

37 Inspirational Movies About Education

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You all remember that one teacher who was much different than the rest of the adults around you when you were a little kid, or when you were in high school making lives miserable with your teenage angst. We know you miss them, and have been looking for the same inspiration ever since. Well, don't worry if you feel like you're being suffocated by adulthood. Here are 37 movies to remind you that you can look at the world with the enthusiasm of a teenager again no matter how old you get!

Storylines are from IMDB, and the ranking is done according to IMDB ratings.

37. The Paper Chase (1973) | IMDB: 7.2

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[IMDB](#)

Serious, hard-working student James T. Hart faces the rigors of his first year at Harvard Law School. The pressure to succeed is tremendous and some of the students form study groups while also spending a great many hours studying. Hart's greatest challenge is contract law and his professor, Charles W. Kingsfield Jr. Using the Socratic method, Kingsfield challenges his students with questions demanding accuracy and creativity in their responses and often humiliating those who are unable to respond. As the school year progresses, Hart faces many challenges but befriends Susan Fields - unaware that she has a connection that affects their relationship. Finally, Hart accommodates himself to whatever might come his way, accepting a new set of priorities in his life.

36. Mr. Hollands Opus (1995) | IMDB: 7.3

[IMDB](#)

Glenn Holland is a musician and composer who takes a teaching job to pay the rent while, in his 'spare time', he can strive to achieve his true goal - compose one memorable piece of music to leave his mark on the world. As Holland discovers 'Life is what happens to you while you're busy making other plans' and as the years unfold the joy of sharing his contagious passion for music with his students becomes his new definition of success.



35. Half Nelson (2006) | IMDB: 7.3

IMDB

Young Caucasian Dan Dunne teaches history and coaches the girls basketball team at a Brooklyn high school populated primarily by black and Hispanic students. To the chagrin of his superiors, Dan bucks the outlined curriculum of historical facts in favor of the philosophy of historical events, generally discussing the concept of dialectics. As such, he captures the imagination of his students, at least in the classroom. Outside of the classroom, Dan's life is in shambles. He has a distant but cordial relationship with his family. He uses illicit drugs rampantly. Although his former girlfriend Rachel was able to clean up her drug habit, Dan believes that rehab will not work for him. Due to a combination of these issues, he treats women poorly. Thirteen year old Drey is a student in his class and a player on his basketball team. Drey has her own problems.

34. Finding Forrester (2000) | IMDB: 7.3

IMDB

Because of scoring exceptionally high on a statewide standardized exam and being an exceptionally good basketball player Jamal Wallace is sent to a prestigious prep school in Manhattan. He soon befriends the reclusive writer, William Forrester. The friendship leads William to overcome his reclusiveness and for Jamal to overcome the racial prejudices and pursue his true dream - writing.

33. Lean On Me (1989) | IMDB: 7.4

IMDB

An arrogant and unorthodox teacher returns as principal to the idyllic high school from which he had earlier been fired to find it a den of drug abuse, gang violence, and urban despair. Eventually his successful but unorthodox methods lead to a clash with city officials that threatens to undo all his efforts. Based on a true story.

32. Stand and Deliver (1988) | IMDB: 7.4

IMDB

Jaime Escalante is a mathematics teacher in a school in a Hispanic neighbourhood. Convinced that his students have potential, he adopts unconventional teaching methods help gang members and no-hopers pass the rigorous Advanced Placement exam in calculus.

31. Precious (2009) | IMDB: 7.4



IMDB

It's Harlem 1987. Sixteen year old Claireece Jones - who goes by her middle name Precious - is an illiterate, overweight black girl. She is pregnant with her second child, both children fathered by her biological father, who has continually raped her since she was a child, but who she doesn't see otherwise. Her infant daughter, Mongo - such named since she has Down Syndrome - lives with Precious' grandmother. Precious lives with her mother Mary, who abuses Precious both physically and emotionally. Mary does nothing but smoke, watch television and collect welfare through fraud (as she doesn't ever look for a job) and believes that education does nothing for Precious, who she would rather also collect welfare if only to bring money into the household. To escape her life, Precious often daydreams of herself in glamorous situations. Because of her current pregnancy, Precious' principal transfers her into an alternative school.

