

# “Bad” Words - Connotation Crisis



**Lauren Weiss**  
Viking Vision Sports Co-Editor

During most people’s childhood, the phrase, “Don’t use that word, it’s a bad word,” has been incorporated into their lives. But if we stop and think about it, how can a word be deemed “bad?” What exactly makes a word so horrible? Words are used in many different ways; most words have more than one meaning. The connotative shading is what truly makes the word; the word itself cannot be bad. Due to this change in connotation, students are often getting into trouble for using such language, as authority figures don’t realize that the words are being used more positively than they suspect.

If you were to take a walk around any high school campus, such as Valencia High, you would hear a plethora of “bad” words being used by students quite frequently. But, if you really stopped to listen, the way the words are used are often much different than the actual meaning. For example, one girl may call another girl a crude name, but in actuality, the two girls are best friends. The shocking definition of the word that the first girl used was changed, and its connotation became more positive.

**“Students often get in trouble for using such awful language, but the word they choose is often changed from its original meaning and used in a completely different way.”**

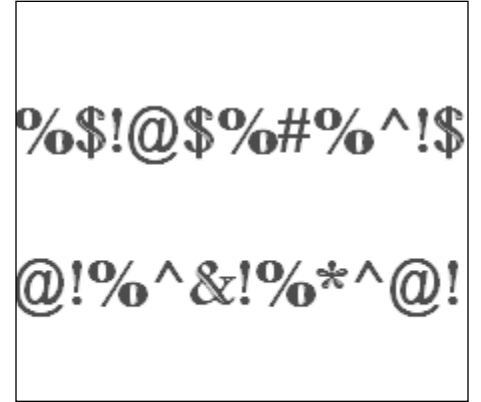
However, an adult passing by may not know this and punish the girl for

using such a horrible word. They act on the fact that words are “bad,” despite how they are used, and will punish the girl for using such language, regardless of how well she explains herself or how many people stand up for her.

Despite the ever-changing connotative shadings, parents and authority figures deemed several words that many people use in their everyday lives as “bad.” But what they aren’t realizing is that a word is just a word; it only stands for what the speaker intends for it to stand for, and nothing more.

The speaker often changes the word from a noun to a verb or adjective, and although they may use it incorrectly from what the word actually means, the word itself has been changed within the context, and it no longer has a negative tone. Just ask the writers of *Monty Python*; they wrote an entire song of the many uses of one particular “bad” word.

Today, students often get in trouble for using such awful language, but the word they choose is often changed from its original meaning and used in a completely different way. To be punished for using “bad” language is like being punished for wearing ugly pants; it’s pointless and ineffective. Parents and teachers alike need to realize that times have changed



Bad words depend on context.

and language has evolved differently. Words only stand for what you want them to stand for, and deeming a word as “bad” only shows ignorance and a closed mind.

To stop this problem of misinterpreting words as “bad,” people need to realize that words are words, and without them, we would be lost. One word is not any better than another, and no word is “bad.” If a word could really be bad, then the word wouldn’t be used at all, for it would be ineffective and inefficient. Language is beautiful, and people need to stop and look at the connotation of the word and how it is being used before bringing punishment upon someone for merely using a word, no matter how “good” or “bad” they think it is.

## Our Duty as Americans - Is Acquaintance Acceptance?



**Melanie Voltz**  
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A United States civilian has many roles leaving us subject to multiple responsibilities-protecting the weak, banding together in difficult times, fighting “the man,” waving our flag loudly and proudly, and sticking our grimy finger in every international pie within arm’s reach.

Since the birth of our nation, Americans have always been involved in international affairs. Our brief period of isolation resulted in the bombing of Pearl Harbor, proving that regardless of our efforts, we remain engaged in the problems of other countries, and since the creation of the United Nations, we have made it our number one priority to see to the welfare of these troubled countries.

However, if we are so hellbent on imposing our beliefs on other nations for their sole benefit, why hasn’t our government gotten involved with the crisis in Uganda? Instead, we’re putting forth all

our efforts toward a war which 11% of the country agrees with.

Post-WWII baby boomers had sworn that had we known about the Holocaust, we would’ve stepped in earlier to fight. My question is, with this principle in mind, why isn’t anything being done to help in Uganda, even though it is widely publicized?

Maybe those who wish to help are a small minority because the rest aren’t aware of what’s happening.

Uganda has been ravaged by a civil war between a rebel militia, the Lord’s Resistance Army (LRA), and the Uganda government. The conflict began when followers of the LRA felt it was their spiritual calling to overthrow the Ugandan government.

Being outnumbered, the militia has been raping and pillaging (literally), and abducting children of all ages to fight in their army. This war has been waging for nearly 21 years, and it wasn’t until 2006 that the precarious attempt at negotiation was tried. In 2007, our government sent peace-talk mediator, Tim Shortly, to Uganda to act as the medium between the LRA and the Ugandan government, but up until this point, it was mainly left to charity organizations and celebrities to help with this conflict.

Uganda’s civil war has been referred to by invisiblechildren.com as the “most neglected humanitarian emergency in the world today.” It is our generation’s Holocaust and we need to get involved.

Being ill-informed of this crisis can no longer be accepted as an excuse,



Cartoon by Andrew Bang

Sticking our finger in every international pie is a classic American pastime.

and if acquaintance is acceptance, meaning that by acknowledging a problem, and doing nothing about it, then you advocate it, then let this be our call to action. We’ve been acquainted with Uganda’s civil war, and now it is our duty as Americans to secure the welfare of Uganda.

In a three-part series, America’s call to action will be defined and we will

be one step closer to peace between the Lord’s Resistance Army and the Uganda government. Children will be able to sleep at night, mother’s won’t have to bury their babies, abducted soldiers can return home, and the country can learn what it is like to be civil without war. So stay tuned, Vikings, because it’s time to stick our finger in this pie. It is our duty as Americans, after all.

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