



Lesson Time: 20–30 minutes

Respectful Language

Objectives & Outcomes

Lesson Objectives: Students will plan a campus-wide awareness campaign to promote respectful language and remind others that words can hurt.

Lesson Outcomes: *Students will be able to...*

- explain the difference between teasing and bullying.
- explain the importance of using respectful language.

Subject Area Connection: Language Arts, Art

Background

During the middle and high school years, students often push the boundaries of respectful language. It is important for students to receive guidance that explains why respectful language is important, because other people are affected by what we say. In acknowledging the importance of respectful language, students will recognize that their language choices impact their fellow students and begin to take responsibility for making respectful choices.

This lesson will differentiate between teasing and verbal bullying and ask students to plan a campuswide awareness campaign promoting respectful language. Students will be motivated to modify their language choices as an example for others. Students will take ownership for creating a respectful environment in their school.

“Students will take **ownership** for creating a **respectful environment** in their school.”

Getting Ready

Teacher Preparation: To prepare for this lesson, choose several popular advertising slogans and write them on the board or bring in examples of advertising slogans from magazines and/or the Internet.

Materials Required:

- chalkboard or whiteboard
- chalk or marker
- several examples of a slogan/advertisement
- poster boards (per 3–4 students)
- markers

Introduction and Modeling

To begin, show students the advertising slogans you wrote on the board or the examples you brought in. Ask students to tell you what is or is not appealing about each one. Lead a discussion about the elements that are present in an appealing advertisement (e.g., a powerful graphic, a catchy slogan, etc.) and list them on the board. Invite students to give additional examples of successful advertising campaigns and explain why they were successful.

Explain that students will be planning a campuswide awareness campaign to promote respectful language. Ask students to think about the necessary elements for an appealing advertisement in planning their own campaigns.

Key Vocabulary

respect: being thoughtful of and polite to others.

courtesy: being polite and considerate.

teasing: playful conduct that encourages friendship and goes both ways.

Procedure

1. Read the following scenarios to students:
 - Erica and Stacey eat lunch together every day. Lately, Stacey has started questioning what Erica eats. When Erica brings chips or cookies, Stacey says, "Are you sure you want to eat that? You've gained a lot of weight recently."
 - Pierre and Rob are on the basketball team. Pierre is taller than all of his teammates. This gives him an edge in basketball games, and he is one of the best players. Rob calls Pierre *shorty*. Pierre thinks it's funny.
2. Explain that one of the scenarios is an example of teasing (second scenario) and the other is an example of verbal bullying (first scenario). Discuss the difference:
 - *Teasing* is funny to everyone.
 - *Verbal bullying* makes someone sad.
3. Discuss the idea that some people do not think words can hurt. Ask students to put themselves in Erica's shoes. How would they feel? Invite students to give additional examples of verbal bullying or other disrespectful language.
4. Now ask students to give examples of respectful language and explain why respectful language is important. Encourage students to think beyond "my feelings are hurt" to how a target of verbal bullying may internalize the words being directed at him or her, which would have a negative impact on his or her self-esteem. Remind students that disrespectful language also negatively impacts the person who is speaking and bystanders.
5. As a class, decide on the main points that an awareness campaign about respectful language would need to include (e.g., the difference between teasing and bullying, words can hurt, etc.). Make a list of ideas on the board.
6. Divide the class into small groups. Assign each group one of the ideas that needs to be explored in the awareness campaign. Explain that students will need to come up with a slogan and a graphic to catch people's attention and explain the concept in an efficient manner. Refer back to the advertisements you explored at the beginning of the lesson.
7. Pass out a poster board and markers to each group. Explain that if a group finishes early, the members should use the time to brainstorm other ways to spread their message and raise awareness.

Discussion Questions

- How can your language choices convey the same message in both a respectful and a disrespectful way?
- How does your tone of voice and body language influence your message?
- Should there be rules about respectful language in schools? If so, what should they be?
- If you witnessed an incident of verbal bullying, what would you do?
- How do you think other students in our school will respond to our campaign?

Evaluation

Invite group members to the front of the room to share their posters. Students should be able to explain the difference between teasing and verbal bullying and the importance of using respectful language.

Tips for Tailoring this Lesson

For Higher Grade Levels

- Students may carry out further plans for a campuswide awareness campaign by filming a public service announcement to be broadcast to the school, creating a website, putting on a play, or holding an assembly.
- Ask students to write an essay, poem, or song lyrics about the importance of respectful language.

For Lower Grade Levels

- Ask students to write up scenarios that show respectful and disrespectful language. Have students compete in a quiz show where students have to correctly label a scenario presented by the opposing team.

Alignment to Standards and Frameworks

Common Core State Standards: College & Career Readiness

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Anchor Standards for Speaking and Listening

CCRA.SL.1 Prepare for and participate effectively in a range of conversations and collaborations with diverse partners, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.

CCRA.SL.5 Make strategic use of digital media and visual displays of data to express information and enhance understanding of presentations.

CCRA.SL.6 Adapt speech to a variety of contexts and communicative tasks, demonstrating command of formal English when indicated or appropriate.

Anchor Standards for Writing

CCRA.W.1 Write informative/explanatory texts to examine and convey complex ideas and information clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization, and analysis of content.

Social and Emotional Core Competencies

Social and Emotional Core Competencies: the five interrelated sets of cognitive, affective and behavioral competencies associated with social and emotional learning as identified by CASEL. Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning www.casel.org

Self-awareness

Students are asked to explain the difference between teasing and verbal bullying. Students are asked to recognize that their language choices impact their fellow students.

Self-management

Students are asked to take responsibility for their own language choices and for promoting a respectful school environment.

Social Awareness

Students are asked to recognize the impact of verbal bullying on everyone involved.

Relationship Skills

SSStudents are asked to plan a campus-wide awareness campaign to promote respectful language in the school community.