

LESSON 1 | Why Words Matter

Watch
the video at
[scholastic.com](https://www.scholastic.com/respect)
/respect

Introduce your students to expressing kindness in person and online.

Objective

Students will learn about the Internet, identify different ways words are used, and create drawings to reflect on their experiences and to build self-esteem and social awareness.

Time

40 minutes

Materials

- Power of Kindness video
- Find the Kindness! activity sheets 1A and 1B
- Chart paper or whiteboard
- Scissors
- Glue

Instructions

1 Begin by acknowledging that it can be scary to discuss mean behavior, but that it's important to know the difference between hurtful words and kind words. We learn that by talking about it, we can make sure to be nice to others and get help if we see something mean. Show the class the Power of Kindness video. Have students describe what happened in the video. Ask: *Where do you think the mean words came from?*

2 Guide an age-appropriate conversation about the Internet, including the concept that the Internet connects you to people around the world and allows you to find out about anything you want. Explain that some people use mean words online just like they can in real life. Discuss how all people have the power to help or hurt other people with the things they say.

3 For first and second graders, explain that some people may feel like it doesn't matter what they do or say on the Internet because they can't see the people who are listening or reading what they say. Explain that words can hurt even more online because they can be seen by lots of people, and they don't go away.

4 Ask: *How can you make sure you don't use hurtful words online or in real life?* Discuss things students can do when they are upset instead of using mean words. Answers can include taking a deep breath, walking away, standing up for others who are being excluded, and telling a trusted adult.



Level the Lesson

Pre-Kindergarten Hold up the Find the Kindness! activity sheet (1A) to the class and point to each scenario. Work with students to identify what is happening in the images and if the children are using safe or kind Internet behaviors.

Kindergarten–2nd Grade Have students make a T-chart on a blank sheet of paper: one column for kind actions and one for unkind actions. Hand out the appropriate Find the Kindness! activity sheet. (Sheet 1A is designed for kindergarten and first grade. Sheet 1B is designed for second grade.) Allow students to cut out the thumbs-up and thumbs-down icons and glue them to the top of their T-charts. Work with them to complete the activity.

Extension

Have students draw a picture of an experience when someone said something helpful or hurtful to them, whether online or in real life. Ask the class to sort the drawings into helpful or hurtful categories. Have older students add descriptive text.