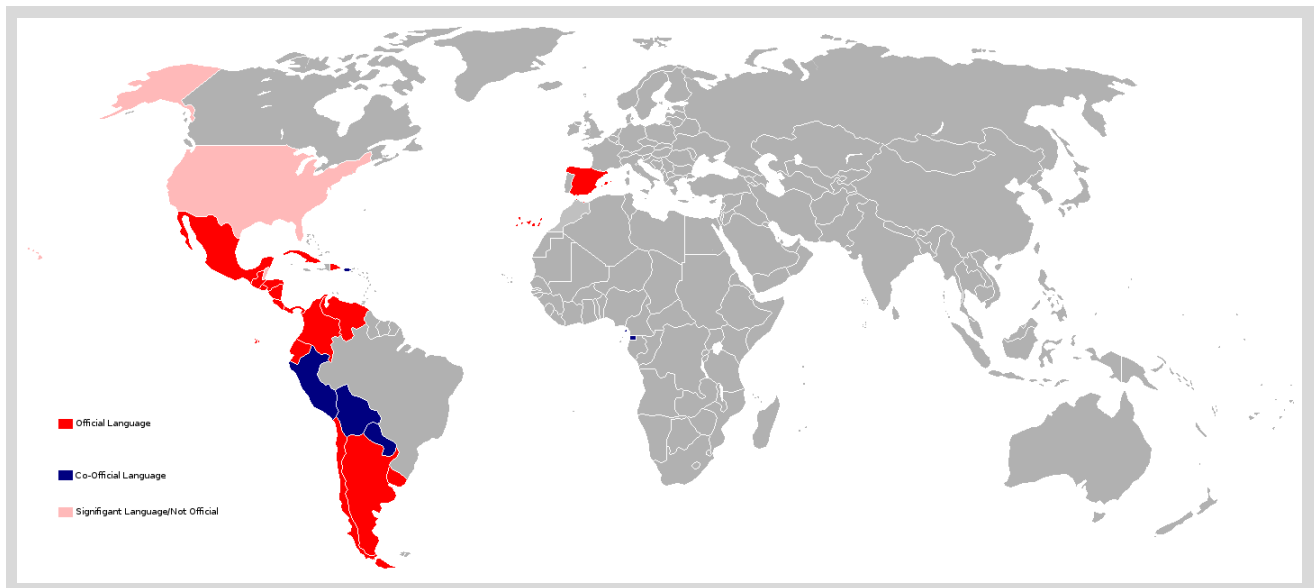
But, don't stop there! Invite your students to set out on an adventure, just like the Wimpy Kid, and find out where Spanish is spoken around the world. You may find the following resources helpful.

- “[Spanish Speaking World](#)”
- “Spanish Speaking Countries” on Google.com
- “Spanish Speaking Countries” on MapsoftheWorld.com (see illustration below)

While visiting the Google listing, above, students can choose a country they would like to visit. Learn more about the country at the [CIA World Factbook](#). Or, students can learn about Spain and its culture in the [Spanish Culture page in the BBC website](#).

Either way, help students complete a passport for the country chosen by either downloading the [Passport for Kids activity](#) or creating your own similar activity. As they complete the passport, ask students to think of what they would need to be able to say or to ask those persons living in the chosen country during their visit. Ask students to write that communication down and type it in a word processor (such as Microsoft Word).

Finally, ask students to read and speak their imagined conversation in Spanish! Highlight and copy the conversation from their word processing file, then paste it in [Google Translate](#). Be sure to choose the buttons to translate from English to Spanish, and Wa-Lah! Speak Spanish!



Spanish Language Map by Usergreatpower [Public domain], via Wikimedia Commons

ACTIVITY: STATE FAIRS

State Fairs are some of the most educational events in our country (and you probably will NOT come away with a pig)! Three of the most famous, according to the National Education Association, are: The Eastern States Exposition (New England), The Texas State Fair, and The Arizona State Fair. Thanks to technology, you can now visit these Fairs virtually and participate in activities.

First, why not join the kids of New England and invite young people to try their hands at [a butter sculpture](#)? [Churn your own](#) butter in the cafeteria (or a kitchen) beforehand, and, then, in groups or individually, set aside a day to “sculpt away!” (You can use everyday objects, such as butter knives, or borrow tools from your art teacher). Hold a balloted vote for the best sculpture and award blue, red, and white ribbons.

