The Prompt:
Write an essay explaining the importance of being able to see a situation from another person’s point of view.

The Model Essay:

Seeing Both Sides

Imagine a court of law in which the prosecution lays out its charges and presents its evidence—and then the judge turns the case over to the jury without giving the defense a chance to respond. Thankfully, the U.S. legal system is not like this. However, people play out similar situations every day when they pass judgment on others without taking into account the other person’s point of view. An intelligent, respectful person should always consider other people’s points of view, no matter what the situation. Failing to consider different perspectives can lead to personal, societal, and international problems.

In the best relationships, people try to see things from one another’s point of view whenever possible. A friend or spouse who insists that things be done “my way or the highway” often finds himself or herself alone. People want to feel valued, and when one person in a relationship won’t take the other person’s perspective into account, the other person feels devalued. Three years ago my sister Jenna divorced, in part because her husband often did not consider her point of view. He would make decisions without consulting her about things such as where they would go on vacation or what church they would attend. He always picked where they’d dine out, what movies they’d watch, and how they’d decorate their apartment. When she would try to give him input, he would argue, say hurtful things, or just ignore her. In the end, their marriage failed because he only considered his own point of view.

On a societal scale, failure to consider another person’s point of view...
view is one of the main causes of prejudice in the world. Prejudiced people pass judgment on individuals and cultures based on preconceived ideas, never taking into account other people’s perspectives. For example, a prejudiced person might sneer at a homeless person and say, “Get a job!” From his point of view, the homeless person is lazy, unmotivated, and perfectly capable of working to better his situation. A more compassionate person might instead offer to help the homeless person or direct him to an agency that could help. The unprejudiced person would know that there are countless possible reasons—such as mental illness, loss of employment, or family tragedy—that may have led to this unfortunate person’s condition. Prejudice comes from ignorance and an inability to see things from another’s perspective. Compassion, on the other hand, stems from trying to understand another person’s experiences and feelings.

Worst of all, international relationships can also suffer when world leaders are unable to see critical issues from another point of view. For example, since the mid-twentieth century, India, Pakistan, and China have disputed the Kashmir region. Each country claims all or part of the region, refusing to accept the others’ perspective on which country the region should belong to. Some people in Kashmir even wish the region to be independent of all three countries. When it comes to national boundaries, you’ll seldom find countries that agree 100%. On another issue, the United States and Mexico have an ongoing disagreement because of differing views on capital punishment. Mexico, which currently has no death penalty, protests when U.S. states, such as Texas and California, sentence Mexican nationals to death for crimes committed in the United States. While this issue is not likely to spark a war, it still cools the relationship between the two countries. The world is not black and white, and in international disputes usually neither side is entirely right or wrong. Responsible leaders should use the United
Nations and other forums to discuss their problems, to try to understand other countries’ concerns, and to look for peaceful ways to negotiate mutually acceptable solutions.

Of course, it’s not always easy to see things from another person’s point of view. Another person’s ideas and values might conflict with yours and make you question—or even change—what you believe. Some people choose to take the easy route and ignore other people’s perspectives. However, when people fail even to attempt to understand others, personal relationships suffer, prejudice festers in our society, and nations become pitted against each other with deadly results. The world would be a better place if everyone made the effort to see things from other points of view. The best route is not always the easiest route, but it’s worth taking.

**Conclusion**

Reflection on thesis

Restatement of thesis

Clincher sentence