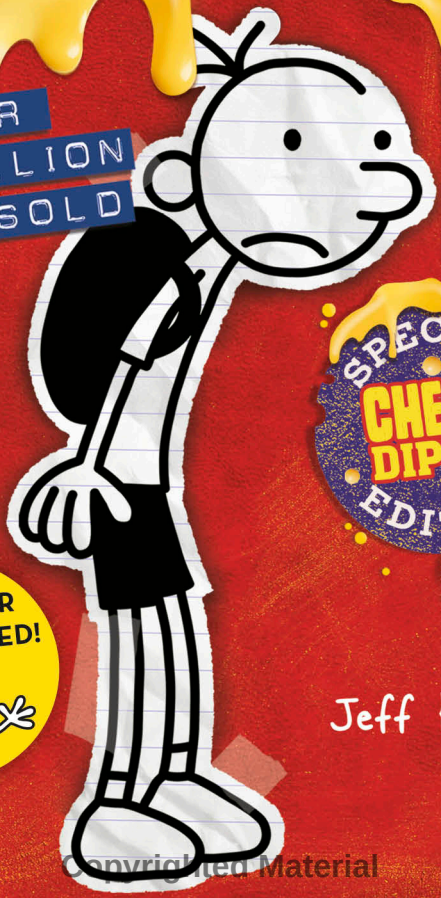
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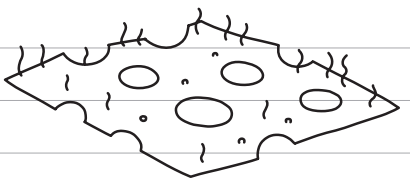


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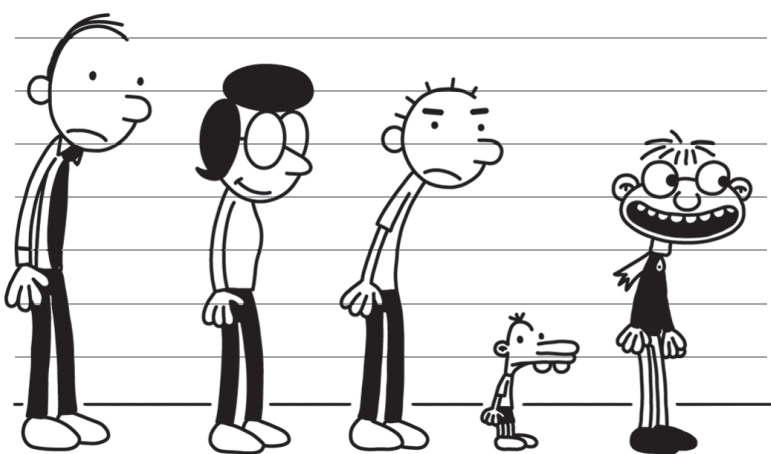
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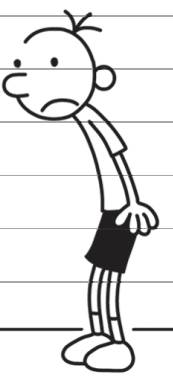
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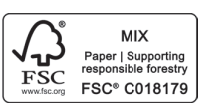
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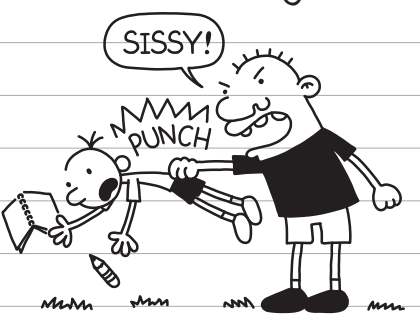
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SEPTEMBER

Tuesday

First of all, let me get something straight: this is a JOURNAL, not a diary. I know what it says on the cover, but when Mom went out to buy this thing I SPECIFICALLY told her to get one that didn't say "diary" on it.

Great. All I need is for some jerk to catch me carrying this book around and get the wrong idea.

