

Inspired by David Wisniewski's picture book, [The Secret Knowledge of Grown-ups](#), and one of the lessons at WritingFix, [Top Secret Reasons!](#), these eighth graders were inspired to write the following descriptions. As they wrote and revised, they worked hard on their **idea development** skills and their **voice** skills. Read each piece, and then talk with a partner about where you see these authors excel with these two traits. Be prepared to share your ideas with the whole class.

### **Grown-up rule # 42: Brush Your Teeth**

by Emma, eighth grade writer

**'Official' Reason:** It promotes good health

**The Truth:** As most people are led to believe, not brushing their teeth can cause cavities and gum disease. The truth is that the tooth brush companies and the parents once made a pact. The parents would force the idea of brushing teeth into their children, and when those children grew up, they would follow this tradition. The parents got great pleasure out of bossing their children, and the toothbrush companies got all the profits. This information might sound shocking, but it is definitely true. Parents are always looking to argue with their children about something.



Some children were rebellious and didn't believe that bad things would happen if they didn't brush their teeth. To make the scheme seem more realistic, some parents even became dentists and drilled into the mouths of kids who didn't brush their teeth often enough. Eventually, as these children aged, the dentists became greedy and wanted patients to spend more money on their teeth. Thus, they created floss and even mouthwash. To promote the sales of batteries, Energizer then created the electric toothbrush. The fast moving bristles wear down teeth and cause them to turn yellow. Dentists recommend using all of these tools twice a day, when really all are completely unnecessary. The mouthwash actually causes bad breath, and floss puts the stains in between teeth. Once the fun of dictating to their children had worn off, the parents realized what a horrible mistake they had made because now they are spending more money than ever on fancy toothbrushes!

### **Grown-Up Rule # 66: Put Away That Laundry**

by Drew, eighth grade writer

**'Official' Reason:** These are not their clothes.

**The Truth:** When the laundry piles up in the baskets, all nicely folded and just waiting to be put away, parents always make up some special reasons to get kids to put the laundry away. But we all know the real reason for NPAL syndrome (Not Putting Away Laundry syndrome); it's just common human laziness.



A long, long time ago, way before people had enough money to buy more than two outfits, they didn't have to worry about laundry getting out of control. Then, progress was made. First came the washboard, then the washing machine. After that, people realized they could buy as many clothes as they wanted. That led to another problem: the clean wash piled up because people could do huge loads at a time. That created another problem: a basket full of clothes that needed to be put away. Soon laziness set in. It got late, and night fell, and kids felt fatigued from a long day. They lay down on their beds, just for a minute, and before they knew it, they fell asleep.

But parents know what happens if the laundry isn't put away. While they sleep, the laundry goes out of control. It tears up the house, leaving everything for the humans to clean up at dawn. When the sun rises, humans wake up to see couches flipped over, a trail of socks on the stairs, paintings knocked down, and the refrigerator empty and all its contents in the oven. When you put your clothes away, it's like the laundry is locked up in a prison cell and can't get loose.

That's why parents always stress over putting the laundry away. One night of NPAL syndrome is enough to scare anybody into emptying the laundry basket before night falls.