

## Author of a Wimpy Kid



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Jeff Kinney is the author of *Diary of a Wimpy Kid*. He grew up in Forestville, Maryland. His father had a government job and worked at the Pentagon in nearby Virginia. His mother worked in education. He has an older brother and sister, and a younger brother.

Jeff says that he had a very normal, very American childhood. He lived in a quiet town in Maryland. Jeff says that's why he writes about normal, everyday things that happen in a family. Jeff's older siblings were in their teens. His younger brother was little and cute. Jeff says he was stuck somewhere in the middle, much like Greg Heffley in *Diary of a Wimpy Kid*. He says his experiences were very similar to those of Greg Heffley's, too.

Jeff didn't always want to be a children's book author. In fact, what he really wanted to do was create comic strips. He got his first chance to write comic strips in college.

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Jeff went to the University of Maryland in College Park, Maryland, which is only about 20 minutes away from Washington, DC. The university sits on a large, beautiful campus with rolling hills topped with impressive, colonial-style buildings. They are classically-styled brick buildings with grand front stairs leading to an entrance framed by two tall, white columns.

The University of Maryland (or just “Maryland,” as the college students call it) publishes a well-known student newspaper called *The Diamondback*. The newspaper is named for the university’s mascot, Testudo. The mascot is a diamondback terrapin. It is a turtle commonly found in and around the state of Maryland.

Jeff began creating a comic for *The Diamondback* in the early 1990s. It was called “Igdorf.” Igdorf was the name of the main character. He was kind of a nerdy dufus. Dufus is an old word from the 1980s and 1990s. It means dorky and kind of clumsy (and definitely not on fleek). The comic itself was pretty cute. It was definitely as clever and fun as any comic you might find in a national newspaper like *The Washington Post* or *The New York Times*.

Jeff continued creating his *Igdorf* comic strip for *The Diamondback* until he graduated from Maryland. He got a degree in Computer Science. Being a computer geek is more of a star-studded, nerdtastic career choice these days (think Facebook creator Mark Zuckerberg). But back in the 1990s, it was still just plain nerdy. That is not to say that Jeff Kinney himself was a big nerd (I’ve never met the guy). But he was definitely surrounded by nerds. It seems that his experiences in and around the computer science building may have a big influence



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on the characters and situations he created for *Diary of a Wimpy Kid*. For example, many people who study computer science love video games. Jeff admits that he used to be addicted to video games himself, just like Greg Heffley.

After graduating college, Jeff tried to get his comic “Igdorf” syndicated. That means that he tried to get a newspaper to print it and pay him to create it. But none ever did. Then Jeff had the idea for *Diary of a Wimpy Kid*. He felt like his drawings were much better suited for kids than for adults.

Jeff worked on the book for eight years before it got published. And he’s so glad he did! Today, Jeff has written a total of 16 Wimpy Kid books. They’ve been translated into many different languages and sold all over the world.

**Jeff Kinney at a book signing in Israel. He signs Hebrew translations of his books for his fans.**



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