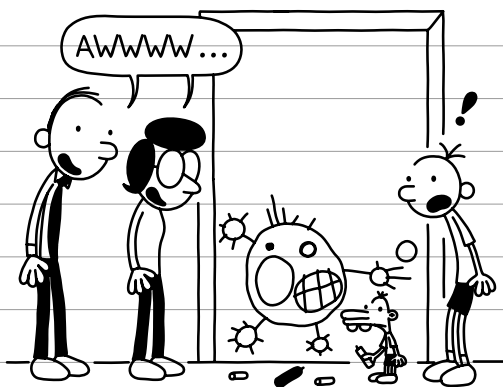


Monday

You know how I said I play all sorts of pranks on Rowley? Well, I have a little brother named Manny, and I could NEVER get away with pulling any of that stuff on him.

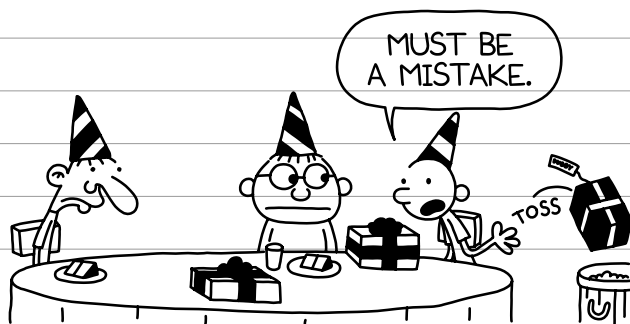
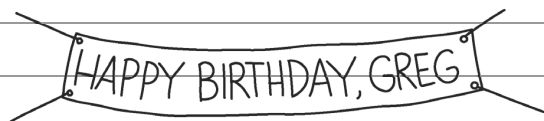
Mum and Dad protect Manny like he's a prince or something. And he never gets in trouble, even if he really deserves it.

Yesterday, Manny drew a self-portrait on my bedroom door in permanent marker. I thought Mum and Dad were really going to let him have it, but as usual, I was wrong.

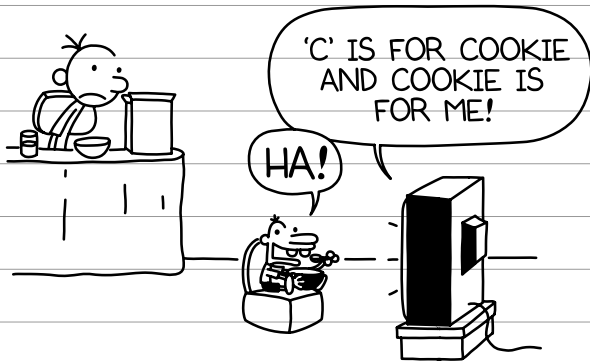


But the thing that bugs me the most about Manny is the nickname he has for me. When he was a baby, he couldn't pronounce 'brother', so he started calling me 'Bubby'. And he STILL calls me that now, even though I keep trying to get Mum and Dad to make him stop.

Luckily none of my friends have found out yet, but believe me, I have had some really close calls.



Mum makes me help Manny get ready for school in the morning. After I make Manny his breakfast, he carries his cereal bowl into the family room and sits on his plastic potty.



And when it's time for him to go to day care, he gets up and dumps whatever he didn't eat right in the toilet.



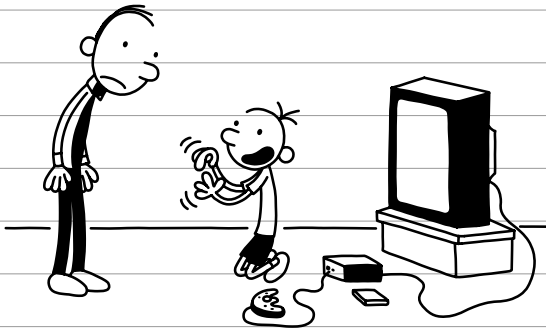
Mum is always getting on me about not finishing my breakfast. But if she had to scrape corn flakes out of the bottom of a plastic potty every morning, she wouldn't have much of an appetite either.

