

## Diary of a Quarantined Kid: 10 Activity Challenges

*Inspired by Jeff Kinney's Diary of a Wimpy Kid*

***"...the brain is like a muscle, and if you don't exercise it by reading and doing creative stuff, it'll get weak and mushy."***

Greetings from the video guys at Launch Media!

If you like to read and you like to watch movies, you've probably thought about making a video yourself! Or maybe writing a screenplay?

So, you think you want to make videos when you grow up? Do you like creating TikToks? Do you want to win an Oscar for Best Director one day?

We've got a few creative challenges just for you. Don't let quarantine make your brain all weak and mushy.

Let's see if you have what it takes.

## Challenge #1: Get to know your craft.

***“Mom always says I need to spend less time on the couch and more time being active. But the way I see it. I’m just conserving my energy for later on. When all my friends are in their eighties and their bodies are broken down, I’ll just be getting started.”***

— Jeff Kinney, *Cabin Fever*

Does that sound like your mom or dad? Well get ready to show them what you can do!

Before anyone can make a movie, there’s always a first meeting. We like to call it the “Discovery Meeting.”

It’s basically when you sit down with your client (the person asking you to create a video), and you learn what you can and cannot do while making a video.

We usually talk about their vision - what they imagine their video to look like. We ask about their budget - how much can they pay? That’s an important question because we need to know how to organize our work - can we have a really big crew and three days to shoot a commercial? Or do we need to have a 2 man crew and one afternoon to get it done? It’s all about asking questions to set expectations and help us make a good plan.

For you, that means having a professional meeting with your mom or dad. You’re creating and directing your first video, so put on a clean shirt, bring your checklist to the kitchen table, and host your first Discovery Meeting. And, don’t forget to remind them that they wanted you to spend less time on the couch and more time being creative! Perfect!

Ask your mom or dad what’s okay for you to do. And ask them what tools you can use to make your video. It’s not like you can go to the store to buy all the cameras, so you’re going to have to get creative.

**It’s all about making a plan and knowing the rules!**

**The Director's Checklist:**

\_\_\_\_\_ Find a notebook, like a journal or a diary, where you can keep track of your video progress.

\_\_\_\_\_ Write down this list in the notebook

\_\_\_\_\_ What are the tools available to you? Do you have your own phone? Is there an old iPhone you can use? Can you borrow mom or dad's phone? Could you use an iPad? Is there an old video recorder in the attic?

\_\_\_\_\_ How long can I use my tools for? An hour each day? One afternoon?

Now, think about some of your own questions and big ideas, and add them to your checklist.

*Like, maybe you have a great idea for a campfire? But that's kinda dangerous, right? But, your mom and dad might be able to help you brainstorm a different way to do that - like with yellow, orange, and red construction paper?*

1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_

*If you can't use an actual video recorder or phone, then consider this is your big chance to pitch a great big idea to a huge studio like, Disney or Universal or Marvel! Because they don't pay the big bucks until you share your ideas. Complete all of the activities that don't require a camera, and you'll have great pitch!*

## Challenge #2: Come up with a spectacular, out of this world, totally cool idea

***“I realised all the good ideas were taken before I was even born.”***

— Jeff Kinney

It can be pretty intimidating to come up with a good idea. There's already a lot of awesome ideas out there, but never fear! There's always more waiting to be thought of or discovered!

When we don't think of an idea right away, we like to brainstorm.

Brainstorming is a creative exercise that helps you find new ideas. It's not a test. There's no right or wrong way to brainstorm. It's all about thinking out loud. And, writing it down.

Start by getting your director's notebook and grabbing your favorite pen or pencil or marker. Then, go sit in your favorite spot - maybe it's outside in your backyard or maybe it's in your living room.

Now, it's time to think, and wait, and think some more, and write your ideas down. Or even draw them!

Here's a few tips to help you get started!

1. There are no bad ideas when you're brainstorming. Write all of them down, no matter how wacky!
2. Look for inspiration. Books! Movies! Magazines! Nature! Inspiration is everywhere. Sometimes all you need is your own imagination!
3. Think BIG! Write down the silly ideas and the lame ideas. Ideas are pretty cool creatures because sometimes the more you think about them, the more they grow!
4. Write down lots of ideas. Don't stop after just one or two. Make a list and then decide on the best one! Who knows? Maybe you'll combine a few ideas for a gigantic AWESOME idea!
5. But, sometimes the simplest ideas are the best ones.
6. Two heads are better than one. So, share your ideas with a brother or sister or a friend. Talk about your vision and how you plan to direct your big idea! They might have some ideas you have thought of that can help!

