

LEVELS OF DETAIL—SAMPLES/RUBRIC

Prompt: Pick a value that you think makes a difference in the world. Write a paragraph or two explaining why the value is important, drawing on personal experience.

Out of Focus or Blah-Blah Writing—No Detail (Level 1)

Respect is a strong aspect of being a good citizen. Throughout history, wars have started because people did not have enough respect. We need respect today, as well. We need it in our schools most of all, otherwise there will be various problems and difficulties. Some students are not respectful to their teachers, and many students are not respectful to each other. When the world is full of respect, it will be a better place in many ways.

Wide-Angle Lens—Teaser Detail (Level 2)

Respect makes the world a better place. When I went to the store with my mom, I saw this guy being rude to the check-out lady, and she got really upset. I also see a lot of people cut off other drivers, who honk and flip them off. Then at school, these guys shoved another kid for no reason. If everyone would have a little more respect for each other, then people wouldn't be so angry all the time.

Medium Lens—Basic Detail (Level 3)

“Push the buttons a little faster and we might get out of here before Christmas,” the man in front of us at the grocery store said to the check-out lady. She looked embarrassed and tried to finish as fast as she could. Then while we were driving home, we saw a woman in a green car get cut off by another woman in an SUV. The first driver yelled and honked and flipped her off. Another time at school, I was walking down the hall when a couple of guys shoved a kid against the lockers just to be funny. Respect may seem old-fashioned these days, but if it disappears, the world will become a lot worse.

Zoom Lens—Developed Detail (Level 4)

“Push the buttons a little faster and we might get out of here before Christmas,” the man in front of us at the grocery store said to the check-out lady. He was a blond, blue-eyed, golfing doctor type, and she was a little Latino woman with an accent and a pony tail. She flushed and muttered, “Sorry,” trying to punch the keys even faster. But then she made a mistake and had to backtrack. “I should have chosen another line,” the man told us. I didn't dare say anything, but my mom did. “She's doing fine,” she told him, staring him down. The man turned away, saying a bad word just loud enough so we could hear. The clerk didn't look at us until the man left, still sneering. Then she said “Thanks,” and my mom said “You're welcome.”

On the way home, we saw a skinny old lady in a green Toyota get cut off by a soccer mom in a big black SUV. Grandma yelled and honked and flipped the other driver off. Then the next day at school, I was walking down the hall when a couple of seniors shoved a freshman with his foot in a cast against the lockers just to be funny. I couldn't help thinking about the store clerk, how that guy didn't seem to know or care that she was a human being. My mom cared, though, and she helped out in her own way. Things like good manners and respect may seem like something from the 1950s these days, but if they keep on fading away, the world will become a strange and ugly place.