

## Student Profiles

### Student 1

You are “life smart” but not “school smart.” You would do almost anything to not look bad in school. You are the class clown, the loud political protester, or the persistent talker—on the edge of being a “behavior problem.” You don’t mind being sent to the office instead of having to give an oral presentation or complete a difficult assignment—and you know just how to get sent there. Everyone at the office knows you well and greets you with affection, as they know you as “really, a nice kid.” The things you are really good at seem to have little place in school.

### Student 2

You are a good student, but you don’t try to stand out. You have figured out what each of your teachers wants, and you do exactly that—on time and completely. You are a committed student but take few risks when it comes to your school work. People describe you as the cooperative kid whose work always falls within the “norm.” You complete your work, earn As and Bs, and are generally liked by your teachers.

### Student 3

You love learning. You can’t get enough of it. You actually look up those books that your teachers mention in passing and independently figure out your own way to solve hard math problems just for fun. Your only issues with school are the busy work you have to do and those times when the other kids who just don’t seem to care about learning are disruptive and slow down the pace of instruction.

### Student 4

Who are you anyway? It often takes teachers a full semester to remember your name or get to know you at all. You often feel invisible or too shy to be seen. This is either because you try to be invisible (that is, you sit in the back or hide behind textbooks) or because you feel out of place and overlooked, for all kinds of reasons. You watch the “in” students with a mixture of envy and disdain. Most teachers don’t know that you’re actually pretty smart and like to learn.

### Student 5

In your mind, there is no way you can succeed in school. You have been classified as a “remedial” student since early grades. You read slowly, you struggle with spelling, and your written work is messy and sometimes unreadable. You do have interests and strengths, but they seem to go unnoticed and undervalued.

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This activity is modified from School Reform Initiative (SRI) developed by Gene Thompson-Grove. Revised by Connie Zimmerman Parrish and Susan Westcott Taylor, 2012.

**Student 6**

You have a creative mind and you love the arts (drawing, music, dance, drama). You have a difficult time staying focused on written work, which is all anyone seems to want to do in school. You are happy with yourself but often feel like you are “marching to a different drummer.”

**Student 7**

Who said that academics, classes, and grades are the most important things about school? As far as you are concerned, you go to school to see your friends and to participate in what they call the “extracurricular” activities—clubs and specials, athletic events, school-sponsored skate nights, and so on. These activities don’t seem “extra” to you at all but instead are central to what school is *really* all about.

**Student 8**

Your family has big plans for you. They resettled in the United States so you could succeed, but they don’t know what it feels like to be a student with an accent whose name the teachers sometimes can’t pronounce. You don’t ask for extra help, even when it’s offered. You’re expected to be a good student and you want to prove that you can be.