

Most children can recite by memory "Sticks and Stones can break my bones, but names can never harm me" by early elementary school. Adults have taught that line from the poem to their children through the generations to help children shrug off the insults they hear from others. Is it really true that names or harsh words can never harm us?

Perhaps the following re-written "Sticks and Stones" poem would make a good class meeting discussion, or discussion about images created by words in English class. Since this revision was written in England, it is also a good opportunity to discuss the fact that children all over the world face the harmful impact of bullying behaviors.

Sticks and Stones Poem - Rewritten

Sticks and stones may break my bones,
But words can also hurt me.
Sticks and stones break only skin,
While words are ghosts that haunt me.

Slant and curved the word-swords fall
To pierce and stick inside me,
Bats and bricks may ache through bones,
But words can mortify me.

Pain from words has left its scar
On mind and heart that's tender.
Cuts and bruises now have healed,
It's words that I remember.

Byrne, Brendan. (1994). *Coping with Bullying in Schools*. Cassell, London, England. Page 38.