



## The Words You Choose

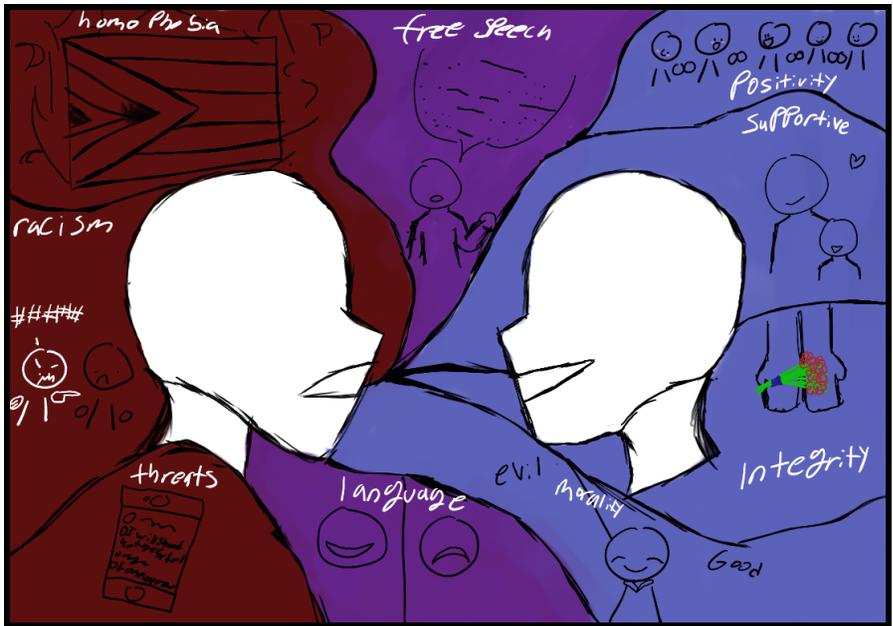
By Nyasia Brown, Phynix Paulino & Leah Smith

Imagine a school with no bad words or no yelling in the hallways, and no bullying. What would that look like?

Every American has free speech compared to other countries, and we are lucky to have that. [On January 6th, 2021](#), protesters approached the Capitol building, and they were allowed to voice their opinions, until they resorted to violence. In North Korea if protestors were to even speak against any political figure they would be arrested and consigned to one of North Korea's "re-education" camps. Many appreciate that we are given the privilege to speak our truths and opinions and be responsible with how we express ourselves.

Even with the ability to say what we can, some people have trouble with [that power](#). We see examples of this here at Rippowam. With many in the hallways calling people out, making assumptions about students based on what they hear, they could start spreading harmful rumors around. Sometimes they make problematic references that really should be left unsaid. In Rippowam there are many who use their words in an ill-mannered way and offend people on purpose based on [stereotypes](#).

Although English is the most spoken language in the world, many people speak other languages. This causes a language barrier, and even an accent can make people think that you can't understand a language.



Artwork by Amari Lopez Cruz and Alex Tom

Mispronunciation is a common mistake that most people make. Race discrimination tends to have an impact on peoples lives and can effect someone's view of others. [Racism](#) is often expressed in words and actions. Sometimes we say jokes that can be considered rude outside our friend group. It could be on impulse, but it can still be interpreted the wrong way by people who don't completely

understand what you are saying.

Regardless of what is being said, the way you indulge in conversation matters. A sentence could be interpreted differently with various tones. Tone is much harder to convey in social media since there is a barrier between the way people stress their words in person and how it could be interpreted online.

## I Forgive You!

by Brian Aguilar Riley Morris, and Lucas Slavin



## Opinion: The Effects of Words

By Kristel Pimentel

Saying unkind words is hurtful. You never know if the person meant it or not. We tend to let our words slip like ice. We all react to situations differently. Everything you do or say will have an effect. For example, let's say someone said to you that you are weird. It's not the cruelest word, but someone is judging you. Being judged is not the greatest feeling. You could start to think, *I'm so weird*, and the outcome could cause a build up of self-hate.

Teenagers text, perhaps, more than anyone. Something that happens to everyone is we don't think before we say something, which would make an impact. I can personally say that when I'm texting, I may pause and ask, *Do I say this or not?* Even though we aren't saying the words in person, it does not change the fact that they can still hurt.

We all joke everyday. I have noticed that people in this school tend to use someone's past against them to get them to stop talking or make fun. People think it's funny to bring up something that is from a long time ago. Whatever they say, it always starts with, "Didn't you...?" And nowadays joking isn't even joking. It can seem like almost arguing because you go back and forth and say, "Don't take it all serious." When making a joke, ask yourself, *Am I really joking? Or do I mean it?* Too often, kids will say stuff to bring someone down and cover it up as a "Just Kidding!"

On social media, teens are reposting stuff, or they post something about someone. They can be embarrassing someone and tag mean things, which is dreadful because it's not just a conflict you had with one person. Now everyone knows, which makes them involved.

It's said that "hurt people, hurt people." Which is why there is so much hate around the world. 🐾

## WORDS, WORDS, WORDS: STUDENT QUOTES!

### What is your favorite word?

"Money." - Kieran Patrick Blake, Grade 8

"Giraffe, because they're majestic." -Anonymous, Grade 6

"Bubbles!" -Ms. Frangione

"Cookie." -Rachita Neupane Grade 8

"Hope." -Yandelin Rivas, Grade 8

### What is the kindest thing anyone has ever said to you?

"I love you." -Avery Kagan, Grade 6

"You look tall." - Nick Ferretti, Grade 7

"I like your fit." - Aily Teo, Grade 8

"You're so strong." -Kevin Gonzalez, Grade 8

### What would you say to students who are careless with their words?

"Either be nice, or be quiet." - Mia Davis, Grade 8

"Think about what you're gonna say before saying it." -Yandelin Rivas, Grade 8

"Words can hurt people so be nice" -Gianna Vitti, Grade 8

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## An Interview with Principal Mrs. Colmenares

By Phnix Paulino, Leah Smith and Alex Tom

### What is your favorite word?

"My favorite word is *acquiesce*... I love the phrase "peaceful acquiescence" because I like to think about how when there's conflict and things arise, how you're able to navigate that in a peaceful and thoughtful way. And I also just really think the word is pretty."

### What are your thoughts about language and public speaking?

"I am terrified of public speaking. I always have been... But I do think the power of words and being able to present yourself verbally and in writing is incredibly important. It's an important skill... especially [for] young people as they move through the world."

### How do you feel about the use of mean-spirited language in school?

"It's hard... because, on one hand, I know that young people are exploring



language and identity, and that with language, there's power... But I really wish that young people would be mindful of their words because I believe that language can cause more harm than physical violence... There's a saying, "The pen is mightier than the sword," and I believe that."

### Anything else you would like to say to the Rippowam community about the power of words?

"I believe what you say becomes who you are. I think it's really important for all people to really develop that filter of, "When I speak, my words have power, and what do I want my words to say?" Because that's how we're going to define ourselves." 🐾