

NAME: _____



Activity One

Town Festival

In the town of Waymer, there's nothing quite like the week of Family Fest—food, rides, and lots of fun. It all culminates with Pigeon Day. On this day, 5,000 pigeons are shot in order to raise money to benefit the local park. While some—like Beans—revel in the pigeon shoot, Palmer and Dorothy don't enjoy it at all.

Let's imagine you could establish your own fictional town with its own version of Family Fest. You want to create an event that the whole town will support and will be fun for young and old alike.

Use the town of Waymer and Family Fest as inspiration for your fictional town and festival. You can name the town and the festival anything you like.

Once you've named your town and your festival, it's time for the next step.

Pretend you're the mayor of your fictional town. You want to convince everyone to support a brand-new festival. Write a proposal that will convince everyone to back your project and help you pull it off. Your proposal should include a very detailed description of what the event will be. It should include why you're doing it, and what sorts of events will be featured.

Your festival can be week-long like Family Fest, or it can be just one day. You'll still need to provide detailed descriptions no matter what you decide. Make sure your description includes:

- When the event begins and ends.
- Exciting language that will make people want to support it.
- A breakdown of events that will happen throughout the festival.
- Any interesting backstory for why you want to have the event.
- A mock schedule.

There's no fixed length for the description. It must provide great details to encourage your town's participation.

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Activity Two

Pigeon Day



The town of Waymer and Palmer's story is fictional. However, pigeon shoots similar to the one described in the book were a real practice. There are some that still exist, but many others have ended.

Do some research online about these pigeon shoots.

Investigate why some of the shoots no longer take place. How do they compare to the one discussed in *Wringer*? Is there any similarity between the events of the book and the real-life events?

How do Palmer's feelings toward the event in Waymer reflect feelings shared about the real pigeon shoots? Are there differing opinions about these events? Describe them. Try to present this information without letting your own opinion impact the facts.

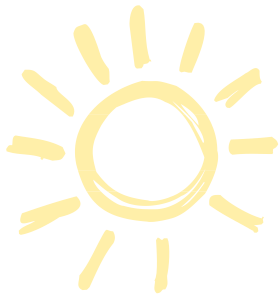
Why do you think there are so many different opinions about the event? Answer all of these questions in a few paragraphs.

Now, take a break and think about how you feel about the pigeon shoot. Imagine being in Palmer's place. Imagine there was a real pigeon shoot happening in your town. How would you react? Explain how you feel about such events. Describe in detail why you feel the way you do.

Your finished product should be at least three typed, double-spaced pages in length. Be sure to address all of the questions posed above.



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Activity Three

Pick a Pigeon



Pigeons can have a reputation that isn't all that positive. The bird is often treated as a rodent or other nuisance animal. Many people don't see pigeons the way they might see a wild deer or a pet dog. Why do you think that is?

Do some research about pigeons in general. What do you think is the source of this negative feeling toward the birds? There are many, many different types of pigeons with all sorts of different characteristics. Palmer himself describes the eight colors that can be found on Nipper. He wonders how such a "winged rat" could have so many different colors.

Pick a breed of pigeon. Make sure you can find lots of information about the bird. Your task will be to write a report all about your chosen breed. You will need to make a detailed summary of the bird's looks, habitat, nesting practices, country of origin or any other relevant information.

Structure your report in different sections for each different aspect. (One for habitat/country of origin, one for physical characteristics etc.) Include a title page. It should include either a photograph or a drawing of your chosen pigeon breed. Try to make this a very detailed report. It will include any information someone might want to know about the pigeon.

Set aside a separate section of your report for some fun facts about your bird. Are they particularly colorful? Do they have a large range? Do they collect shiny objects like some other birds do? This will be a section for any assorted information that doesn't fit anywhere else.

Make your report as detailed as possible. The finished product should be at least three typed, double-spaced pages in length.

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Activity Four

Theme Comparison



He did not want to be a wringer.