30. Padre Padrone | IMDB: 7.4

IMDB

The true story of the life of Gavino Ledda, the son of a Sardinian shepherd, and how he managed to escape his harsh, almost barbaric existence by slowly educating himself, despite violent opposition from his brutal father.

29. The First Grader (2010) | IMDB: 7.4

IMDB

Set in a mountain village in Kenya the film tells the remarkable true and uplifting story of a proud old Mau Mau veteran who is determined to seize his last chance to learn to read and write - and so ends up joining a class alongside six year-olds. Together he and his young teacher face fierce resistance, but ultimately they win through - and also find a new way of overcoming the burdens of the colonial past.

28. Waiting For Superman (2010) | IMDB: 7.5

IMDB

Filmmaker Davis Guggenheim reminds us that education "statistics" have names: Anthony, Francisco, Bianca, Daisy, and Emily, whose stories make up the engrossing foundation of WAITING FOR SUPERMAN. As he follows a handful of promising kids through a system that inhibits, rather than encourages, academic growth, Guggenheim undertakes an exhaustive review of public education, surveying "drop-out factories" and "academic sinkholes," methodically dissecting the system and its seemingly intractable problems.

27. Searching for Bobby Fischer | IMDB: 7.5



IMDB

Josh Waitzkin is just a typical American boy interested in baseball when one day he challenges his father at chess and wins. Showing unusual precocity at the outdoor matches at Washington Square in New York City, he quickly makes friends with a hustler named Vinnie who teaches him speed chess. Josh's parents hire a renowned chess coach, Bruce, who teaches Josh the usefulness of measured planning. Along the way Josh becomes tired of Bruce's system and chess in general and purposely throws a match, leaving the prospects of winning a national championship in serious jeopardy.

26. Freedom Writers | IMDB: 7.5

IMDB

It's 1994 in Long Beach, California. Idealistic Erin Gruwell is just starting her first teaching job, that as freshman and sophomore English teacher at Woodrow Wilson High School, which, two years earlier, implemented a voluntary integration program. For many of the existing teachers, the integration has ruined the school, whose previously stellar academic standing has been replaced with many students who will be lucky to graduate or even be literate. Despite choosing the school on purpose because of its integration program, Erin is unprepared for the nature of her classroom, whose students live by generations of strict moral codes of protecting their own at all cost. Many are in gangs and almost all know somebody that has been killed by gang violence. The Latinos hate the Cambodians who hate the blacks and so on. The only person the students hate more is Ms. Gruwell.

25. The Class (2008) | IMDB: 7.5

IMDB

Teacher François Marin and his colleagues are preparing for another school year teaching at a racially mixed inner city high school in Paris. The teachers talk to each other about their prospective students, both the good and the bad. The teachers collectively want to inspire their students, but each teacher is an individual who will do things in his or her own way to achieve the results they desire. They also have differing viewpoints on the students themselves, and how best to praise and discipline them. The administration of the school tries to be as fair as possible, which includes having student representatives sit on the student evaluation committee. Marin's class this year of fourteen and fifteen year olds is no different than previous years, although the names and faces have changed. Marin tries to get through to his students, sometimes with success and sometimes resulting in utter failure.

24. Monsieur Lazhar | IMDB: 7.5



IMDB

Bachir Lazhar, an Algerian immigrant, is hired to replace an elementary school teacher who died tragically. While the class goes through a long healing process, nobody in the school is aware of Bachir's painful former life; nor that he is at risk of being deported at any moment. Adapted from Evelyne de la Cheneliere's play, Bachir Lazhar depicts the encounter between two distant worlds and the power of self-expression. Using great sensitivity and humor, Philippe Falardeau follows a humble man who is ready to transcend his own loss in order to accompany children beyond the silence and taboo of death.

23. Bad Education (2004) | IMDB: 7.5

IMDB

In the early 60s, two boys - Ignacio and Enrique - discover love, movies and fear in a Christian school. Father Manolo, the school principal and Literature teacher, both witnesses and takes part in these discoveries. The three characters come against one another twice again, in the late 70s and in 1980. These meetings are set to change the life and death of some of them.

