



**(DIS)HONESTY**  
THE TRUTH ABOUT LIES

**SLIPPERY SLOPES**  
A FILM-BASED ACTIVITY AND DISCUSSION GUIDE



John  
Templeton  
Foundation

**REVE**



**SALTY**  
FEATURES



**cah**  
Center for Advanced Hindsight

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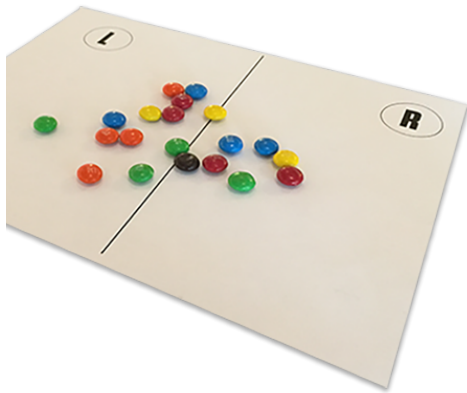
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# The Fudge Factor: M&Ms

## How we misbehave and still think of ourselves as “good” people

Note that there are two versions of this activity—one for students of all ages and another for those learning fractions and percentages.

### M&M Experiment

#### Basic experiment for all ages

#### See accompanying video for guidance/reference



1. Ask participants to take a seat and hand out the Left-Right Worksheet (at the end of the lesson plan). If participants ask what kind of activity this is, you should NOT say that it's related to ethics or lying. You can say it's about counting or about probability; try not to reveal the truth and not to lie...
2. Ask students to choose a side of the worksheet in their heads — either Left or Right. They should NOT write their choice down.
3. Give them paper cups filled with 20 M&Ms. If you can't use M&Ms, use another type of treat or mix that appeals to the participants.
4. Tell them to spill the contents over the middle of the paper carefully.
5. Now tell them that they will get to eat the M&Ms that fell on the side they chose in their head (Left or Right). Those that fell on the other side, they need to return.
6. If any fell outside the paper, tell them to push them back on to the nearest side of the page. If any fell right in the middle, tell them to push them to whatever side seems fair.
7. Tell them to return the M&Ms that fell on the side they did NOT choose into the cup. Tell them to pick the M&Ms up one by one rather than returning them all at once to the cup.
8. Ask them to count how many M&Ms they returned to the cup and write that number down on their piece of paper and return the cup to you.
9. Statistically, you should receive back close to half of the total number of M&Ms that you originally gave out. So for example, if you have 15 participants who each received 20 M&Ms, you should receive about 150 M&Ms back which averages 10 M&Ms per participant. The actual number of M&Ms you receive back will probably be less because many participants will find a way to keep more than they give back. Announce to the class the total number of M&Ms you received back. You won't actually know who in the class fudged their answers but chances are, that around 70% will cheat (our theory is that treats may make that number even higher than similar experiments where the reward is money)!

**The Fudge Factor:**  
“The ability to misbehave  
and think of ourselves as  
good people.”

—Dan Ariely



# Film-Based Discussion: Everyone is Doing It

## Joe Papp's Story



**“When you have the mindset, or when you think that everybody else is doing it, it makes it a lot easier to consider what you’ve done is legitimate.”**

—Joe Papp



### For participants of high school age and older.

Watch the film segment featuring Joe Papp, a professional cyclist who doped in order to (literally) get ahead and keep up with the rest of his crowd.

TimeCode in DVD or Digital: 00:09:53 | DVD Chapter 3: Everybody's Doing It



### Warm-Up Activity

After watching Joe's clip, have students discuss what Joe means by “Everyone is Doing It” and how that affected his approach to doping. Ask students if they've ever gotten wrapped up in something because it was the popular thing to do?



