



September's Key to Character—2011

Definitions

Elementary: Honesty is having the strength to be truthful in everything you do and say.

Secondary: Honesty is being truthful and sincere, admitting mistakes and being trustworthy.

Related Words

truthfulness	trustworthy	honor	integrity	sincere
lying	deception	ethical	genuine	dependable

WHAT HONESTY LOOKS LIKE!

- ◇ telling the truth when asked a question
- ◇ caring enough about others not to mislead them for personal benefit
- ◇ never misusing that which is given in trust
- ◇ including all the information not just a part of it
- ◇ being consistently truthful so that others can trust you
- ◇ giving praise only when it is sincere
- ◇ telling information without distortion or exaggeration
- ◇ not cheating on homework or tests
- ◇ choosing not to take something that does not belong to you
- ◇ not accepting things you do not deserve like awards, praise, money, credit for ideas, etc.
- ◇ refusing to listen to a negative talk or gossip about someone else
- ◇ facing mistakes even when they get us in trouble or we have to admit them to others

Eight Great Reasons to Tell the Truth

1. Telling the truth lets everyone know what really happened. There's less chance of misunderstanding, confusion, or conflict.
2. Telling the truth protects innocent people from being blamed or punished.
3. Telling the truth allows everyone to learn from what happened.
4. You usually get into less trouble for telling the truth than for lying (and getting caught).
5. Other people trust you more when you tell the truth.
6. You don't have to tell (and remember) more lies to keep your story straight.
7. You gain a reputation for being truthful—a trait most people value.
8. Telling the truth helps you to feel secure and peaceful inside.

Sunshine State Standards

HE.K.C. 1.1/HE.1.C.1.1—Recognize healthy behavior.

SS.K.C.2.1—Demonstrate the characteristics of being a good citizen.

SS.1.C.2.1—Describe the characteristics of responsible citizenship in the school community.

HE.3.P.1.1—Practice responsible personal health behaviors.

HE.4.C.1.2—Identify examples of mental/emotional, physical and social health.

HE.5.C.1.1—Describe the relationship between healthy behaviors and personal health.

HE.6.P.1.1/HE.7.P.1.1/HE.8.P.1.1—Explain the importance of assuming responsibility for personal health decisions.

HE.912.B.2.1—Explain skills needed to communicate effectively with family, peers and others to enhance health.

HE912.P.1.1—Analyze the role of individual responsibility in enhancing health.



“Children cannot heed a message they have not heard.”—George Nicholaw



Parent Corner



Young children have trouble distinguishing between fact and fantasy. They may misrepresent facts because they haven't yet developed the ability to distinguish facts. They may even believe that changing the facts in their heads changes the facts in reality. Honesty is a developing concept for children younger than seven. They need experience with honesty in order to learn how to employ it.

Use literature to help children distinguish between fact and fantasy. Because they lack experiential background, young children have difficulty determining what is real and unreal. For example, young children don't know if a wolf can blow a house down because they have no experience with wolves. Around the age of seven, children usually have acquired enough information to begin to separate fact from fantasy.

When children distort the truth, help them sort through the facts. Explain to them how important it is to get the facts straight so that people will be able to trust what they say.

When children are playing board games, talk about the importance of playing fairly and honestly. What happens to a game if someone cheats? If you cheat to win, can you really count it as winning?

Help children see the long-term effects of dishonesty by presenting them with situations that illustrate the burden of misrepresenting the truth. For example, if you stand on your tiptoes when you're measured this year, will you have to stand on your tiptoes from now on?

Prompts for FCAT Writes

Think about a time when you felt proud because you told the truth. Write about the day you felt proud because you told the truth.

Think about a time when your feelings were hurt because someone lied to you. Now write a letter to the person who hurt your feelings, explaining why it is important to tell the truth.

In George Washington's Farewell Address, he stated, "I hold the maxim no less applicable to public than to private affairs, that honesty is the best policy." Think about the reasons that honesty would be the best policy to follow. Now write to explain the importance of honesty.

