

Katie Lambrecht
1st grade

My dad's name is Lonny and I love him more than anything! I know he loves me too because he tells me how much he loves me and gives me hugs and kisses. My dad works very hard so we can have money to buy clothes and food. My dad is the best dad because no matter how busy he is he takes time to play with me and teach me things. Dad teaches me how to play games. My favorite games to play with dad are Uno and SkipBo. I like that my dad is usually happy. When we clean the house he plays loud music and we dance as we clean. I love my dad because he takes time off work to go places with us. Every year we go camping some place new. I like that my dad makes us hot dogs and s'mores. Dad helps me do my homework, he brushes my hair and puts it in braids and he reads us stories from the Bible. Some day I want my dad to teach me how to play football, change the oil in the cars and how to kill a turkey. I am lucky to have my dad.

Kaitlynn Mahlberg
2nd grade

Hi! I want to tell you about a special person named Kelly. He is special because he is strong, respectful and trustworthy. He is my foster dad and I call him Kelly. Kelly is 39 years old. I admire Kelly because he takes me fishing at our cabin. He let me ride his sisters' horses and he goes hunting for deer venison. Kelly's favorite color is purple. Kelly works on roofs. My favorite day with Kelly was when he was teaching me to swim. The best part of Kelly is he is building a rec room for us to play in. Kelly makes me laugh by telling me jokes. Kelly is the most respectful, kind, safe and honest person I've ever known on earth.

Christopher K. Chen
3rd grade

What does my father mean to me? He is like a teacher to me because he teaches me math, language and history. He teaches me math to help me and make me skilled. He corrects my mistakes at my language work. He reviews history with me which makes me better in the class.

He works and provides me the things that I need. He provides me food when I get hungry. He provides me books so I can study. He provides help when I need it. He helps me build a car. He fixes my closet. He also helps me clean my room. He is always available whenever I need help from him. He also provides me Bible lessons so I can learn more about Christ.

He is my protector and my caretaker like a shepherd. He protects me so I won't get hurt, get lost or run into danger. He cares for me. When I am sick, he is with me to comfort me and make me strong. He cares for me and he guides my thoughts for what is good and right.

My father is a treasure box. In him there are gold, silver and diamonds. He is a gold because he teaches me to grow in knowledge and in wisdom that purifies my heart. He is a silver because he instructs me to be right with God. He is a diamond because his encouragement makes me shine. For all of his works for me I am going to thank my father by helping him whenever I can and being an obedient child.

Chloe Schroeder
4th grade

You never realize how much you love someone until they aren't there. I know this is true because my dad has been away for twelve days on a business trip and I've almost been counting down hours I miss him so much. So this is what a father means to me. F stands for funny. Somehow my dad knows when I'm upset and can make me laugh until I cry. A stands for adventurous. When we went to Colorado skiing last January, my dad encouraged me so much that I went down one of the black diamond hills with him. T stands for teacher. When I don't understand something he'll go through it with me until I do understand it and it's not just homework he helps me with. It's a variety of stuff from sports to just plain art. H stands for handsome. I know this because I asked him to marry me when I was little. E stands for easy to get along with. My dad always tells me you can't have too many friends. He's the type of person that it isn't hard to get to know him. R stands for respectful. My dad is very polite and considerate whenever we go somewhere, always. He sets a good example for me and that's what a father means to me. Every kid needs a father in their life. I don't know what I'd do without my dad.

Morgan Scheiber
5th grade

What My Father Means to Me

My father means a lot to me for many different reasons. He was a great father!!

My father's name is Mike (Michael). He married my mom, Mary. Then they had my sister and me.

After we were born, my father was diagnosed with ALS in 2000. It's where your muscles weaken and lose their ability to move. So he could hardly do anything anymore and he had to be in a wheelchair. We were really sad but we still had some fun times. Once in the summer, my sister and I had my dad pull us around in a wagon tied to his wheelchair with bungee cords. It was fun!

He had to give up everything he liked to do like demo derbying, playing with us and he could barely go out of the house. He never complained. He was just happy to be with us.

Five years after he was diagnosed, he started getting worse so we knew he was going to pass away soon. It was a sad thought but God wanted him.

