

Isabelle Herring

February 27, 2026

National FCE Essay Contest 2026

Theme: Respect

Throughout time, there has always been a force that holds a mutual understanding through elements. It isn't always spoken, but it continuously bonds together our world as we know it. This force is respect. Respect is more than admiration and high regards for something, it shapes relationships that change dynamics of our entire world. It is proven how important respect is through as big as our entire world, all the way down to communities and simple ecology. In the past, present, and future, respect has always made a widespread impact.

Even if you haven't realised it, respect has been a crucial part of our pasts on many different levels. Throughout the world, it has always been a battle for respect. Nations against nations, always fighting the battle to scale upwards in the social ladder. Whoever was respected the most seems to have the entire world at their mercy. Through times like that in the past, respect was measured in different ways. In some instances it was measured through military power, country size, or even divine rights of kings, the idea that they were to be respected based on a belief of God given superiority. These ideals spread from country to country creating a network of relationships built on respect. Within our nation, respect was one of the concepts that geared us to independence. We fought because Great Britain had timelessly proven that they didn't deserve our respect. After gaining independence, as a nation we grew not only to respect the leaders we chose for our country, but also respect each other. To respect other ideals and eventually come to realise respect shouldn't be tarnished based off of any God given characteristics such as race and gender. To realise that because all men are created equal, we

must understand that respect walks hand in hand with that. On a smaller scale, we had to trust the native tribes in Oregon as Lewis and Clark first settled on the west coast. We respected their culture and knowledge of the land, and without those relationships who knows where our state could be now. As new people started to move to Oregon to look for more work and on a search for gold, new smaller communities started to blossom. Klamath Falls was one of them. Within the small town of Klamath Falls, Farmers started to settle and grow crops throughout the basin. There was a respect that our farmers had for the land and our people to work hard to produce sustainable living environments not only for the community, but for the environment as well. On every size of scale, respect has been one of the key factors to our holding together all of our pasts.

Currently, respect continues to be a part of our lives. Every four years, as citizens of the United States we have the right to vote in a president to represent our nation. With this, we choose someone who we respect and trust. With this respect, our president gets to represent our country and it is up to them to build the respect between other countries as well. Fallouts of this respect is what leads to wars and tragedy. It's a vicious circle of untrustworthiness, but that is just how the world works. Without respect between powerful nations conflict can build. We get to do the same thing in our state. We get to vote for someone we respect to represent our state. Someone who we think will make our voices heard, even in the grand scheme of chaos that consumes our world. Without that respect, we lose trust. That is why respect is so important in our world. Within individual communities, we hold respect within one another. We respect the farmers that grow food for us, the educators that would work endlessly for my education, and other fellow community members who spend their time for someone they might not even know very well. There is even a mutual understanding between communities in the wild. For example,

there are respect relationships between a predator and its prey. Situations like that sit right under our noses, and we tend to miss how many crucial examples that the great wilderness around us gives us. When it comes down to it, respect for one another builds the world together even now.

In the future respect will continue to play a part in our lives. The world will continue to spin and days will keep going by, but the love and respect we share for one another could continue to grow. Between nations, there can never be a perfect society where we all agree on everything, but building respect for those differences can shape our world into a better place. Respect between nations can build peace. A world more suited to live together in liberty. Building respect for one another in our country would make us an undefeatable nation. If we can understand each other's viewpoints and respect differences between one another then it makes the bonds of our nation undeniably stronger. There can never be a perfect nation, but a foundation based on respect for people just the same as you is a perfect start moving forward. People who come from the same place, like Oregon or the west coast, advocate for each other to build respect and strong relationships with one another. One voice may seem faint but many create choruses. All this can start with respect. To understand that we are different but all human. In Klamath Falls, we continue to build respect for one another through the acts of kindness we pour into our communities. Community service shows a kind of leadership that has brought our community together as one. To keep in pursuit of a respectful world is really the key to respect in our future.

Personally, respect has a special place in my heart. I always want to be respected, but with this I know I have to be respectful. I know that respect has to be earned, so I continuously work to build these relationships in my community. I hope that I can build my life to a point where people can see me as a trustworthy individual who can love my community and

everything that comes with that responsibility. Respect, to me, means not only to hold each other in high regards, but to show that. I hope to continue to give back to my community and show through my actions how much I respect my peers, just like my peers show respect towards me and how the generations before have shown me how respect is given.

Respect is so crucially important. Even through ways you might not even realise, respect plays such a big role within our lives. We always want to grow respect for one another to communities all over the world together. Every way you think about it, respect can change so much with so little. It can spare lives in wars, bring communities together, and hold the chance of a stronger future. Simple words rippled into the difference of a lifetime. Respect continually affects us in the past and present, and it will continue to affect us in the future. Relationships we build are built off of respect even when you might now see it.