Ten Tips for Being More Truthful

1. **Make a commitment to tell the truth.** Say to yourself "Starting today, I'm someone who tells the truth." Then honor your commitment.
2. **Tell someone about your commitment**—a close friend, a parent, a teacher, someone else you trust. Keep that person informed of your progress.
3. **Think before you give a dishonest answer, explanation, or reason.** Consider the consequences. You'll probably decide that it's easier to tell the truth.
4. **Be careful of when and how you use exaggeration, sarcasm, or irony.** Maybe you're trying to be funny, or maybe you want to discourage further questions or conversation. Either way, you don't want to give people the wrong information. Example: You missed three problems on your math test, and you're upset because that dropped you down a grade. Your dad asks "How was your math test?" and you answer back "I blew it!" He ends up thinking you did a lot worse than you really did—and worrying as a result.
5. **Be careful not to twist the truth or leave out part of it.** Example: Gloria says to Marcus "Tell Hosea I don't know if my folks will let me go to the party with him." What Gloria means is that her parents might not let her go to the party, period. But Marcus says to Hosea "Gloria's dad probably won't let her go to the party with you." Now Hosea thinks that Gloria's dad doesn't like him or maybe Gloria doesn't want to go with him.
6. **Don't indulge in little white lies; don't get caught up in cover-ups.** Example: "My sister's not home" means she's not home. Standing outside on the porch doesn't count.
7. **Watch out for silent lies.** When you know about a lie and choose to keep quiet about it, you're allowing the lie to live on. Silence equals complicity.
8. **When you catch yourself lying, throw your mouth into reverse.** Do it then and there. Example: "What I meant to say is I missed three problems on my math test, which means I'm getting a B instead of an A."
9. **Talk to yourself.** Ask yourself, "How do I really feel about this? What's the best thing to do? How can I keep my commitment to myself?"
10. **Treat yourself when you tell the truth even when it's hard to do.** Pat yourself on the back.

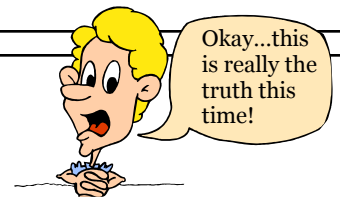
*Adapted from Momilani Elementary, Hawaii
www.momilani.k12.hi.us*

Accelerated Reader books that have stories about Honesty

1.4	Pinocchio	Hillert	4.9	The Cybil War	Byars
2.5	The Treasure	Shulevitz	5.0	Number the Stars	Lowry
2.6	Summer Wheels	Bunting	5.3	On My Honor	Bauer
2.7	The Boy Who Cried Wolf	Schechler	5.5	The Big Lie	Leitner
2.9	Talking Eggs	Souci	5.5	Humbug	Bawder
2.9	The Berenstain Bears & the Truth	Berenstain	5.6	The Animal, the Vegetable and John D. Jones	Byers
3.9	The Emperor's New Clothes	Anderson	6.2	One Eyed Cat	Fox
3.4	Sam, Bangs, and Moonshine	Ness	9.9	Northanger Abby	Austin
3.4	The Boy Who Cried Wolf	Lawrence	10.0	Oliver Twist	Dickens
4.4	Dragon's Robe	Lattimore			

Dr. Ken Shore's Classroom Problem Solver

"The Child Who Lies"



Most children lie sometimes. Although an occasional lie is not a reason for serious concern, teachers/parents should be concerned about a child who lies frequently. Children who lie can become skilled at the behavior; the lying then might become habitual to the point that they lie with little concern for the consequences, which can be considerable. Frequent lying can cause classmate/sibling distrust, and lead to peer rejection, which can give rise to additional behavioral or academic problems.

What You Can Do

Some instances of lying are of greater concern than others. (A child who lies to avoid hurting a classmate's feelings or who occasionally embellishes a story poses little cause for concern, for example.) When determining whether lying warrants your involvement, consider how frequently the child lies, the nature and context of the lies, the reactions of classmates/siblings, and any other behaviors the child displays. Avoid disciplining a child for lying unless you are certain that he has lied.

