

Ryan Hodge, Age 12  
Albuquerque, New Mexico  
Desert Ridge Middle School

#### Why I am Thankful for Gifted Education

Go back to fourth grade. Where you happy, sad, or angry? When I was in fourth grade I hated school. I was bullied every day, and ended up becoming very depressed; that was, until I got into Gifted Education. That day, I felt like I was stepping into a wonderful, happy, and warm world where I was no longer being bullied, and everyone accepted me for who I was. I never again was bored during class lessons, and had discussions about things I had never even bothered to think about before. That was three years ago, but I still feel the exact same way. Gifted education saved me from a dark, depressing world.

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Francesca Foley, Age 13  
Cedar Crest, New Mexico  
Roosevelt Middle School

### Why I am Thankful for Gifted Education - by Francesca Foley

Gifted education allows me to be an individual and work at my own pace while being challenged. Being an individual lets me think for myself and learn everything I can at my own pace. I like to be challenged in class because, it gives me something to think about and something to keep me excited for the next day. Having a gifted education has allowed me to expand my learning and my creativity. I am thankful for a gifted education because it has shown me a whole different way to learn.

Being an individual allows you to express yourself in many different ways. Creativity is something that can be taken away from people very easily, but in the gifted program the teachers give you the materials you need to be creative. In the gifted program you are guided in your studies but not controlled. Working at my own pace has helped me to understand the material better. Also, working at my own pace lets me move through the lesson quickly or stay behind and ask the questions I need to understand. Individuality is something that you need to succeed in the real world and learning it early is helpful.

Challenging yourself pushes your boundaries which widens your knowledge. Challenging yourself keeps your mind wondering; it keeps your mind interested. When you are learning a new concept, you are interested in the concept because it is something unfamiliar to you. In the gifted education you move quickly enough that you are always learning something new and always thinking, which helps to motivate you. When pushing your own boundaries you are testing your limits and you are seeing how far your knowledge stretches. That's why challenging me keeps me interested, because it keeps me thinking. Pushing your boundaries challenges you and keeps you motivated to succeed.

Having a gifted education has opened my eyes to many different ways of learning things. By moving at my own pace I have learned not only to be independent and work on my own, but also to take charge of my education. Challenging myself to learn new things has kept me interested and motivated in school. I have learned many things that have helped me to be creative. I have enjoyed the gifted program and everything I have learned through it. I am thankful for the gifted program, because it has shown me how to be an individual and how to challenge myself at the same time.

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Eli Echt-Wilson, Age 13  
Albuquerque, New Mexico  
Desert Ridge Middle School  
Gifted Education

Gifted education proposes a way to accelerate students, and helps develop the genius's of this generation. As a gifted student, I have experienced the difference between a gifted class, and a regular education class. The differences definitely show, and the changes in the learning environment show as well. In these gifted classes, I am challenged to not only learn material, but apply it to life situations and learn the material how I prefer to learn. Instead of copying definitions from a textbook, in gifted classes, I apply knowledge to construct a conclusion or reach a goal. In my gifted classes, my peers are motivated and prepared to learn, which helps learning production and makes me feel like I am in a positive and helpful environment. In these ways, gifted education is wonderful. I feel like the information I learn (most of it), I will remember in the future and apply to situations when I need it. Gifted education, in this way, will help develop the scholars, genius's, inventors, mathematicians, and writers of our generation, and I am sure that this education will extend my knowledge as far as it goes, pushing me and my gifted peers to excel.

Math, Language, Literature, and Social Studies are the subjects that currently offer gifted education at my school. In reality, I feel like I have learned most in these classes. This is not a coincidence; it is simply demonstrating the importance of gifted education. Each day in math, I feel like I am challenged to learn to my full extent with 3 peers who excel in that area as well. I am never bored and always find myself striving to figure out a problem, or reach a goal. However, in Science, a lot of the time, simply because of the environment and the other kids, I find myself watching the clock, waiting for class to be over or for the teacher to teach something new. I am always doing this because I have already completed the required work, and have nothing to do except read or do something for another class.

