



Writing Radar: Using Your Journal to Snoop Out and Craft Great Stories

Jack Gantos

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The Newbery Award-winning author of *Dead End in Norvelt* shares advice for how to be the *best* brilliant writer in this funny and practical creative writing guide perfect for all kids who dream of seeing their name on the spine of a book.

With the signature wit and humor that have garnered him legions of fans, Jack Gantos instructs young writers on using their "writing radar" to unearth story ideas from their everyday lives. Incorporating his own misadventures as a developing writer, Gantos inspires readers to build confidence and establish good writing habits as they create, revise, and perfect their stories. Pop-out text boxes highlight key tips, alongside Gantos's own illustrations, sample stories, and snippets from his childhood journals. More than just a how-to guide, *Writing Radar* is a celebration of the power of storytelling and an ode to the characters who--many unwittingly--inspired Gantos's own writing career.

Writing Radar: Using Your Journal to Snoop Out and Craft Great Stories Details

Date : Published August 29th 2017 by Farrar, Straus and Giroux (Byr)

ISBN : 9780374304560

Author : Jack Gantos

Format : Hardcover 203 pages

Genre : Language, Writing, Nonfiction, Childrens, Middle Grade, Humor

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~Fancy Headaches and Tea ~ says

This was such a great read and inspiration for writers of all ages. Plus... it was funny!

Jenny says

Jack Gantos teaches middle grade students to use their "Writing Radar" in Writing Radar: Using Your Journal to Snoop Out and Craft Great Stories.

Jack outlines the following: always carrying a notebook with you, listening (spying) and taking notes, outside world and inside characters, trusting yourself, story maps, action and emotion, story structure and elements, and focused drafts. There's no real new information here; however, he sprinkles lots of examples of how each of these are used with his own work samples and stories (some handwritten/drawn and some typed in text) and these are the REAL stars of this book! Jack Gantos knows how to paint a picture and how to make people giggle, that's for sure!

Middle grade students aspiring to be authors will get some great information from this book and I would recommend this to middle grade teachers both for their classroom library and for tips on teaching writing for their students.

Thank you, Macmillan Kids, for providing our #BookRoam group with an advanced copy in exchange for an honest review.

Cassie Thomas says

Teachers: if you do not have this preordered DO IT NOW. This book has changed my whole attitude about inspiring students to be the writers they can be. Coming from Jack Gantos I knew it would be amazing, but he takes things to a whole new level. He's inspiring and hilarious. This is written for students, but it's an amazing teacher tool as well. He provides so much insight on how to pay attention to everything around you and how everything can be a potential story. He shares writing tips in every chapter, he draws little pictures that correlate with what he's talking about, he says he doesn't just stick to one writing journal, but with a small notebook, stickies, big notebook. It truly is a remarkable resource. Comes out late August and as a 5th grade teacher I can't recommend enough.

Scott Fillner says

A must have if you have students and you teach writing. I take that back...you will WANT to have it!

Margie says

When you hear something on a monthly or sometimes weekly basis for most of your life, it starts to not only take root, but to grow and flourish in your mind. As far back as I can remember my mom told me I was going to write a book. She was downright giddy when I was given the opportunity to be a teen reporter for our capital city newspaper. She saved every single article I wrote. Not once did she ever waver from this conviction of my becoming an author.

My writing four to five hours for five to six days a week is not toward the publication of a book but thanks to my mom, I do write, drawing attention to the work of other authors and illustrators. What these people bring to children's literature is making our world, as a whole, better with every book. I feel honored and compelled to talk about them and their work.

BUT (I can almost hear Mom laughing from heaven.)

I read a book yesterday which made me want to rush out, buy a fountain pen, open up one of my collected journals and start writing...a book. Writing Radar: Using Your Journal To Snoop Out And Craft Stories (Farrar Straus Giroux, August 29, 2017) written and illustrated by Jack Gantos is one of the best titles on writing I have had the privilege to read. It's bursting with good, solid, doable advice on the art of writing. And it's loaded with hilarious moments...Jack Gantos's hilarious moments, which are unlike any other kind of funny.

My full recommendation: <http://librariansquest.blogspot.com/2...>

Karen Kline says

The book is chock full of ideas for gathering inspiration for writing and turning those ideas into a well-polished story. It's also full of clever little stories that help the reader analyze the ideas that Gantos suggests for taking your writing to the next level. These stories had me chuckling and laughing out loud. Run, don't walk, to your nearest library and read this book! Thank me later!! If you like this book, you'll also want to read Gantos's other books including Dead End in Norvelt, the Joey Pigza series and Rotten Ralph series. I've read all of these, and they are amazing.

Dan says

In the fall of 2015, I briefly met Jack Gantos at the ALAN Workshop during an author signing.

During that brief encounter I asked him to sign a book to "Spud Readers." He stopped and took out a small sticky note with a sly grin and began writing as he looked up at me and said something around the lines of, "Wow so are you saying your school's mascot is a potato? That is pretty funny. Spuds, huh?! I hope they like my book as much as I like their mascot's name." In those brief moments I saw a man who delights in the world, is inquisitive, and naturally funny.

Little did I know at the time, his sticky notes were a piece of his writing process for snooping out stories!

Writing Radars mixes great writing advice with classic Jack Gantos' storytelling to show readers how stories

are all around us and how the world can offer us a great number of story ideas if we are listening carefully, and have ways of writing ideas down when they come to us!