Respond to mistakes constructively. If a child expects you to react to mistakes by getting angry, she will be more inclined to lie to hide those mistakes. If you react to mistakes in a calm, constructive solution-focused manner, she will be more likely to be truthful.

Acknowledge honesty. If a child admits a mistake, let him know you are pleased he had the courage to speak the truth. Although you might want to give the child a consequence for the misdeed, consider going easy because of his honesty. Let the child know you are lessening the consequence for the misdeed because of his truthfulness. Giving him a harsh punishment might encourage him to be dishonest about future mistakes.

Address the lie. If you observe a child lying, even occasionally, don't ignore the behavior. Lies that go unchallenged give children the impression that they can get away with lying and encourage them to tell bigger lies. A child whose lies go unchallenged also might become a more skilled, and even compulsive, liar.

Intervening quickly also is important because lying can cause social problems for the child.

React calmly. Although confronting lying as soon as you observe it is important, do not overreact. Let the child know that you are disappointed in her behavior, but reacting in an angry, critical manner, will only encourage her to lie more skillfully in the future. Similarly, avoid conducting an inquisition to determine conclusively whether the child has told a lie. In doing so, you give the issue more attention than it is worth, and could encourage the child to add to her lie.

Meet with the child in private. In responding to a lie, focus on the behavior rather than on the child. Let the child know that he has made a mistake and hopefully will act differently next time, but do not call him a liar or otherwise make him feel like a bad person for having lied. Help him understand the consequences of lying, and let him know that if he lies frequently you and his classmates won't know when he is telling the truth. Help him understand that lying does not make a problem go away and, in fact, usually makes it worse.

Attend to what underlies the lying. The nature of a child's lies might offer clues about an underlying emotional need, which might suggest ways of intervening. For example, if you observe a child frequently lying to classmates/siblings about her achievements, it is likely that she feels insecure and is getting attention by highlighting her actual accomplishments. If a child tells a classmate/sibling that she has a lot of friends in another class when you know that isn't true, the child might be conveying feelings of social isolation. This would suggest another avenue for teacher/parent intervention.

Use punishment sparingly. A gentle talk with a child can be more effective than a punitive approach; however, situations might arise in which you feel punishment is warranted. If so, accompany the punishment with an explanation of why lying is wrong and a discussion of what the consequences of lying are.

Source: Education World/Professional Development Center: Classroom Problem Solver; http://www.educationworld.com/a_curr/shore/shore042.shtml



Stories that Encourage Trust and Honesty

After reading a story, students should answer the question: "Why is it important to be honest?" Direct them to use details and examples from the story to support their answer.

"Trust"

I bought a violin from a man who lives a long distance away. I contacted him by phone after being given information about him by my violin teacher. The violin seller asked for my name and address, and we agreed that he would send me the violin, I would send him my old one, and after he had evaluated my old violin, he would bill me less the trade in. I was the proud owner of a violin worth probably \$1000 for two weeks before I received his bill. Here is a man who truly believes in others. I was honored to be the recipient of his trust and have resolved to do the same, every day.

The Foundation for a Better Life—www.values.com

"The Silver on the Hearth" (Afghanistan)

There was once a poor farmer who found it a great struggle to get ahead in the world. Though he worked very hard and lived carefully, it was impossible for him to save money year after year. After an entire lifetime of labor he was no better off, it seemed, than he had been on the day he was born.

One morning he seized on the notion that if ever he was to own anything at all in this hard world, it would have to simply appear before him. He wished and wished that one morning he would wake

(cont. on page 4)



“The Silver on the Hearth” cont.)

up and discover riches aplenty heaped upon his own hearth. The riches must appear on his own hearth, he knew, so that he would have no doubt they were intended for him.

He thought of this as he went about his daily tasks in the fields. One day while he was working, some brambles in the field caught and tore his clothes. So that this wouldn't happen again, the man dug a little around the roots and pulled the brambles out of the ground. As he did so, he uncovered the top of a large earthen jar. In great excitement, he dug a little more and then removed the lid of the jar. He found that the jar was filled to the brim with silver coins. At first he was delighted, but after a few minutes of thought he said, "Oh, I wished for riches upon my own hearth, but instead I have found this money out here in the open fields. Therefore I shall not take it. For if it were intended for me it would surely have appeared on my own hearth, as I wished."