Gifted education is really what the name says it to be. It is truly a gift to be in gifted, and I am happy that I have been given the chance to participate.

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Nicole Spence, Age 11  
Albuquerque, NM  
Bosque School

I am so happy that I have gifted classes at my school. I think they are one of the best things about school and I look forward to them every single day. I like them so much because they really challenge me when I am bored. I am then with kids who are just like me. That is just the start of why I am so thankful for gifted education and classes.

First of all I really appreciate my gifted classes when I look back at the years of school when I didn't have gifted and I would be bored out of my mind. I would sit in school and know all the things that the teachers would be teaching to the other kids. I would feel like there was never anything that was really interesting in school apart from the occasional school day where I learned something new. I was never challenged before, and then I started the gifted education program in third grade and I was finally challenged in school. I would be learning new things everyday and having fun in class with other kids who were just like me. That was one thing that really made me love my gifted education classes.

Another reason I liked my classes was that there were a lot of kids that were just like me. I could relate to them better and I could make friends with them really easily. I could also do things like talk with them and actually share ideas that they would understand and be thinking about as well. These were things that I could not do with the kids in my normal classes because they would not relate to me so easily. So I think that having gifted classes is also a great idea because you can have a chance to relate with other kids and to make friends with kids who are just like you, and that is why I love them so much.

So I think in the end having gifted classes is an amazing opportunity to have and that is why I am so grateful for it. After all there are plenty of great things about having gifted education if you need it. You can make friends. You can have fun and you can do lots of challenging work in school and plenty of things you don't normally do. There is all that to explain why I am thankful for my gifted education classes.

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soccerdiva1998, Age 11  
Fruitland, NM  
Grace B. Wilson Elem.

### I Am Thankful for Gifted Education

I am thankful for gifted education for many reasons. One reason is because it challenges me and a lot of my regular classes do not. Secondly, I never get disinterested in enrichment so I am always excited about what we are doing. Three I get to do Destination Imagination and that is really fun. Last I enjoy doing work on the computers. These are the reasons that I like enrichment. Enrichment or gifted education challenges me in many ways. First of all we do instant challenges and they are harder than regular work. The instant challenges have us do things that we have to use our imagination and think really hard to do. Second I do things that challenge my imagination. I also do problems that test my brain and make me think harder. All these activities challenge me and my brain to think harder.

I am always interested in what we are doing in enrichment. Last year I got bored in my class a lot. Enrichment is fun and I always have something to do. This essay is even fun compared to some of the things I have had to do in other classes.

Enrichment is my favorite classes because I don't have to just sit and read when I am done with something. I always have something new to do when I complete my work. I am always engaged in enrichment and those are my reasons.

Destination Imagination is one of my favorite parts of enrichment and it is really fun. It is extremely awesome. I get to do Destination Imagination with my friends, and we have to work as a team. That makes it even more fun. We get to go to Albuquerque to compete. That is a really fun. For these reasons I liked destination imagination.

I enjoyed doing work on the computers. We did power points on bugs that we studied. We got information off the internet to study the bugs. We also got to do power points on what we wanted to be, where we wanted to live, and what car we hoped to have when we grow up and had to see if our job choice would support us. We typed about what we imagined a Candy Land to look, smell, and taste like. We also wrote about what we thought the messiest room in the world would look like. We did do a lot of computer work.

For all these many reasons I am thankful for gifted education and all off its many advantages. Without gifted education I would not have learned a lot of things. My reasons for liking gifted are from real experiences. I hope you feel the same way about gifted education and continue in your support of our program.

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Paulina Gomez-Legareta, Age 11  
Albuquerque  
New Mexico  
LBJ Middle School

I am thankful for gifted education, simply because it gives kids, who have high grades on scholastic academics, the chance to develop their brains to a higher level. Gifted children are those identified with especial test that help show virtue, of outstanding abilities from the children. These are children who require differenced educational programs and / or services beyond those normally provided by the regular school program. Also it lifts our standards a bit higher so we are able to learn more throughout the school year.

