

Why First Impressions Don't Matter But Respecting Others Does
Advice Column by Carmen Haines

Dear Carmen,

I'm starting grade eight at a new school next week and I don't know what to do. I want to fit in, but I'm worried I'll make a bad first impression and people won't like me. At my old school, I didn't really fit into any of the cliques; I'm not a jock, a nerd, a punk, or a cool kid, but I still had several friends. That's mostly because we'd known each other long enough to know each other really well. I'm just a normal kid. How do I make a good first impression and make some friends?

Signed,
An Average Kid Just Looking for Friends

Dear Average,

First impressions are only important to a certain point. Because you have to remember that whether you leave a “bad” or “good” impression depends on the other person almost as much as yourself.

You just can't control everyone's reaction to you—maybe they immediately dislike you because you have the same name as the kid who bullied them in grade three. Maybe they like you because your hair is red, or blond, or black, or blue! This is not something you can control. (Note how this says a lot about how shallow they are! Don't be shallow yourself—take more than a few seconds to judge others. Remember that the friends you made in your old school came from getting to know each other.)

The best solution: focus on what you can control—respecting yourself and others.

First of all—respect who you are. Don't try to change yourself to fit in or make friends. This is also called “being true to yourself.” It means—act natural; don't pretend you're someone or something you're not, just to impress others—because you don't want to be stuck with that act for the rest of the time you know those people!

Second of all—respect others and they're more likely to respect you. So if the person sitting next to you in class looks a bit flaky because her socks don't match and she thinks you're a bit uptight because your jeans are pressed—you can still respect her and dig deeper to find out what she's really like. Maybe you'll find out you have as much in common as you have differences in personality. That way, when you're assigned to work together on a project, maybe you'll find out the project is stronger because of how you complement each other.

Good luck!
Carmen

Name _____ Date _____

1. Do you agree with the writer of the advice column? Why or why not? (Use the CEIEOH sheet to organize your response.)
2. What does the Average Kid value? What does Carmen value? How do you feel about those values or beliefs?

Average Kid Values...	Carmen Values....	How I Feel...

3. What else do you think the advice columnist could have suggested to Average Kid? Support your answer with reference to the text and your own experience.

C*E*I*E*I*E*I*O

C * Change your prompt into a topic sentence.

E * Use evidence from the text. (In the story it said ...)

I* Interpret the above evidence. (Clearly, this shows...)

E * Use evidence from the text. (Another part of the story said ...)

I* Interpret the above evidence. (To me this means...)

E * Use evidence from the text. (The text also stated...)

I* Interpret the above evidence.(I have to believe...)

O * State your “Oh” or “Aha” moment. (From reading and thinking about this text, I now know...)
