


1 SPEAKING

- a  Do you think you should always tell the truth? When do you think it is OK to lie? Discuss with a partner.

2 READING

- a Read the first paragraph of the article on page 51. Are the statements true or false? Discuss with a partner.
- Most societies think telling lies is wrong.
  - Young children are always taught that not telling the truth is wrong.
  - Telling lies is wrong – but maybe not always.
- b Read the rest of the article quickly and put the descriptions of the situations below in order 1–6.
- ☐ talking about your past
  - ☐ taking money
  - ☐ expressing a point of view
  - ☐ asking for money
  - ☐ offering an excuse
  - ☐ feeling worried
- c Put the following words and phrases from the article into the table. Use your dictionary to help if necessary.

trust   wrong   virtue   dishonesty   tell the truth  
tell a lie   convicted of an offence   deceive  
criminal record   conviction

Positive	Negative

- d Think of two or more words related to the topics and add them to the table. Compare your ideas with other students. Use a dictionary to check any meanings you're not sure about.



BETTER READING: FOLLOWING IDEAS WITHIN AND ACROSS SENTENCES



Writers use pronouns to refer to something already mentioned so they can avoid repeating the same words. If you recognise the connection, you can follow the ideas in a text more easily.

For example, in the introduction, the word *people* in the second sentence is referred to again with the words *people*, *them* and *they*. Find these phrases in each of the situations and the other words or phrases which refer to the same thing.

- a colleague
- a child
- an old friend
- an airline ticket
- a group of friends
- some cash

- e Read the six situations on page 51 again and answer questions 1–6. Compare and discuss your answers with a partner.
- Why doesn't the person in situation 1 want to go to the party?
  - Why do you think the person in situation 2 might say that they liked the picture?
  - Why would the person in situation 3 tell the man that the friend isn't in the house?
  - Why didn't the person in situation 4 take the flight?
  - What did the friend do and not do in situation 5?
  - Why does the waiter in situation 6 offer the customer some money?
- f Read the final paragraph on page 51. Which sentence below summarises the writer's opinion? Why? Compare and discuss your idea.
- You shouldn't trust people who lie.
  - It is always better to be honest.
  - Not all lies are wrong.

4 SPEAKING

- a Read the six situations on page 51 again and make a note of your answers to the questions at the end of each one.
- b  Discuss the questions with a partner. Does your partner have the same answers as you?
- c  With your partner, put the lies in order of how serious they are: 1 = not bad, 6 = very bad. Compare your answers with the rest of the class.

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# When is it OK to lie?

by Maggie Jansen

Most societies do not approve of lying. It's very difficult for a community to function if people lie too much and deceive one another. When people tell a lot of lies, you can't trust them even when they're telling the truth! That's why children are often taught that lying is wrong and honesty is a virtue. But perhaps life is not quite so simple. Are there times when dishonesty is justified? Let me describe six true, real-life situations, and you decide for each situation whether you would lie or not.

## Situation 1

A colleague invites you to a party on Friday evening. You haven't got any other plans for Friday evening, so that is not a reason to refuse. You get on well with this colleague at work, but you've met a lot of their friends before and, to be honest, you didn't like them at all. They are the kind of people you find very annoying, and that's actually why you don't want to go. How would you respond to your colleague's invitation? Would you tell them the real reason?

## Situation 2

A child you know has drawn a picture of his mother and shows it to you. The picture makes the mother look like something from a horror film and, in fact, you think it is the ugliest image you have ever seen. The child asks you if you like the picture and you say yes. The child asks if you really like it or are just trying to be polite. Would you tell the truth?

## Situation 3

An old friend is staying with you. You've been close friends since childhood, but you know that sometimes he hangs out with a bad crowd and gets into trouble. Late in the evening, your doorbell rings, and there's a violent-looking man at the door. There's something in his pocket which looks like it might be a weapon. He asks you if your friend is there in the house with you. Would you tell the truth?



According to tradition, the Mouth of Truth in Rome will bite the hand of a liar. Would you put your hand in it?

## Situation 4

You bought an airline ticket, but you weren't able to travel because your father was very ill and you had to stay around to help him. You didn't try to claim back the cost of the ticket from the airline because you knew there was no cancellation policy. Fortunately, you hadn't paid for a hotel booking, so you didn't lose money on that. A few days after you thought the flight had left, you discovered that the flight was cancelled and that all passengers could claim a refund of the ticket price as well as a £100 voucher as compensation for costs – taxis to the airport, hotel cancellations and so on. Would you claim the refund? And the voucher? Would that be lying?

## Situation 5

As a teenager, you were wrongly convicted of stealing. You were in a shop with a group of friends, and one of the group took an expensive video game and put it in your rucksack without you knowing. As you left the shop, the alarm went off and you were caught. Your 'friend' didn't come forward to tell the truth and help you. Fortunately the conviction is not on your criminal record. Now you are having a job interview and the interviewer asks if you have ever been convicted of an offence. Would you tell the truth?

## Situation 6

You have had a meal at a restaurant. At the end of the meal, you pay your bill. You also leave a generous tip because the waiter was very efficient and attentive. As you're walking along the street, the waiter comes running after you with some cash. It's a single note, but for a very large sum. The waiter thinks it must be yours because she found it under your chair. You don't think it's yours – you don't remember having such a large note. Would you tell the truth?

As you can see, lies come in all shapes and sizes. They aren't all equally bad, and perhaps some are not bad at all. It all depends on the context – who you are lying to and why. Are you doing it for selfish reasons or to help someone else? Does the person you are speaking to deserve your honesty? What are the consequences of your lie? Readers will certainly disagree about if it's OK to lie in some of the situations above, but one thing will surely be clear – you can't simply say that lying is always wrong.