Tuesday

I don't know if I mentioned this before, but I am SUPER good at video games. I'll bet I could beat anyone in my grade head-to-head.

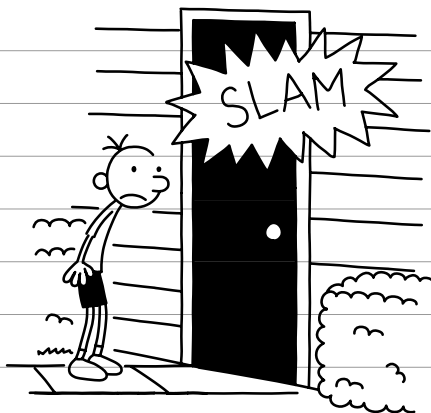
Unfortunately, Dad does not exactly appreciate my skills. He's always getting on me about going out and doing something 'active'.

So tonight after dinner when Dad started hassling me about going outside, I tried to explain how with video games, you can play sports like football and soccer, and you don't even get all hot and sweaty.

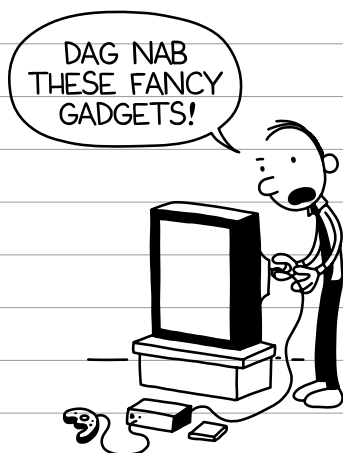


But as usual, Dad didn't see my logic.

Dad is a pretty smart guy in general but when it comes to common sense, sometimes I wonder about him.



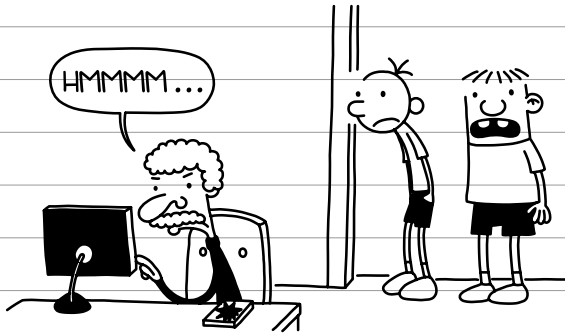
I'm sure Dad would dismantle my game system if he could figure out how to do it. But luckily, the people who make these things make them parent-proof.



Every time Dad kicks me out of the house to do something sporty, I just go up to Rowley's and play my video games there.

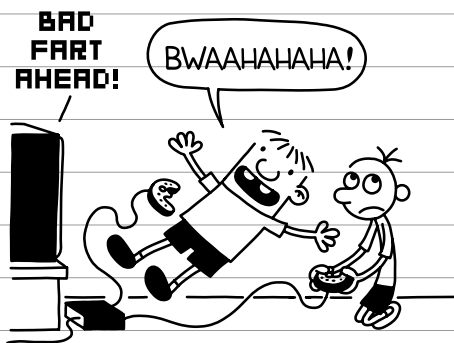
Unfortunately, the only games I can play at Rowley's are car-racing games and stuff like that.

Because whenever I bring a game up to Rowley's house, his dad looks it up on some parents' Web site. And if my game has ANY kind of fighting or violence in it, he won't let us play.

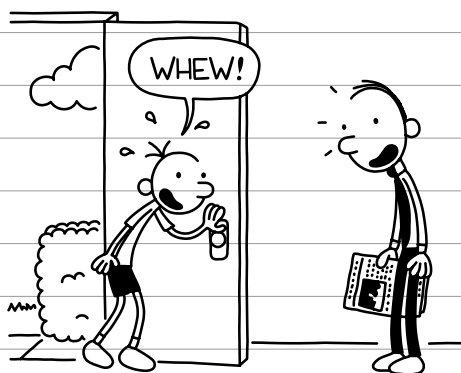


I'm getting a little sick of playing Formula One Racing with Rowley, because he's not a serious gamer like me. All that you have to do to beat Rowley is name your car something ridiculous at the beginning of the game.

And then when you pass Rowley's car, he just falls to pieces.