I will never forget that Sunday morning. My sister and I went to church with my grandma and grandpa praying so hard that he would be OK. My mom was at the house with my dad.

After we got to my grandpa and grandma's house, we got a phone call. It was my mom saying, "He just passed away." We all started crying!

My grandma held me and told me that I did not have to worry because she said he was a great man. God wanted him to be my guardian angel.

That is why my father means a lot to me because of a great man he was. I still remember him to this day. I have the best guardian angel, my father!

Jacob Komarek
6th grade

When we got the assignment of saying things about our fathers that we liked, and we got two free Twins tickets to boot, I thought that the teachers were going crazy. What's easier than talking about the good things our dads do. First and foremost, my father is always there for me when I need to drive somewhere and I need to go places a lot. He's like my personal chauffeur.

Second, he always makes me laugh when I'm bored or sad. Like in the morning when I've fallen asleep in my Cheerios, he does some silly voice and wakes me right up and I'm ready to go. Or when I'm at the dinner table and my sister is rambling on about how an actor died right after he did a movie.

Of all thing things he does, he's always there when I want to talk about something personal. We can always have our Man's Night. When the ladies have to go to some play or fashion show, we stay home and watch a movie that's for men only "as we called it."

Back when my sisters and I were only around five, we had a hornet in our porch. We geared daddy up for battle and after he came out victorious, we ran to him and hugged him until we couldn't hug anymore, of course, after he threw away the dead hornet.

Something like that happened earlier in this past year, but it was with a bat instead of a measly hornet and me and my sisters were asleep. I guess you can't always be there when your father emerges victoriously, but you can always be there a couple of hours later to pat him on the back. The essay is close to the end, so I'll wrap it up by saying, "Daddy! I love you! I hear you coming so I'll end now."

Hannah Steiner
7th grade

Dad

Being a dad is much, much more than being a biological father. There are two things that need to be done to get the title "dad." Both the big and the little things have to be covered. I am a lucky kid. I have a dad who covers both.

The big things are the values and morals I will carry with me through the rest of my life. My dad is a very patient man. He will work things out before losing his temper. When we get lost in the car, I notice that my dad doesn't panic. Kids pick up on stuff like this. Ever since I was little, I picked up on that. Patience isn't the only big thing my dad teaches me through his actions. He also demonstrates patience when I begin to get on his nerves, when we get into some arguments. He also teaches me how to love, laugh and work hard.

The little things are just as important as the big things. The little things are taking me fishing every summer, studying for science tests, taking me to the fair, teaching me how to ride a bicycle, and just living life. My dad gives me all of that. I know it would be hard for me without all the little things. And not everyone gets any of that. I am a lucky kid.

The thing I'd most like to see from my dad in the future is for him to continue giving me both the big and the little things. I believe the hardest thing about being a dad is watching your kids grow up. But, that's what's gotta happen. Time doesn't stop; so, dad, the best thing is to keep being you!

Dear Father,

In this world, there are many places to see,
but I already know where I want to be.
I want to be in your embrace
and see that genuine smile on your face.
My heart gushes love that is true
and I dedicate it all to you.

You have taught me that inner beauty is what I should seek,
so I find that looks compared to personalities are weak.
You have shown me that all life is to cherish,
so I refuse to see anything as nightmarish.
You have revealed to be that kind souls are all around,
so now I have a large diversity of friends that walk on this earth's ground.

With each new moment, I get another step closer to being an adult,
and you help me see when I should take responsibility when I am at fault.
You lend a hand when I work on achieving;
this is my life, you are aiding me in weaving.
To earn your pride I don't need to be intelligent,
because I know that you will always love me to a great extent.

You tell me to be full of integrity.
Then, people will see my reliability.
You tell me to be humble.
Then, I won't have a reason to grumble.
You tell me to be only me.
Then, that is all everyone shall see.
After I listened to this advice, my problems began to decrease,
so now I try to spread a little more peace.

I want to tell you just how much you mean to me;
I value your love, personality, and veracity.
You have my deepest gratitude
for helping me shape this attitude.

Dad, you mean the world to me;
my admiration for you is bigger than the sea.

