

# DIARY

## of a Wimpy Kid

### THE MELTDOWN

National  
Literacy  
Trust

Changing life stories

In *Diary of a Wimpy Kid: The Meltdown* snow shuts down Greg Heffley's middle school and his neighbourhood transforms into a wintry battlefield. Rival groups fight over territory, build massive snow forts and stage epic snowball fights and Greg and his trusty best friend Rowley Jefferson fight for survival. When the snow clears, will they emerge as heroes, or will they even survive?

#### THE COMPETITION

Imagine that there has been a wild snowstorm overnight, in which 5 feet of fresh snow has fallen. You open your window, dash downstairs and listen to the radio with great anticipation. And then you hear it, your school is closed due to heavy snow! Hurray! What happens next, now that your local area has been transformed by a blanket of snow? Just like Greg and Rowley, will you take part in an epic snowball fight or have to fight for survival? Write a diary entry about the most exciting snow day you ever had or can imagine.

#### SETTING THE SCENE

First inspire your pupils to use all of their senses to recall their snow day memories. You could transform your classroom into a wintry battlefield by using fake snow and scattering the area with objects you might find on a snow day, such as sledges and lost mittens. Take a look at the ideas on the following pages to help pupils set the scene for their entry.





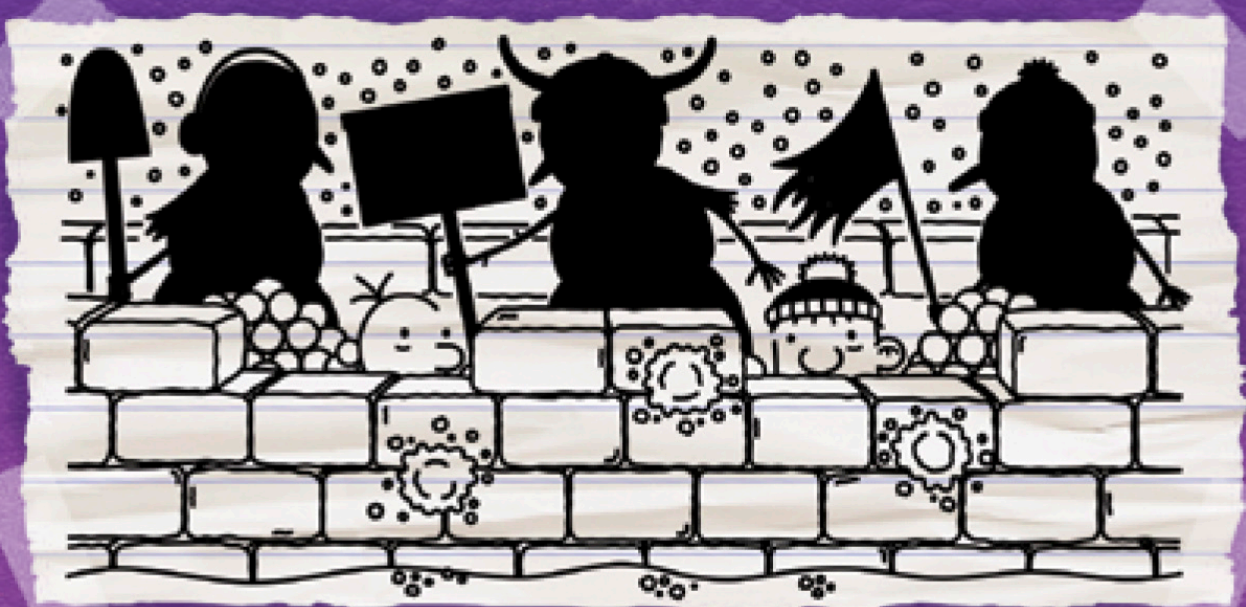
# Teacher Resource

## Snow Soundscape

Show a picture of a snow scene through a window. Ask pupils to imagine they have just woken up on a snow day and looked out the window to reveal a snow-covered landscape. What do they hear on the streets or in the distance? Using their hands and voices, they need to create the sounds they would hear on a snowy morning. For example it could be the scrapping of a shovel against the path or the creeping of the cars along the road. Then show them a picture of a busy snow day, filled with snow activities and games, and ask them to create the sounds that they would hear now, for example children laughing, the thud of snowballs and the crunch of sledges down the hill. Use your hands to control the volume of the two soundscapes. Then ask them to think of onomatopoeic words to describe both scenes.

