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GRADE 3

The Power of Words

What should you do when someone uses mean or hurtful language on the internet?

CYBERBULLYING, DIGITAL DRAMA
& HATE SPEECH

*We are kind
& courageous.*

OVERVIEW

As kids grow, they'll naturally start to communicate more online. But some of what they see could make them feel hurt, sad, angry, or even fearful. Help your students build empathy for others and learn strategies to use when confronted with cyberbullying.

Students will be able to:

- Understand that it's important to think about the words we use, because everyone interprets things differently.
- Identify ways to respond to mean words online, using S-T-O-P.
- Decide what kinds of statements are OK to say online and which are not.

Lesson Snapshot   **Estimated time: 45 mins.**

Warm Up:	Same Word. Different Meaning.	10 mins.
Watch:	The Power of Words	15 mins.
Investigate:	What's the Problem?	10 mins.
Wrap Up:	Crossing the Line	10 mins.

Key Standards Supported

What You'll Need

Spanish-language student and family resources available soon!

- A long string or rope
- Paper
- **Lesson Slides**
- Video: The Power of Words **Watch**
- Student Handout: Words Can Hurt
    - **- Student Version**
    - **- Teacher Version**
- Lesson Quiz
    - **- Student Version**
    - **- Teacher Version**

Take-home resources

- **Family Tips**
- **Family Activities**

LESSON PLAN

Key Vocabulary:

Warm Up: **Same Word. Different Meaning.**   10 mins.

1. **Project Slide 4** and ask students: *Imagine when you walked in, I said to you* [in a friendly tone, with a big smile] *"Hello!" Which emoji would fit?*

   Have students show their answer by holding up fingers (1, 2, 3, or 4). If anyone holds up a number other than 1, ask them to share out why.

2. **Repeat** this two more times, saying *Hello* differently each time: once with an angry tone and a scowl, and once with a nervous or scared tone.

3. **Project Slide 5** and ask: *What about if you're just reading it? How does it make you feel now?*

   Point out how when something is just in text, it can be even more difficult to interpret what someone means. Explain that their responses might be different depending on who they are because we all **interpret** the world a little differently. Clarify that **interpret** means *to understand something based on our point of view.* (**Slide 6**)

4. **Say**: *Because words can be interpreted differently by different people, it's important to think about the words we use and how they affect people. We might say something just to be funny, but someone might take it seriously, and it might hurt their feelings. This can happen in person, and it can also happen online. It may even happen more online, because the words are just text -- we're not actually face-to-face with other people.*

Watch: **The Power of Words**   15 mins.

1. **Ask**: *Who has heard of the saying "Sticks and stones may break my bones, but words can never hurt me"?*

   Invite students to respond. Answers will vary. Follow up by asking students if they think the saying is true.

2. **Project Slide 7** and say: *We're going to watch a video now called "The Power of Words." As we watch, continue to think about whether that statement is true or not.*

   Show the video **The Power of Words** and then call on students to share out what it says about whether the statement is true or not. Emphasize that sometimes it is hard to ignore what someone is saying when it's a mean name. Names CAN make you feel sad or hurt.

3. **Ask**: *Why do you think those other players said those things to Guts?* (**Slide 8**)

   Invite students to respond. Answers will vary, but possible reasons include *they were trying to joke around* or *they feel badly themselves and are taking it out on someone.*

4. **Ask**: *What does Gus do in response to the mean words?*

   Invite students to respond and clarify that Guts talked to someone he trusted, who was able to empathize with him and give him some good advice. Define **empathy** as *imagining the feelings that someone else is experiencing.* (**Slide 9**)

5. **Project Slide 10** and review the acronym S-T-O-P for responding to mean words online.

Investigate: **What's the Problem?**   10 mins.

1. **Distribute** the **Words Can Hurt Student Handout** and read the directions aloud. Allow pairs five minutes to complete the activity.

2. **Invite** pairs to share their answers. Refer to the **Teacher Version** for possible responses.

Wrap Up: **Crossing the Line**   10 mins.

1. **Place** a string across the length of the classroom. Mark one half of the room "OK." Mark the other half "Not OK." Have students all stand on the OK side of the line.

2. **Project Slide 11** and read the directions aloud.

3. **Have** students read the statements on **slides 12-15**. After each statement, allow time for students to move or stay. Call on students to explain their thinking. If possible, choose students from each side to debate reasons why the statement is or isn't okay.

   For the examples where students say it's Not OK, follow-up by asking them what they could do if they received that message from someone.

4. **Review** that kids like to go online to email, chat, watch videos, send messages, play games, and do homework. Sometimes the language can get mean or scary. Messages that make people feel bad cross the line.

5. **Have** students complete the **Lesson Quiz**. Send home the **Family Activity** and **Family Tips** sheets.

Extension Activity:

Prepare slips of paper with comments that say mildly unkind things, like:

- I can't believe you like superhero shows. Only first-graders do.
- You are weird.
- Why are you wearing THAT shirt?

Pass out one slip to each student and pair them up. Have students trade slips and read them silently. Then have them trade back and take turns saying the comment aloud to the other person. Ask them what the difference was between writing something not-so-nice and being accountable for what they were saying to someone's face. Emphasize that people sometimes hide behind the anonymity of their online activity. Remind students that if they wouldn't say something to another person's face, it's not OK to say it in their online activities.