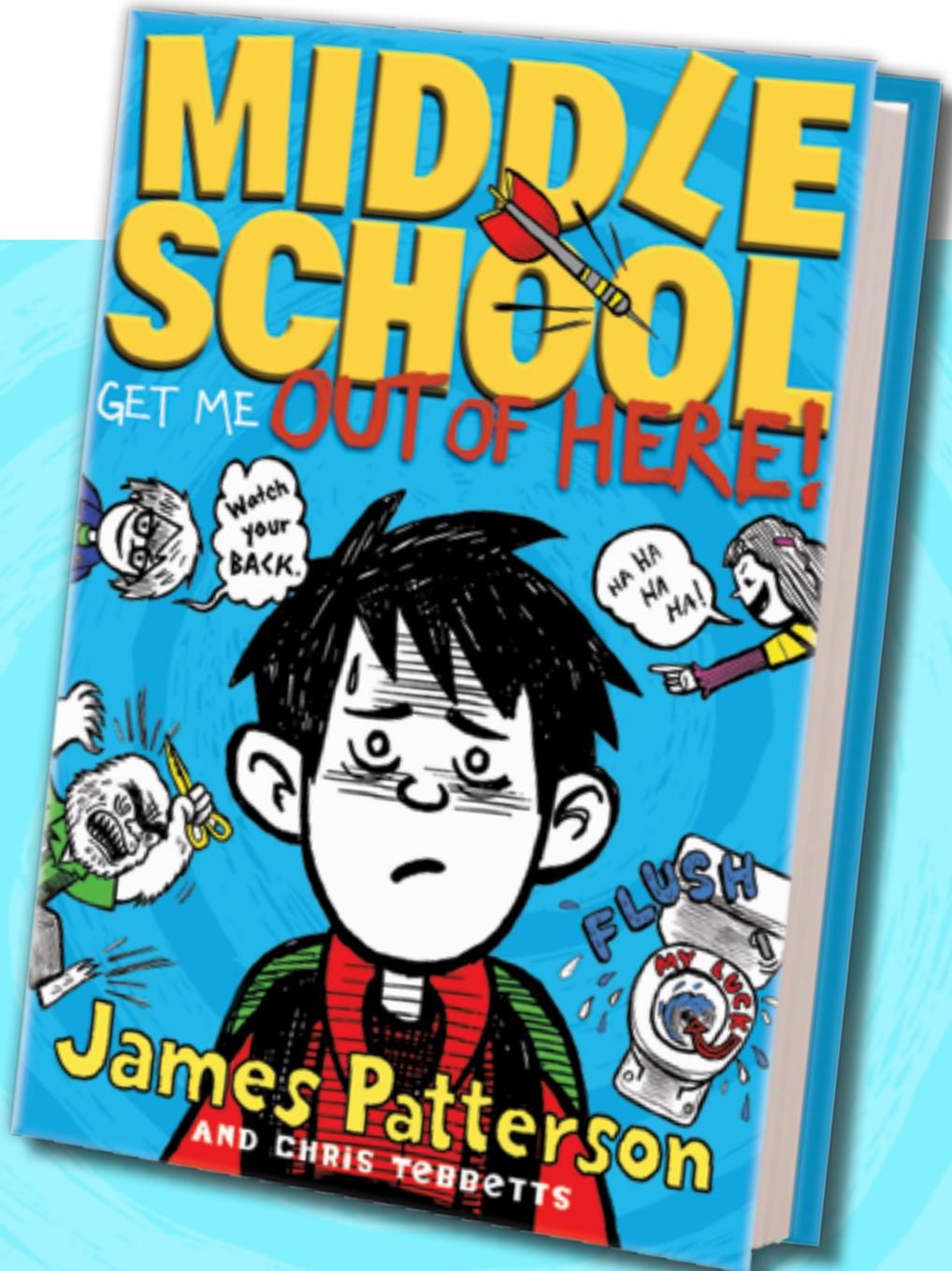


# MIDDLE SCHOOL GET ME OUT OF HERE!

## thematic connections

- ❖ Family Relationships
- ❖ Making Choices
- ❖ Bullying
- ❖ Friendship
- ❖ Peer Pressure

Ages: 8 - 12



by **JAMES PATTERSON** and **CHRIS TEBBETTS**

## BEFORE YOU OPEN THE BOOK (PRE-READING ACTIVITY)

Right now, you're probably saying to yourself, "Get me out of here! I don't want to read another book." Well, don't sweat it. The story you are going to read is all about my life in 7<sup>th</sup> grade—and it's no ordinary book. It's actually pretty funny. But, before you start reading, first tell somebody in your class the worst thing that has ever happened to you in school. And, oh yeah, make it funny! No matter how horrible it was, I bet the stuff you'll find in my book is WAY worse... — **RAFE**

## CURRICULUM CONNECTIONS

### English/Language Arts

Using poster board, ask students to work with a partner to generate a list of Rafe's Top Ten (or so) Biggest Accomplishments from 7<sup>th</sup> grade. Then have them illustrate each item, using the same kind of irony and humor Rafe uses in Chapter 4. Display the Top Ten lists in the classroom.