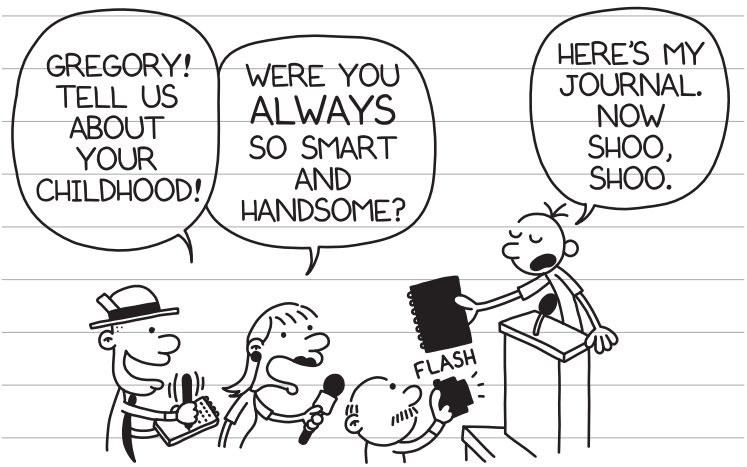


The other thing I want to clear up right away is that this was MOM's idea, not mine.

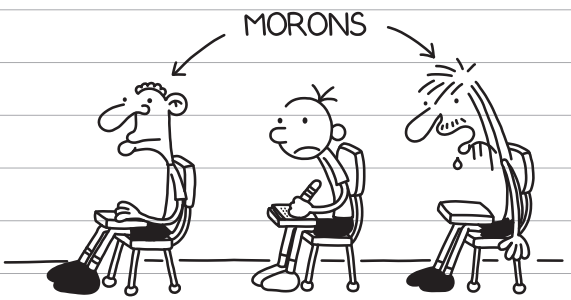
But if she thinks I'm going to write down my "feelings" in here or whatever, she's crazy. So just don't expect me to be all "Dear Diary" this and "Dear Diary" that.

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The only reason I agreed to do this at all is because I figure later on when I'm rich and famous, I'll have better things to do than answer people's stupid questions all day long. So this book is gonna come in handy.



Like I said, I'll be famous one day, but for now I'm stuck in middle school with a bunch of morons.



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Let me just say for the record that I think middle school is the dumbest idea ever invented. You've got kids like me who haven't hit their growth spurt yet mixed in with these gorillas who need to shave twice a day.



And then they wonder why bullying is such a big problem in middle school.

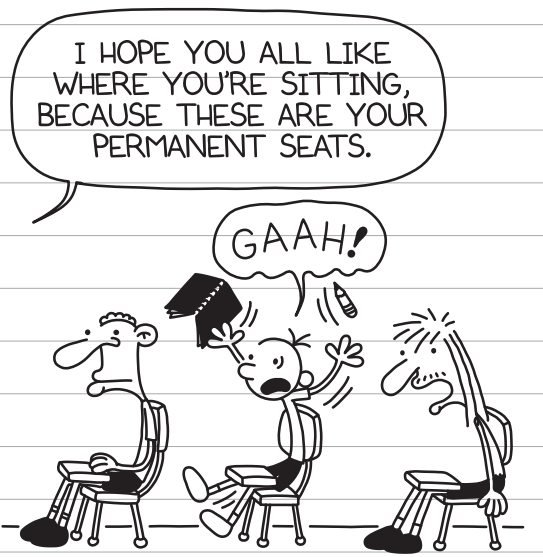
If it was up to me, grade levels would be based on height, not age. But then again, I guess that would mean kids like Chirag Gupta would still be in the first grade.



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Today is the first day of school, and right now we're just waiting around for the teacher to hurry up and finish the seating chart. So I figured I might as well write in this book to pass the time.