Now that you have made your list, it's up to you to choose your favorite ideas.

If you still can't think of an idea, then try to recreate an idea from your favorite book or movie! Put your own spin on it!

My Big Ideas:

1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_

4. \_\_\_\_\_

5. \_\_\_\_\_

6. \_\_\_\_\_

7. \_\_\_\_\_

8. \_\_\_\_\_

9. \_\_\_\_\_

10. \_\_\_\_\_

## Challenge #3: Start writing your video script

***“I’m not really sure what makes a book a ‘classic’ to begin with, but I think it has to be at least fifty years old and some person or animal has to die at the end.”***

— Jeff Kinney

Wait a second. I thought we were making a video! Is this more writing? Of course! Writing is a very important part of the video making process.

A video script is like the map of your video. It’s the document where you write down all the dialogue (what your characters say), their actions, and a description of each scene.

Writing a video script helps you work out all the wrinkles in your story! It’s a way to organize your thoughts and think about what makes your story unique!

Remember, your video or movie can be about anything you want! You get to decide what is classic to you!

To begin, start by answering these questions.

1. *What will your story be about?*
2. *What’s the beginning, middle, and end of your story?*
3. *What kind of story is it? An adventure story? A real-life story?*
4. *What is the message? Is there a lesson your audience will learn?*

5. *How do you want your audience to feel when they watch it?*

Now, make a list of your actors and decide what their roles will be. Remember, everyone doesn't need to have a speaking role.

1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_

Finally, start writing your script! You can copy the format below, if you'd like!

*Two middle school kids sit under a tree in their backyard. Character A is pulling at the grass.  
Character B is looking at the clouds. It's a sunny day.*

CHARACTER A

"Wow. I can't believe we're still stuck in quarantine."

CHARACTER B

"I know. I'm kinda sad we can't go to field day this year. We were totally going to beat Mrs. Marley's class."

CHARACTER A

"Yeah, it really sucks."

CHARACTER B

"Hey! What if we made our own field day?"

## Challenge #4: Create a storyboard

***"I'll be famous one day, but for now I'm stuck in quarantine with a bunch of morons."***

— Jeff Kinney

If you want to be a famous director one day, you're going to have to work hard and prove that you can be an amazing planner. And, creating a storyboard is where you start.

A storyboard is a visual representation of what's going to happen in a movie or video scene by scene. It's kind of like sketching your own comic strip.

It's like a roadmap or a guide for when you start filming, so you know which shots you need in the backyard and which shots you need in a hallway. If you don't make a good storyboard, you'll waste time later filming stuff you don't need or you'll forget to film something you do need!

You can download a free storyboard template [here](#). Or, you can get really creative and make your own!

1. Draw a series of rectangles on a piece of paper, as if you were creating a comic strip. Make sure you leave room for notes or lines of script under each rectangle.
2. Add the line of script or dialogue that corresponds to that scene.
3. Sketch out your scene in the box. You can draw stick figures or you can draw detailed comics. Just make sure your ideas are clear!
4. If you really don't like drawing, you can always use photographs or pictures cut from an old magazine to glue onto your storyboard. (Be sure to ask permission before you cut up anything!)
5. Make notes. Notes usually include a description of what's happening in each scene. If there's movement or not. Or if you want music sound effects.

## Challenge #5: Build a set

***“And if you don't spend every second outdoors, people think there's something wrong with you.”***

— Jeff Kinney, *Diary of a Wimpy Kid*

Building a set is serious business. It takes some muscle and imagination. But, it doesn't have to be outside (unless your mom says so).

Sketch out what you want your set to look like. Then, make a list of all the items you have and the ones you might have to make.

You can use things from around the house. Like pillows, blankets, bikes, empty toilet paper rolls. You can build your very own design with cardboard boxes.

But, you should also look around for how you can use what's already available. Could your backyard swingset be a fortress? Do you have a treehouse that could be a castle? Or a tall sofa that could be a great big wall!? Maybe your living room furniture could be a classroom...

*Remember, all video professionals know that what comes up must come down. Whatever kind of set you build, it's important to leave your area clean and back in its original order when you're finished. No one likes a messy director.*

