



## Jack Strong Takes a Stand

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Jack Strong just wants to be a regular kid. But his parents have overscheduled his week with every extracurricular activity under the sun: tennis, baseball, cello, karate, tutoring, and Chinese language lessons—all on top of regular homework. His parents want him to be “well-rounded” and prepared for those crucial college applications. Jack’s just about had enough.

And so he stages a sit-in on his couch and refuses to get up until his parents let him quit some of the extracurriculars. As Jack’s protest gains momentum, he attracts a local television host who is interested in doing a segment about him. Tensions rise as counter-protesters camp out across the street from Jack and his couch. Jack’s enjoying this newfound attention, but he’s worried that this sit-in may have gone too far.

## Jack Strong Takes a Stand Details

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Author : Tommy Greenwald , Melissa Mendes (Illustrator)

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# From Reader Review Jack Strong Takes a Stand for online ebook

## Georgene says

Jack, who is 12, is a typically overscheduled middle school boy. His father thinks that is the way to get into a good college--to try all kinds of activities. His mother just goes along with his father. But when Jack wants to go to the party given by his crush, he can't because of his activities. When he wants to hang out with his friends at the ice cream store, he can't. One day Jack decides that he will go on strike and not leave his sofa until he can quit some of his activities and only keep the ones he really likes. He doesn't go to school or anywhere else except to use the bathroom or to eat. He even sleeps on the sofa. He feels that this is a reasonable thing to do and he is only exercising his right of free speech. After a few days, word gets around about his strike and he is invited to be on TV. That is when things really get interesting.

I enjoyed this story, but it sounds like something Andrew Clements would write--kid takes on the grownups to prove that he knows what is best for himself. Although being an overscheduled kid is hardly a universal problem, this book will be enjoyed by readers who can identify with this issue.

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## Jacob P says

I believe that Jack Strong takes a stand is an amazing book and I admire what Jack does in the story.

Jack is a slightly normal kid but he has a really overscheduled life. His parent, mostly Dad believe that in order to get into a good college you need to start young and do a handful of extra activities.

Then Jack finally had enough he first asked his mom politely to skip soccer practice so she of course called Jack's Dad and I think you can guess what happens, yep he said no. Jack just had a weekend of doing something great but then torn down by his father saying "let's go onto the next activity." Jack was over it o he told his dad on the phone, "No i'm not going to soccer practice." so his dad responds with "So what you're just gonna sit on the couch all day?" And that was when the idea was sparked! To see how his dad responds to jack go ahead and read the book by Tommy Greenwald

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## Lisa says

12-year-old Jack Strong's life is over-scheduled. Besides cello lessons and baseball (which he loves) he also has soccer, swimming, 2 different tutors, karate, tennis, EMT class and homework. There is very little free time or room for socializing like class parties and celebrations. Eventually Jack decides to go on strike. He wants his dad to let him drop some of them so he can have time to be a kid, but his dad wants Jack to be competitive for college and he stands his ground. So Jack takes a stand by sitting - on the couch. He refuses to do anything but stay on the couch.

Greenwald writes another commentary on today's kids and their problems. This time it's parents with super high expectations. Addressed with humor and balance, this timely topic will certainly relate to our own over-scheduled students. This stand alone companion to the Charlie Joe Jackson series - Charlie Joe makes a brief

text messaging appearance, has all the fun of the other books in the series.

Cross-posted to <http://kissthebook.blogspot.com> CHECK IT OUT!

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### **Judy says**

Running from one extracurricular activity to the next, middle school student Jack Strong finally says enough is enough. He takes a stand for a less-scheduled life by taking a seat on his family's couch. I really enjoyed the characters and plot as well as the fact that every side of the issue was touched. Not only was Jack's thoughts and feelings fleshed out, but his father's motivations were, too. This book could really resonate with many middle school children.

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### **Lori Redman says**

It was pretty good. Not my favorite book of the year, but my students loved it.

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### **Amy says**

The Charlie Joe Jackson books are among the most beloved in my seventh grade classroom and they are one of the few titles with 50/50 male/female appeal. My least experienced readers find the books relevant and close to their personal lives; my most experienced readers are afraid that I'll think less of them if I catch them reading the series. I have more than a few students who will try to hide a CJJ book inside of a title like Nazi Hunters or The Family Romanov.

But for the vast majority of my readers, these books are like snuggling on the couch with a mug of hot cocoa, a big bowl of popcorn, and a favorite blanket. They love these books and they're not afraid to let the world know.

Jack Strong's story will strike a chord with my students... even though Jack's just in middle school, his father constantly talks about college and his mother shleps him from activity to activity. One day, Jack decides enough is enough.... until HE gets to decide what activities HE wants to do, he's not getting up from his couch.

Overscheduled and hyperpresent parents are a reality that most of my students face; Jack gives them a way to articulate these concerns.

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### **Nam says**

It is true. So many parents over-schedule their kids. While Jack's methods may have been extreme, he got his message across loud and clear. Parents, let your kids be kids. They'll be grown up before you know it, and by

then, they'll be wishing that they had had the carefree days of youth that the older generation always had. After school activities are not a bad thing, but children need to learn how to entertain themselves too. It is vital for their development.