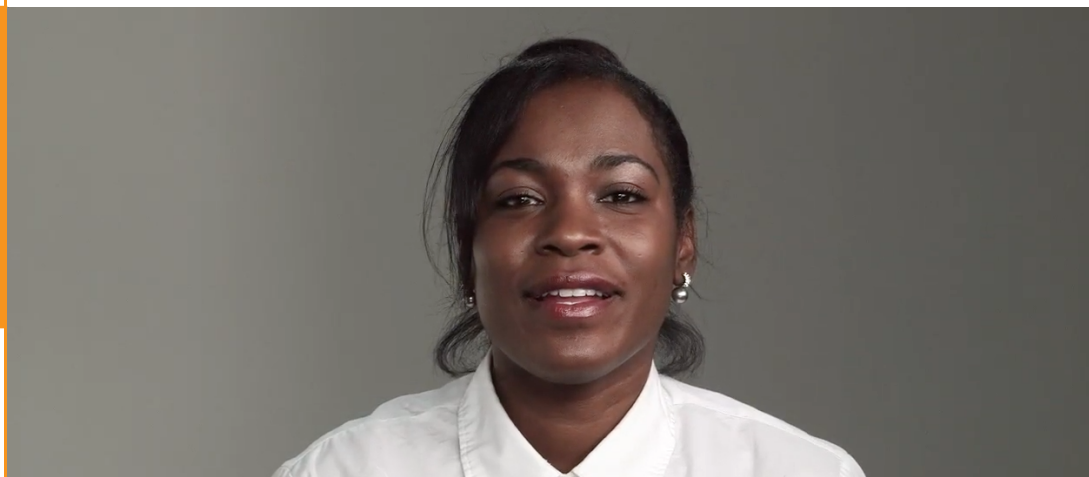


# Lying for Someone Else

## Kelley Williams Bollar's Story

**“When I lied on the application, I just thought I was doing what was in the best interest of my daughters.”**

—Kelley Williams Bolar



### Warm Up/Take Home Activity

Discuss what type of factors lead parents/care givers to lie for their kids? When do you think these lies are justified and when do you think they are wrong? Can you think of examples around serious situations where lies are acceptable? For example, if you were hiding Anne Frank in your home and a Nazi knocked on your door and asked if you were hiding any Jews, what would/should you say? Can you think of other examples?

**For participants of high school age and older.** Watch the film segment featuring Kelley Williams Bolar, a woman who lied about what district she lived in so that her kids could go to a better school.



TimeCode in DVD or Digital: 00:35:16 | DVD Chapter 8: Lying for Others

### Debate or Written Response

Ask students to imagine a fair system of getting into school. Encourage them to use words, images, skits, or gestures to describe and explain their solution.



1. Ask the group to raise their hands if they would answer yes to the following question, “If this was you, would you do what Kelley did?”
2. Now have the group count off by twos and move to different sides of the room. Tell them that Group 1 will represent Kelley’s side of the debate. Group 2 will represent the school board. If possible, encourage students to research the case so that they are well informed about both sides.
3. Ask each group to write down arguments defending their side of the debate with one person as a note-taker.
4. Ask each group to circle the two arguments they listed that they feel are the strongest and share out.
5. Discuss what made some arguments stronger than others (emotional appeal, evidence to substantiate a point, appeal to the everyday person, etc.).





## A Story From Dan

When Dan Ariely was thirty, he decided to trade his motorcycle for a car. To help him decide what car to get, he found a website that provided advice for purchasing cars. The website was based on an interview procedure, and it presented a lot of questions that ranged from preferences for price and safety to what kind of headlights and brakes the consumer desired. After about twenty minutes, the process ostensibly reveals to the consumer his or her dream car. When Dan first took this test, the website suggested a very sensible four-door family oriented sedan. Deciding this was not for him, he went back into the program and “fixed” his answers several times. He kept this up until the program recommended a small convertible. “Surely the right car for me!” Dan said to himself.

As Dan notes, sometimes we don’t make choices based on our explicit preferences. Instead, we have a gut feeling about what we want, and we go through a process of mental gymnastics, applying all kinds of justifications to manipulate the criteria. That way, we can get what we really want, but at the same time keep up appearances to ourselves and to others - that we are acting in accordance with our rational and well-reasoned preferences.

Examples of Mental Gymnastics:

- Re-taking one’s temperature over and over until it gives us a result that justifies a sick day
- Flipping a coin over and over again to get the result we want
- Manipulating data or information to line up with our beliefs

Discuss the consequences of these and other examples in personal situations, work, situations, and others.



# Core Curriculum Learning Standards

## English Language Arts

### Writing Standards Grades 6-12

#### Text Types & Purposes

1. Write arguments to support claims with clear reasons and relevant evidence.
2. Write informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas, concepts, and information through the selection, organization, and analysis of relevant content.
3. Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, relevant descriptive details, and well-structured event sequences.

#### Production & Distribution of Writing

4. Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.
5. With some guidance and support from peers and adults, develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach, focusing on how well purpose and audience have been addressed.
6. Use technology, including the Internet, to produce and publish writing and present the relationships between information and ideas efficiently as well as to interact and collaborate with others.

#### Research to Present & Build Knowledge

7. Conduct short research projects to answer a question (including a self-generated question) drawing on several sources and generating additional related, focused questions that allow for multiple avenues of exploration.
8. Gather relevant information from multiple print and digital sources, using search terms effectively; assess the credibility and accuracy of each source; and quote or paraphrase the data and conclusions of others while avoiding plagiarism and following a standard format for citation.
9. Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.

#### Range of Writing

10. Write routinely over extended time frames (time for research, reflection, and revision) and shorter time frames (a single sitting or a day or two) for a range of discipline-specific tasks, purposes, and audiences.



