**Kindness is Cooler Mrs. Ruler**

By: Margery Cuyler

It was cold. It was rainy. And Mrs. Ruler’s class hadn’t been outside all week. The students were getting jumpy and grumpy. Anaya and Tawana whispered during story time.

David pulled Raquelita’s ponytail and Raquelita stole his hat. Then David grabbed Connor’s hat and threw it into the hall. “That’s enough! Too rough!” shouted Mrs. Ruler. The bell rang. It was time for recess. As the kids left, Mrs. Ruler kept Anaya, Tawana, Connor, Raquelita, and David behind. “Sit down, don’t frown,” she said.

“Now, tell me, why do you think I’ve kept you in from recess?”

“We were acting up.” Mumbled Connor

“That’s right.” You were being mean to one another. And you acted as if it’s cool to be mean. But it’s not. What is a cooler way to act?

Raquelita spoke up. “Kindness is cooler, Mrs. Ruler,” she said.

“Bravo. A slice of nice makes a mile of smile! You five need to practice being kind. During the next few days, I want you to perform five acts of kindness for your families. Then, in show-and-tell, you can share what you did with the rest of the class.”

David scowled. “What if I don’t feel like being kind?” he asked.

Mrs. Ruler smiled. “Good deeds fill needs! Count on me, you’ll see!” she said.

The next day, Anaya and Tawana couldn’t wait for show-and-tell. When it was their turn, they ran to the front of the class. “We did ten acts of kindness last night,” said Tawana. “Before dinner, I made special placements.”

“I set the table,” said Anaya.

“I drew hearts on the napkins to show mom we love her,” said Tawana.

“I grated the cheese for the macaroni,” said Anaya.

“I helped make the salad,” said Tawana.

“After dinner, we carried the dishes to the sink,” said Anaya.

“And I loaded the dishwasher,” said Tawana.

“While I took out the garbage,” added Anaya.

“Then I sponged off the table…,” said Tawana.

“…and I straightened up the chairs,” finished Anaya “Mom told us how much she liked out homework. It put her in such a good mood that we want to do more nice things for her!”

“Bravo!” said Mrs. Ruler. “Ten kinds acts will lead to more. Give me the chalk, and I’ll keep score!” Then she wrote the twins’ deeds on the blackboard. When she was finished, she looked at David. “What about you?” she asked. “Did you practice too?”

“No.” said David. “I just couldn’t get into it.”

“Oh my, please try! Kindness is cooler.” Said Mrs. Ruler.

After school, Raquelita invited Connor over for a play date. She had a new dog and a big family, so there were lots of ways Raquelita and Connor could practice being kind.

In show-and-tell the next day, they shared kindness with the class. “We took Puddles for a walk,” said Raquelita, “and we threw him a ball.”

“I filled his water dish,” said Connor.

“And I gave him some puppy chow,” said Raquelita.

“Puppy chow. Wow!” said Mrs. Ruler.

“Then we build a block tower with my little brother,” said Raquelita. “And gave Abuelo and Abuelita their canes before they took a walk.”

“We also helped Raquelita’s dad carry in groceries from the car,” said Connor.

“And I gave my baby sister her bottle,” said Raquelita.

“I count eight, and eight is great!” said Mrs. Ruler.

“That’s not all,” said Connor. “When I got home, I took in the mail. I also carried the clean laundry upstairs!

“Bravo!” said Mrs. Ruler. “All together you did ten. And how much do the twins’ ten acts and your ten make?”

“Twenty!” shouted the class.

“That’s right!” said Mrs. Ruler. “Twenty is plenty. But how about you, David? What did you do?”

“Too few for you,” said David. The class laughed. “I told my brother I liked his haircut, and I let him use my comb. That’s all I could think of.”

“Well that’s a good start! Keep doing your part!” said Mrs. Ruler.

Lauren raised her hand. “I’d like to try some acts of kindness when I get home today too,” she said.

“Okay, hooray,” said Mrs. Ruler.” Let’s turn this into a class project. For the rest of the week, I’d like you to bring in some acts of kindness you’ve done at home. I’ll write your acts on paper hearts and put them on the bulletin board, and I’ll also add the ones from the blackboard.

More acts of kindness: Put away clothes, vacuumed living room rug, shelved books, let my big brother use my computer, told dad I liked his shirt, got sister a Band-Aid when she skinned her knee…

And more kindness: Cleaned my room, fed goldfish, emptied wastebasket, watered houseplants, put groceries away, drew pictures with my little sister, told my sister that she has nice teeth.

The class really came through. “We have so many, we’ll need another wall!” Mrs. Ruler exclaimed. “Let’s count.”