22. Die Welle (2008) | IMDB: 7.6

IMDB

High school teacher, Rainer Wegner, may be popular with the students, but he's also unorthodox. He's forced to teach autocracy for the school's project week. He's less than enthusiastic at first, but the response of the students is surprising to say the least. He forces the students to become more invested in the prospect of self rule, and soon the class project has its own power and eerily starts to resemble Germany's past. Can Wegner and his class realize what's happening before the horrors start repeating themselves?

21. Blame It On Fidel (2006) | IMDB: 7.6

IMDB

Hello, my name is Anna and I am nine years old. I wish you had known me before - I mean before my aunt Marga and my cousin Pilar came to my parents'house -, I was such a happy little girl. Before their coming life was a bed of roses. Of course my little brother could be a pain in the neck - little brothers always are, aren't they? - but there was that wonderful big house, there was my Cuban-born nanny who cooked so well, there was the bath before dinner, not to mention this wonderful catechism class at the catholic school. But they did come, those Spanish intruders. And now never heard before names like "Franco", "Allende", "Women's Lib", "abortion", the lot, have got into my life. Daddy and



Mummy have suddenly become "communists", although this a term that Bon Papa and Bonne Maman (my grandparents from Bordeaux, in fact) just hate.

20. Detachment (2011) | IMDB: 7.7

[IMDB](#)

Detachment is a chronicle of three weeks in the lives of several high school teachers, administrators and students through the eyes of a substitute teacher named Henry Barthes. Henry roams from school to school, imparting modes of knowledge, but never staying long enough to form any semblance of sentient attachment. A perfect profession for one seeking to hide out in the open. One day Henry arrives at his next assignment. Upon his entry into this particular school, a secret world of emotion is awakened within him by three women. A girl named Meredith in his first period. A fellow teacher Ms. Madison, and a street hooker named Erica, whom Henry has personally granted brief shelter from the streets. Each one of these women, like Henry, are in a life and death struggle to find beauty in a seemingly vicious and loveless world.

19. Dazed and Confused (1993) | IMDB: 7.7

[IMDB](#)

It's the last day of school at a high school in a small town in Texas in 1976. The upperclassmen are hazing the incoming freshmen, and everyone is trying to get stoned, drunk, or laid, even the football players that signed a pledge not to.

18. Rushmore (1998) | IMDB: 7.7

[IMDB](#)

Max Fischer is a precocious 15-year-old whose reason for living is his attendance at Rushmore, a private school where he's not doing well in any of his classes, but where he's the king of extracurricular activities - from being in the beekeeping society to writing and producing plays, there's very little after school he doesn't do. His life begins to change, however, when he finds out he's on academic probation, and when he stumbles into love with Miss Cross, a pretty teacher of the elementary school at Rushmore. Added to the mix is his friendship with Herman Blume, wealthy industrialist and father to boys who attend the school, and who also finds himself attracted to Miss Cross. Max's fate becomes inextricably tied to this odd love triangle, and how he sets about resolving it is the story in the film.

17. To Sir With Love (1967) | IMDB: 7.7

[IMDB](#)



Engineer Mark Thackeray arrives to teach a totally undisciplined class at an East End school. Still hoping for a good engineering job, he's hopeful that he won't be there long. He starts implementing his own brand of classroom discipline: forcing the pupils to treat each other with respect. Inevitably he begins getting involved in the students' personal lives, and must avoid the advances of an amorous student while winning over the class tough. What will he decide when the engineering job comes through?

16. Small Change (1976) | IMDB: 7.7

IMDB

In the town of Thiers, summer of 1976, teachers and parents give their children skills, love, and attention. A teacher has his first child, a single mother hopes to meet Mr. Right, another mom reaches out to Patrick, a motherless lad who is just discovering the opposite sex. Patrick befriends Julien, a new student who lives in poverty with his mother and has a terrible secret. Bruno shows his friends how to chat up girls. Sylvie stages a witty protest against her parents. Brothers give a friend a haircut. A toddler falls from a window and is unhurt. Everybody goes to the cinema. At camp, Martine catches Patrick's eye. A teacher explains: "Life is hard, but it's wonderful."

15. Not One Less (1999) | IMDB: 7.8

IMDB

In a remote mountain village, the teacher must leave for a month, and the mayor can find only a 13-year old girl, Wei Minzhi, to substitute. The teacher leaves one stick of chalk for each day and promises her an extra 10 yuan if there's not one less student when he returns. Within days, poverty forces the class troublemaker, Zhang Huike, to leave for the city to work. Minzhi, possessed of a stubborn streak, determines to bring him back. She enlists the 26 remaining pupils in earning money for her trip. She hitches to Jiangjiakou City and begins her search. The boy, meanwhile, is there, lost and begging for food. Minzhi's stubbornness may be Huike and the village school's salvation.