Something that I think is a very important and also a very good thing that gifted education helps us with, this would be no other than the huge number of countries that have better education than not other than the United States. If you are a student or a teacher that wouldn't be a good picture to look at. Believe me. So if you ask me, I would say that gifted education brings these kids a step closer to those standards. Because gifted is somewhat, higher education. So once again my point would be that gifted brings kids closer to other countries education levels. This is a really great thing! Oh and before I forget I wanted to say that some teacher (a minimum amount) don't get the concept of what gifted education is.

I now would like to tell you that, some teachers are misinterpreting what gifted education is. Like maybe they would give students work, for like, tenth grade when you are in seventh grade. Or giving students five projects, that are also given the week that they are due. That, I think is so not fair. Well, all that gifted education is, would be making the work harder to the level that we could still do it. So gifted, when taught could help kids.

Another reason, in which I think, that gifted education is helpful, is that It simply helps kids do better or have better grades in school. Also gifted education helps students understand, the their subjects better, because they are smaller and also focus deeper than in regular classes. It might also be that kids give a bigger effort because they are grateful for simply getting in and passing the tests. I know that if that was up to me I would give my best effort. And thanking the people who made this possible, is the least that we could do.

Finally, I just wanted to thank, the people who came up with gifted education, because thanks to them students and I have the chance to be in classes that support the needs. With this I am not looking to demean other kids, because being in gifted is your choice and not an obligation. So as you can see gifted education is a special way to get further on your education. So for my finally, I would once again like to thank, all the people who made gifted education possible, in the state of New Mexico.  
Thank You!

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Dana Thalmann, Age 11  
Bosque Farms, NM  
Bosque Farms Elementary

I am thankful for gifted education for many reasons. One of them is that gifted class enables me to use my language arts skills at my own pace. When I am at gifted, the class can work at their pace.

Gifted class has also given me motivation. I started going to gifted class 2 years ago, and since then, my MAPS scores have soared higher than they ever have. Also, when I heard that my missing assignments would eventually interfere with my privilege of going to gifted, I started and still do try to prevent that from happening.

In gifted class, I have learned that stating my opinion and asking questions is okay. Pointing out people and events in stories and doing that helps me very much. Gifted class also enables me to expand my skills, as if I am in a box which is constantly expanding, while other peoples' are expanding slowly. It also helps me to organize my thoughts as well as the skills I am good at, but leaving room for those that I need to work on. This helps me understand how my brain works, and helps me calm down if we are again having a lesson on something I know by heart. I understand that they need this lesson, but gifted class lets me clear my mind and think. It isn't dull, though; in fact, I look forward to going to my assigned class.

I am challenged in gifted, and I often have to ask questions. I have also learned that you can't know everything in gifted class, and if you have to ask questions again and again, it's okay. If I had not started going to gifted, I would be shy and embarrassed easily. If all that information had been in a box, it would fill up only a fraction of the box. That would make me extremely ill-tempered and stressed. (I am not lying.) Even though nobody is perfect, everyone is on their way there, though some are farther than others. I am sure that that is why we have gifted class, so that the people further ahead can get all that they need, while the people further behind can take more time getting this information. Well, what do you think? Is that a lot of reasons to be thankful for gifted class? I am especially thankful to the teacher who has taught me this. Thank you, too, for reading this.

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Isabella Smith, Age 11  
Albuquerque, NM  
Eisenhower Middle School

I can barely describe in words how thankful I am for gifted education. I love having smaller classes because I feel like I get more attention from the teacher individually, and it is easier to connect with the other students. I feel more comfortable being around other people at my academic level who know what it's like to be really smart, and I don't feel like I must wait for a long time before everybody in the class understands a lesson so that we can move on.

Gifted opens new doors and presents incredible opportunities, such as new projects where we must apply a variety of new skills and are challenged to think and express ourselves in different ways. For example, last year we did IRP (individual research projects) in my all-day gifted class, where we had to combine new and old skills like interviewing people, researching things in books and on the computer, creating pictures, and making a works cited page. Another example is last year when we performed a Shakespeare play, and I was expected to memorize about 125 lines in a month.