So the man left the treasure where he had found it and went home. When he arrived, he told his wife about his discovery. The woman was angry at her husband's foolishness in leaving the riches in the field. When her husband lay down to sleep, she went out to the house of a neighbor and told him all about it, saying, "My stupid husband found a hoard of money in the fields, but the blockhead refuses to bring it home. Go and get it for yourself, and share with me."

The neighbor was very pleased with the suggestion, and he went out to find the treasure where the woman had described it. There, where the bramble bush had been uprooted, indeed was an earthen jar. He took it from the ground and opened it. But when he lifted the lid he saw not silver coins, but a jarful of poisonous snakes.

Into the neighbor's mind rushed the thought, "Ah, that woman must be my enemy! She hoped I would put my hand in the jar to be bitten and poisoned!"

So he replaced the lid and carried the jar back home with him, just as he had found it. When night came he went to the house of the poor farmer, climbed on the roof, and emptied the jar of poisonous snakes down the chimney.

When dawn came, the poor farmer who had first discovered the jar got up to start the day. As the morning rays of the sun fell upon the hearth, his eyes opened wide. For the hearth was covered with silver coins. His heart swelled with gratitude. He said, "Oh! Finally I can accept these riches, knowing that they are surely intended for me as they have appeared upon my own hearth, as I wished!"

Source: www.storiestobrowby.com/stories/silver.html

Accompanying Questions

1. Why did the farmer need to be sure the riches were intended for him?
2. Tell about a time that you didn't take something because you weren't sure if it belonged to you.

Footnote: This story theme has many variations throughout Asia.

Source: "The Silver on the Hearth" is based on a story of the same name from *Ride with the Sun: An Anthology of Folk Tales and stories from the United Nations*, edited by Harold Courlander (McGraw-Hill Book Company, Inc.: New York, 1955) pp. 60-62. (adapted by Elaine Lindy).

“Mercury and the Woodsmen”—Aesop



A poor woodsman lost his rusty, old axe in the river when it glanced off a tree he was felling. Mercury (the Roman messenger god) appeared while the man was lamenting his loss, and on hearing his tale, dove into the river, and recovered a silver axe. "That's not mine," said the woodsman, so Mercury returned it to the river, resurfacing this time with a golden axe. "That's not mine, either," said the woodsman, and again Mercury returned it to the river, resurfacing this time with the woodsman's own rusty, old axe. "That's mine," said the grateful woodsman. Mercury promptly rewarded the man for his honesty by giving him the silver and golden axes as well. On hearing the woodsman's tale, an envious friend set out to do as the woodsman had done, visiting the same spot and deliberately losing his axe in the river. Just as before, Mercury appeared and dove in to recover the lost axe. When Mercury produced a golden axe, the man greedily stretched out for it claiming, "That's mine." Mercury, displeased with the man's dishonesty, held on to the golden axe, and refused to recover the original. The man lamented, "Honesty is the best policy."



“The Butcher Story”

A butcher, who had had a particularly good day, proudly flipped his last chicken on a scale and weighed it. "That will be \$5.35," he told the customer. "That's a good price, but it really is a little too small," said the woman. "Don't you have anything larger?" Hesitating, but thinking fast, the clerk returned the chicken to the refrigerator, paused a moment, then took it out again. "This one," he said faintly, "will be \$5.65." The woman paused for a moment, then made her decision... "I know what," she said, "I'll take both of them!"

