

WHAT SIZE IS YOUR FILTER?

Learning to Filter our Words to Respect Others

When you were a kid, did your mom and teachers tell you that if you didn't have anything nice to say, don't say anything at all? Do you think this is a lost art?

It is no secret that students find it easier to express opinions and say negative things on social media. It is a growing problem and we need to respect others.

Teach students how to find the balance. When is their opinion needed? How should they give their opinion?

Show your class examples of filters and colanders with different sizes of holes.



Explain to your class that we need to filter our words before we say them. Some people have a filter with large holes like a colander. These people blurt out whatever they think without thinking how those words might affect others. Ask your students what the long term effect might be if you have a colander with large holes? (Answers: very few friends, arguments with other students, tattling, and no one to play with at recess) Others have refined the skill to an art so their filter is like a coffee filter. These people choose their words carefully. When they do give an opinion, they choose the right time, use the correct tone, and use the correct words so the other person can "hear" the message. What is the long term effect of having a filter like a coffee filter? (Answer: friends, someone to play with at recess, happiness).

Here are a couple of scenarios your students can role play:

Scenario #1:

A new boy has joined your class. His family recently moved here from another country. He speaks with an accent.

Wrong way: You talk funny.

Right way: Where did you live before you moved here? Did you speak a different language? That's great! Can you teach me a few words?

Scenario #2:

Jake just got his first pair of glasses. He is nervous about going to school because he thinks the other students will make fun of him.

Wrong way: I'm glad I have good eyesight because those glasses make you look dumb!

Right way: Hi Jake! Cool glasses! My friend has some like those. He told me that his grades improved after he got them.

Discussion Points:

- As a general rule, if you don't have anything nice to say, don't say anything at all.
- If you think you need to express an opinion ask yourself, is it constructive? Will it help your friend?
- When you do need to express your opinion, the timing, your tone, and words you use are very important.
- Would you like it if someone said that to you?

