



## TOOLKIT: THIS IS JUST TO TELL YOU

THEME: MEMORY / IDENTITY / STORIES  
SUBJECT: VISUAL ART / LANGUAGE ARTS  
ARTIST: JOHN PEÑA  
GRADE: recommended 6<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> grade

### OBJECTIVES

Students think about the differences between verbal and non-verbal communication.  
Students create a dialogue about vulnerability and emotional expression.  
Student think about the meaning and importance of their words and how we express ourselves.

### KEY QUESTIONS

What do you say out loud and what do you keep to yourself?  
Have you ever been nervous to say something but said it anyway? How did you feel after you said it?  
What if you could see what other people were really thinking?  
Why does writing your thoughts feel different than saying something out loud?

### LITERARY REFERENCES

1. *My Mouth is a Volcano!* by Julia Cook
2. *Hello! Hello!* By Matthew Cordell
3. *Saying What You Mean* by Joy Wilt Berry

### VISUAL REFERENCES

1. *Word Balloon*, (2014) by John Peña
2. *Confessions*, (2012) by Candy Chang at P3 Studio, Las Vegas, Nevada

### ACTIVITY

Spend several minutes writing down anything you remember saying or hearing over the past couple of days. You can write down anything, it could be what you had for lunch, an intense phone call, something you overheard on the bus, anything! Pick out a few snippets of what you wrote. Write each sentence on it's own scrap of paper. Have the whole class put the snippets of what they wrote in a jar. Ask each student to choose a piece of paper from the jar. On blank paper, draw a speech bubble large enough to fit your sentence, making sure to write it large enough so that it can be read from a couple feet away. Cut out your speech bubble and tape it to a wall. With a partner, move around the room and try out all the different statements. How does it feel to read them in your head? How does it feel to say them out loud? How does it feel to document these forgotten moments and write them down?





## **BONUS**

Choose one person to read each of the speech bubbles out loud. While standing in front of the group, someone else will stand behind them and hold different speech bubbles above the speakers' head. Using only the visual clues from the group and their expressions, the speaker tries to guess what was said on each speech bubble. Think about how what you say matters and look carefully at the expressions that the statement evokes.

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### **PENNSYLVANIA CORE STANDARDS**

#### **VISUAL ARTS**

(9.1.6.A-9.1.12.A)

*-know and use the elements and principles of each art form to create works in the arts and humanities*

(9.1.6.B-9.1.12.B)

*-recognize, know, use and demonstrate a variety of appropriate arts elements and principles to produce, review and revise original works in the arts*

(9.1.6.E-9.1.12.E)

*-demonstrate the ability to define objects, express emotions, illustrate an action or relate an experience through creation of works in the arts*

#### **LANGUAGE ARTS**

*Narratives:*

(CC.1.4.6.M-CC.1.4.11-12.M)

*-write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events*

*Narrative Content:*

(CC.1.4.6.O-CC.1.4.11-12.O)

*-use narrative techniques such as dialogue, description, reflection, and pacing to develop experiences, events, and/or characters; use precise words and phrases, relevant descriptive details, and sensory language to capture the action and convey experiences and events*

