

Middle School Magazine

Inside:

The Evils of
Baby Shows!
(dun dun!)

Inside:

Cool poems!
(crazy, right?)

Thanks for picking up my magazine! I hope you enjoy it!

Are you kidding me? For 72 lessons you'd better like it!

Sorry.

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and the Cover Story middle school writing curriculum
printed and distributed by Pickett Press
Printed on March 30th, 2016

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It's about time!

Infinity Ring Book Review

Time travel is a confusing, dangerous ability that should be illegal if ever invented.

The Infinity Ring book series is an exciting, adventurous, time-traveling adventure. Its story in a paragraph is this:

In a world being destroyed from the inside out by natural disasters, two kids, Dak and Sera, stumble upon a time machine called the Infinity Ring. After that, they are whisked away by a secret organization known as the Hystorians (created by the great philosopher Aristotle) to fix the Great Breaks, events where history has gone disasterously off course. All this they are doing while staying one step ahead of the evil SQ. They are joined by a teenager named Riq, a language wonder whose parents invented an amazing translation device.

An interesting thing about this series is that at the end of each book, there is a code and instructions for an on-line video game, so each book has two Great Breaks.

The Breaks, excluding the video games, are these:

1. Instead of Christopher Columbus discovering America in 1492, he is thrown overboard by the Amancio Brothers, who are also SQ agents. They then get all the fame and fortune for discovering America.
2. Instead of the Viking leader Siegfried (again, SQ) peacefully conquering Paris and settling down in Normandy, he destroys Paris and goes on a rampage through Europe.
3. Instead of runaway slaves escaping through the Underground Railway, the SQ pose as friendly Abolitionists, capture the slaves, and eventually destroy the Underground Railroad.
4. When Diego De Landa burns most of the Mayan artifacts, the SQ tricks him into saving a fake Mayan codex saying that the SQ will save the world.
5. When the Mongols invade Baghdad, they burn books with information about the last Break. Without these, the Hystorians won't be able to fix the last Break.
6. In WWII, the Allies launch an extremely risky secret plan. Unfortunately, that plan fails horribly, and neither the Allies nor the Axis powers ever recover. After that, the SQ basically takes over the world.
7. In the last Break (chronologically the first), Dak, Sera, & Riq have to stop the young Alexander the Great from being poisoned.

In summary, Infinity Ring is one of my favorite series and is perfect for middle schoolers.

Letter to a celebrity (of sorts)

Dear Mr. Schwabauer

Dear Mr. Schwabauer,

My name is Clayton Pickett. I am currently using your Cover Story curriculum. In fact, I am writing this letter for lesson 25: Dear Mr. President! I am really enjoying Cover Story, although it was a little hard to get used to.

I am in 6th grade and I am homeschooled. I have one little brother and two little sisters. I live in Richland, Washington.

Anyway, I was wondering if you could create a writing curriculum for elementary kids. My 4th-grade sister, Dana, often watches me doing my work, and she thinks you are very funny. Best of all, if she does Cover Story, we can share our experiences and our work.

I think that the thing I like best about Cover Story is that I do a lot of creative writing, which I enjoy. I am looking forward to trying out your One Year Adventure Novel when I get to high school. I also liked your Runt the Brave book, and I am trying to get my sister to read it.

Sincerely,
Clayton Pickett

And the reply!

Dear Clayton

Dear Clayton,

Thank you very much for your kind letter regarding *Cover Story*. I am honored to have been chosen as the subject of your famous person letter in lesson 25.

Please accept my sincere apology for my tardiness in responding. I have been terribly busy over the holidays. I imagine you were expecting a response sooner.

Regarding your request that I create a curriculum for elementary students, I suspect this is not going to happen. I do hope to create another middle school program, but although I love kids of all ages, I'm not sure I would be very good at engaging and teaching a younger audience. That said, please give my regards to Dana and tell her I am grateful that she likes my sense of humor. Fortunately for her, she is certain to outgrow it eventually.

Best wishes,

Daniel Schwabauer

Dear Editor Section
Dear "Pinkie Pie"

Dear Mr. Editor,

I really do like your Middle School magazine. It has great stories, great poems, and great graphs. But I really do think it needs more pink. Pink is by far the most beautiful color, and should be in every magazine. I'm sure it will make your magazine a lot more popular.

Sincerely,
Patty "Pinky Pie" Gibbons

"Pinkie Pie",

You are actually very right! My magazine does not have very many feminine implements. Fortunately, with my typing program, I can easily make some articles pink. I could also hire a woman writer to help me. My only concern is that my male readers might not enjoy this. Of course, this can easily be solved by making a "girls only" section. Thank you so much for your suggestion!

