Teaching the Cover Story On
THE MIDDLE SCHOOL DEBATE

SUMMARY
Parents, teachers and school administrators across the country are rethinking the concept of middle school. In the 1970s, many school districts made the switch from junior high schools to middle schools. Now, some districts are moving toward a K–8 model. What are the advantages and disadvantages of each type of school?

RESOURCES
rand.org Visit the Rand Corporation site for Jaana Juvonen’s 2004 report, Focus on the Wonder Years: Challenges Facing the American Middle School. Under Reports & Bookstore, scroll down to Browse Authors.
nmsa.org The National Middle School Association focuses on educating students ages 10–15. The site offers a wealth of professional development resources, including the online version of The Middle School Journal. Also available: “This We Believe: Successful Schools for Young Adolescents,” the group’s position paper.
edweek.org Education Week’s online site posts the latest education news from newspapers across the country. Updated daily.
ed.gov The U.S. Department of Education site has information for students, parents, teachers and administrators.
time.com Search the TIME site for the August 8, 2005, cover story, “Being 13.” Includes the article “Is Middle School Bad for Kids?” by former TFK editor Claudia Wallis.
middleweb.com This site offers a Listserv and links to blogs by middle school teachers.


NONFICTION LITERACY STRATEGIES
BEFORE READING
Analyze the Cover Illustration
• Have students examine the illustration’s message. Ask: What is happening in the illustration? How does it make you feel? What message do you think the illustrator is trying to communicate? Does the picture go well with the story? Explain.

START A DISCUSSION
Think Critically
• Ask: Which kind of school would you rather go to: a K–8 school or a middle school? Explain your thinking.
• What do you see as the advantages and disadvantages of K–8 schools? Of middle schools?

Give examples from the text and from your own experience.
• Some educators are closing middle schools and opening more K–8 schools. What reasons do they give for making the change? Do you think it’s a good idea? Explain your thinking.

EXTEND LEARNING
Conduct an Interview
• Have students interview a peer, parent or teacher to learn about his or her sixth-grade experience. Ask students to share what they learned in class.

ASSESS COMPREHENSION
Assess student comprehension with our weekly online quiz.
crops in California might affect citrus growers, farmworkers and consumers across the country.

**Read a map:** Several states are mentioned in this story. Have students find them on a United States map.

**Resource**

- Scholastic Atlas of Weather by Mary-Ann Legault, ed. (Scholastic Inc., 2004) A comprehensive and useful guide to understanding the weather, with colorful photographs, diagrams and suggested science experiments to help concepts come alive.
- factmonster.com Click on Science, then Weather, for background information on winter weather, record temperatures, cool links and more.

**WHAT'S WITH THE WEATHER?** (p. 6)

**Make personal connections:** Ask students to describe what the weather has been like in their area this winter. How does it compare with places mentioned in the TFK story?

**Start a discussion:** Challenge students to think about how the loss of citrus crops in California might affect citrus growers, farmworkers and consumers across the country.

**WILD AND WEIRD (p. 7)**

**Start a discussion:** Why do scientists feel it is important to save these rare and unusual animals? What can people do to help make sure these unique creatures survive?

**Resource**

- edgeofexistence.org Visit the EDGE site to learn more about the program and the animals that are in dire need of protection. In video clips, scientists explain their work. A forum offers visitors the opportunity to ask the scientists questions.


**TFK Power Words**

_In the Middle_ (pp. 4–5)

- **PRIVILEGE:** a special benefit; opposite of a right
- **MOVEMENT:** an organized effort
- **FLAWS:** imperfections
- **RIGORS:** strict expectations
- **TAILORED:** specially made
- **STABILITY:** structure
- **TRANSITION:** movement, or change, from one thing to another

_Wild and Weird_ (p. 7)

- **RAREST:** not often found
- **WONDROUS:** extraordinary; full of wonder
- **LAUNCH:** to start off in an energetic manner
- **PRESERVING:** keeping alive
- **DISTINCT:** notable
- **ENDANGERED:** threatened with extinction, or of dying out forever
- **CONSERVE:** to keep safe

**World Report Teacher’s Guide**

- Teacher’s Guide Editor Jaime Joyce
- Teacher’s Guide Associate Editor Suzanne Friedman
- Teacher’s Guide Art Director Cathy Sánchez Duvivier
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**Complaints? E-mail teachersguides@timeforkids.com**
IN MY OPINION...