Second, along with kids from Texas, invite young people to go on a “Food Race” (but don’t eat your shoes when you wear a hole in one or both)! Learn how food “races” from the farm to YOUR own table by using the [State Fair of Texas Curriculum Guide](#), visiting the state or local fair in your own locale, and inserting your state or community name everywhere you see the word TEXAS (within the guide). Have fun “racing” within the food chain (same as your Texas friends).

Third, the Arizona State Fair is well-known for music, music, music! Just look at this [list of performers](#) over the years. Ask students to choose one year from this listing and look up information about each performer (or group) using [KidzSearch.com](#). Ask students to see if any of the musicians grew up or live in your state. If so, write them down.

Next, have the class or learning group add each name discovered to a “Musicians From _____” listing (make sure all years are researched). After preparing your state listing as a group, together listen to one song from each performer on [You Tube](#). As a class activity, decide which [genre of music](#) the performer(s) play(s), and list it beside the correct name on your state list. Post the list in your classroom with pride! (See the example below.)

Visit the website for your own state fair and discover if any of these performers are scheduled to appear this year.

MUSICIANS FROM NORTH CAROLINA	
Name	Genre
Ronnie Milsap	Country
Scott McCreary	Country

ACTIVITY: HEAT EXPANSION

Do your students want to understand WHY the sticky bun container blew up in the Wimpy Kid family vehicle? They can find out in “Getting Hotter = Getting Bigger” on Physics4kids.com. Then, invite young people to become young physicists and learn all about thermodynamics by reading [ALL](#) these pages (10 all together) on Physics4Kids.com. Watch all the videos, too, and be sure and take the [quiz](#) afterwards.

Don’t stop there! Invite students to “fool” their friends with a magic trick based in thermodynamics. Place a bottle and a coin (a bit larger than the opening of the bottle) in cold water for a few minutes. Then, take both out of the water. Place the coin on top of the bottle. Wrap your hands around the bottle for a minute or two. Watch what happens to the coin as the bottle heats up. It “magically” dances!

As a class, think of some other experiments that demonstrate the principles of thermodynamics (but are safe for all)! Start with [these](#) “Thermal Expansion” examples on HelloKids.com.

Be sure to record both your experiment and your observations, just like a true scientist. You might use the following template

<https://i.pinimg.com/236x/97/73/74/9773742ac14fcd41b2b3a9f21837f3--scientific-method-for-kids-scientific-method-experiments.jpg>.

EXPERIMENT:

Our Question:
Our Equipment:
Method (What did we do?):
My Predictions (What I think will happen):
Results:

READ AND LEARN MORE

MORE BOOKS BY JEFF KINNEY

If *The Long Haul* is your first introduction to The Wimpy Kid, be sure to check-out his “history” by reading the series in order of publication.

- *Diary of A Wimpy Kid* – 2007
- *Diary of A Wimpy Kid: Rodrick Rules* – 2008
- *Diary of A Wimpy Kid: The Last Straw* – 2009
- *Diary of A Wimpy Kid: Dog Days* – 2009
- *Diary of A Wimpy Kid: The Ugly Truth* – 2010
- *Diary of A Wimpy Kid: Cabin Fever* – 2011
- *Diary of A Wimpy Kid: he Third Wheel* – 2012
- *Diary of A Wimpy Kid: Hard Luck* – 2013
- ***Diary of A Wimpy Kid: The Long Haul* – 2014**
- *Diary of A Wimpy Kid: Old School* – 2015
- *Diary of A Wimpy Kid: Double Down* – 2016
- *Diary of A Wimpy Kid: he Getaway* – 2017

OUR WHITE HOUSE: LOOKING IN, LOOKING OUT

Learn more about other “wimpy kid” adventures, kids living in or visiting *The White House* that is, at the following pages within the acclaimed children’s book *Our White House: Looking In, Looking Out* (Candlewick Press):

- “Storming Down the Stairs” by Albert Marrin on pages 98-9. Also see the accompanying illustration by Chris Van Dusen on pages 96-7.
- “A Note for the President” by Jerry Spinelli (illustrated by Terry Widener) on pages 141-3.
- “The Kennedy White House” by Barbara Harrison (illustrated by Steve Johnson and Lou Fancher) on pages 152-3.
- “My Room” by Lynda Johnson Robb (illustrated by Jane Dyer) on pages 170-2.