Gantos' uses a tiny wallet journal, pocket notepad, sticky notes and a larger journal to capture his thinking as he begins to craft his stories.

Gantos' examples of how to utilize the world and your journal for stories is accessible and easy to follow. At one point he encourages the reader to find where their last name would be in the library and ask them to make a promise to themselves that they will write a book and get it published. From inspiring moments like this to concrete examples of how to craft stories and make them better, Jack has added yet another wonderful book about the power of stories and the need for us (the readers) to write our own!

I can't wait to share Jack's book this fall as my students and I work on crafting our own stories!

Anita says

If you happen to notice some kid skulking around your neighborhood or apartment complex, eavesdropping on conversations and scribbling in a black notebook, chances are that kid has read *Writing Radar: Using Your Journal to Scoop Out and Craft Great Stories* by Jack Gantos. Multi-award winning author, creative writing professor of 20 years, and the only author who has ever made me choke with laughter on a sandwich while trying to drive and listen to his audio book, Jack Gantos has the street cred to pull off this hilarious and inspirational writing manual. Aimed at middle graders, this is for anyone who interested in creative writing.

Inspired by *Harriet the Spy* and the confidence that he could write better than the cheerful, flowery fluff that he found in his older sister's stolen diary, a young Jack Gantos swore an oath to himself to write a book that would someday appear on the library shelf. He received encouragement from one Mrs. Hammer, a tough-minded librarian who had lost her two previous jobs because of "abusive behavior." She supported his quest to write and encouraged him to put his writing on the shelf in the school library. Later, his English teacher gave him writing advice that he adheres to today. In this book, packed with practical suggestions, almost unbelievable anecdotes, and just the right balance of support and instruction, Gantos speaks directly to the reader. Kids will be inspired to take their own authorship oaths.

Add this to your gift list for the aspiring writers in your life and be sure to include a notebook and a cool pen and pencil to go with it. This book goes on my worth-every-penny list, and I have already pre-ordered several copies for some of my tutoring students and one for me. (NetGalley provided an e-ARC in exchange for an honest review.)

Marcia says

Jack Gantos shares the secrets to crafting great books (and he knows how--he has penned some great ones) for all budding authors. Infused with his highly funny personal stories and concrete ways for kids, or adults for that matter, to collect ideas and organize them into winning stories, this will be a great addition to the classroom. Jake believes in us, so we can believe in ourselves as writers.

I've read every book he's written and been fortunate to hear him speak several times, so many of the stories in the book were familiar. My one questions is why has the Pagoda family become the Deals????!! I bet there is a funny explanation! Terrific book.

Jennifer says

This propulsive writing guide is full of practical advice, helpful examples and hilarious personal anecdotes that will inspire both kid AND adult writers. Especially helpful are the sections on how to organize story structure and elements, and how to write focused drafts. My own writing journal got a kick in the pants today from Mr. Gantos's sound instruction. A must read for teachers, librarians and any wannabe author.

Ashleigh Rose says

Any kid who has even the slightest spark of desire to want to get into writing needs this book. Honestly it's great for adults, too! (Had me snooping all the great family Thanksgiving quotes into my own notebook.)

Jack Gantos writes a book that is equal parts how-to be a writer, motivational kick in the pants, hilarious personal narrative, quirky illustration, and fun writing exercises. Not only is it a great intro to how to read in the genre of self-help, it's fast paced and written in the most kid friendly language. He dispels the ever-disempowering notion that "nothing interesting ever happens to me" by encouraging students to "snoop out" the world around them and write down anything that strikes them even if it isn't the perfect first sentence or ending or climax - it will be useful and handy sometime! I'm excited to recommend even parts of this book to students as we embark on our realistic fiction unit.

If we'd had this book as kids - who knows where we'd all be now! I'm still excited to see where it takes me and my students...

Brenda Kahn says

I waited on a line at AASL to score an autographed copy and began to read it with my eyes. I suddenly wondered if he narrated this and found that he had. Best read with the book in hand so as not to miss the fantastic illustrations. Really a must-purchase.

Jacqueline says

As is often mentioned, Jack Gantos is a master storyteller. In this book, he clearly presents the basics of good storytelling outlined in any other instructional book about the writing process. Yet Gantos adds an important extra spice, his own desire to be an author and how he pursued it as a child. Reading how Gantos dreamed of seeing his own books on the library shelf as a child should inspire many other budding writers. My favorite part was where he shared how he came to write the Joey Pigza books. More of my thoughts on this book available at my blog Pencil Tips Writing Workshop <http://penciltipswritingworkshop.blog...>

Linda Epach says

"Writing Radar" by Jack Gantos is a humorous instructional guide showing younger writers exercises and suggestions designed to improve their creative writing skills. It encourages journaling and looking at everyday life and themselves to garner inspiration to create their stories. Something as simple as looking at scars or body parts for ideas, different areas of focus in a re-write, and writing examples are given in the book as well as cute illustrations. Kids who enjoy writing should enjoy the helpful hints, while struggling writers may learn some things that will make writing less of a task.

paula says

"Don't be that writer who waits all day for the perfect first sentence," he advises, "or you will grow old while learning to hate yourself and writing." This from the guy who wrote, "School was finally out and I was standing on a picnic table in our backyard getting ready for a great summer vacation when my mother walked up to me and ruined it." Now THAT's a first sentence.
