

13 Reasons Students Hate Teachers

[Mark Barnes](#) | July 16, 2015 | [Innovation](#), [Inspiration](#) | [24 Comments](#)



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“Wait just a second,” you say as you read this title. “My students don’t hate me.”

Granted, not all students hate teachers, and you just might be that one in a million that they all love. It’s more likely, though, that you’re not and at least some students really do hate you.

I know this because my students hated me for many years. Some loathed me and begged their counselor to move them out of my class.

Why? Mainly because I was a bad teacher, but that’s pretty vague. To put a finer point on it, I and my class were not fun, but there are many layers to this onion, and you should tune in, because there’s a fair chance that some of your students hate you, too, and you may not even realize it.

13 reasons students hate teachers

1 — Teachers are boring. They preach standards and testing and expectations. Students see no value in this.

2 — Teachers are strict. I used to think being strict meant running a tight ship and offering the “kind of structure these kids need.” I was wrong. If you doubt this, read Alfie Kohn, Jessica Lahey, Stephen Krashen, and a host of others, who have studied best practices for decades and suggest that strictness isn’t conducive to successful teaching and learning.

3 — Teachers yell. A brilliant principal I know once said that the culture of his school started changing when he and his staff stopped yelling at kids.

4 — Teachers are secretive. “That’s personal,” I used to say when kids asked anything about my life. If you’re secretive, it looks like you are hiding something, and students hate that.

5 — Teachers have too many rules. Kids face plenty of rules in their lives. They want a little freedom. Let them chew gum or wear their hats, for crying out loud. Who does it hurt?

6 — Teachers assign too much homework. If students don’t have choice about out of class assignments and receive a string of zeroes for missing work, then the activities are useless. Traditional [homework](#) does not improve learning, and the consequences of not doing it only make students hate teachers.

7 — Teachers give “pop” quizzes. Tests, in general, say very little about learning, and a surprise quiz is nothing more than a way for teachers to punish and exercise control. Again, I know, because I used the “pop” quiz and told students and parents that I would give lots of them, as a way to make students do homework. How did this go over? You guessed it; kids hated me. A lot of parents did, too.

8 — Teachers take mobile devices from students. I don’t care if the student handbook says devices are banned. Just because your leaders are blind doesn’t mean you have to walk into walls. This is the age of mobile learning. Embrace it.

9 — Teachers are sarcastic. Sure, I used sarcasm; it was a go-to tool for far too long. It wasn’t cool. It wasn’t funny. Kids hated it, and they hated me for using it. Sarcasm is thoughtless and childish—not outstanding teacher qualities.

10 — Teachers use grades as weapons. Ever give points for participation? Every deduct points for poor behavior? Ever give a zero for missing assignments? I’m guilty of all three. The practice was a disservice to my students and one more reason for them to hate me.

11 — Teachers make threats. “If you don’t stop, I’m calling your mom” was one of my staple if-then threats for [disruptive students](#). I rarely called (I didn’t really want to), and nothing was accomplished. Kids hated me, and their behavior didn’t change.

12 — Teachers use work books and worksheets. Bad practice adds up to disengaged students, who hate you and your class.

13 — Teachers appear to dislike kids. Of course, this is almost never true, but if you rarely appear to enjoy being around kids, they will leap to the conclusion that you dislike them.

At this point, honest teachers, who want what’s best for kids, will likely check this list and wonder which reasons apply to them. This self-evaluation is, of course, a good thing.

As previously mentioned, students hated me for many years. It took far too long for me to realize that kids are more than empty minds that teachers must fill with information.

Our students are people. They have feelings, and they have needs. Oh, and most of them are shortsighted and immature; it’s part of being a kid. So, they are inclined to think the worst of teachers.

They want to be engaged, to be liked, to feel welcomed, and they need someone they can trust.

Before you fill their brains with math, science, reading and writing, show them that you care—that you do actually like kids. Speak softly. Look them in the eyes. Ask questions. Be their friend, before you are their teacher.

Do these remarkably simple things, and students won't hate you.

They may never love you, but they will respect you, care about you, and many will run through a wall for you. If they're willing to do this, imagine how much they'll want to learn from you.

Now, you can teach them.