



Student Characteristics – Middle School

Never underestimate this age group. They want to learn almost everything, and they are developing the ability to think abstractly. More important, they need to feel cared about and respected by the adults in their lives. Consequently, no matter what textbooks, materials, or guides are used, teachers are the focus. Developing comfortable and secure relationships with the students is a high priority.

Sixth Grade-11 year olds

They are in a period of transition between childhood and adolescence. As a result they tend to be sociable and need opportunities to express feelings and opinions. They have an increased ability to de-center and see the world from various perspectives. Students prefer new tasks and experiences to reflection or revision of previous work.

Seventh Grade-12 year olds

Students often take a tentative approach to difficult intellectual tasks as they are not willing to take big risks. They like to challenge authority and give one word answers to adult questions. They worry about school work. They can and will see both sides of an argument and have a high interest in current events, politics, social justice as well as pop culture.

Eighth Grade-13 year olds

Students want to be treated like adults, but don't expect adult behavior consistently. Asking the students to help develop the rules for your sessions can increase their involvement and positively impact their behavior. They are very aware of problems in the larger world and interested in technology and how things work.

Middle school students are often dealing with adult issues. Remember that despite their age and maturity levels, their feelings and beliefs are very important to them. Always treat them with the respect you expect them to show you.

They have a desire to be seen as competent and to be recognized for what they do well. They value order, consistency, and fair play. Make sure you are always clear and consistent when discussing and enforcing rules.

Conformity with peers is critical and it may seem they are "too cool to care". If, however, you are consistent, friendly and caring, they will become more open and animated.

The attention span of a middle school student is about 8-10 minutes.