# Core Curriculum Learning Standards

## English Language Arts

### Speaking & Listening Grades 6-12

#### Comprehension and Collaboration

##### 1.

**Grades 6-8:** Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grade-appropriate topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly.

**Grade 9-12:** Initiate and participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grade-appropriate topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.

##### 2.

**Grade 6:** Interpret information presented in diverse media and formats (e.g., visually, quantitatively, orally) and explain how it contributes to a topic, text, or issue under study.

**Grade 7:** Analyze the main ideas and supporting details presented in diverse media and formats (e.g., visually, quantitatively, orally) and explain how the ideas clarify a topic, text, or issue under study.

**Grade 8:** Analyze the purpose of information presented in diverse media and formats (e.g., visually, quantitatively, orally) and evaluate the motives (e.g., social, commercial, political) behind its presentation.

**Grade 9-10:** Integrate multiple sources of information presented in diverse media or formats (e.g., visually, quantitatively, orally) evaluating the credibility and accuracy of each source.

**Grade 11-12:** Integrate multiple sources of information presented in diverse formats and media (e.g., visually, quantitatively, orally) in order to make informed decisions and solve problems, evaluating the credibility and accuracy of each source and noting any discrepancies among the data.

##### 3.

**Grade 6-8:** Delineate a speaker's argument and specific claims, evaluating the soundness of the reasoning and relevance and sufficiency of the evidence and (Grade 8+ only) identifying when irrelevant evidence is introduced.





## Core Curriculum Learning Standards: English Language Arts (cont'd)

### Language Standards Grades 6-8

#### Conventions of Standard English

1. Grade 6-8: Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English grammar and usage when writing or speaking.
2. Grade 6-8: Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English capitalization, punctuation, and spelling when writing.

#### Knowledge of Language

3. Use knowledge of language and its conventions when writing, speaking, reading, or listening.

#### Verbal Acquisition and Language

4. Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words and phrases based on grade-appropriate reading and content, choosing flexibly from a range of strategies.
5. Demonstrate understanding of figurative language, word relationships, and nuances in word meanings.
6. Acquire and use accurately grade-appropriate general academic and domain-specific words and phrases; gather vocabulary knowledge when considering a word or phrase important to comprehension or expression.

### Language Standards Grades 9-12

#### Conventions of Standard English

1. Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English grammar and usage when writing or speaking.
2. Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English capitalization, punctuation, and spelling when writing.

#### Knowledge of Language

3. Apply knowledge of language to understand how language functions in different contexts, to make effective choices for meaning or style, and to comprehend more fully when reading or listening.

#### Vocabulary Acquisition and Use

4. Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words and phrases based on grades 9–10 reading and content, choosing flexibly from a range of strategies
5. Demonstrate understanding of figurative language, word relationships, and nuances in word meanings.
6. Acquire and use accurately general academic and domain-specific words and phrases, sufficient for reading, writing, speaking, and listening at the college and career readiness level; demonstrate independence in gathering vocabulary knowledge when considering a word or phrase important to comprehension or expression.



The (Dis)Honesty Project's educational curriculum is made possible by a grant from the Templeton Foundation.



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## Credits

### SALTY Features

SALTY Features is an independent film production company founded in 2003 by **Yael Melamede**. SALTY's goal is to create media that is thought provoking, vital and enhances the world. SALTY's past film's include: INOCENTE (winner of the 2012 Academy Award for Best Documentary Short); DESERT RUNNERS; WHEN I WALK; BRIEF INTERVIEWS WITH HIDEOUS MEN; THE INNER LIFE OF MARTIN FROST; MY ARCHITECT (nominated for an Academy Award in 2004).

[saltyfeatures.com](http://saltyfeatures.com)

### Center for Advanced Hindsight

Founded by **Dan Ariely**, the Center for Advanced Hindsight's central goal is to develop great insights about an extensive and diverse set of research projects. Needless to say, all of this work is done retrospectively, i.e. "in hindsight." Research interests include cheating behavior & morality, forgiveness; counterfeits & identity, self-signaling; conflicts of interest in the medical arena; health issues such as overeating and obesity, sexual health, health care; pain; dating behavior; placebos; taxes; opportunity cost ("If I buy these shoes, how many lattes must I live without?"); wealth distribution (perceived, real and ideal); self-control devices and incentive systems; and more — each with a focus on the dissemination of Science to the greater public. We seek to make research accessible and relevant to the masses.

[advanced-hindsight.com](http://advanced-hindsight.com)

### Studio REV-

A non-profit public art organization founded by **Marisa Morán Jahn**, Studio REV- (as in, to "rev" an engine) combines bold ideas and sound research to produce creative media that impacts the lives of low-wage workers, immigrants, teens, and women. We strive to spark the public imagination through digital experiences, apps, curricula, workshops, museum installations, toolkits, and on-the-ground organizing.

[studiorev.org](http://studiorev.org)