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

Emilee Bell

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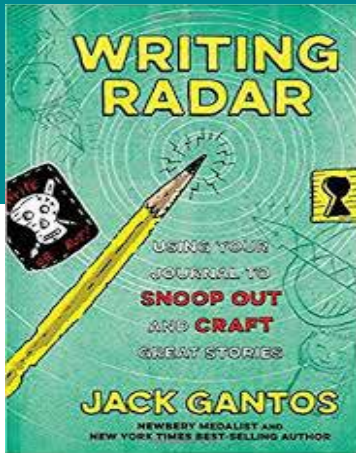
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## Book Review

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

### Author

Jack Gantos

### Illustrator

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### Reviewer

Emilee Bell

### Rating

Dependable

### Level

Intermediate, Young  
Adult

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### Pages

203

### Year

2017

### Publisher

Farrar Straus Giroux

### ISBN

9780374304560

Jack Gantos unlocks the secret of becoming a writer within the pages of this book. Instead of insisting that young authors have formal instruction in story construction, Gantos opens the eyes of the reader to the stories that surround us in our everyday life. As we observe what happens around us and write everything down that we think is interesting in a journal, Gantos promises we'll have plenty of fodder for an action-packed, emotion-based story of a lifetime. Other tools such as mapping, drafting, and editing are discussed, but the book clearly emphasizes honoring self, keeping promises, trying, working hard, and trusting your gut.

As the author of more than fifteen published books for “readers of all ages,” Jack Gantos has years of personal experience combing his way through the ever-changing jungle of a writing career. This career began as a boy, and he writes from that perspective many times. Between this voice and the middle-school anecdotes, this book is a perfect reference book for aspiring young writers, but is helpful to all ages as well. This would not be of good use necessarily as a textbook in a classroom, but teachers could find practical ideas to help tease out would-be writers and stymie conversation about what makes quality literature. Ideally, this book would be given to the hesitant young author as a personal read at home. It's fun and light but chock full of useful tidbits and exercises to flesh out ideas into stories.