

Essay Cover Sheet

Student Name: Katelyn Coomes

Grade: 10

Age: 16

Teacher's Last Name: Rhodes

School Name: Trinity High School

Teacher's Phone: 270-233-5533

Chosen Theme: No R Word

Parent's Name: Matt Coomes

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#No"R"Word

A fifth grade teacher once gave her students bottles of toothpaste, shaving cream, and hair gel. The students had a fun time squirting or squeezing the products out, like most kids would. After the students were finished, the teacher asked them to put the product back into the bottle, but it was impossible to do so. She said, "In that moment you so were consumed in what you were doing, you didn't know the mess you were making. Remember this for the rest of your lives when it comes to the words you say out of your mouth." The message here is that what you say can hurt someone, even if you're sorry afterward. We should think about this before we use the "R" word.

More than three million people are diagnosed with an intellectual disability each year in the United States. Retard or retarded describes a delay or hold back in terms of progress, development, or accomplishment. Some synonyms are delay, slow down, decelerate. We, today in society, misuse this word to refer to someone as stupid or dumb. We have totally switched the word's meaning to hurt someone's feelings, and this misuse should be stopped.

Will, in our school, has Down syndrome, and I cannot tell you enough how much joy he brings to us and our community. He has a bubbly personality and always wants to help. During mass on Fridays, he says the prayers like we do and sings his heart out. He makes all of smile and happy. Even though Will has a disability, he lives a normal life just like we do. We are grateful for Will.

There is absolutely no reason why it's okay to call someone a retard or retarded to hurt their feelings. Us, teenagers, use it more and more, and this abuse needs to be stopped. Campaigns, speeches, and essays can help us realize that this word needs to be used in the proper way and will hopefully help others to spread the no "R" word message. My point is, just like you can't put the shaving cream back into the can, you can't take back calling someone the "R" word.