I feel more challenged in gifted than I did when I was in a regular class because the work we do is either enriched or from a higher grade level. Everything is harder, but I feel like I need a bit of an obstacle in order to reach my full potential. I have experienced more freedom in writing as well as other subjects in gifted like math and science. To me it seems as if we have a lot of open-ended response questions in gifted, where we have to think about things from different perspectives and there is no right or wrong answer. Nothing is "easy" and I am never bored in gifted, but I don't feel like it is too hard. For me, gifted is nothing short of perfect.

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Micaela Resta, Age 11  
Albuquerque, New Mexice  
L.B.J.

### Why I am Thankful for Gifted Education

I am a sixth grader who has been in the gifted program since third grade. I am thankful for gifted education because it makes me think and work harder. All through elementary school, gifted class was fun. Now that I am in middle school, it is still fun and gets me ready for my future education and career. I wish all my classes, including Math and Science, were gifted, not just Language Arts, Literature and Social Studies. In the gifted program, there are smaller classes for discussion and I can learn at my own rate. My gifted classes are places where I can not only learn and progress, but I can do projects and activities that allow me to think in different ways.

In gifted, the smaller class sizes are ideal for discussion. In other classes, there are too many students for you to get your point across. Things get unruly. In gifted, you're able to get your point across, defend it, and listen to what others have to say. For example, in Literature we do Socratic seminars. They are a way of discussing in a group. Everyone gets to speak and add their own comments and listen to others. If we were to do this in a larger class, there would not enough time for everyone to voice their opinion.

Also, in my gifted class, everyone can learn at a similar rate. In my other classes, the instructor does not often teach at different levels required to meet the needs of students with varying abilities. In gifted education, the class comprehends more efficiently and I am able to learn more in a shorter time period. In Math, not one of my gifted classes, we are learning how to add and subtract decimals. I have done this before so I understood it already. However, many other students don't understand the subject. Therefore, the students who already understand it have to listen to our teacher reteach it over and over again. In gifted, we all learn pretty quickly and at a level that suits our needs.

Finally, we do projects in gifted courses that help us understand our lesson. In other classes, we just are taught, we review, and test. In gifted we learn our lesson, we discuss it, we do a project, an activity, or a research paper and we take a test or quiz. In this way, I am able to put my knowledge into a project, activity or research paper to reinforce the concept or subject area being taught.

Gifted education forces me to constantly be working hard. These are classes that I look forward to, are challenging and I can feel proud when I get A's in those subjects. I hope to continue in the gifted program to experience different subject areas, and to prepare me for my future education in high school and college.

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luke denoyer, Age 11  
Albuquerque, nm  
Lyndon Baines Johnson

### Why I'm Thankful For Gifted Education

I am thankful for gifted education because without it I would not be challenged in most classes. Gifted provides unique experiences in my class, for I get to learn things that normal teachers wouldn't talk about much. The reasons I like gifted are it challenges me, I am exposed to more complex teaching that really break down each subject, and it provides a spark to your day because it is fun and makes you think. Gifted is all-star baseball for students. By that I mean that you have to be good at what you do or you will not make it. Practicing with all star students is like a performance against good players – you have to play at your highest ability. Like sports, if you work hard everyday and keep practicing, you will get it right. You also have to have talent to identify things that aren't common knowledge, without having to stall or take too much time.

The challenges gifted provides me with are things like taking every literary term possible and showing what each one means on a sheet of paper. If I wasn't challenged as much as I am each class that I go to would be boring and easy.

Things that I learn in gifted that normal teachers wouldn't talk about are things like comprehending stories and novels that are far above my grade level. The teachers are more complex in gifted because they know that they can depend on their gifted students to do hard work efficiently and quickly.

Gifted provides a spark in my day by making me work hard in the morning and at the end of school. The experience is not a "breeze past it" type class either, it's more of a work or you'll get left behind type class. You not only work hard, you get to think a lot. Thinking a lot helps you get better at each subject and learn more. Gifted programs are like practicing in sports – you have to keep on working hard or you will lose the skills that allow you to adapt to classroom that gives work from upper grade levels.