## Snowball Synonyms

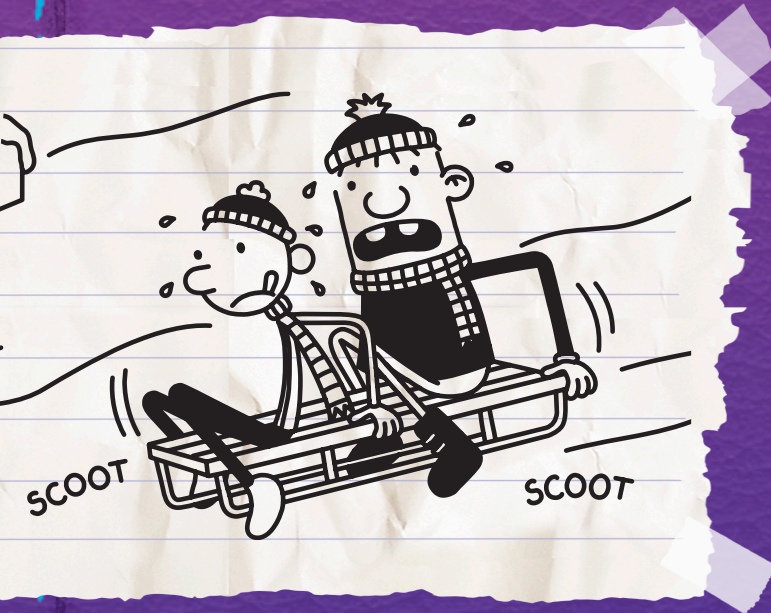
Ask pupils to write the word SNOW and their name on a blank piece of white paper and scribble down as many adjectives to describe snow as they can, including when it is freshly laid and what it is like after a few days. Then ask them to scrunch up the paper into a 'snowball' and throw it into the middle of the room. Next, they need to choose a different ball from the pile and a different coloured pencil. This time they should write a synonym for at least one of the adjectives on the snowball they have chosen, then scrunch it up and throw it back into the centre. Repeat a number of times and then return the snowball to its original owner.





## Snow How You Feel

Gather together a selection of snow-related objects and clothing items, such as a scarf, bobble hat, carrot, mittens and sled and display around the room. Ask pupils to choose an object that evokes the most emotion from them and sit in a circle around it. Then, they need to take turns to hold the object, close their eyes and think of an emotion attached to that object. Encourage them to recall a memory surrounding that item as they do so. Pupils should write this emotion on a Post-It note and place it in the middle of the circle. Continue until they cannot think of any more words to describe their feelings associated with this object.



## Funny Freeze Frame

Ask pupils to imagine and then act out an action that they might do on a snow day. For example, building a snowman, sticking out their tongue to catch snow or creating a snow angel. Then, choose a freeze frame to demonstrate it and ask them to think of another action that could make the frame funny, such as getting your tongue stuck on a lamppost or jumping into a pile of hard snow. Pupils need to demonstrate the funny freeze frame when you call MELTDOWN!

## WRITING A DIARY ENTRY

Help pupils to structure their diary entry using the key features below:

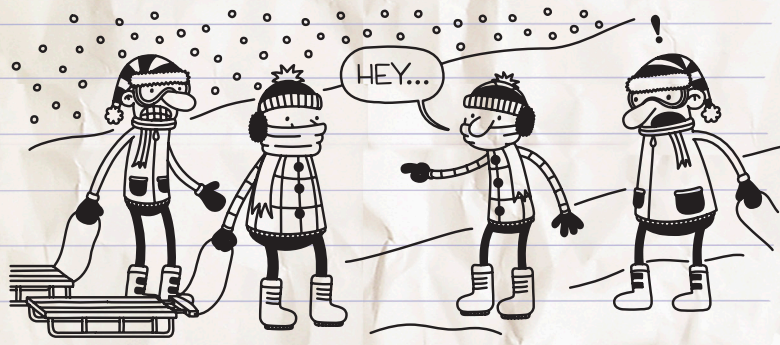
### Features of a Diary

Look at a page from *Diary of a Wimpy Kid: The Meltdown* or one of the other titles and identify different features in the text using Resource 1 (Features of a diary). Pupils should choose one example for each feature. For example XXX as an example of informal and chatty language. (Because *Diary of a Wimpy Kid* is hilarious, they will also spot humour, which is not always typical of a diary entry!)

### In the Past

Diary entries are written in the past tense, as they are describing events that have already happened. Ask pupils to write down as many verbs as they can on a large piece of paper, or use chalk on the playground, to describe what they would do on a snow day. For example build (a snowman), throw (a snowball), stretch (out like an angel). Then ask them to choose a different colour and write the word in the past tense.





### **But I Built the Snowman First!**

Explain that you always write a diary entry in the first person, to record what you did that day. To practise writing in first person, ask pupils to describe how their friend built a snowman. For example, 'First she found two sticks for arms, then she stuck

a carrot in the middle for the nose.' Then they need to give their entry to their partner, who needs to choose a different coloured pencil, cross out all of the uses of 'she/he' and change to the word 'I'.

### **Chronological Comic and Connectives**

Ask pupils to decide whether their diary entry will recall the whole day or just one event and write down the date and time that it happened. Then, ask them to break the event down into three parts to create a beginning, middle and end. Write one sentence for each part and include a time connective. For example, 'First I jumped in a huge pile of fluffy snow. Then, I created snow angels. Lastly, we had a gigantic snowball fight.' They should then draw a comic strip to illustrate the order in which the events occurred using Resource 2 (Chronological comic). They could use line drawings, similar to Jeff Kinney's, if they would like to.

### **Chatty Battlefield**

Explain that diary entries use more informal, chatty language than other types of descriptive writing. In pairs, ask pupils to take turns to choose one of the formal sentences on Resource 3 (Chatty battlefield) and read it aloud. Then, they need to race their partner to create a more informal way of saying the same thing. The partner who uses the most informal sentences wins the battle.

### **Roll up Rhetorical**

Explain that it is important to include self-reflection throughout their diary entry. One way to do that is by asking yourself rhetorical questions that you don't expect answers to. For example 'Why did I go outside without a coat?' Explain that you can also reflect on your rhetorical question, by providing a reflective answer. Ask pupils to think of a silly thing they would do on a snow day, then choose a rhetorical question and reflective answer. 'Why would I lick the snow off the lamp post? Now my tongue is stuck!'