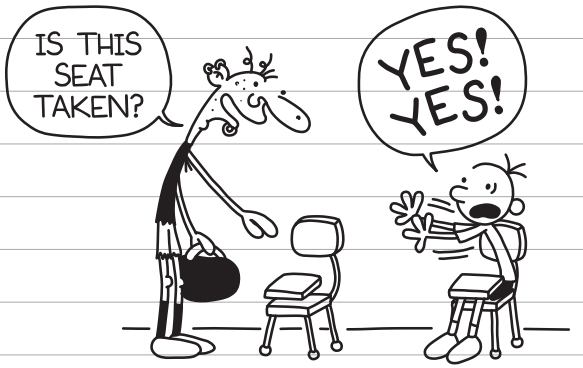
By the way, let me give you some good advice. On the first day of school, you've got to be real careful where you sit. You walk into the classroom and just plunk your stuff down on any old desk and the next thing you know the teacher is saying -



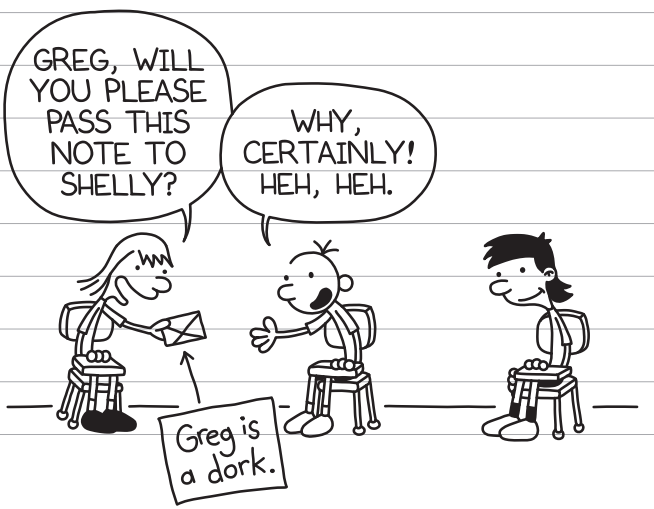
So in this class, I got stuck with Chris Hosey in front of me and Lionel James at the back of me.

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Jason Brill came in late and almost sat to my right, but luckily I stopped that from happening at the last second.



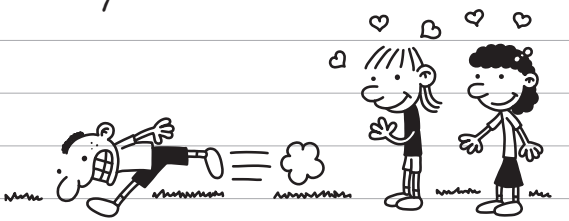
Next period, I should just sit in the middle of a bunch of hot girls as soon as I step in the room. But I guess if I do that, it just proves I didn't learn anything from last year.



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Man, I don't know WHAT is up with girls these days. It used to be a whole lot simpler back in elementary school. The deal was, if you were the fastest runner in your class, you got all the girls.

And in the fifth grade, the fastest runner was Ronnie McCoy.



Nowadays, it's a whole lot more complicated. Now it's about the kind of clothes you wear or how rich you are or if you have a cute butt or whatever. And kids like Ronnie McCoy are scratching their heads wondering what the heck happened.

The most popular boy in my grade is Bryce Anderson. The thing that really stinks is that I have ALWAYS been into girls, but kids like Bryce have only come around in the last couple of years.

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I remember how Bryce used to act back in elementary school.



But of course now I don't get any credit for sticking with the girls all this time.

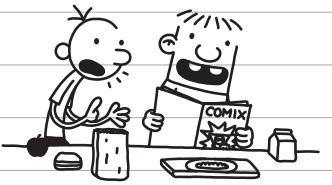
Like I said, Bryce is the most popular kid in our grade, so that leaves all the rest of us guys scrambling for the other spots.

The best I can figure is that I'm somewhere around 52nd or 53rd most popular this year. But the good news is that I'm about to move up one spot because Charlie Davies is above me, and he's getting his braces next week.