Overall, gifted keeps learning upbeat, challenges me, gives me more complex teachers, and provides a spark in my day.

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John Spanjers, Age 11  
Sandia Park, NM  
San Antonito Elementary

### Why I'm Grateful for Gifted

Hi, my name is John Spanjers. I'm in 5th grade. I'm in Mr. Hales' KEP class. I have KEP every Friday from 9:00am to 2:30pm. I've been in KEP for five years and I enjoy it a lot.

I'm thankful for a lot of things. First I'm thankful because it challenges me more. Like in math we do tons of algebra, in my normal class we do almost none. They've got this cool algebra program that makes me think, I'm really grateful to be in KEP.

I love science and Mr. Hale was born to do science. Every time I go to KEP there is something new and exciting. I'm grateful because there's always a surprise, like one day I came into KEP late and I saw kids destroying a computer! I also love junk art. It lets me show who I am and that I'm talented.

I love writing but they don't do too much in my normal class, in KEP we do lots. From word problems to letters I love writing and that's one of the few reasons I'm grateful. Right now we are writing letters to President Barak Obama about things to help our school system.

Reading is important for me and they do some in my normal class but not like how we do in KEP. In KEP we read more challenging books and get tested every week on what happened in the book. Right now we're reading Bud not Buddy and I love it.

I think KEP is important because some kids like me aren't getting enough math, science and reading. I used to be horrible at science. Thanks to KEP I try to put science into my ordinary day. When I was in first grade I was the only one in my KEP class so it was cool. Mr. Hale taught me things I learned in 4th grade, like adding fractions. One of my favorite things about KEP is that we do brain teasers. You know the ones they don't do in normal classes. I love them. And that's another reason I'm thankful for KEP. New Mexico is one of three states that still has a KEP program.

In KEP I get so excited about the activities that I have to jump in. KEP is one of the best presents I've ever gotten and I think it's one of the most important things in my world. Let me just put it this way, I'm grateful for gifted education.

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Faith Lee, Age 11  
Fruitland, NM  
Grace B. Wilson Elem.

### Why I'm Thankful for Gifted Education

I am thankful for "Gifted Education" because it challenges me. Sometimes in my homeroom class, we go over the same lessons three to five times before tests. I usually get bored and I think to myself, "Why do I have to learn this again? I already know this."

So, when I get to Enrichment, I don't have to do lessons. I get to do Instant Challenges and research on the computer. These are only a few challenges we have in Enrichment. I'm in this class with other kids who also think and learn at a higher level than most. We're all challenged by how well other people in the Enrichment class think and learn.

Enrichment is all about creativity. All the people in Enrichment think creatively. Destination Imagination is all about creativity and imagination. Last year was my first year of Destination Imagination. I did some things wrong and some right. I learned that it just depends on what the judges think. D.I. is a great experience. Everyone in Gifted should have a chance to compete in D.I.

Gifted is fun. I love going. Whenever there is a half day, we don't get Enrichment. I don't like half days. It is a very boring day without it. Of course, other people don't care and they don't know what they're missing.

I love Enrichment. It gets me thinking. The best thing about it is that we never do the same things twice. Sometimes we work solo, and at others we work as a duet. We even work together as entire symphonies! We never do the same instant challenge. It's different every time. These are only some of the reasons we should have Gifted Education.

One of the assignments we did was making a PowerPoint about how we wanted our lives to be in the future. We decided what job we wanted and found the average salary per year that job would make. Then we found the car of our dreams and the monthly payment on it. Next, we found the best house in the world and the monthly payment of that. Finally, we added the monthly payments together and found out if we could afford the life we wanted.

We have learned to do storytelling, instant challenges, and other things. I have learned to work with different people that have different personalities. I love to work with people who tell me what I do wrong. I might get mad at first, but it helps me do better next time. I am happy in Enrichment. These people in Enrichment will be my friends forever. I am thankful for Gifted Education!