Sincerely,

Your extremely appreciative daughter

Alexandra Mae Anderson
9th grade

I am writing about my father - my very best friend.
William Joseph Anderson

March 25, 2008, my father's 50th birthday; March 26, the end of the world. On that day, my dad became more than just a father; he became my best friend and one of my greatest life lessons.

I remember that it was a cold morning; I remember the rotating door, phones ringing off the hook, escalators, solemn faces, waiting rooms. I remember the too clean smell that you associate with hospitals. And it was there, in that small University of Minnesota doctor's office that my family had experienced its own personal apocalypse. The diagnosis seemed to hang in the air, making it heavy—crushing. It squeezed the air out of my lungs in short bursts and made even shallow breaths almost impossible; ALS—the end of the world.

Life as I knew it was over, but for my dad, life had just begun. It's not like there weren't times when it seemed like there was no point to life anymore, but Dad did his best to live as if each day were his last. He taught me that growing old is inevitable, but growing up is an option, and to live your life while you're still alive.

My father has barely enough strength left in his arms to hold my hand, but to me, he is the strongest man in the world.

Justin Rippentropp
10th grade

What my father means to me. Honestly I have never thought about it. Now that I do think about it, he means so much to me. He has been a support in my life when times get shaky and uncertain. He has been a best friend to me when there's no one else around to talk or be with. He has helped me when I'm lost or hurting and need his help to find my way. He has been the "Lighthouse" in my life when the path ahead of me is dark and gloomy. He has been a teacher that has taught me some of the most important values in my life. There are so many more things that I could go on about my father. Most of all, my dad is my hero. He is my everything and he means the world to me. He has all my respect and I love him with all my heart. I would never give him up for anything; ever! He is my superhero and villain all in one. He is my father and this is what he means to me.

James Cawthra
11th grade

At times my father is like an enigmatic force, more closely resembling a mountain spirit or a tree given life than a man. He is stoic and mysterious, yet at the same time openly and solid, truthful as an oak.

On certain occasions he's mild-mannered and polite, and on others rude and full of hilarity. He has a grin like the stretched face of a scruffed dog that's hard not to smile back at, punctuated by two twinkling eyes. He has a taste for sweet, mossy Scotch that's difficult to argue with, this always augmented by the double "plink" of ice cubes dropping into a glass.

He has a quick and deliberated mind, from which earth-tone wisdom may easily be drawn up. He is an outstandingly hard worker, and I envy the skill with which he can make his hands dance over tools. He is an enthusiastic hunter and fisherman, as well as a sought-after veterinary surgeon.

More than anything else though, he is simply and finally my father. He is the man who taught me to shoot a gun and remove the trachea of a deer. He is the man whose hands make the squash mounds in our garden, and whose work puts food in my mouth. He is the voice in the back of my head always telling me that I should be doing work.

Some people know him as "Doctor" or "Jim" and his presence can be interpreted in a variety of ways. To me, however, his name and place will always be summed up by a single syllable, "Dad."

Maggie Ragan
12th grade

My dad is special because he is a regular "Joe." Even though he is a rural Lutheran pastor, he doesn't act pious and holy. My dad, like others, runs around in his underwear on the weekends, allows foul curses to slip during sports games, and tries to be as active as possible in his kids' lives. He is not the bread-winner in my family, but he loves his family and life besides the fact.

My fear of doctors has shown me how dependable and supportive my dad is. My dad comes to my doctor appointments with me to help me relax. He cracks jokes about the funny nurses and doctors. Watching him attempt to impersonate my Indian Asthma Specialist is hilarious.

My dad is very protective of his "little princess." He's a black belt in Tae Kwon Do and promises to evaluate my first boyfriend through a specific test on comprehension of the word "no" by breaking three cement blocks at once in front of him.

My dad has not taught me everything I know, but what I have learned through his long yet insightful "sermons" has helped develop my personality and sense of morality. Now I know it's okay to be who I truly am because no one can change it.

The reason he is special is because he's *my* dad and he doesn't try to be someone else. He is stern when needed, but loves to laugh and enjoy spending time with his family. My dad is quirky and weird but I love who he is because he is *my* dad.