

Effective Ways to Praise and Acknowledge – ANSWER KEY

Reminder: Below are scenarios (column 1) and recommended technique for crafting an effective acknowledgement for each scenario (column 3). Column 2 has an example effective praise statement for each scenario.

Scenario	Acknowledging Success	Technique Used
Kathy calls Lisa a name and instead of responding, Lisa walks away. What would you say to that student?	<i>“It’s great that you were able to control your anger when teased by Kathy. That’s an important skill that will help you keep friends.”</i>	Highlighting future usefulness of behavior.
A student stands up for or comforts a peer who is being bullied. What would you say or do to recognize the student?	<i>“I noticed that you helped out Ryan just now. I’m sure you would want others to do the same for you.”</i>	Linking the behavior to underlying thoughts, emotions, and dispositions.
A struggling student has turned in her homework every day this week. What feedback would you give her?	<i>“If I were right now, I would be thinking ‘Great job, Taylor, you should feel proud of yourself!’”</i>	Encouraging the student to take pride in her own behavior.
Charlie gets a perfect score on his spelling test for the first time all year. What might you say to him?	<i>“I’m going to call your parents and let them know how much your spelling has improved. You worked hard and got every word right!”</i>	Focusing on student’s specific achievement and effort demonstrated toward the achievement.
You catch a student helping a peer pick up the books and papers he has dropped. What would you say to recognize the student?	<i>“Nice job thinking about others. Tyler really appreciates what you did.”</i>	Linking behaviors to underlying thoughts, emotions, and dispositions to support prosocial behavior.
You spot one student praising another. What could you say to recognize that student?	<i>“Great! You must have realized how your behavior might make Carlos feel good about himself.”</i>	Highlighting the future value of the behavior.
Your class remains quiet and respectful during a school assembly. How could you acknowledge their good behavior?	<i>“You were all so quiet and respectful during the assembly this morning. I think you should all feel very proud of yourselves for your good behavior.”</i>	Encouraging students to self-evaluate their prosocial behavior.