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timmyg89, Age 11  
Albuquerque, New Mexico  
Edward Gonzales Elementary School

In my life before gifted I used to just go fast, and I would just be bored. All of the kids would tell me "you're weird," but some were my friends. I only had like eleven friends because I was the only gifted kid in first, second, so I was treated with hardly any respect. Then when I went second I got two or three more friends. But then in March of my second grade year I found out that my Dad wanted to move closer to family. So I had two months to say good-bye to all of my friends. In April I was going to Edward Gonzales Elementary but first I had to go get screened for gifted. Man, it was hard work. I only had a ten minute lunch break. Then when I was done with the test I had to go to school. I was late.

So it was the last day of school. I was trying not to cry but could not help it. I had to say good-bye to my teacher and my friends. I knew that if I moved and went to Edward Gonzales I would have my cousins to watch my back. So it was horrible and not so horrible at the same time.

My friend I knew since I was four came to help us move. Then we had to live with my grandma and grandpa. Then it was my first day at Edward Gonzales on August 12, 007. Two days later I had my first IEP. Then six days later I would be in my first gifted class. I met Ms. Hammel, Ben, Ryan, Charlene, Maria, Alison. Those were the other gifted third graders. I wasn't the only gifted in my grade so I was so happy. These were the kids I would be with for the next three years.

We did algebra. We did writing. We did all sorts of stuff. Then at the end of the year we joined Destination Imagination. We chose Challenge B, which was Hit or Myth. We had to rehearse for about two months. We were called Hammel's Mammals. We took second place that year. Hey, at least that's better than nothing.

In our fourth grade year we had three Destination Imagination teams. We fourth graders chose Video Lit Hits and we had two new team members: Santiago and Reinaldo. Unfortunately, we lost a member: Alison. She went to another school. At the end, Ms. Hammel called everybody and told us that we had won first.

We had a chance to go to Global Finals but decided not to. I think gifted in the future will get me a good job that I am satisfied with, like being an engineer or a doctor something that would pay a lot. I want a job that I am really good at. So I think gifted can play a major part in your life.

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Stacey Winter, Age 11  
Albuquerque, NM  
Truman Middle School

## The Importance of Gifted Education

My name is Stacey Winter, and I am a child in the gifted program. I would like to provide information on why I feel gifted education is important in public schools. Gifted children think differently, therefore, they need time away from other "normal" kids. Gifted children also need time with other gifted children. Gifted children also need a more challenging school curriculum.

Gifted children usually think differently than the average child. Sometimes in a normal class, we (gifted students) feel like we don't fit in, or that we can't be ourselves, because we feel like we are weird and different. Sometimes other kids might make fun of us and tell us we are weird because we think differently. Sometimes even the teacher cannot understand why we take a simple problem, stretch it out, and turn it into a deep thought problem. Often, regular education teachers cannot relate to us, and sometimes they don't like or accept that we are gifted.

Gifted kids also need time with other gifted kids. We usually think similarly, so it is good to put our minds together. I think gifted kids can be themselves around other gifted kids. When you're in a class with other gifted kids, you can learn and think the way you like. Usually when you are gifted, most of your friends are also gifted. The gifted teachers also understand us because they were probably once gifted kids too.

Gifted kids also need a more challenging curriculum. In regular education classes, teachers give work that takes a long time to do, but doesn't make you think. In my regular classes, I sometimes get bored because the work is very easy. In the gifted classes, the pace is faster, and the teachers challenge us with deep thinking problems.

I am really glad we have Gifted Education in the Albuquerque Public Schools. I feel like I am less shy and have gained confidence since I started in gifted education.

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Marisa Michealson, Age 11  
Sandia Park, New Mexico  
Roosevelt Middle School

I am just an ordinary kid like everybody else, but I feel special because I am gifted. My friends in gifted enjoy learning and new challenges. I like being around these kids, sharing ideas, and learning from them. And my teachers make learning fun, too! I look forward to school.

Gifted is more than just another challenge. It pays attention to my needs and the ways I learn best. I get to have a say in what I want in my education. And I like that! Gifted is a ticket to a good future. It is a future that I can create myself. School is my responsibility and gifted classes will help me succeed. My supreme goal of going to college and getting a good job will be easier.

