



Learning Target:

- Students will understand that they can combine words to say things that are helpful or hurtful. Through thoughtful word choices, they can blast out hope into the world.

After watching [Kid Congress - Words Matter](#), open with a class discussion about the idea that “Words Matter”:

- How can words help us take care of the world?
- How can words help us better understand each other?
- What would our world be like if more people used their words to blast out hope?

Then, use the activities below to remind students of the power of words by allowing them to connect with others through language. These activities are designed to offer flexibility and choice. Select any combination of activities and utilize them in whatever manner will work best within your classroom setting.

After students complete the task(s), engage in a reflective conversation using the following questions:

- What big results came from the little words you chose to use in these activities?
- How can we use what we’ve learned to help others in our school and community understand the power of their words?
- How have your thoughts and actions changed now that you have completed these activities?
- What other ideas do you have to blast out hope into the world? (*Teachers: Were your students inspired by these activities? Join the [Kid President in the Classroom Facebook Community](#) to share photos and stories about how your students are teaming up to seek good, create good, and celebrate good!*)

NOTE TO TEACHERS:

*Our words matter, too! Use [these pointers](#) from *We Are Teachers* to bring more positive language into your classroom.*

Anchor Standards

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.L.1

Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English grammar and usage when writing or speaking.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.L.3

Apply knowledge of language to understand how language functions in different contexts, to make effective choices for meaning or style, and to comprehend more fully when reading or listening.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.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.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.SL.3

Evaluate a speaker's point of view, reasoning, and use of evidence and rhetoric.

National Curriculum Standards for Social Studies

Theme 3: People, Places, and Environments

Theme 10: Civic Ideals and Practices

ISTE Standards for Students

Standard 2- Digital Citizen

Students recognize the rights, responsibilities and opportunities of living, learning and working in an interconnected digital world, and they act and model in ways that are safe, legal and ethical.

Standard 6- Creative Communicator:

Students communicate clearly and express themselves creatively for a variety of purposes using the platforms, tools, styles, formats and digital media appropriate to their goals.

Standard 7- Global Collaborator:

Students use digital tools to broaden their perspectives and enrich their learning by collaborating with others and working effectively in teams locally and globally.



MAILBOX OF ENCOURAGEMENT

Make positive and encouraging language an integral part of your classroom culture! Create a classroom or school-wide mailbox where students can write compliments and positive messages to each other. These messages can be regularly shared out publicly (for example, read them on school announcements, during morning meeting, or at the end of each day). Alternatively, each student can create their own mailbox where they can receive personal messages throughout the year.

ACT IT OUT

It is important for students to understand how their words affect the world around them. It takes time and effort to develop empathy. Allow students to practice understanding another person's feelings or experiences by role playing the scenarios below.

Put students together to work with a partner. Students take turns reading the scenarios. One partner will act out how the person in the scenario feels while the other partner focuses on using empathetic words that will help, not hurt.

Sample elementary scenarios:

- You are playing on the playground and you fall off the swing...
- You are sharing your writing with a group of friends and they laugh...
- You are moving to a new home and have to change schools...

Sample secondary scenarios:

- You are on social media and someone has written a mean comment about a classmate...
- You are sick and can't go to a party...
- You are playing soccer and you missed a goal. Your team loses the game...

Extend the activity by allowing students to create their own scenarios. Connect with peers in different classrooms or at different grade levels to complete the role playing activity.



LEYLA'S LETTERS

In this video, Leyla presented us with a challenge. Take on this challenge by giving each student a piece of paper so they can write a letter to someone they love, care about, or would like to encourage. This offers an ideal opportunity to develop important literacy skills, such as the parts of a letter, writing for a specific purpose and audience, friendly letter format vs. business letter format, and how to address a letter.

Students can also write letters for other authentic purposes. Use this list of ideas, or come up with your own:

- Write to politicians about pressing issues within their home, school, or community
- Send handwritten letters of thanks to servicemen and women ([Operation Gratitude project](#))
- Write letters to senior citizens in a retirement community ([Love for the Elderly project](#))
- Create get well cards and letters for children in the hospital ([Cards for Hospitalized Kids project](#))

Extend the activity by allowing students to send ongoing messages of encouragement through a penpal program. Keep it local by connecting with students in a nearby school, or by pairing your classroom with older or younger students to create a mentoring partnership. Take it global by joining a [Postcard Exchange project](#) or by connecting with another classroom through [ePals](#) or [PenPal Schools](#).

