

# Game Title: "Words on Trial"

## Objective

To help participants understand the emotional and social impact of hate speech, explore perspectives from both sides (those who write and those who receive), and evaluate what constitutes hate speech through a third-party lens.

## Game Overview

- **Participants:** Minimum 9 (3 teams of 3); ideally 12-18.
- **Time:** 60-90 minutes
- **Teams:**
  1. **Authors** – simulate people writing or speaking statements that may or may not be considered hate speech.
  2. **Receivers** – represent individuals or groups affected by the statement.
  3. **Judges** – act as a neutral panel that evaluates whether the content constitutes hate speech.

## Game Structure

### 1. Round Setup (5 minutes per round)

- Each round, roles rotate: Authors become Receivers, Receivers become Judges, Judges become Authors.
- A **prompt** is given to Authors. These are **controlled, fictional scenarios** (see sample prompts below).
- Authors craft a **statement or short dialogue** based on the prompt.

### 2. Delivery (2 minutes per group)

- Authors present their statement **in character**.
- Receivers react **in character**, describing how it affects them emotionally or socially.

### 3. Evaluation (5 minutes)

- Judges assess the statement:
  - Is this hate speech? Why or why not?

- What laws, norms, or community standards might it violate?
- Could this have been expressed differently?

#### 4. Reflection (After all rotations)

- Group-wide debrief (15–20 minutes):
  - What did it feel like to switch roles?
  - Did your views on what constitutes hate speech shift?
  - What surprised you?

## Guidelines

- **Authors** must base their messages on assigned fictional personas and prompts — not personal views.
- **Receivers** are encouraged to fully embody the persona they've been assigned to represent.
- **Judges** must give clear rationale, keeping in mind legal, ethical, and cultural contexts.

## Sample Prompts for Authors

### 1. "Free Speech vs. Hate"

- You're a talk show host criticizing a specific religious practice. How do you phrase your opinion?

### 2. "Online Commentary"

- You're reacting to a news article about immigration in a country with rising tensions.

### 3. "School Debate"

- You're arguing why gender-neutral bathrooms shouldn't be allowed in schools.

### 4. "Comedy Sketch"

- You're a stand-up comic making jokes about a marginalized group.

*(Note: Facilitator should review and approve final submissions before they're presented.)*

## **Materials Needed**

- Role cards for each persona
- Printed scenario prompts
- Whiteboard or projector (optional)
- Score sheets for Judges (with scale: 1 = Not Hate Speech, 5 = Extreme Hate Speech)

## **Facilitator's Role**

- Ensure all statements remain within the bounds of simulated role play.
- Intervene if the environment becomes emotionally unsafe.
- Guide the reflection to highlight lessons, not blame.

## **Intended Outcomes**

- Increased empathy across perspectives.
- Nuanced understanding of what hate speech is and how it affects people.
- Improved communication strategies that favor expression without harm.