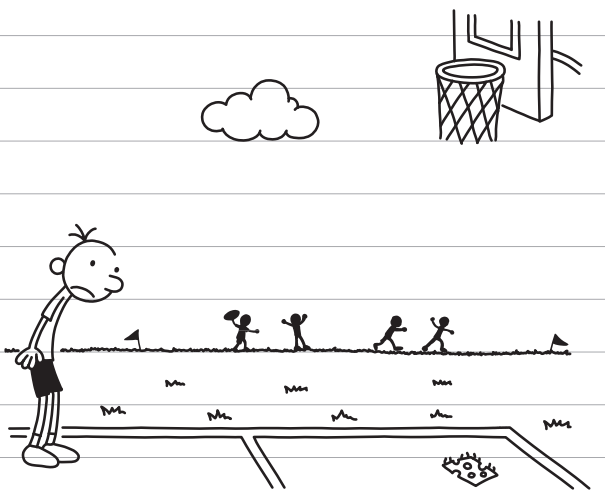
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I try to explain all this popularity stuff to my friend Rowley (who is probably hovering right around the 150 mark, by the way), but I think it just goes in one ear and out the other with him.



Wednesday

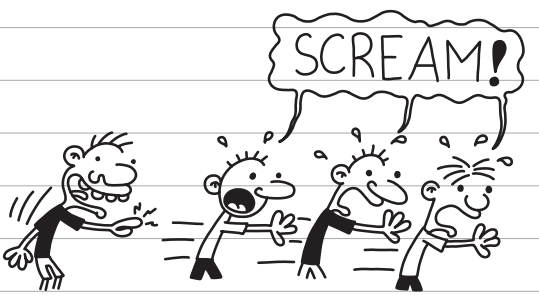
Today we had Phys Ed, so the first thing I did when I got outside was sneak off to the basketball court to see if the Cheese was still there. And sure enough, it was.



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That piece of Cheese has been sitting on the court since last spring. I guess it must've dropped out of someone's sandwich or something. After a couple of days, the Cheese started getting all mouldy and nasty. Nobody would play basketball on the court where the Cheese was, even though that was the only court that had a hoop with a net.

Then one day, this kid named Darren Walsh touched the Cheese with his finger, and that's what started this thing called the Cheese Touch. It's basically like the Cooties. If you get the Cheese Touch, you're stuck with it until you pass it on to someone else.



The only way to protect yourself from the Cheese Touch is to cross your fingers.

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But it's not that easy remembering to keep your fingers crossed every moment of the day. I ended up taping mine together so they'd stay crossed all the time. I got a D in handwriting, but it was totally worth it.

This one kid named Abe Hall got the Cheese Touch in April, and nobody would even come near him for the rest of the year. This summer Abe moved away to California and took the Cheese Touch with him.

I just hope someone doesn't start the Cheese Touch up again, because I don't need that kind of stress in my life any more.

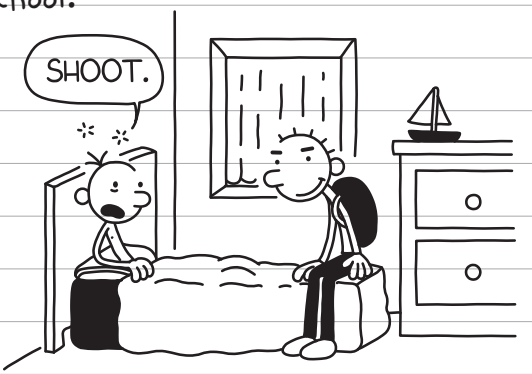
Thursday

I'm having a seriously hard time getting used to the fact that summer is over and I have to get out of bed every morning to go to school.

My summer did not exactly get off to a great start, thanks to my older brother Rodrick.

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A couple of days into summer vacation, Rodrick woke me up in the middle of the night. He told me I slept through the whole summer, but that luckily I woke up just in time for the first day of school.

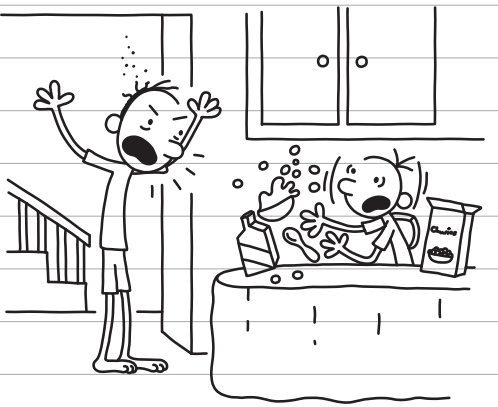


You might think I was pretty dumb for falling for that one, but Rodrick was dressed up in his school clothes and he'd set my alarm clock ahead to make it look like it was the morning. Plus, he closed my curtains so I couldn't see that it was still dark out.