Gifted classes can work at a faster pace and at a higher level when compared to regular classes. I actually enjoy the pace because I get the chance to learn and accomplish more things in a day's time. Working at a faster pace can help you to progress and reach levels which you might not have ever thought possible. I also enjoy working ahead of my grade. Our class is doing grammar and vocabulary at a seventh grade level while I am in sixth grade. I also enjoy doing math and science, its continuous class work, homework and labs. But mostly I enjoy trying to do my best in all of my subjects because it lets me feel pride in myself.

In addition to keeping up with the fast pace, I am working on being more organized. I also have to decide what is most important and what to give attention to first. All of my teachers have taught me the importance of being organized. I have to be orderly with all of my papers so I don't misplace one or not turn it in on time. I have learned the hard way that I have to be well structured like this. Being in gifted has helped me not only with these skills but with a lot of other things that will help me in the classroom and outside of it.

I like getting the good grades that I do because it only makes me want to excel more. When you get good grades you never want that feeling to stop. Gifted is made up of kids who want to excel. I feel that I am one of those kids and I am proud to say that I am in the gifted program at Roosevelt Middle School. I might only be eleven years old, but I like being a part of this program. It is a good place to be. And sixth grade all seems a little less scary because I am here.

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Gclothes, Age 11  
Albuquerque, New Mexico  
John Baker Elementary

### Why I Am Thankful For Gifted Education

I am very thankful for Gifted Education because you can be very creative and have fun. You learn a lot of new things by building and drawing them that you wouldn't learn in regular class. Being in gifted gets me prepared for Middle school because I do advanced work. It challenges my brain to be creative and makes it grow a lot faster than if I was learning what I already knew. Gifted Education makes me try and do my best.

In my special class we do a lot of things that involves being creative, but still having a very good learning experience. You do a lot of activities that involves building and creating things, but it has to have certain qualities, like the time we had to make a boat that had to have a special number of heavy items in it, and still had to float. Having fun and being creative is a great way to learn!

Gifted does a really good job of preparing me for Middle school by challenging me to do advanced work and things beyond my grade level. I will be more ready for Middle school than any of the people I know because of Gifted Education. My brain would not have grown as much or learned new things if they would not have put me in this special class. All the other grades higher than this will be harder and harder, but it wont be so hard for me because I have been challenged and doing things harder then my actual grade for some of my life. If we did not have Gifted Education I would have to be in a regular class and I would not have been this smart.

Gifted makes me smart, creative, and prepared by having me do fun, but also challenging activities. It is very amazing to be doing art and learning a bunch of new things too. I love to be challenged and do harder work then other people because I know I will be a lot more prepared for Middle school and future grades

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Casey Ziegler, Age 11  
Albuquerque, NM  
Hoover

### Why I'm Thankful for Gifted Education

I am very thankful for gifted education because I get to do lots of projects. I also get to work on my story just about every day. I love writing and continuing my story. My classmates entertain me as much as I entertain them. Which is a lot. I get to talk and we do a lot of oral things, which I love. My teacher even gives us candy on grammar days.

My favorite projects are the book responses. We have to turn them in every other week. There is a list to choose from. There are all kinds of projects on there like making a mobile, a book cover, or a magnet. You could also make an animated movie or write a letter to the author of the book that you are reading. These are my favorite projects because there is a wide variety of things to choose from. In a regular class, we probably wouldn't have the opportunity to do things like that. My story is very funny. It is titled "Cheese." It is about an evil witch named Cheese that puts the princess Violet's kingdom at the bottom of the ocean. She has to endure all kinds of obstacles that Cheese sets up. I love working on it almost every day. If I was in a regular education class, I wouldn't get that chance because all the computers would be taken or we would be doing something else. If I was in regular education, I would probably get laughed at if I was as outgoing as I am in my gifted class. I have a very active nature so it is hard for me to sit still for a long time, as I would have to in a regular education class. In my gifted class, I can be up and about most of the time. I am usually up and about talking. My classmates are very entertained by my antics.

