

# 9 creative ways for kids to write thank yous and why they should



**“KIDS LEARN GRATITUDE  
BY SEEING OTHERS  
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IN EVERYDAY,  
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**- MICHELE BORBA**

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Contributor, Michele Borba.

“I know my teacher gave me a present, but she’s getting paid for being nice.”

“Why should I write Grandma a thank you note? I told her ‘thanks’ already.”

“But it takes too much time! Can’t I just text a thank you?”

If those comments sound familiar, know you’re not alone. While kids love receiving those gifts, writing those thank yous is plain drudgery to most. But writing thank-you cards is a habit we should encourage in our children for a few important reasons. Here are just four values of having kids take time to write those notes.

**Don’t Forget Your Example!**

Kids learn gratitude by seeing others display appreciation in everyday, unplanned moments. So make sure your child is watching you write those thank you notes! And while you're at it, ask yourself how often your kids see you convey your appreciation with hugs, words or small notes to others? How often do you tell your kids how much you appreciate them? Tune up your attitude of gratitude so that your kids are more likely to copy your example.

Most parents agree it's a lot easier to have all those family members sit down and write their notes together. Just do consider the child's age and ability to your expectations. While one kid can write all his notes in one sitting, other children may need to extend the task to one or two cards a day. Manner experts even provide guidelines for those cards. School-age kids should use this rule of writing thank you notes from the **Etiquette and Leadership Institute** in Athens, Georgia:

*The total number of sentences in a thank-you note should be half the child's age. So a ten-year-old should be expected to write a minimum of five complete sentences. A young child can dictate his comments and only needs to sign his name.*

One way to instill your expectations is to reinforce one simple family rule: *"You must write the thank you note first, and then you may use the gift."* From experience I can say this one really speeds up the process!



Dr. Michele Borba is an educational psychologist, parenting expert, TODAY show contributor and author of 22 books including *The Big Book of Parenting Solutions: 101 Answers to Your Everyday Challenges and Wildest Worries* and *UnSelfie: Why Empathetic Kids Succeed in Our All-About-Me World*.

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