ONLINE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES

The following online resources provide information related to graphic novels and comics.

Comics in Education by Gene Luen Yang

<http://www.humblecomics.com/comicsedu/>

Articles and Interviews by Brigid Alverson

Brigid Alverson writes about comics and graphic novels for *School Library Journal*. She is the editor of the *Good Comics for Kids* blog and has been reading comics since she was four. She has an MFA in printmaking and has worked as a book editor and a newspaper reporter; now she is assistant to the mayor of Melrose, Massachusetts. In addition to editing GC4K, she writes about comics and graphic novels at MangaBlog, SLJTeen, Publishers Weekly Comics World, Comic Book Resources, MTV Geek, and Good E-Reader.com.

- “Teaching With Graphic Novels”
<http://www.slj.com/2014/09/books-media/the-graphic-advantage-teaching-with-graphic-novels/>
- “Good Comics for Kids”
<http://talkingwithtim.com/wordpress/2008/07/16/brigid-alverson-on-good-comics-for-kids/>
- “Just Another Day in an LGBTQ Comic”
<http://www.slj.com/2017/05/diversity/just-another-day-in-an-lgbtq-comic/>
- “The People’s Comics: Using the Graphic Format to Teach About Current Events”
<http://www.slj.com/2017/08/books-media/the-peoples-comics-using-the-graphic-format-to-teach-about-current-events/>
- “Teaching with Science Comics”
<http://www.slj.com/2017/06/resources/teaching-with-science-comics/>
- “A nonfiction roundup of Graphic Novels”
<http://www.slj.com/2017/01/teens-ya/nonfiction-graphic-novels-give-these-to-fans-of-march/>
- “The immigrant experience in graphic novels”
<http://www.slj.com/2016/08/diversity/graphic-novels-portray-bicultural-america/>
- “Graphic novels that tie in with video games”
<http://www.slj.com/2016/10/books-media/game-changers-books-based-on-video-games/>
- Brigid Alverson Talk on “Graphic Novels for Kids”
<http://blogs.slj.com/goodcomicsforkids/2017/05/08/an-introduction-to-graphic-novels-for-children/>
- “Interview: Eric Kallenborn on Graphic Novels in the Classroom”
<http://blogs.slj.com/goodcomicsforkids/2017/08/16/interview-eric-kallenborn-on-graphic-novels-in-the-classroom/>

GRAPHIC NOVEL BOOKLISTS

The following online booklists from authoritative sources recommend graphic novels for different age levels:

- “Graphic Novels: Read the Pictures”
<http://www.readingrockets.org/booklists/graphic-novels-read-pictures>
- “Graphic Novels for Kids: Classroom Ideas, Booklists, and More”
<http://www.readingrockets.org/article/graphic-novels-kids-classroom-ideas-booklists-and-more>
- “19 Graphic Novels That Engage Students and Keep Them Reading”
<http://www.readingrockets.org/blogs/aiming-access/19-graphic-novels-engage-students-and-keep-them-reading>
- “Graphic Novels: Selected Titles for Children and Teens”
<https://ccbc.education.wisc.edu/books/detailListBooks.asp?idBookLists=192>
- “Graphic Novels”
<https://www.commonensemedia.org/lists/graphic-novels#>
- “The Best Comics for Your Classroom: A List for All Grade Levels”
<http://www.graphicclassroom.org/2008/01/best-comics-for-your-classroom-list-for.html>
- “Graphic Novels Reading Lists: 2016 Update”
<http://www.ala.org/alsc/publications-resources/book-lists/graphicnovels2016>
- “Great Graphic Novels for Middle School”
<https://www.kirkusreviews.com/lists/great-graphic-novels-middle-school/>
- “Powerful Graphic Novels for Middle School”
<https://www.edutopia.org/article/powerful-graphic-novels-middle-school>
- “Top 10 Graphic Novels 2015”
<http://www.slj.com/2015/11/reviews/best-of/top-10-graphic-novels-2015/>
- “Top 10 Graphic Novels 2016”
<http://www.slj.com/2016/11/reviews/best-of/top-10-graphic-novels-2016/>
- “Comic Relief: Thirty-Nine Graphic Novels that Kids Can’t Resist”
<http://www.slj.com/2011/07/collection-development/comic-relief-thirty-nine-graphic-novels-that-kids-cant-resist/>
- “Graphic Novels for (Really) Young Readers”
<http://www.slj.com/2006/03/collection-development/graphic-novels-for-really-young-readers/>