Anyway, after I got done mopping the floor with Rowley today, I headed home. I ran through the neighbour's sprinkler a couple of times to make it look like I was all sweaty, and that seemed to do the trick for Dad.

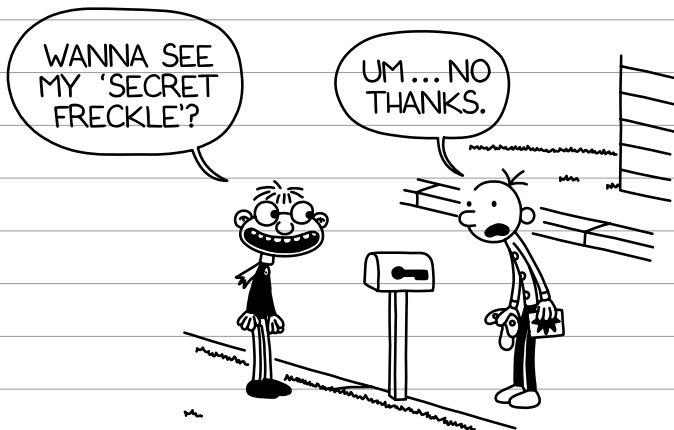


But my trick kind of backfired, because as soon as Mum saw me, she made me go upstairs and take a shower.

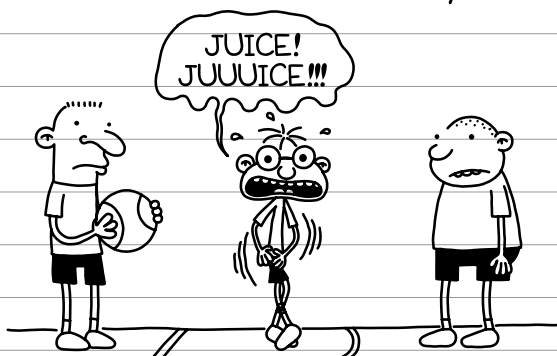
Wednesday

I guess Dad must have been pretty happy with himself for making me go outside yesterday, because he did it again today.

It's getting really annoying to have to go up to Rowley's every time I want to play a video game. There's this weird kid named Fregley who lives halfway between my house and Rowley's, and Fregley is always hanging out in his front yard. So it's pretty hard to avoid him.



Fregley is in my Phys Ed class at school, and he has this whole made-up language. Like when he needs to go to the bathroom, he says —



Us kids have pretty much figured Fregley out by now, but I don't think the teachers have really caught on yet.

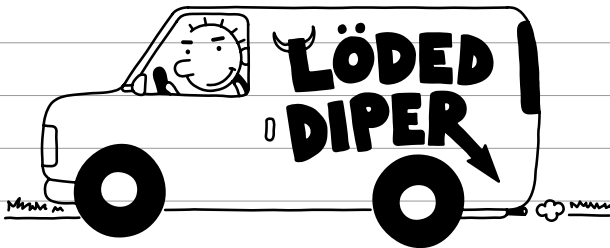


Today, I probably would have gone up to Rowley's on my own anyway, because my brother Rodrick and his band were practising down in the basement.

Rodrnick's band is REALLY awful, and I can't stand being home when they're having rehearsals.

His band is called 'Loaded Diaper', only it's spelled 'Löded Diper' on Rodrick's van.

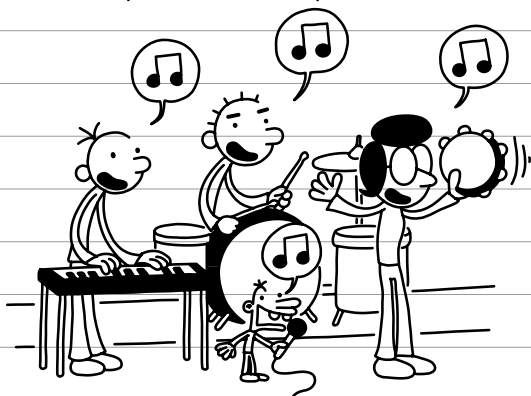
You might think he spelled it that way to make it look cooler, but I bet if you told Rodrick how 'Loaded Diaper' is really spelled, it would be news to him.



