

Joey Pigza Swallowed the Key Teaching Unit

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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.

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Chapter 3
Conflict & Figurative Language

Name: _____ Date: _____

There are two types of conflict: internal and external. An internal conflict is a conflict that a character has within him/herself. (man vs. himself) An external conflict is a conflict that a character has with someone or something else (man vs. man, man vs. nature, man vs. society, etc.)

Complete the following chart to help you analyze the conflicts Joey faces.

Text	Summary of conflict	Type of conflict
"I don't get how they think I'm such a pain," I said to her. "And I didn't, because most of the time I wasn't even in the classroom."		
Maria kept frowning at me and then she pulled out a little pad from her desk and wrote down four letters I couldn't see but figured spelled J-O-E-Y.		
She stopped a moment to be real careful. "And no one at the school wants to be hurt by you."		

Complete the following chart to help you analyze the figurative language found in chapter three.

Text	Type of figurative language (simile, metaphor, personification, hyperbole, or idiom)	What does it mean?
"I got my eye on you."		
I watched the second hand sweep around and around.		
Sharp as a needle		
The beauty parlor was a zoo today.		

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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? _____