

## Young Adult Book Discussion Kits

Young Adult Book Discussion Kits are available to library patrons for use by home and community discussion groups, as well as teachers in the classroom setting. Each kit contains a set of thirty identical soft-cover books accompanied by a book discussion guide. The guides feature information about the author, reviews of the book, discussion questions, suggested further readings, and other pertinent information. Each kit is packaged in a canvas tote bag and may be borrowed for six weeks.

Young Adult Book Discussion Kits may be reserved and sent to the library branch of your choice for pick up. If you would like to reserve a kit, please stop by your local library branch or call **574-1611**. The kits may also be reserved through our website [www.lfpl.org](http://www.lfpl.org). A list of all the kits may be found in the LFPL catalog by typing **Book Discussion Kit Young Adult** at the title prompt.



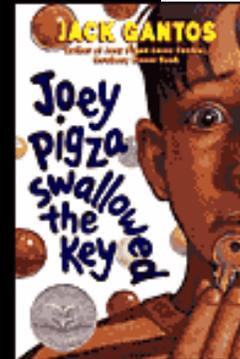
**Children's & Young Adult Services**  
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*Information for this flyer was partially gathered from the following resources:*  
[www.amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com) (7/7/03)

"John Bryan Gantos, Jr." in *Contemporary Authors*. Gale Literary Databases. 2001.  
(7/7/03) <http://galenet.com>

"John Bryan Gantos, Jr." *Something About the Author*. Vol. 119. Gale, 2001. pp.59-66

[www.harperchildrens.com/teacher](http://www.harperchildrens.com/teacher) (7/9/03)



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A Reader's Guide to  
Juvenile Book  
Discussion Kit #230  
**Joey Pigza**  
**Swallowed the Key**  
By Jack Gantos

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Just Good Books  
Just Good Books  
Just Good Books  
Just Good Books  
Just Good Books

**Juvenile Book  
Discussion Kits**



Joey Pigza is wired all wrong. At least that's what everyone at school and at home keeps telling him. The worst thing about being "wired" wrong is that Joey is beginning to believe it's true. He knows he's a good kid, but he can't help his uncontrollable urges, urges that insist he spin himself around and around like the Tasmanian devil or that he swallow his only house key—twice! When his mother shows up out of the blue, after years of being gone, to relinquish child rearing from Joey's grandmother, (who also happens to be "wired" wrong) Joey hopes that her return will mean the return of Joey's semblance of normalcy. Although his mother tries to help Joey, will her love be enough for him? Or, will Joey push his mother, schoolmates and school officials to the point where they must take drastic measures?

### About the Author

John Bryan Gantos, Jr. or, Jack Gantos, was born in 1951 in Mt. Pleasant, Pennsylvania. The son of a father who worked construction and a mother employed by a bank, Gantos was the eldest boy of four children. Although he was a creative child, Gantos was placed in the "Bluebird" reading group in the first grade. The "Bluebirds," Gantos later learned were also known as "slow readers." Despite being a slow reader, he was never "slow" in other areas of his life.

When Gantos' family moved to Barbados during his 2<sup>nd</sup> grade year, he discovered the importance of a diary. It was then that he began to write. At first, to just let out his feelings, but eventually he began to write stories about his family. One family member peaked his interest so much that he inspired the series that brought Gantos into the spotlight as a children's writer. The family member was his cat and the series, *Rotten Ralph*. Also in the same year that *Rotten Ralph* debuted, 1976, Gantos received his BFA from Emerson college; he later received a MA in 1984 from the same institution. When asked why he writes for children, Gantos replied, "because they are sincere and honest in their reactions...they are a good audience and deserve good books."

### What the Critics Say...

"...an accurate, compassionate and humorous appraisal of a boy with attention-deficit disorder."  
- *Publishers Weekly*

"From the powerful opening lines... readers will cheer for Joey, and the champion in each of us."  
- *School Library Journal*

"Gantos is a terrific writer."  
- *School Library Journal*

### Awards and Recognition

**1999** Notable Children's Book (ALA)  
**2001** Newbery Award Honor Book, *Joey Pigza Loses Control*  
**2003** Printz Award Honor Book, *Hole in My Life*

### Discussion Questions:

1. Do you think that some of Joey's problems could stem from his home environment? Think back to the beginning chapters with Joey living with his grandmother and the descriptions of their home. Would things have been any different if he continued to live with his grandmother?
2. Have there been times in your life where you have similar feelings/ thoughts as Joey? Do you think there is anything "wrong" in feeling this way?
3. Once Joey's mother returned, things definitely changed and mostly for the better. However, Joey's mother doesn't always seem to do the best things for Joey; what things do you remember as not being so good? Is there anything she could have done or been differently?
4. Did you like reading a story from the first person point of view in the first person? Did it cause you to feel out of control or badly wired too, as if you were Joey?
5. After reading *Joey Pigza Swallowed the Key*, do you think you have a better understanding of what it's like to be diagnosed with ADHD? Do you think you might react to someone with the disorder in a different way now than you might have before reading the novel?

6. How did you feel at the end of the book when Harold's mom praised Joey? Do you think there is hope for Joey?

### Suggested Titles for Further Reading

*Everything You Need to Know About ADD/ADH*  
by Eileen Beal (616.8589 BEA)

*Crazy Lady!*  
by Jane Leslie Conly (J)

*Joey Pigza Loses Control*  
by Jack Gantos (J)

*What Would Joey Do?*  
by Jack Gantos (J)

*Zipper, The Kid With ADHD*  
by Caroline Janover (J)

*Trout and Me*  
by Susan Richards Shreve (YP)

*Pay Attention, Slosh!*  
by Mark Smith (J)