14. Remember The Titans (2000) | IMDB: 7.8

IMDB

Suburban Virginia schools have been segregated for generations. One Black and one White high school are closed and the students sent to T.C. Williams High School under federal mandate to integrate. The year is seen through the eyes of the football team where the man hired to coach the Black school is made head coach over the highly successful white coach. Based on the actual events of



1971, the team becomes the unifying symbol for the community as the boys and the adults learn to depend on and trust each other.

13. Little Miss Sunshine (2006) | IMDB: 7.9

IMDB

In Albuquerque, Sheryl Hoover brings her suicidal brother Frank to the breast of her dysfunctional and emotionally bankrupted family. Frank is homosexual, an expert in Proust. He tried to commit suicide when he was rejected by his boyfriend and his great competitor became renowned and recognized as number one in the field of Proust. Sheryl's husband Richard is unsuccessfully trying to sell his self-help and self-improvement technique using nine steps to reach success, but he is actually a complete loser. Her son Dwayne has taken a vow of silence as a follower of Nietzsche and aims to be a jet pilot. Dwayne's grandfather Edwin was sent away from the institution for elders (Sunset Manor) and is addicted in heroin. When her seven-year-old daughter Olive has a chance to dispute the Little Miss Sunshine pageant in Redondo Beach, California, the whole family travels together in their old Volkswagen Type 2 (Kombi) in a funny journey of hope of winning the talent contest...

12. The Chorus (2004) | IMDB: 7.9

IMDB

Fond de l'Etang is a boarding school for troubled boys located in the French countryside. In the mid-twentieth century, it is run by the principal M. Rachin, an egotistical disciplinarian whose official unofficial mantra for the school is "action - reaction", meaning that there will be severe consequences for any boy out of line. This approach does not seem to be working as the boys as a collective are an unruly bunch. In turn, the teachers don't teach, but are always watching out for the next subversive act from the boys. January 15, 1949 marks the arrival to the school of the new supervisor, M. Clément Mathieu, a middle-aged man who is grasping at finding his place in life after a series of failed endeavors. Although he does find the boys an unruly lot, Mathieu does not believe in the "action - reaction" policy, and as such, butts heads with Rachin while secretly undermining the policy.

11. Être et Avoir (2002) | IMDB: 7.9

IMDB

How do we learn to live with others and their wishes? Director Nicolas Philibert poses this question in a village schoolhouse in Auvergne, where Georges Lopez teaches 13 children, ages ranging from about four to 12. Against a landscape of mountains and farmland, from driving snow to rain to sun, the children gather in Lopez's warm and colorful classroom, to read, write dictation, cook, and sort



things out. At home, the older ones do homework with parents after their chores. At year's end, they look ahead to the next, visiting the middle school and meeting the little ones coming in the fall. As they learn sums and adjectives, with Lopez's help, they also learn to live side by side.

10. Dead Poets Society (1989) | IMDB: 8.0

[IMDB](#)

Painfully shy Todd Anderson (Ethan Hawke) has been sent to the school where his popular older brother was valedictorian. His room-mate, Neil Perry (Robert Sean Leonard), although exceedingly bright and popular, is very much under the thumb of his overbearing father (Kurtwood Smith) . The two, along with their other friends, meet Professor Keating (Robin Williams), their new English teacher, who tells them of the Dead Poets Society, and encourages them to go against the status quo. Each, in their own way, does this, and are changed for life.

9. Bowling for Columbine (2002) | IMDB: 8.0

[IMDB](#)

The United States of America is notorious for its astronomical number of people killed by firearms for a developed nation without a civil war. With his signature sense of angry humor, activist filmmaker Michael Moore sets out to explore the roots of this bloodshed. In doing so, he learns that the conventional answers of easy availability of guns, violent national history, violent entertainment and even poverty are inadequate to explain this violence when other cultures share those same factors without the equivalent carnage. In order to arrive at a possible explanation, Michael Moore takes on a deeper examination of America's culture of fear, bigotry and violence in a nation with widespread gun ownership. Furthermore, he seeks to investigate and confront the powerful elite political and corporate interests fanning this culture for their own unscrupulous gain.