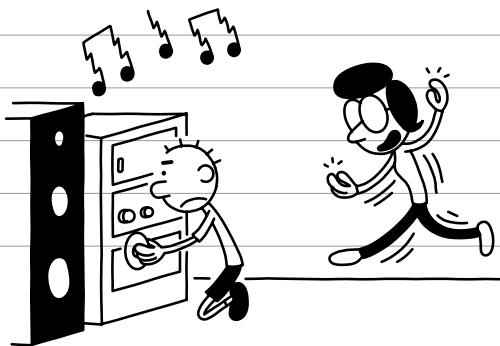
Dad was against the idea of Rodrick starting a band, but Mum was all for it.

She's the one who bought Rodrick his first drum set.

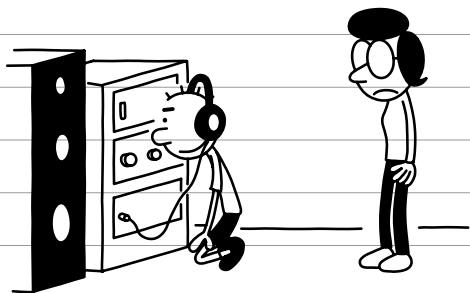
I think Mum has this idea that we're all going to learn to play instruments and then become one of those family bands like you see on TV.



Dad really hates heavy metal, and that's the kind of music Rodrick and his band play. I don't think Mum really cares what Rodrick plays or listens to, because to her, all music is the same. In fact, earlier today, Rodrick was listening to one of his CDs in the family room, and Mum came in and started dancing.



That really bugged Rodrick, so he drove off to the store and came back fifteen minutes later with some headphones. And that pretty much took care of the problem.



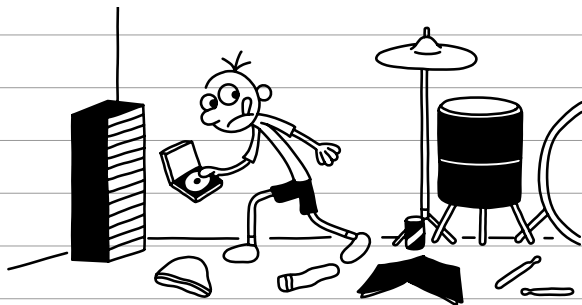
Thursday

Yesterday Rodrick got a new heavy metal CD, and it had one of those 'Parental Warning' stickers on it.

I have never gotten to listen to one of those Parental Warning CDs, because Mum and Dad never let me buy them at the mall. So I realised the only way I was gonna get a chance to listen to Rodrick's CD was if I snuck it out of the house.

This morning, after Rodrick left, I called up Rowley and told him to bring his CD player to school.

Then I went down to Rodrick's room and took the CD off his rack.

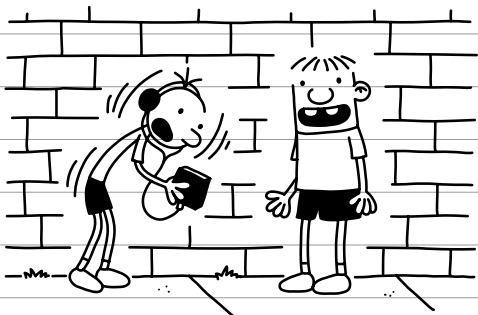


You're not allowed to bring personal music players to school, so we had to wait to use it until after lunch when the teachers let us outside. As soon as we got the chance, me and Rowley snuck around the back of the school and loaded up Rodrick's CD.

But Rowley forgot to put batteries in his CD player, so it was pretty much worthless.

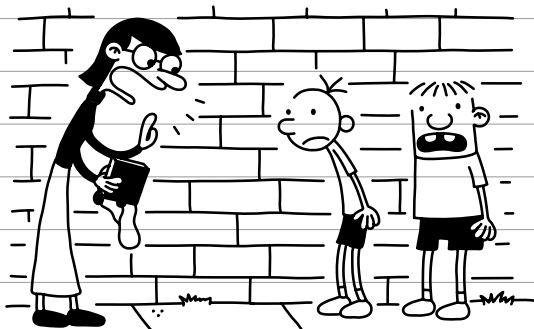
Then I came up with this great idea for a game. The object was to put the headphones on your head and then try to shake them off without using your hands.