After Rodrick woke me up, I just got dressed and went downstairs to make myself some breakfast, like I do every morning on a school day.

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But I guess I must have made a pretty big racket because the next thing I knew, Dad was downstairs, yelling at me for eating Cheerios at 3:00 in the morning.



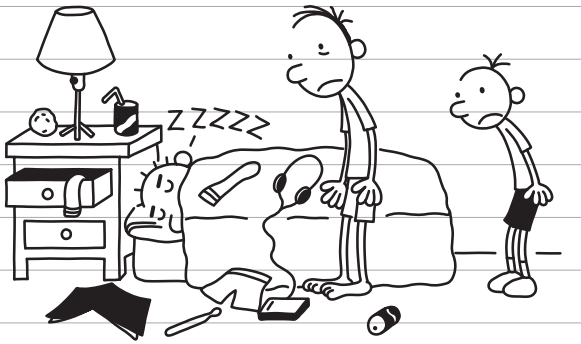
It took me a minute to figure out what the heck was going on.

After I did, I told Dad that Rodrick had played a trick on me, and HE was the one that should be getting yelled at.

Dad walked down to the basement to chew Rodrick out, and I tagged along. I couldn't wait to see Rodrick get what was coming to him.

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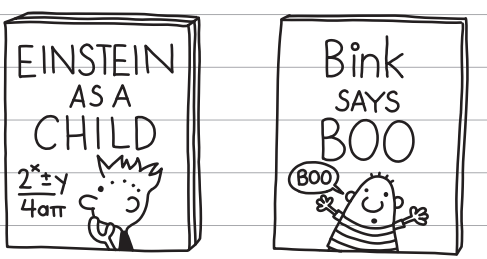
But Rodrick covered up his tracks pretty good. And to this day, I'm sure Dad thinks I've got a screw loose or something.



Friday

Today at school we got assigned to reading groups.

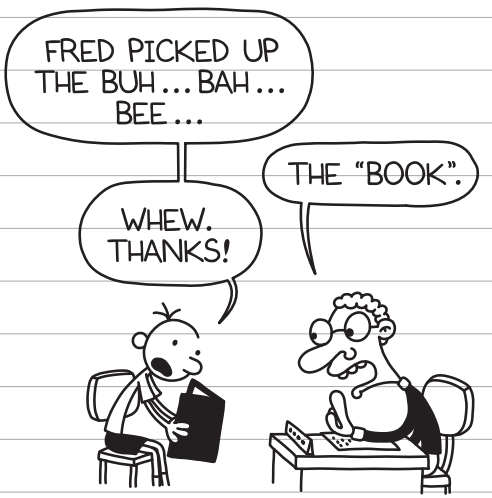
They don't come right out and tell you if you're in the Gifted group or the Easy group, but you can figure it out right away by looking at the covers of the books they hand out.



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I was pretty disappointed to find out I got put in the Gifted group, because that just means a lot of extra work.

When they did the screening at the end of last year, I did my best to make sure I got put in the Easy group this year.

