



Middle School Student Sound Off

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Not Like the Movies

You are walking through the hallways of your middle school, passing people laughing and talking as they walk to their next class. Some kid is getting shoved into a locker and bullied, and everyone is in their own little groups and clicks. Every middle school coming of age movie portrays the same setting. While there is some resemblance between real life and the ones on television, TV middle schools are not accurate enough to prepare anyone for the actual life of a middle schooler. Behind the curtains, it can be much different. Middle school is not like the movies.

I have not seen many movies about student athletes, and the few I have did not quite depict the real struggles. I cannot fit a breath between school and sports! Most athletes attend 2-3 practices per week, and games or tournaments over the weekends. This schedule worsens for multi-sport athletes such as me, where almost every day is filled with 1-3 hours of practice. The way my family frantically runs around trying to gather all equipment needed in time to leave reminds me of a fire drill. Not only is the rush stressful to get from school to sports, and then back home with enough time to shower and get ready for bed, often, not all my homework is completed, and I lay awake in bed overwhelmed by the amount of homework with the little time available before class. I get homework every night, including weekends, and only manage to finish half of the time! I have lost many tears over this, and sometimes my love for the sport I play drains.

I have however seen several movies attempting to recreate the teenage girl experience. These are all remarkably similar to each other, and normally contain a popular mean girl or group, a main character, and some background characters that typically have formed groups. Most middle schools have a few popular groups of girls, some mean, and some kind. There are no main characters, although it seems like they are. Everybody is their own main character and sees all from their own perspective. This is the same for the "background characters" which are just the less popular. When you are looking at the entire grade walking in circles around the hallway, things just feel different.

Some people you know well, some people you have never even seen before, and some people just in between. Some people that are nice, some people that are mean, and some people just in between. Many of these people, however, could not possibly care less about your wellbeing outside of school. They are all just there for education, but so much more goes down. There are not enough pages to write about this, but there is also an immense amount of pressure to wear makeup and dress "cute" and "trendy." This is technically to stand out, but really you are just blending in amongst hundreds of other girls who look the same. Makeup alone can take between five and 45 minutes to prepare depending on the person, and skin care is also a staple because showing up to school with even the smallest pimple gets you at least a little judgment. The worst thing about middle school is boys! For some even, other girls! The movies have this one right, because being a middle school girl, it seems as if your entire school experience is centered around somebody! These things distract me from the important things like growing my relationship with friends, family, or even God. Not all teenage girls behave this way, but this is true for most.

The whole purpose for school can even be a problem! Some classes are a breeze to pass, but many are difficult. There is much work to do and not enough class time to complete for some. Especially for those who tend to get distracted or talk with friends. To make things worse, paying attention is often harder than the class! There are billions of thoughts circling in my head during class. My brain is like a fair, and in class my thoughts are riding roller coasters. I think about every event ever occurring on this planet, stressing, and distracting myself from my surroundings. To add on, while it is important, the whole concept of school feels recurring, and it makes me feel like I am stuck in some time loop or in the movie "50 First Dates". Every morning I wake up, go to school, get home, rush to practice, shower, and sleep. I do this five times a week for two days "off" at a tournament, and repeat week after week until a break. These cycles repeat year after year until college or adulthood. This can either make life boring at times, or super chaotic and stressful.

My movie would accurately portray the life of most middle schoolers. Everybody has their own movie. The director is God, and sometimes we just must relax and live the life He made especially for us. While there are some joys to seeing friends and having connection classes, this is what it is really like being a middle schooler, but sometimes I still like to pretend I am in my own movie. It helps me escape the stress and worries of reality. Middle school is not like the movies.