This was one of the first things he had learned about himself. He could not have said exactly when he learned it, but it was very early. And more than early, it was deep inside. In the stomach, like hunger.

But different from hunger, different and worse. Because it was always there. Hunger came only sometimes, such as just before dinner or on long rides in the car. Then, quickly, it was gone the moment it was fed. But this thing, there was no way to feed it. Well, one way perhaps, but that was unthinkable. So it was never gone.

- Wringer, Chapter 1

Wringer includes themes of peer pressure, bullying and challenging expectations. Palmer knows he has no desire to be a wringer. Yet he feels he has no choice because it is what everyone else does. It is what everyone else has done for decades. His father was a wringer and a shooter. His friends can't wait to turn 10 so they can be wringers too. Everyone in town seems to support the festival. The only person he believes he can share his feelings with is Dorothy. When Palmer takes in a pigeon, he feels isolated because of all these factors. Eventually, his mother tells Palmer she knows about the bird. He describes realizing how much he missed his parents' support.

Do these themes sound like anything else you might have seen or read? Is there any movie that captures something similar? Is there a book that reminds you of *Wringer*? Your task will be to choose a book, movie, television show, or other media that presents similar themes as those presented in this book.

Provide a short summary of the movie, book, or other media of your choice. Describe why you believe the themes are similar or the same as *Wringer*.

Your finished product should be at least two typed, double-spaced pages in length. It should provide plenty of evidence backing up your conclusions.

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Activity Five

Beans and the Bully Boys



Beans, Mutto, Farquar—even Palmer participated in bullying in *Wringer*. Beans, Mutto, Henry and Palmer targeted Dorothy. They called her Fishface and threw snowballs at her. They took her hat and made her walks to and from school very difficult.

Eventually, Dorothy breaks down and asks Palmer why he was doing these things to her. That made Palmer stop seeing Dorothy as a target and instead as the person she was—a friend.

Bullying is a serious issue in schools around the world. The more a person is taunted and mocked, the more impact it can have later in life. It can even lead some people to hurt themselves.

Look back through the book and note any times you noticed a character bully another. This can be anything from physical violence to name-calling or other emotional abuse. Keep a list of all of these incidents. Take special care to note the reaction from the person being bullied and any future actions they take because of the bullying.

Now, do some research on bullying. What is bullying? Why might it happen? What can happen to children who are bullied? Discuss in detail the negative effects bullying can have on kids. Talk about why it's important to make sure no person feels like they have no one to turn to.

Next, look into some different ways that bullying can be prevented. Look into some ways those who are bullied can deal with the issue in a healthy way.

Your finished product should be about three typed, double-spaced pages. It should address all of the questions posed above.

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Activity Six

From Page to Screen



Standing there in feathers up to his sneaker knots, Palmer felt a peace, a lightness that he had never known before, as if restraining snaps had snapped, setting him free to float upward. For a moment, feeling in his fingertips the quick beating of Nipper's acorn-size heart, he believed he could fly. Through a pigeon's eye he looked down from the sky upon the field, the thousands of upturned faces, and saw nothing at all to fear.

He reached out then, held his pigeon out to the people, slowly turned so they could all see, so they all would know.

Someone whistled.

Someone shouted, "Bang!" and laughter followed.

People booed.

- Winger, Chapter 40

In this activity, your task will be to recreate a pivotal scene from the book as a movie script. You will be the screenwriter. Your job is to take information from the book and transform it into a screenplay that will be used to film a movie scene. For example, the scene depicted above could look like:

Exterior – Day

A crowd of townspeople stand along the sidelines of a shooting range littered with the feathers of hundreds of shot pigeons.

Palmer sighs as he looks toward the sky. He allows himself just a peek at the bird in his hands.

Nipper is alive.

Palmer turns and shows the bird to the crowd. Someone whistles.

Spectator 1

Bang!

Laughter erupts from the crowd, followed quickly by boos.

Be creative and ensure the scene has important emotional and action beats.