The winner was whoever could shake the headphones off in the shortest amount of time.



I had the record with seven and a half seconds, but I think I might have shook some of my fillings loose with that one.

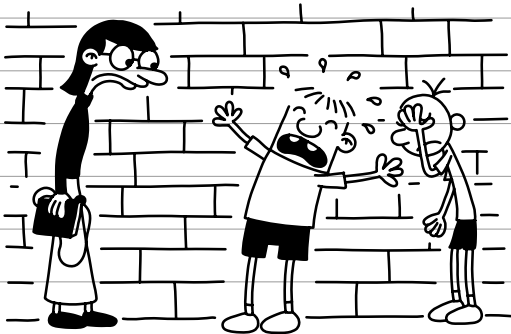
Right in the middle of our game, Mrs Craig came around the corner and caught us red-handed. She took the music player away from me and started chewing us out.



But I think she had the wrong idea about what we were doing back there. She started telling us how rock and roll is 'evil' and how it's going to ruin our brains.

I was going to tell her that there weren't even any batteries in the CD player, but I could tell she didn't want to be interrupted. So I just waited until she was done, and then I said, 'Yes, ma'am.'

But right when Mrs Craig was about to let us go, Rowley started blubbing about how he doesn't want rock and roll to ruin his 'brains'.



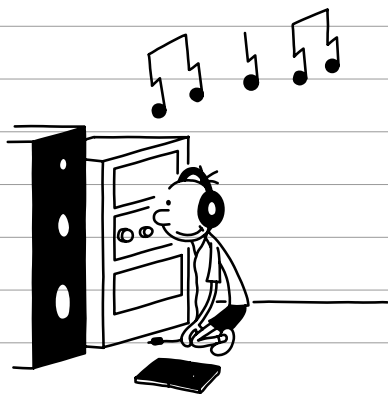
Honestly, sometimes I don't know about that boy.

Friday

Well, now I've gone and done it.

Last night, after everyone was in bed, I snuck downstairs to listen to Rodrick's CD on the stereo in the family room.

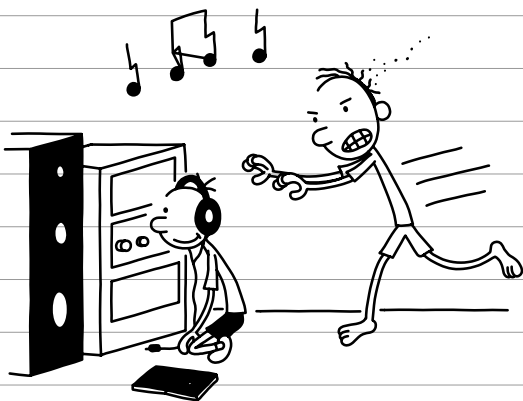
I put Rodrick's new headphones on and cranked up the volume REALLY high. Then I hit 'play'.



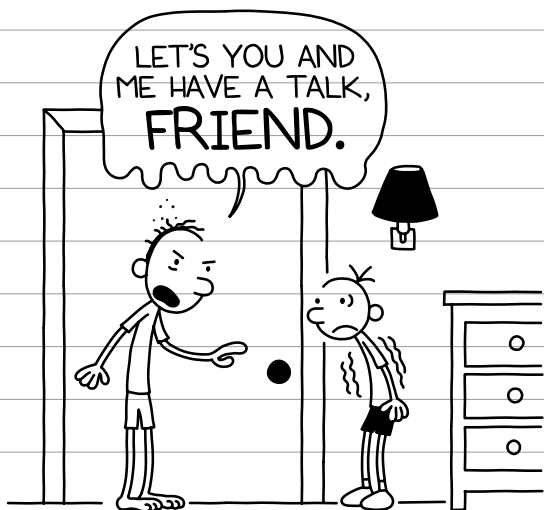
First, let me just say I can definitely understand why they put that 'Parental Warning' sticker on the CD.

But I only got to hear about thirty seconds of the first song before I got interrupted.