Sincerely,
Clayton Pickett (signed)

Regarding the above letter, I will add a "girls only" section written by my illustrator, Dana Pickett, in the Fall 2016 issue.

Want to have your own "dear editor" letter?
Mail us your letter, with a return address, to:

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This Issue's short story!

Science Fair Disasters

"Come on, Doug." Doug's mother nagged. "You know your father is out of a job and you need to support the family."

"I don't care, Mom. I'm not going to work in some crummy fast food restaurant just because Dad can't find a job. I've got my own problems." Doug whined. "The school is putting on a science fair, and I'm going to have to work hard if I'm going to win the grand prize." Doug said.

Doug's mother sadly walked out of his bedroom. As Doug lay in bed, he thought, *Maybe Mom's right. Maybe I should try to earn some money. Then again, if I leave school, all my friends would be disappointed. And I'll miss the science fair. Maybe some sleep will help me think.*

When Doug woke up the next morning, he was still just as undecided as the night before. "Oh well." he thought. "I should probably get started on my science project."

Doug Winstor was a medium-sized, blond haired tween. He was a seventh-grader at Springhill middle school, and a very popular and smart student. His father lost his job last summer, and his family was getting poorer.

Later that day, at recess, Doug was speaking with one of his friends, Bobby, as kids ran screaming around the playground.

"I can't wait for the school science fair." Doug said.

"I heard that the school put on the science fair because they needed some money." Bobby said.

"Yeah, the school is pretty poor. Have you decided what you're making yet?"

"I think I'm going to make a working boat with a hose attached, like a fire boat."

"Cool. I'm making a 3-D printer!"

"Good luck with that!"

Just then, the bell rang and all the kids rushed inside. Doug went to the computer lab to start researching for his science project. There were already a lot of other kids there working on their project, so Doug got stuck with one of the old computers in the corner. After researching, he went on E-bay to order some parts. The school gave each student \$10 to work on their project, and Doug had saved up \$7 in allowance money.

This was how he spent the next few days. Much to his excitement, he discovered that Sandra, the cute girl from math class, was also going to be in the science fair. Sandra was the same age as Doug, but she had some weird disease that made her muscles weak. Because of this, Doug was surprised that she entered the science fair.

On Friday, Doug's 3-D printer was ready for its first test. It wasn't nearly as nice as he had expected, but he was out of money and the science fair was only a few days away. He turned it on, and immediately he could see that things weren't going as planned. It was making a high-pitched sound, much like a cicada. Just as he turned the machine off, it released a puff of smoke that smelled like sulfur.

Back to the drawing board.

The next test was on Monday morning, and it wasn't much better than the first test. Instead of a buzzing sound, it started making coughing noises. It felt incredibly hot, like needles piercing my skin. It released another puff of smoke, this time smelling like elephant poop. At this point, I was very stressed out. Nevertheless, I was very excited, and I kept working.

Doug made some tweaks and adjustments, and by the next test I was sure it would work. I turned it on, but this time it didn't do anything. I was so frustrated I almost gave up.

But the next day, something happened that changed everything. In the middle of ELA, an announcement came over the intercom.

“Students of Springhill middle school. I have bad news. Due to lack of funding, the science fair is canceled. Students must retrieve their inventions by the end of the day.”

Once Doug grabbed his failed 3-D printer, he looked around at all the science fair posters being taken down. Sorrow was hanging in the air.

At that moment, Doug realized something. *Why was I so worried about my science project? Other people's problems were much worse than mine. My dad is out of a job, the school is poor, and Sandra can barely walk. But what can I do? It's not like I have a million dollars. Hey, maybe I can earn some money!*

Doug decided that as soon as school got out, he would start a lemonade stand. He would also try and spend his money better, and start a savings account (er, piggy bank). Over the summer, his lemonade stand made a grand total of \$197.50, most of which was donated to his school. Also, Doug's Dad finally got a job, with Doug's help, of course.

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This should be very useful!

Catching up on School

FYI, these tactics only work if you're a homeschooler, like me. I'm often behind in school, but that's just who I am. If you're like me, then this information will probably help you. I hate doing more school than I have to. For instance, doing 2 day's worth of school. The easiest way to help this is to do school on a regular basis, so you get in to a kind of rhythm, so you don't get behind. If you're already behind, then it's best to just keep doing school 5 days a week until you're done, even if you have to go through summer vacation.

Kitchen time!

Meat & Cheese Quesadillas

Quesadillas are a quick, easy meal that, when done right, can be very delicious. For those of you who are not familiar with Spanish, it's pronounced kay-sah-dee-yah. The only problem with them is that your siblings will constantly beg you to make one for them.