### Math

The Cathedral School of the Arts is a fine arts academy, and students who attend can also study music and theater. According to Rafe's rule number three on page 108, Rafe believes that "most of the kids at Cathedral were born with a math book in one hand and an extra brain in the other." Ask students to create a polyhedron with paper, adding colors and design to each side. The templates can be found at: [www.korthalsaltes.com](http://www.korthalsaltes.com). When students have completed their polyhedron, hang them from the ceiling in the classroom.

### Science

Our planet is becoming polluted and our natural resources are being depleted. Although it is not Ms. Ling's purpose in asking students to create an art project from something they could recycle, the project provided a good exercise in making students aware of what they use and throw away. Working in small groups, ask students to investigate "going green" and what that means for an individual or family. Ask students to keep a list for a week of every item they use that becomes garbage. Students may even choose to save their trash for a week, so they can see the volume and weight. By exploring the amount of waste students and their families produce each day, students can better understand the enormous impact of trash on the environment. After their lists are generated, and students become aware of how much trash they accumulate, ask students to brainstorm ways they can reduce, reuse, and recycle. Students can also investigate local recycling options and initiate a school recycling campaign.



## Social Studies

With all the recent stories in the news about cyber bullying, could the fake web page that Zeke and Kenny posted using Rafe's name get them in serious trouble? Ask students to define the term cyber bullying, to investigate cyber bullying laws in their state, to research the consequences of cyber bullying, to ascertain if there are school policies that protect students, and to find statistics and stories about actual cases. Then, armed with information, ask the students to initiate an awareness program in their school and community.

## THEMATIC CONNECTIONS

### Family Relationships

Rafe causes his mother considerable grief, but she remains supportive. How does she influence Rafe's choices? How do Rafe and his mother show each other mutual respect? What does Rafe learn about his father's family from his grandmother? How does Rafe go about discovering the whereabouts of his father?

### Making Choices

Rafe is a likeable character with a good heart, but he continually makes bad choices. Why is Rafe so easily influenced by Matty? What choices does Rafe make based on his emotions? How do those choices turn out for him? What is the result of the choices Rafe makes based on his intellect?



## Bullying

The green paint poured in Rafe's locker is mean, but it doesn't hurt anyone, and, at that point, Rafe realizes he needs to stop the battle. But when Zeke and Kenny take bullying to the next level by posting the fake website, Rafe renews the war. How could Rafe have handled that situation without making the choice to "get even?" What, if any consequences, do Zeke and Kenny suffer for their bullying tactics? Matty also begins to bully Rafe after the incident at the museum. What is Rafe's reaction to Matty's bullying tactics? How can bullying be stopped?

## Friendship

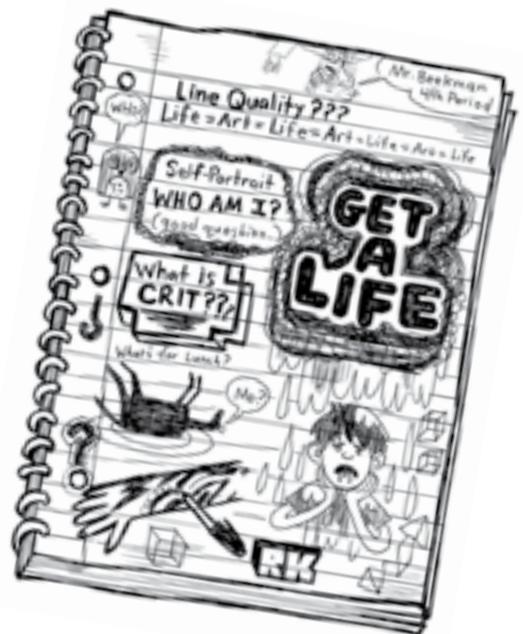
Rafe is thrilled when Matty befriends him on the first day of school. What does Matty teach Rafe about friendship? How does Matty betray Rafe? What does this say about Matty as a friend? How does Rafe respond to Matty's betrayal? Rafe turns to Jeanne when he is hurting, even though he does not consider her a friend. How does Jeanne prove to Rafe that she is his friend? What are characteristics of true friendship?

