

Joey Pigza Swallowed the Key
by Jack Gantos

A Teaching Unit

Sample Pack

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The highlighted chapters are below for you to print!

Joey Pigza Swallowed the Key

Chapter 1

Introducing Joey & Author's Style

Name: _____

Introducing Joey

Read the first two paragraphs in chapter one. Then answer the following questions.

1. From what point of view is this story told? _____

2. What is revealed about Joey in these first two paragraphs?

3. Do you think you would want Joey as a friend? _____ Why or why not?

Author's Writing Style

A style is a way of writing. It involves how something is said, not what is said. Many elements contribute to style, including word choice, sentence length, tone, and figurative language.

Two elements that Jack Gantos uses are evident in the very first chapter: long sentences and the use of figurative language.

Read the following long sentence that is written on page 4. Notice how long it is.

So I went and stood in the hall for about a second until I remembered the mini-Superball in my pocket and started to bounce it off the lockers and ceiling and after Mrs. Deeks in the next class stuck her head out the door and yelled, "Hey, cut the racket," like she was yelling at a stray cat, I remembered something I wanted to try.

Find one other place in chapter one where the author uses a long sentence. Write the page number and paragraph number. Page _____ Paragraph _____

Why are these long sentences effective? _____

Read the following similes that Gantos uses in chapter one.

"Okay. Joey," she'd say, calling on me and staring hard at my face as if her eyes were long fingers that could grip me by the chin.

Why is this simile effective? _____

"I had seen the Tasmanian Devil on TV whirling around like a top so I unbuckled my belt and pulled on the end really hard.

What two things are being compared in this simile? _____

Find three similes on page five in chapter one.

Joey Pigza Swallowed the Key
Chapter 4
Point of View & Flashback

Point of View

This novel is written in the first person point of view. That is an advantage because we really get to know Joey. However, it is a disadvantage because we never get to know what the other characters are thinking and feeling. The story would be much different if it were told in another point of view.

In chapter four, Joey swallows his key and gets sent to the special ed. classroom. Let's take a look at how different the story would be if it were told in another point of view.

Reread page 33 in chapter four. Then complete the following activities.

1. Rewrite the action from this passage from the point of view of Seth Justman.

2. Rewrite the action from this passage using the third person omniscient point of view.

3. Rewrite the action from this passage from the point of view of Mrs. Maxy.

Flashback – When a character remembers something from the past.
Find the flashback that Joey has on page thirty-one.

1. What is the flashback about? _____
2. What causes Joey to have this flashback? _____
3. What words signal the flashback? _____

Joey Pigza Swallowed the Key

Irony

Verbal irony is a contradiction between what is said and what is actually meant.

Example: My alarm clock battery dies, so I was late for school. When I opened my bookbag in first period, I realized my homework folder was still on the kitchen counter. And, to make it even better, my teacher, Mrs. Temperland, called on me to give the answer for the first vocabulary word on our homework sheet! It did not take me long to realize that the day was going to be perfect!

What is ironic about the passage? _____

Why is this ironic? _____

Dramatic irony is when the reader is aware of something that a character or characters does not.

Example: I still can't believe she opened that closet door! I knew that monster was in there!

What is ironic about the passage? _____

Why is this ironic? _____

Situational irony is contradiction in what actually happens to what is expected to happen. It is a twist of fate.

Example: Paul handed Sue a brightly covered package in hopes of helping her to forget about her best friend's recent move. When he placed the gift in her hand, instead of smiling, Sue burst into tears!

What is ironic about the passage? _____

Why is this ironic? _____

Joey Pigza Swallowed the Key
Chapter 13
Figurative Language & Irony

Figurative Language

Complete the following chart.

Passage	Type of figurative language used	Analysis (What insight does this figurative language give the reader?)
<i>...she kept squeezing my arms and legs and shoulders into place as if I were made out of Silly Putty until I was just the right shape.</i>		
<i>"Now hold still and play like an Egyptian mummy," she said.</i>		
<i>....my brain tingled as if it were a honeycomb full of bees.</i>		
<i>I kept spinning the rack faster and faster until it was a postcard tornado and the cards were sailing out of their holders and...</i>		
<i>He could be drunk, he could be sober, he could be nice, or he could be as mean as a snake.</i>		

Irony

A door opened and I heard footsteps coming my way. "You can open your eyes now," the nurse said. "And wiggle your eyeballs." She reached into my mouth, pulled out the rubber mouthpiece, and put it in a small white bag. "Hop up, you were great. No twitching, no coughing or sneezing. You're a real pro at being still."

What type of irony is employed in the passage? A. Verbal B. Situational C. Dramatic

Why? What makes this passage ironic? _____

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