(“Mercury and the Woodsmen” and “The Butcher Story” used w/ permission c. Alan Chapman 1995-2011; www.businessballs.com)

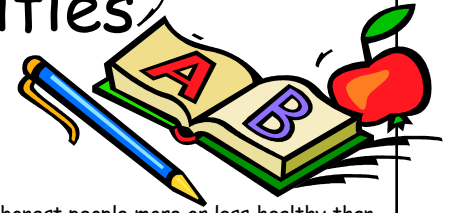
“The Honest Farmer”

There was a war in Germany long ago, and thousands of soldiers were scattered over the country. A captain of the cavalry, who had a great many men and horses to feed, was told by his colonel that he must get food from the farms nearby. The captain walked for some time through the lonely valley, and at last knocked at the door of a small cottage. The man who opened it looked old and lame. He leaned on a stick. "Good day, sir," said the captain. "Will you kindly show me a field where my soldiers can cut the grain and carry it off for our army?" The old man led the soldiers through the valley for about a mile, and in the distance they saw a field of barley waving in the breeze. "This is just what we want. We'll stop here," exclaimed the captain. "No, not yet," said the old man. "You must follow me a little farther." After another mile or two, they came to a second field of barley. The soldiers dismounted, cut down the grain, tied it in sheaves, and rode away with it. Then the captain said to the old farmer: "Why did you make us walk so far? The first field of barley was better than this one." "That is true, sir," answered the honest old man, "but it was not mine."

(used with permission, www.inquest.org)



Subject Centered Activities



Math

Discuss how numbers never lie but can be interpreted to support different points of view.

Contact the National Crime Prevention Council and request the latest statistics for juvenile robbery, burglary, or shoplifting. Then, contact your local police department to request similar numbers from them. Are your local statistics higher or lower than the national numbers? Make a graph to show what you've learned and share it with the school and community.

Language Arts

In groups of four, students will brainstorm to create a list of words related to the theme of honesty and integrity that start with each letter of the alphabet. From their master list they will write a story about honesty and integrity. Each student will then read a portion of the story to the class.

Daily Oral Language:

He didn't quite lie but he didnt really tell the truth neither.

The cashier seen that mom left her change so he had the bagger bring it to her.

If he realy believes what he says why don' he do something about it

Now that I know shes a gossip I dont trust her with none of my secrets.

Social Science: Discussion Topics

Selected historic figures and how their honesty or dishonesty changed history.

Why is honesty important in the officials we elect? Discuss political campaign advertising on T.V., road signs, brochures, etc. Do some slant the truth to control voter opinion?

Have students find examples of advertising that purposely misleads the public. Discuss how truth can be twisted to be misleading (example: products that advertise they are sugar free but contain corn syrup or molasses).

Science:

Interview researchers at a local university in person or by mail, e-mail or phone. You may want to check the university's web site for biographies of their staff to identify those you may want to interview. Ask each person a series of questions about honesty in research. Some examples might be:

1. Do you know examples of researchers who manipulated test results to try to prove something?
2. What happens when researchers exaggerate or minimize test results and get caught?
3. Is this a common practice in your area of study?
4. What safeguards are in place to guarantee honest research and reporting?
5. What is the most serious consequence that you are aware of resulting from manipulating test results?

Health

Explore these questions: "Are honest people more or less healthy than dishonest people? Are there any diseases or illnesses that seem to be linked to dishonesty and guilt?"

Invite a mental health expert to your class to talk on these issues.

Physical Education

This assignment could be used as a writing prompt, small group or general class discussion. Skits portraying the situation could be written and performed by small groups on a rainy day.

Think of yourself as a coach. What would be the advantages of having athletes on your team with a high level of honesty:

- ◇ for the team as a whole?
- ◇ for the team's reputation?
- ◇ for team-mate relations?
- ◇ for a winning season?
- ◇ for a possible scholarship?
- ◇ for team spirit, morale and attitude?

K-5 Activities

Play fact or fantasy. Give children a red paper circle and a green paper circle. The green circle signals "go" and the red circle signals "stop." Start telling a made-up story. Have the children hold up the green circle until you say something that couldn't really happen. Then hold up the red circle to stop you. Continue the story using the signals for facts and fantasies. Discuss the difference in a fantasy and reality.

After a discussion of the importance of being honest, allow younger students to draw a picture of someone or something that is either honest or dishonest, then dictate a sentence to go with the picture.