## Peer Pressure

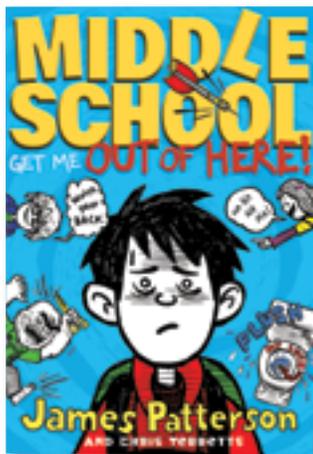
Everyone responds to peer pressure—at least occasionally—but some kids are more likely to submit to negative peer pressure while others are better able to resist and stand their ground. Rafe obviously responds to negative peer pressure and finds himself in trouble for the actions initiated by others. Why is Rafe so easily swayed? Ask students to discuss what factors influence students who conform to the pressure, students who apply the pressure, and students who stand their ground.

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Being a new kid is always a difficult situation. How does Rafe adjust to his new school? What are Rafe's biggest fears about moving to the city? What are his biggest disappointments about leaving Hills Village?
2. Rafe's grandmother welcomes them into her home. What is Rafe's first impression of his grandmother and her house? Why does Rafe never feel at home in his grandmother's house?
3. How does Rafe explain his need for Leonardo the Silent? What does the idea of Leo as a companion give Rafe? How does Leo help Rafe?
4. Why does Leo feel the need to step up "Operation: Get a Life"? Are his reasons justified? What is Rafe's reaction to Leo's new rules? How is Rafe going to keep his "no-hurt rule" and follow Leo's new guidelines?
5. What do Matty the Freak and Leo have in common? How does Matty help Rafe work toward achieving his mission?
6. Matty, Zeke, and Kenny are all involved when Rafe gets busted for "art-napping," but they do not come to his aid, and Rafe does not tell on them. Why is Rafe willing to take the blame and suffer the consequences on his own?
7. After the failed attempt at art-napping, Rafe realizes he has lost his mother's trust. What does Rafe do to begin to earn her trust back?
8. When Rafe tells the truth about whose backpack held the stolen pen, Matty turns on him, and, even worse, Matty uses private information Rafe shared in order to humiliate Rafe. What is Rafe's immediate response?
9. Going to Hills Village on a bus by himself demonstrates that Rafe has courage even though he is running away from his problems. Does Rafe do other ironic things like this in the story?
10. How does Rafe react to the news about his father's life and death? How will this news help Rafe to know the truth about his dad? What role did his father's uncle play in Rafe discovering the truth about his dad?
11. How is moving back to Hills Village a positive move for everyone in Rafe's family? What do they learn from their time spent in the big city?



## about the book



**MIDDLE SCHOOL:  
GET ME OUT OF HERE!**

by James Patterson &  
Christ Tebbetts

978-0-316-20671-6

James Patterson's winning follow-up to the #1 *New York Times* bestseller *Middle School, The Worst Years of My Life*—which the *LA Times* called “a perfectly pitched novel”—is another riotous and heart-warming story about living large.

After sixth grade, the very worst year of his life, Rafe Khatchadorian thinks he has it made in seventh grade. He's been accepted to art school in the big city and imagines a math-and-history-free fun zone. *Wrong!* It's more competitive than Rafe ever expected, and to score big in class, he needs to find a way to turn his boring life into the inspiration for a work of art. His method? Operation: Get a Life! Anything he's never done before, he's going to do it, from learning to play poker to going to a modern art museum. But when his newest mission uncovers secrets about the family Rafe's never known, he has to decide if he's ready to have his world turned upside down.

## about the authors



**James Patterson**

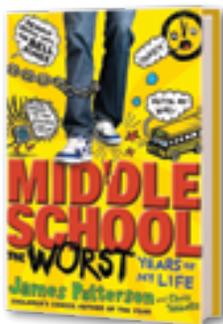
was selected by kids across America as the Children's Choice Book Awards Author of the Year

in 2010. He is the internationally bestselling author of the highly praised Maximum Ride novels; the Witch & Wizard series; the Daniel X series; *Middle School, The Worst Years of My Life*; and the detective series featuring Alex Cross. His books have sold more than 230 million copies worldwide, making him one of the bestselling authors of all time. He lives in Florida.

**Chris Tebbetts**

is the co-author of *Middle School, The Worst Years of My Life*, the author of *The Viking*, a fantasy adventure series for young readers, and the co-author of the young adult novel *M or F?* with Lisa Papademetriou. He lives in Vermont.

## also by James Patterson



**MIDDLE SCHOOL:  
The Worst Years of  
My Life**

978-0-316-10187-5 HC

978-0-316-13348-7 PB



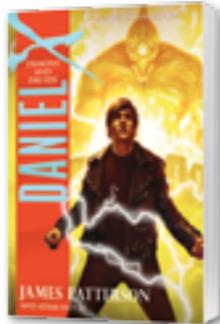
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