

Name _____

Euphemism

Definition: The substitution of an agreeable or inoffensive expression for one that may offend or suggest something unpleasant.

Examples:

- The use of "terminally injured" rather than "killed" in this sentence: "Seven people were terminally injured in the DUI accident earlier this morning."
- The use of "friendly fire" rather than "accidental killings" in this sentence: "Some experts suggest that one third of our casualties may be from friendly fire."
- Referring to women as "big, beautiful, bountiful" rather than obese in this sentence: "A big, beautiful, bountiful store for big, beautiful, bountiful women."
- Preferring to use the terminology "pro-choice" rather than the more politically charged "pro-abortion" and "pro-life" rather than "anti-abortion."

1. Restate the four examples above, removing their euphemisms and using exact language. What is the effect?
2. Are euphemisms politeness, preciseness or persuasion? Defend your answer.
3. You are part of a team of students asked to speak to parents about supporting the installation of metal detectors in your school. What are some phrases you can use for convincing parents to support this cause without scaring them?
4. Which profession might possibly be very practiced in the use of euphemisms? Defend your answer.
5. List five topics that are addressed in television commercials but are carefully draped in euphemisms because the topics themselves are touchy for public discussion.