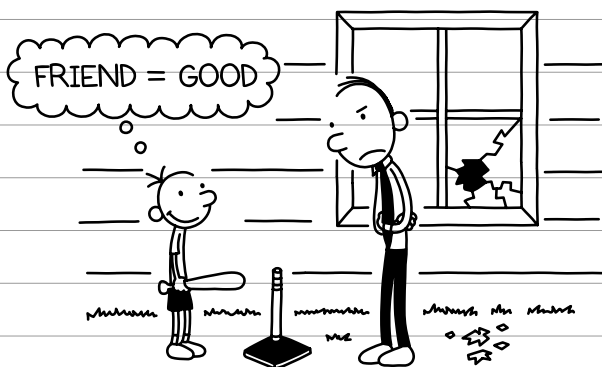
It turns out I didn't have the headphones plugged into the stereo. So the music was actually coming through the SPEAKERS, not the headphones.



Dad marched me up to my room and shut the door behind him, and then he said —



Whenever Dad says 'friend' that way, you know you're in trouble. The first time Dad ever said 'friend' like that to me, I didn't get that he was being sarcastic. So I kind of let my guard down.



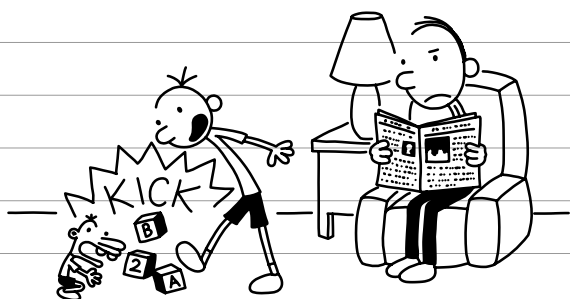
I don't make that mistake any more.

Tonight, Dad yelled at me for about ten minutes, and then I guess he decided he'd rather be in bed than standing in my room in his underwear. He told me I was grounded from playing video games for two weeks, which is about what I expected. I guess I should be glad that's all he did.

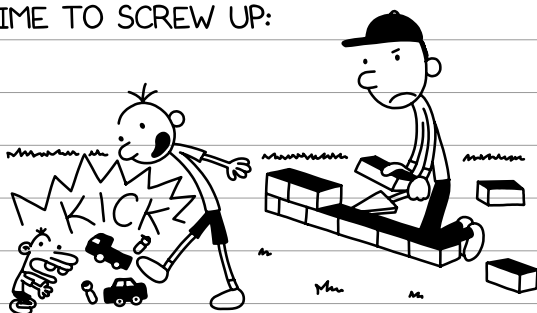
The good thing about Dad is that when he gets mad, he cools off real quick, and then it's over.

Usually, if you mess up in front of Dad, he just throws whatever he's got in his hands at you.

GOOD TIME TO SCREW UP:

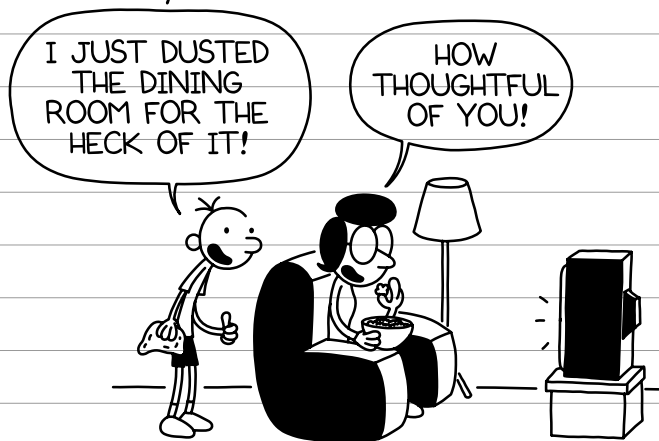


BAD TIME TO SCREW UP:



Mum has a TOTALLY different style when it comes to punishment. If you mess up and Mum catches you, the first thing she does is to take a few days to figure out what your punishment should be.

And while you're waiting, you do all these nice things to try to get off easier.



But then after a few days, right when YOU forget you're in trouble, that's when she lays it on you.