For the ingredients, you will need:

- Two tortillas (I prefer flour, but you can make it gluten-free by using corn tortillas)
- Shredded cheese (any type, any brand, it doesn't really matter. I use cheddar cheese)
- Meat (again, any type, any brand. I use canned meat)

Then, follow these simple steps:

1. Set your stove-top to medium heat, or a little bit higher.
2. Put one tortilla on your favorite frying pan.
3. Sprinkle meat and cheese on tortilla. Don't worry if you put too much on.
4. Put the second tortilla on top and press it down with a spatula.
5. Once the bottom of the Quesadilla is brown, use your spatula and carefully flip it over.
6. Once the other side is brown, transfer it to a plate. Remember, it should be brown, not black.
7. Let cool for a few minutes, then cut into pieces with a pizza cutter.

Of course, it doesn't always turn out perfect. One time, I had the stove on too hot and the tortilla burnt before the cheese melted. It was not very tasty.

Cover story:

The Evils of Baby Shows

“Mommy, can I play on the Ipad?” Faye said.

The words sent a chill up my spine, colder than the dark side of Neptune. My eyes were as big as viking shields.

Why was I so terrified? Every time Faye gets a hold of the Ipad, she goes on to YouTube and watches the absolute worst videos you could ever imagine, as cheesy as a gargantuan gorgonzola. And then she won't let *anyone* play on the Ipad until Mom uses pliers to rip it out of her hands.

I could almost see Faye's innocent, toddler brain being corrupted with Diny, the friendly pink dinosaur that lives in Turkmenistan. It looked like Faye was magnetically attracted to the screen. And not one of those cheap, 25 cents fridge magnets. It was a heavy duty, Neodymium magnet. And the Ipad was made of cast iron.

I finally found the incredible strength it took to take the Ipad away from Faye. She then stood up, walked to the living room, and fumbled with the remote until she found YouTube. Then she found the video she was watching and watched the rest of it.

By the time the show was over, I was so frustrated I reached over to the remote and pressed the power button. Again, Faye stood up, walked to the computer room, and got to YouTube. She then watched more videos. After an hour had passed, I decided once and for all I was going to kick her off YouTube.

But then, she stood up, walked to my room, grabbed my NintendoDSi, and watched more videos. I didn't even know my DSi had YouTube!!!

But then, I had a brilliant idea of how to stop her brain from turning to mush. Although, the video looked kind of interesting, and it's not like I have to do it right now...

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Ask Clay advice

Dear Bobby

Dear Clayton,

I am a homeschooler, and I've been wondering: Why do most kids go to public school? It's obvious homeschooling is the better choice. Most of the kids on my block go to public school, and they seem to like it just fine. I was wondering if you could give me some more information on the subject, and maybe give me your personal opinion.

Sincerely,
Bobby McFannie

Dear Bobby,

That is a very good question. Homeschool has gotten much better over the last few decades. This is mostly because of the Internet. However, public school is free, and it has many more social opportunities. It's also great babysitting. The answer to your question really depends on which choice suits you and your family.

Also, there are some programs where homeschool kids can go to a school one day a week. There they learn things that wouldn't be taught in homeschool, such as archery, robotics, cooking, etc.

I am a homeschooler, and I like homeschool. My favorite thing about it is that it only takes a couple of hours, as opposed to seven hours plus homework. Of course, it still depends on what works best for your family.

Best of luck,
Clayton D. Pickett

Want expert advice?

Contact us with the same address as the Dear Editor letters (page 5).

The fun part:
Poetry Place

Legos (an acrostic)

Lacks noise
Endless possibilities
Grumpy dad
Often square
Smooth or sharp

September (a cinquain)

The month
Of September
When autumn brings brown leaves
After shopping, the school year
Begins

A Finished Book (a haiku)

Now at last I say
With pleasure and happiness
I finished my book

Last Day of School (a ballad)

Casey Masey was going to school
'Twas the last day before summer
But he had an important test
He thought to himself, "Oh bummer."

He had to do a practice test
Before the big important test
He tried as hard as he could try
But alas, he did not do best

He had failed the practice test
But now it was time to munch
On a BLT from the cafeteria
but he forgot his money for lunch

So he went out to the recess yard
To play on the playground
But he ran into the mean bully Matt
Who smashed his face to the ground

Last of all was the big important test
For which he forgot to study
The test started at half past two
He could hear God saying, "Oh, buddy."

But as people started finishing
And from Casey prayers were sang
His prayers were finally answered
As the final bell rang