“One, two, three…” The kids counted until they reached thirty-five.

“Bravo!” said their teacher. “Now try skip-counting by fives.”

“Five, ten, fifteen, twenty, twenty-five, thirty, thirty-five!” shouted the class.

“That’s right! You’re bright!” said Mrs. Ruler. “We should keep going with this project. Not let’s try some acts of kindness at school. I’ll add those to the wall too. Don’t forget—a slice of nice makes a mile of smile!”

As Mrs. Ruler kept cutting out more hearts, Connor and Pablo tried some school kindness too. They invited David to sit with them at lunch. But when they finished their sandwiches, David took one of Connor’s cookies.

“Hey, quit it!” said Connor. He grabbed David’s lunch bag and threw it over his head.

“Stop!” cried Pablo. “Don’t you remember what Mrs. Ruler said? “Good deeds fill needs.” David—don’t grab. And Connor—you still have four cookies. Why don’t you share them with David and me?”

“Oops!” said Connor. “You’re right. For a moment, I forgot about being kind.” And Connor gave some cookies to his friends, “I agree Here are three”

“Yum,” said David. “I’m going to ask my babysitter to help me make cookies when I get home.”

“And then you can bring them to school,” said Pablo.

“And share them with the whole class,” added Connor.

“And Mrs. Ruler will congratulate me for being extra kind,” said David. “But I still won’t have done as many acts of kindness as everyone else.”

“So think of other things to catch up!” said Pablo.

David didn’t have to think for long. That afternoon, when Kaitlynn was cleaning the gerbils’ cage, the gerbils got loose. One even jumped to the window ledge! Mrs. Ruler hopped on a chair. “Eek, Squeak!” she cried. Everyone ran for cover—everyone but David.

He chased the gerbils. He scooped them up one by one. Then he set them back where they belonged. “Hooray for David!” yelled the class

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“Your act of kindness was THE BEST!” cried Mrs. Ruler. “Now go on home and do the rest!” She jumped off the chair and added the acts of kindness from that week to the wall.

Mrs. Ruler and the class counted up all the hearts. By now, the class had done seventy acts of kindness. “That’s great! But wait!” said Mrs. Ruler. “There’s more in store. Let’s keep going and spread some kindness beyond school. There are lots of kind acts you can to in the community.”

“But we’re just little kids,” said David. “How can we do stuff outside our house and school?”

“I’ll ask your parents to work with you on community kindness. And I’ll help too.” Said Mrs. Ruler. “All it takes is one simple act—one act of kindness that will make the world a better place. If you act from your heart and do your part, we’ll end up with one hundred acts of kindness all together!”

Now the class was really excited. And David was more excited than anyone. A few weeks later, the kids shared their acts of community kindness.

Mrs. Ruler added more hearts to the wall. Again, the class counted…one, two, three, until they got to ninety-nine.

“Oh no, uh-oh” said Mrs. Ruler. “We still need one more!” Then she paused and thought for a moment. “I know. Let’s have a class party. We’ll decorate and celebrate—”

“One hundred acts of kindness!” shouted the class.

“Okay! Hooray!”

***Task***

You will be reading the shared text “Kindness is Cooler Mrs. Ruler” with your class! Using your interpretive essay checklist and rubric, as well as your background knowledge of theme, you will be working independently or with your writing partner to:

-Determine a related theme from the story

-Write an essay defending your theme by quoting accurately from the text; Tell your reader what the text said explicitly, while also drawing inferences from the text to accomplish this.

**Common Cor****e State Standards**

[CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.5.1](http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/W/5/1/)
Write opinion pieces on topics or texts, supporting a point of view with reasons and information.

[CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.5.1.A](http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/W/5/1/a/)
Introduce a topic or text clearly, state an opinion, and create an organizational structure in which ideas are logically grouped to support the writer's purpose.

[CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.5.1.B](http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/W/5/1/b/)
Provide logically ordered reasons that are supported by facts and details.

[CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.5.1.C](http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/W/5/1/c/)
Link opinion and reasons using words, phrases, and clauses (e.g., *consequently*, *specifically*).

[CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.5.1.D](http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/W/5/1/d/)
Provide a concluding statement or section related to the opinion presented.

[CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.5.1](http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/RL/5/1/)
Quote accurately from a text when explaining what the text says explicitly and when drawing inferences from the text.

[CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.5.2](http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/RL/5/2/)
Determine a theme of a story, drama, or poem from details in the text, including how characters in a story or drama respond to challenges or how the speaker in a poem reflects upon a topic; summarize the text.