

YOU MIGHT BE A MIDDLE SCHOOL TEACHER

If you have no qualms about telling adolescents to pull up their pants, spit out their gum, and get their hair out of their faces, even if these adolescents are not in your normal jurisdiction-in grocery lines, at fast-food restaurants, at family reunions, or at your spouse's boss's house-you might be a middle school teacher.

If you can detect gum chewing at fifty paces, by one movement of the jaw, you are a middle school teacher.

If you have become adept enough at reading between the lines of "principal compliments" to know, for example, that: "You're so flexible" means "I want you to teach yet another class outside of your endorsement area;" "You've got great ideas" means "I've scheduled you for yearbook in the fall;" and "You're so patient" means "Wait 'til you see this new kid I just placed in your 4th-period class; then you might be a practical middle school teacher.

If your peripheral vision range is now up to 240 degrees, you might be a middle school teacher.

If you can stroll down an aisle of adolescents checking homework, and snarf a note from one, a skateboard catalog from another, and a Gameboy from a third without so much as disturbing the modulation of your voice as you explain the causes of the Civil War, you might be a middle school teacher.

If you have successfully eliminated from your vocabulary all words and phrases which could be construed as having anything to do with pubescent body parts or things those parts could do with each other, then you most definitely are a middle school teacher.