

*Dear Student,*

*Good essay. I've been really tough on your grammar in a way that I hope will help you beyond this essay--it's easy to give line notes and harder to give detailed explanations that make sense to a student. Please ask me if you have any questions. It's not that I actually had trouble understanding you (although my comments might make it look that way). Rather, my notes aim to give your writing a clarity and fluency that will make it stand out from all the other applicants who make the same grammatical moves.*

*Content-wise, this essay is very strong. It demonstrates your thoughtfulness, your moral education, and your ability to apply ideas to your own life.*

*One thing I might suggest is to be more specific about placing your essay in specific time.*

*You mention children learning about King at an early age. And you imply that you are referring to a specific moment when you first learned about King. Why not set a scene?*

*Little Student, sitting in kindergarten, learning about MLK. You can also be clearer about setting the stage for your middle school experiences--perhaps in the cafeteria being bullied. I know it's tough because of the subject matter and because of the retrospective nature of the essay, but concrete settings (time, place, the smell of the air, the quality of the light) give writing that much more impact.*

*Similarly, in the last three paragraphs, you mention applying King and Gandhi's theories to your own but you don't talk about when and how you experienced this. Why not remove the generalities here and discuss specific instances in which you stood for*

*equality, respect, and equal rights through non-violence? You can give us a scene in school, volunteering, or elsewhere that will transmit your actual experience of following King and Gandhi's tenets. It is a question of story-telling: If you tell someone that a woman broke your heart, they'll understand and say "sorry" at best. If you tell someone the story of how your heart was broken, giving the details and setting the scene, you might break the reader's heart too. I would recommend specifically talking about an instance in which you demonstrated your pride in your culture and/or stood up for someone else.*