Create a word wall of all the synonyms for honesty. Allow students to write in their journals about a person they thought was honest who they knew personally and admired using the words.

Make a poster using block letters for the word honest. Direct students to write characteristics of an honest person inside the letters.

Talk about the difference between a lie and the truth. What happens when we lie? Ask the students if they know of a time when lying created a lot of trouble for them or someone else. Read the book Pinocchio by Lorenini. The story is about a puppet transformed into a little boy. When he does not tell the truth his nose grows, and he gets into difficult situations. He learns a valuable lesson. Divide the class into small groups. Give each group a drawing of Pinocchio without a nose. Create a list of true and untrue statements that your group will relate to. Have the group put a round nose on him when you say something that is the truth and a longer triangular nose on him when you say something that is not true.



Quotes About Honesty



Week 1

"Honesty is the best policy."
—Aesop (originally)

"Dishonesty is like a boomerang. About the time you think all is well, it hits you in the back of the head."
—Anonymous

"Honesty is the first chapter in the book of wisdom."
—Thomas Jefferson

"This above all; to thine own self be true, and it must follow, as the night follows day, though canst not be false to any man."
—Shakespeare

"To be trusted is a greater compliment than to be loved."
—J. MacDonald

Week 2

"Sincerity is the highest compliment you can pay."
—Ralph W. Emerson

"Better are the blows of a friend than the false kisses of an enemy."
—Thomas Becket

"It takes two to speak the truth—one to speak and another to hear."
—Henry David Thoreau

"A man's character is like a fence, it cannot be strengthened by whitewash."
—Anonymous

"The truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth."
—Legal Oath

Week 3

"If he does really think that there is no distinction between virtue and vice, when he leaves our homes let us count our spoons."
—Samuel Johnson

"Every violation of truth is a stab at the health of human society."
—Ralph Waldo Emerson

"Truth is like the sun. You can shut it out for a time, but it ain't goin' away."
—Elvis Presley

"Truth is not a matter of personal viewpoint."
—Vernon Howard

"No legacy is so rich as honesty."
—Shakespeare

Week 4

"A liar will not be believed, even when he speaks the truth."
—Aesop

"To rise from error to truth is rare and beautiful."
—Victor Hugo

"Truth is confirmed by inspection and delay; falsehood by hast and uncertainty."
—Tacitus

"Half a truth is often a great lie."
—Benjamin Franklin

"Lands mortgaged may return, but honesty once pawned is never redeemed."
—Middleton



Websites

www.aesopfables.com—collection of more the 600; many with audio downloads

www.teacherplanet.com—large directory of lesson plans

www.valuesparenting.com/familynight/sample4.php—family-oriented lessons and games

www.goodcharacter.com/pb/trustworthiness.html—activities, writing prompts, and parenting ideas

Bulletin Board Ideas:

1. Collage: Ask each student to draw a picture or cut some from a magazine that represents honesty and create a bulletin board collage from the pictures.
2. Place a stone, or a picture of one, on the bulletin board. Title the board, "Honesty is the Cornerstone of Good Character."
3. Use a bulletin board as a teaching tool. Scatter the synonyms for honesty around the word HONESTY in the center. Discuss one word each day. Constant reminders of what good character is provide important lessons for students.



HONESTY

Each of the letters of this famous quote from George Washington is numbered below. Using the alphabet, fill in the blanks as you figure out each letter. Good luck!

1. 21 is 2 letters after "A".
2. 4,12, and 14 are the fifth letter of the alphabet.
3. 13 is 2 letters before "D".
4. 2 is 1 letter after "N".
5. 8 and 20 are 3 letters after "F".
6. 1 and 11 are 1 letter before the answer in number 8.
7. 19 is 1 letter before "M".

8. 18 is the letter before "P".
9. 6,10, and 16 are two letters after "R".
10. 5 and 15 are the letter before "T".
11. 3 is the letter right before the "O".
12. 17 is four letters after "L".
13. 7 and 22 are 1 letter before the last letter of the alphabet.
14. 9 is the same letter as the answer for number 5.

" 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22."