

## **8 Reasons Why Gum Has No Place in the Classroom**

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I like to debate the issues with my colleagues, and one debate I had with one of my best of friends was over his choice to allow his 8th grade students to chew gum. I, on the other hand, am fervently opposed to allowing it in my 7th grade classroom. In fact, we teachers shouldn't be chewing gum in class either. It might seem trivial to many teachers, but there are reasons why we shouldn't permit our students to chew gum in class.

**1. The classroom is not a barn yard.** Chomp-clack-chomp-clack. When I taught at a high school where gum was permitted, that's all you heard in the sea of students. Looking out at them made me think of a host of cows chewing cud on my brother-in-laws farm.

**2. It's terrible for public speaking.** There's nothing more awful than students who have just delivered the GREATEST PRESENTATION OF ALL MANKIND, but the whole time you can't think about anything beyond how they fit 6 pieces of gum in their mouth. It also muffles the voice from operating in a proper manner, and a piece of gum sitting on one's tongue or stuffed in their cheek just looks silly. Want to get in a debate and win against someone? Give your competitor a piece of chewing gum.

**3. It will destroy your class and school.** This is probably the number 1 reason to prevent gum chewing. Our middle school is nearly 60 years old, and it's in pretty decent condition. A large reason behind that is the fact that gum is and has been prohibited. Compared to the high school that I taught at, which is less than 10 years old – I still remember going to get a drink from a water fountain that was splattered with gum, someone had even wrapped their gum around the faucet. Nasty!

**4. Gum snapping and bubble blowing is distracting.** There are silly things that students do unconsciously or even consciously when you turn your back to make one another laugh. Why give them another?

**5. Gum sharing is inconsiderate.** It's become a popularity contest to share gum, and students act selfish by giving to a select group of people while neglecting others. I operate by the policy if you have something in this class, there needs to be enough for everyone. Period.

**6. People try to claim that it stimulates concentration.** But I don't buy it. Do you really think a slap of Big Red or 2 pieces of Orbit are going to make you do that much better on the test? How about an interactive, stimulating classroom, a healthy breakfast, or 8 hours of sleep? That's what I'd rather focus on for my students.

**7. Opening Pandora's box to a host of other classroom discussions.** If students can chew gum (which I'm opposed to), why can't they carry around a water bottle (which I support)? Why can't they eat snacks or bring in soda pop?

**8. It sets a negative precedent for years to come.** We are animals of habit. If we can model good behaviors in our students in any age, they can become standards for years to come. If teachers restrict the ability to chew gum in class, it's possible that students will go to college and be on interviews and think to themselves – I shouldn't have gum in a professional setting. It's amazing how many young adults – or even the President of the United States – forget about that.