Opening classroom doors to the world allows us to support all learners by establishing a foundation of diversity, inclusion, and equity. If you would like to learn more about building a classroom culture that values and respects diverse perspectives, read this [Getting Started with Global Connections](#) blog post from [KSU iTeach](#).

LET'S TACO 'BOUT HOW AWESOME YOU ARE

Our world needs more opportunities for us to be people-oriented. As Leyla suggested, invite students to send others a “taco” packed with positivity.

Download, print, and cut out the [Let's TACO 'Bout How Awesome You Are](#) printable (available in color and black and white). On each ingredient, ask students to write a message of encouragement designed to give the recipient support, confidence, and hope. This is a great opportunity to applaud others for their actions and acknowledge their successes. Put each ingredient inside the taco and deliver it to the intended recipient! As students write their messages, encourage them to think about how words matter.

Extend this activity by encouraging students to share this idea with their families, friends, and community to feed others some great tacos.



CHALK TALK

Sometimes we can turn “little” ideas into “big” ideas in really simple ways. Instead of having students create little notes (think sticky notes) of encouragement to share with peers, have them leave BIG messages of kind words that matter. With sidewalk chalk, have students leave messages of encouragement around the school. On the sidewalks around the playgrounds, on the covered area near the buses, or that empty part of the parking lot - See the impact your kind words can have on the school and the community!

Ideas:

- Big messages for no reason at all
- Words of encouragement around back to school and/or testing time
- Near graduation, homecoming, or other major school events
- During Teacher Appreciation Week

POWERFUL WORDS

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Powerful Words

Let's use our positive, powerful words to inspire and lift up others in our families, schools, communities, and world. Get a picture of someone in the school (administration, support staff, or teacher) and display it on the board. Ask students to write positive, powerful words to describe this individual. Encourage students to be specific and use variety in their word choice. This is an excellent opportunity to address how we can strengthen writing using descriptive adjectives. Transfer the words to a frame around the picture and present it as a gift.

Students can repeat this activity for other important people in their life and give them this powerful display of words. Students can also work together to create a frame for each member of the class.

Alternatively, you can collect words digitally using [Answer Garden](#), [ABCya word clouds](#), [Tagxedo](#), or [Wordle](#) to create word clouds that display the positive words of encouragement. a “taco” packed with positivity.



DIGITAL CITIZENSHIP CAMPAIGN

The theme of this episode of Kid Congress connects to issues of digital citizenship. Help students make smart choices online and in life using Common Sense Media's free [K-12 Digital Citizenship Curriculum](#).

Social media should be used to encourage collaboration, empathy, and citizenship in the classroom. How can we make sure students don't use hurtful words or images while on social media? Challenge students to start a positive social media campaign and accompanying hashtag to publicize their movement. By creating and sharing quotes, pictures, GIFs, infographics, videos, and other digital creations, students can promote encouragement, positivity, and the powerful use of words.

Elementary Students:

Teachers can upload the students' creations on a class website or class social media account.

Secondary Students:

Students can share and post on an approved social media platform or website.

A POWERFUL VOICE

Leyla discussed how we can use kind words to have an impact on those around us. Our students are experts at sharing their ideas on a variety of digital platforms... so let's see some of their talents shine while they lift each other up! [Flipgrid](#) provides educators with a secure and safe place for students to create short videos. This tool can be used to record uplifting words of encouragement for others.

1. Head to [Flipgrid.com](#) and login or sign up for a free educator account.
2. Follow the prompts to set up your first Grid (Classroom). Pay attention to any passwords or login requirements that you may need to share with your students.
3. Continue by following the steps to setup your first Topic in your new Grid.
4. Adjust the settings in your topic to provide enough time for your students to share their words that matter with their peers.

Extend the activity by connecting globally. From your Flipgrid homepage, open the #GridPals tab near the top. Use the search and filter functions to identify and connect with a teacher and/or classroom that has common interests through #GridPals profiles.