For the article “In the Middle,” the writer and other reporters interviewed several people in order to present the reader with different opinions on the topic of middle schools.

In the boxes below, write the names and titles (student, teacher, principal, etc.) of three people interviewed for the article. Then, in your own words, explain each person’s opinion.

NAME: ____________________
____________________________
TITLE: ____________________

NAME: ____________________
____________________________
TITLE: ____________________

NAME: ____________________
____________________________
TITLE: ____________________

What is your opinion on the topic of middle schools? Write your answer on the back of this page. Share your position with your classmates.
AN OPINION POLL

Poll 10 people on the topic of middle schools. Ask: Which do you think is better for students: traditional middle schools (grades 6–8), K–8 schools, or another kind of school?

1. In the chart below, write the name of each person you polled and mark his or her response.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NAME</th>
<th>TRADITIONAL MIDDLE SCHOOL (6–8)</th>
<th>K–8 SCHOOL</th>
<th>OTHER/UNDECIDED</th>
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2. Create a key for the pie chart on the right. Assign a different color to each response.

3. Fill in the chart to show the results of your poll. There are 10 wedges—one for each person’s response. Group colors together.

Explain the results of your survey. _____________________________________________________________

BONUS: Show the results of your poll in fractions, decimals or percents.
Our reproducible archive includes the following themes:

- Animals
- Black History
- Bullying
- Elections
- Environment
- Geography
- Government
- Health
- Holidays
- Middle East
- Space
- Sports
- Technology
- Women
- World History

Have students solve a crossword puzzle using nouns from the TFK cover story “NASA’s New Vision” (April 29, 2005), also available at timeforkids.com.

<table>
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<th>THEME</th>
<th>REPRODUCIBLE TITLE</th>
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<tr>
<td>Space</td>
<td>Wordplay</td>
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In this thought-provoking reproducible, students read and interpret quotes from the men and women of the U.S. space program.

1. Go to timeforkids.com/teachers.
2. Click on Reproducibles in the navigation bar.
3. Click on the appropriate theme listed along the left side of the page.
4. Scroll down until you find the title of each World Report reproducible.

Visit timeforkids.com/teachers for worksheets to teach this week’s issue.
Nesting
Copies are “nested” within each other. Many times teachers think they do not have enough copies, when in fact they are inserted into one another.

Follow these five easy steps for 24-hour access to your account:
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3. Click one of the account options on the left-hand menu.
4. Enter your 9-digit account number.
5. Click on View My Account.

Did you know . . . ?
TIME FOR KIDS has three different editions to meet your students’ needs.

Big Picture:
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30 issues

News Scoop:
Grades 2–3
26 issues

World Report:
Grades 4–6
26 issues

TFK also offers a supplementary geography magazine, TIME FOR KIDS Around the World, which can be added to a current News Scoop or World Report subscription for only $1 per student!

Visit us online at timeforkids.com/TFK/class.
TIME For Kids has teamed up with Toyota to create a year-long classroom program that motivates students to assume leadership roles and work to preserve and repair the environment. Phase II of this three-part program, arriving with your January 26 issue, includes:

- **Four-page Student Magazine** that will ask students to start off the New Year by examining their eco-expertise. Inside they’ll learn how to make their own enviro-lutions, hear how to conserve and preserve from famed skateboarder Bob Burnquist, play eco-friendly games and activities, and more!
- **Companion Teacher’s Guide** with supporting worksheets and lesson plans.
- **Student Minisite** (timeforkids.com/drivechange) with updated content based on the information in the student magazine.
- **Teacher Minisite** (timeforkids.com/teachers/drivechange) with additional resources to supplement your environmental curriculum.

And, there’s more to come! Keep an eye out for the next installment in April 2007.

**timeforkids.com/teachers/drivechange**

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