8. Stand By Me | IMDB: 8.1

[IMDB](#)

It's the summer of 1959 in Castlerock, Oregon and four 12 year-old boys - Gordie, Chris, Teddy and Vern - are fast friends. After learning of the general location of the body of a local boy who has been missing for several days, they set off into woods to see it. Along the way, they learn about themselves, the meaning of friendship and the need to stand up for what is right.

7. Au Revoir Les Enfants | IMDB: 8.1

[IMDB](#)



In 1944, upper class boy Julien Quentin and his brother François travel to Catholic boarding school in the countryside after vacations. Julien is a leader and good student and when the new student Jean Bonnet arrives in the school, they have friction in their relationship. However, Julien learns to respect Jean and discovers that he is Jewish and the priests are hiding him from the Nazis. They become best friends and Julien keeps the secret. When the priest Jean discovers that the servant Joseph is stealing supplies from the school to sell in the black market, he fires the youth. Sooner the Gestapo arrives at school to investigate the students and the priests that run and work in the boarding school.

6. Spring, Summer, Fall, Winter...and Spring (2003) | IMDB: 8.1

[IMDB](#)

In the midst of the Korean wilderness, a Buddhist master patiently raises a young boy to grow up in wisdom and compassion, through experience and endless exercises. Once the pupil discovers his sexual lust, he seems lost to contemplative life and follows his first love, but soon fails to adapt to the modern world, gets in jail for a crime of passion and returns to the master in search of spiritual redemption and reconciliation with karma, at a high price of physical catharsis...

5. Into the Wild | IMDB: 8.2

[IMDB](#)

Based on a true story. After graduating from Emory University, Christopher McCandless abandoned his possessions, gave his entire savings account to charity, and hitchhiked to Alaska to live in the wilderness. Along the way, Christopher encounters a series of characters who shape his life.

4. Good Will Hunting (1997) | IMDB: 8.3

[IMDB](#)

A touching tale of a wayward young man who struggles to find his identity, living in a world where he can solve any problem, except the one brewing deep within himself, until one day he meets his soul mate who opens his mind and his heart.

3. 3 Idiots (2009) | IMDB: 8.5

[IMDB](#)

Farhan Qureshi and Raju Rastogi want to re-unite with their fellow collegian, Rancho, after faking a stroke aboard an Air India plane, and excusing himself from his wife - trouser less - respectively. Enroute, they encounter another student, Chatur Ramalingam, now a successful businessman, who reminds them



of a bet they had undertaken 10 years ago. The trio, while recollecting hilarious antics, including their run-ins with the Dean of Delhi's Imperial College of Engineering, Viru Sahastrabudhe, race to locate Rancho, at his last known address - little knowing the secret that was kept from them all this time.

2. Like Stars on Earth (2007) | IMDB: 8.5

IMDB

Ishaan Awasthi is an eight-year-old whose world is filled with wonders that no one else seems to appreciate; colours, fish, dogs and kites are just not important in the world of adults, who are much more interested in things like homework, marks and neatness. And Ishaan just cannot seem to get anything right in class. When he gets into far more trouble than his parents can handle, he is packed off to a boarding school to 'be disciplined'. Things are no different at his new school, and Ishaan has to contend with the added trauma of separation from his family. One day a new art teacher bursts onto the scene, Ram Shankar Nikumbh, who infects the students with joy and optimism. He breaks all the rules of 'how things are done' by asking them to think, dream and imagine, and all the children respond with enthusiasm, all except Ishaan. Nikumbh soon realizes that Ishaan is very unhappy, and he sets out to discover why. With time, patience and care, he ultimately helps Ishaan find himself.

1. La Vita è Bella (1997) | IMDB: 8.6

IMDB

In 1930s Italy, a carefree Jewish book keeper named Guido starts a fairy tale life by courting and marrying a lovely woman from a nearby city. Guido and his wife have a son and live happily together until the occupation of Italy by German forces. In an attempt to hold his family together and help his son survive the horrors of a Jewish Concentration Camp, Guido imagines that the Holocaust is a game and that the grand prize for winning is a tank.