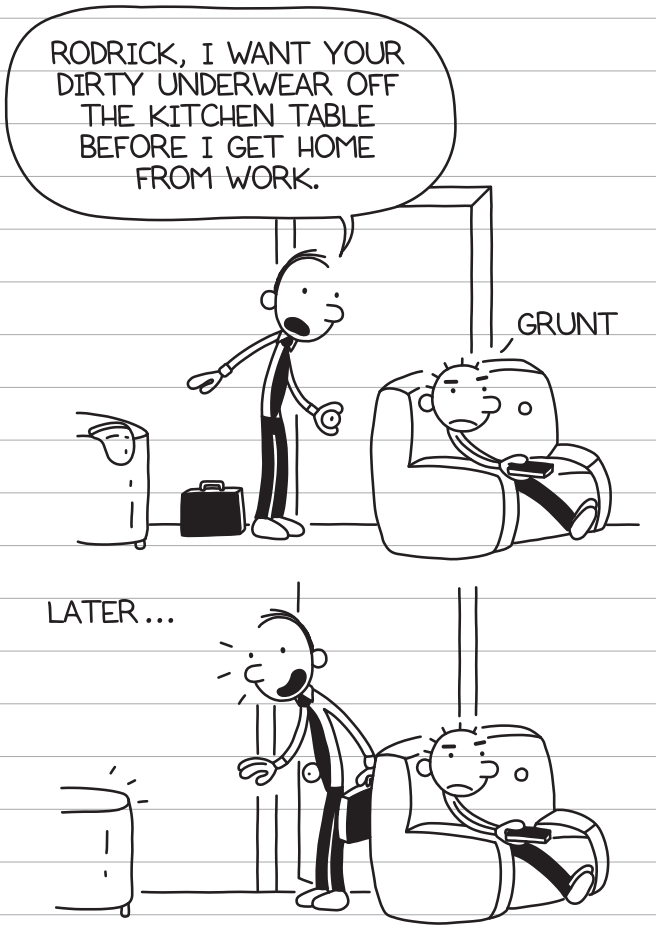


Mom is real tight with our principal, so I'll bet she stepped in and made sure I got put in the Gifted group again.

Mom is always saying I'm a smart kid, but that I just don't "apply" myself.

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But if there's one thing I learned from Rodrick, it's to set people's expectations real low so you end up surprising them by practically doing nothing at all.



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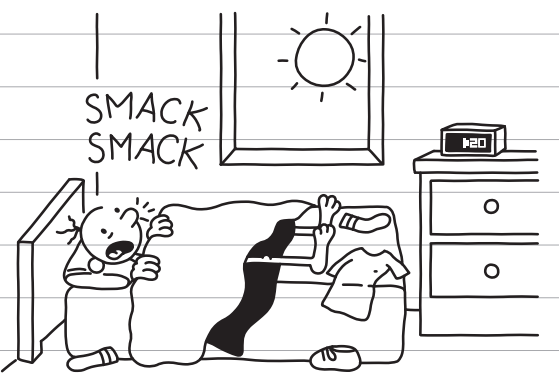
Actually, I'm kind of glad my plan to get put in the Easy group didn't work.

I saw a couple of the "Bink Says Boo" kids holding their books upside down, and I don't think they were joking.

Saturday

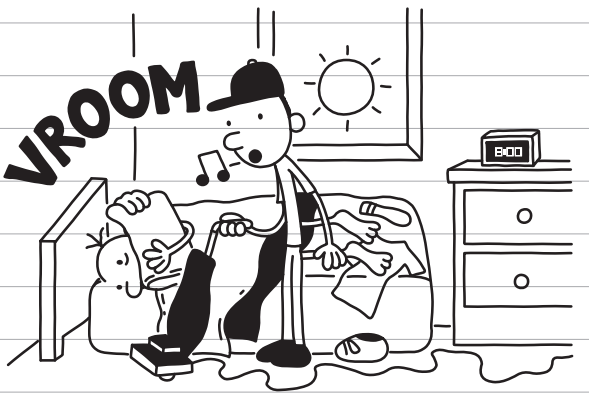
Well, the first week of school is finally over, so today I slept in.

Most kids wake up early on Saturday to watch cartoons or whatever, but not me. The only reason I get out of bed at all on weekends is because eventually I can't stand the taste of my own breath any more.



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Unfortunately, Dad wakes up at 6:00 in the morning no matter WHAT day of the week it is, and he is not real considerate of the fact that I am trying to enjoy my Saturday like a normal person.



I didn't have anything to do today so I just headed up to Rowley's house.

Rowley is technically my best friend, but that is definitely subject to change.

I've been avoiding Rowley since the first day of school, when he did something that really annoyed me.

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