ARTICLES: USING GRAPHIC NOVELS IN THE CLASSROOM

The following online articles provide information about using comics and graphic novels in the classrooms:

- “Graphic Novels for Young Kids” by Reading Rockets
<http://www.readingrockets.org/article/graphic-novels-young-kids>
- “Graphic Novel Conversation with ESL Teacher Colleen Dykema”
<http://www.readingrockets.org/blogs/book-life/graphic-novel-conversion>
- “Using Comics and Graphic Novels in the Classroom” by NCTE
<http://www.ncte.org/magazine/archives/122031>
- “Eek! Comics in the Classroom” by Linda Starr
http://www.educationworld.com/a_curr/profdev/profdev105.shtml
- “Comic Book Science in the Classroom” NPR Broadcast with Sarah Hughes
<http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=4581832>
- “Hamlet' too hard? Try a comic book” by Teresa Mendez
<https://www.csmonitor.com/2004/1012/p11s01-legn.html>
- “Graphic Novels in the Classroom: A Teacher Roundtable”
<https://www.cultofpedagogy.com/teaching-graphic-novels/>
- “Graphic Novels: The Bridge Between Visual and Print Media” by Stan Steiner
<https://www.literacyworldwide.org/blog/literacy-daily/2017/05/08/graphic-novels-the-bridge-between-visual-and-print-media>

ONLINE RESOURCES FOR COMIC STRIPS

The following online websites and articles provide lesson plans for creating comic strips.

Websites

- Comics in the Classroom
<http://comicsintheclassroom.net/>
- Teaching Comics
<http://www.teachingcomics.org/>

Articles and Lesson Plans

- “Comic Strip Creations Lesson Plan”
<https://www.scholastic.com/teachers/lesson-plans/teaching-content/comic-strip-creations/>
- “Comic Creator”
<http://www.readwritethink.org/classroom-resources/student-interactives/comic-creator-30021.html?tab=4>
- “Comics in the Classroom as an Introduction to Genre Study”
<http://www.readwritethink.org/classroom-resources/lesson-plans/comics-classroom-introduction-genre-188.html>
- “Comics in the Classroom as an Introduction to Narrative Structure”
<http://www.readwritethink.org/classroom-resources/lesson-plans/comics-classroom-introduction-narrative-223.html>

- “Book Report Alternative: Comic Strips and Cartoon Squares”
<http://www.readwritethink.org/classroom-resources/lesson-plans/book-report-alternative-comic-195.html>
- “Using Cartoons and Comic Strips”
<http://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/article/using-cartoons-comic-strips>
- “Creating Comic Strips”
http://artsedge.kennedy-center.org/educators/lessons/grade-3-4/creating_comic_strips.aspx
- “The Secret in the Cellar: A Written in Bone Forensic Mystery from Colonial America”
<http://anthropology.si.edu/writteninbone/comic/index.html>
- “Creative Writing Using Comics Lesson Plan”
<https://eduref.org/lessons/language-arts/wcp0013>

ABOUT THE EDUCATION RESOURCE GUIDE CONTRIBUTOR

Renée Critcher Lyons is an assistant professor in the School Library Media Program at East Tennessee State University, teaching children’s and young adult literature to future librarians. Prior to her appointment at ETSU, she served as both a school (elementary, middle, and high school) and instructional (community college) librarian. Reneé is the author of three books: *Teaching Civics in the Library: An Instructional and Historical Guide for School and Public Librarians* (McFarland, 2015); *Foreign-Born American Patriots: Sixteen Volunteer Leaders in the Revolutionary War* (2013); and *The Revival of Banned Dances: A Worldwide Study* (2012). She is a graduate of Vermont College of Fine Arts (MFA in Writing for Children and Young Adults) and Appalachian State University (Master of Library Science).

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