On grammar days, we go over the topic for that day and then we usually do the practice section orally. Our teacher picks someone to answer the question and if they get it right, they get a piece of candy. My favorite day was when she gave out Swedish Fish.

My gifted teacher and classmates are the best. I have a very special bond with each of them. I love getting to school each day knowing that I am going to start off the day on a good note. Gifted classes are my favorite part of the day. They are what I look forward to each day.

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Itchybunny, Age 11  
Albuquerque, NM  
Double Eagle Elementary

The gifted program is something to be grateful for. From the moment you first walk in there to the moment you walk out the door, you're grateful for it.

I am grateful for the gifted program for lots of reasons. One reason is because it makes me different. I keep in my mind that not every kid gets to go to gifted program. I'm pretty lucky! Another reason is that it is a challenge. I like to challenge myself so when I do projects in extension that are more my level, it's fun and my brain likes it. It's like a puzzle I have to put together with thousands of pieces, but I love the challenge of putting it together so I can see the fabulous picture it creates.

I'm also grateful for it because it gives me a chance to excell. I can be good at something, and when I go to extension I have the chance to work even more on it and become better and go beyond. It gives me a jump start, so when we work on something in extension, then latter we work on it in class, I already know about it and I'm ahead. It's like everyone's in a bus on a road, but I'm in a car and already driving past them.

My fabulous teacher is also something I'm grateful for. She teaches me new things and pushes me to go above and beyond standards. I'm like a lawn mower that feeds on grass of knowledge and my teacher pushes me across that lawn of knowledge so I can consume more of it. She opens the door of opportunities and walks me through.

I'll probably also be grateful for extension when I'm older with a good job and family, because I'll know that extension helped me get to that point and without extension I probably wouldn't have my job as a doctor or a scientist or be able to raise a family. So I'd still be grateful. It's like I'm a train and extension builds the tracks so I can continue in life with success.

Now, that's a lot of reasons to be grateful for extension. I could go on for hours. That just shows how much extension means to me.

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Abigail Hunter, Age 12  
Albuquerque, NM  
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### Gifted Essay

I am thankful for gifted education. Why? There are several reasons I could write about here, but my favorite one; the one I am most thankful for, can be summed up in one word. Opportunity. If America is the land of opportunity, why is gifted education such a recent development? The enrichment program is the best opportunity that the educational system has to offer. Its origins lie as recently as the fifties. Why was the idea not invented and implemented sooner? Albert Einstein was shunned in his own school because he was so smart. If there had been a gifted program at his school, his genius would have been nurtured from childhood. Although he lived in a Germany that would give way to the Nazis in only a few short years, who knows what would have happened to him if his genius had been fostered from an early age? He did give the world much, and took nothing in return, but who knows how many Einsteins were living at that time, and all they needed was a little push that they never got?

Opportunities are now extremely vast for those that qualify. Most children that are as smart as Einstein was can now express that genius from an early age. I'm not saying I'm as intelligent as he was, but I probably would not have discovered any of the intellectual gifts I have if it wasn't for the gifted program at my first elementary school. This opportunity, to write this essay, is part of an immense universe of chances that I would not be able to take advantage of were I not in this program. Unfortunately, students in regular education don't have as many chances, and I would enjoy seeing that fixed in the future. I was euphoric when I first was accepted into the program, because socially, I'm not as competent as many of my peers. A smaller class was just what I needed to unlock the socialite within.

Socialization is one thing that many gifted students enjoy. Almost everyone in the world enjoys interacting with other human beings on a personal level. It's quite unfortunate that many of my gifted peers consider other students that aren't gifted below them, and don't really pay attention to them. It's snobbery in my opinion, because I love talking with other, non-gifted students. Many of them are my friends. However, if I were the kind that would turn up my pretty little nose at a sincere student, just because they were not gifted, I would be grateful for the opportunity to interact with some of my other peers that were gifted. It provides very stimulating conversation that has nothing to do with gossip or fashion. I'm extremely grateful for gifted education because of the opportunities that it provides. I would not be writing this essay if it were not for that.

--Abi Hunter

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