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### **Barbara says**

Middle grader Jack Strong is certainly one busy boy. At times it seems as though every minute of his day has been scheduled. When he isn't in school or completing his homework, he has cello lessons, plays baseball, goes to Chinese class, and takes EMT lessons. There's nothing wrong with keeping busy, but when Jack asks to drop some of these activities, his father refuses since he thinks they will make Jack well-rounded and look impressive on his college applications. Jack decides that he is fed up with being over-scheduled and stages a protest from his living room couch. Naturally, the protest gains the attention of classmates and the media, and before Jack knows it, he's become an overnight sensation. Many middle graders will relate to Jack's plight, but they will also understand Jack's unwillingness to blame his father in public and recognize that there are many sides to this particular issue. The author captures middle grade dynamics and dialogue quite well as he does in his popular earlier books featuring Charlie Joe Jackson. This title will be fun to discuss in the classroom since it explores whether it's better to have too much or too little time on your hands.

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### **Ms. Yingling says**

It's bad enough that Jack plays on a baseball team and plays cello. When junior EMT training, Chinese lessons, and tennis get added to the mix, he feels overscheduled and just wants to sit on the couch and watch programs with his grandmother. Since he is still in middle school, he thinks his father is ridiculous to be worried about his college applications. He's not the only one; Lucy, a girl who is in orchestra with him, also has an overbearing parent who signs her up for too many things. When he feels too tired to go to practice one day, and his father won't let him miss it, Jack decides to go on strike. He refuses to go to activities, to school, or even to get off the couch until his father lets him drop some activities. After a friend's brother writes him up for the school newspaper, Jack is interviewed by a local television personality who wants to make him the focus of the show and put him up against the opinions of Lucy's mom. Jack doesn't want to spend his life on the couch, but needs to work on a good compromise with the help of his friends and family.

Strengths: A fun, quick read for boys, and one of only two books I know that address the topic over overscheduling activities (Calli Be Gold is the other). Jack's relationship with the grandmother is nice, and enjoyed the fact that he goes to the same school as Charlie Joe Jackson. This is sure to be a hit with the fans of this author's other work.

Weaknesses: I think that getting in to college is a bigger concern on the East coast. Ohio schools don't seem to be so rigorous in their demands, so I always have trouble connecting with this idea!

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### **Elizabeth says**

Middle schooler Jack Strong has well-meaning, loving parents, but they're so obsessed with getting him into a good college that his life has become a blur of lessons, recitals, and obligations. All Jack wants to do is hang out on the couch and be a normal kid, so one day, he goes on strike and vows not to leave the couch

until he can drop all the activities he doesn't like. Cue a battle of wills between Jack and his strict father, and a burst of fame as the local media gets ahold of the story.

Greenwald has written a children's novel that's both laugh-out-loud funny and very insightful. He never vilifies either side of the argument, but explores the pros and cons of devoting your childhood to college applications and resume fodder.

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### **Michael says**

Tommy Greenwald, illustrated by Melissa Mendes. Jack Strong Takes a Stand. (Roaring Brook Press, 2013)  
Take a stand by sitting down! Rosa Parks did it. So did Gandhi. But of course they weren't sitting down on a couch playing video games. Is this the inspirational leader of the next generation? Couch potatoes unite!  
For more great humor for Middle School guys, see: <http://www.talestoldtall.com/B4BMHUM....>

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### **Peggy says**

I read out loud to my son it's one of our quality time activities we favor. We both enjoyed this book. I was able to relate ideas to him too. This was a "Virginia reader" recommended book. He got 10/10 on the AR test too!

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### **Paula says**

Middle-schooler Jack Strong learns about burnout first-hand after his dad enrolls him in numerous extracurricular activities so that he will be well prepared for college. But after only a week into the hectic schedule of Chinese, tennis, EMT training, cello, math tutoring, baseball and soccer, Jack rebels. He stages a sit-in on the family couch, refusing to budge until his dad concedes to his demands and lightens his load. This in turn causes strife between Jack's parents and his maternal grandmother. Jack's cause celebre spreads to the high school paper and then to the local media. Their front yard turns into a remote news venue, complete with protestors for and against Jack's stand. When it seems that the impasse will never be resolved, a family health crisis causes everyone to re-evaluate their positions, much to Jack's satisfaction. The story is a cautionary tale about excess and overreaching parenting. Jack's first-person narrative moves the plot along and will keep young readers amused and engaged. The few illustrations are simple and spot-on. Themes and lessons abound here, but they don't get in the way of a good story.

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### **Lisa Calvert says**

I was chuckling by page three...gosh, I loved this kid. He has heart, wisecracks that come out of nowhere and he endears us to all of the kooky folks in his life - mustached English teacher included. The premise is one most kids will connect with...aren't we all just tired of trying to be everything we should be? When do we get the time to actually find out? Loved it.

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## **Kristen Badger says**

Greenwald, T. (2013). *Jack strong takes a stand*. New York: Roaring Book Press.

This funny story revolves around the life of an over scheduled middle schooler named Jack Strong. One day Jack decides he has had enough and with all of his afterschool activities and he goes on strike. When the local media get's involved tempers within Jack's family rise.

Teachers could use this book to teach students about persuasive writing and persuasion techniques. This story could lead to great debates and discussions about involvement in extra curricular activities.

Intermediate

From Follett Titlewave: Reviews & Awards

Booklist 09/15/13

Publishers Weekly 08/12/13

Horn Book 04/01/14

School Library Journal 10/01/13

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