



Written by [Raven Clabough](#) on March 20, 2010

## Diary of a Wimpy Kid: Great for Whole Family!

“I’ll be famous one day, but for now I’m stuck in middle school with a bunch of morons.” Greg Heffley’s perception of middle school was less than optimistic — in fact, he thought it was the dumbest idea ever invented. What middle schooler wouldn’t agree? That’s why *Diary of a Wimpy Kid* proved to be a popular book series and now a hit movie to boot!



Director Thor Freudenthal’s *Diary of a Wimpy Kid* stays true to the nature of the beloved series, devoid of the cheesy singing and dancing that typically appears in children’s movies. Instead, moviegoers are greeted by Greg Heffley (Zachary Gordon) as he starts his first day of middle school. He repeatedly acknowledges the jungle-like quality of the middle school environment, loaded with struggles for popularity and survival. Greg’s 6th grade experience is characterized by beatings from bullies and awkward extracurriculars, but is redeemed by his friendships.

*Diary of a Wimpy Kid* is a delightful movie that manages to appeal to audiences of all ages. Greg’s diary chronicles the humiliating moments shared with his overweight, yet loveable, friend Rowley (Robert Capron). Kids can relate to Greg, whose realization that he is surrounded by “morons” unfortunately does not arm him with the skills necessary to outwit or outlast them. Simultaneously, adults will find themselves shudder horrifically in their theater seats amidst the flood of middle-school memories that return.

Author Jeff Kinney has compiled ideas for *Diary of a Wimpy Kid* since 1998. Six years later, he published it as an online book in daily installments. Currently, the online version has more than 80 million visits, read by approximately 70,000 kids a day.

As a book series, *Diary of a Wimpy Kid* debuted only three-years ago, but was quickly welcomed into the hearts of elementary and middle school students alike. In fact, shortly after its release in 2007, *Diary of a Wimpy Kid* became a *New York Times* bestseller.

While the language and story elements are relatively unchallenging, the 224 pages that comprise each book help parents and teachers to forgive the series’ simplicity. Any opportunity to encourage a child’s reading is always welcomed, am I right?

Some parents have contested Greg’s moral lapses, devotion to laziness, and irresponsibility. There is validity in their claims, though Greg has redeeming qualities too including a conscience. Moreover, his lapses often have bad consequences and teach him that there is a better path that hopefully he’ll be



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better able to follow as he matures. Greg's trials and tribulations should provide an excellent opportunity for parents to discuss the moral lessons with their children. Greg's imperfect character is the perfect outlet for students, one through whom students can live vicariously. In truth, we all need characters like that. How often have you felt yourself vindicated by the actions of literary or on-screen characters — who may not be picture perfect but to whom we can relate? It is one of the many reasons people read!

In fact, Kinney was inspired to create a character that he believed was more relatable than the heroes we typically encounter. Kinney explains, "He's not a bad kid, but he's not a fully formed human being. All the humor comes from his flaws." Kinney adds that one of the film's producers even compared Greg to Larry David of *Curb Your Enthusiasm*. "His character acts sort of despicably but you root for him anyway." In many ways, the flawed and often unsuccessful Greg is reminiscent of Charlie Brown.

Jeff Kinney managed to deflate the excitement and inflate the anxiety of the middle school experience, in much the same way children do. Pre-teens will rejoice in an on-screen character like Greg.

The movie is rated PG for some rude humor.



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