

# Honesty is the Best Policy

This lesson introduces the concept of Integrity. At this age, the concept of integrity can be difficult to understand. As such, the focus will be on learning about honesty and perseverance. This lesson will focus on identifying honesty and dishonesty and practicing honesty across all situations. Honesty helps us move forward, while dishonesty holds us back.

**Caring Sub-Concepts**

Self Discipline, Kindness

**Lesson Timeframe**

45 minutes

**Required Materials**

- Honesty in action cards
- David Gets in Trouble*  
by David Shannon

**Standards Map**

This lesson aligns with CASEL Competencies, National Health Education Standards, and Common Core State Standards. Please refer to the [Standards Map](#) for more information.



DESIGNATED BY CASEL  
AS A RECOMMENDED PROGRAM  
FOR SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL LEARNING.  
See last page for details.

**Lesson Objective**

Students will be able to:

- Utilize caring and kindness to develop honest alternatives to deceptive actions.
- Practice showing honesty in social situations.

**Teacher Connection/Self-Care**

As teachers, we are held to a level of integrity that is unprecedented in any other profession. Let's be honest. You are here because of the students. How can you start and end each day with this simple statement in mind?

**Tips for Diverse Learners**

- Draw simple pictures on the board to illustrate each scenario.
- Use your interactive whiteboard to illustrate each honest/dishonest sentence as you read it aloud.
- Model how to play the game using the first several sentences as a model



## Share

3-5 minutes

Play two truths and a wish. Say three things about yourself, two that are true and one that is a wish.

**Example:**

I have red hair.  
I drove to school today.  
I can only walk on my hands.

Which one is not true but is a wish? Yes, it's the last one! Today we are going to talk about what is true and right, this is called honesty.



## Inspire

### What is Honesty?

5 minutes

Explain that honesty means being truthful in our words and actions. Telling the truth can be hard sometimes. Telling stories can be fun and it might be tempting to make stories up when others ask you questions about a fight or why you didn't do your work. Remember: your words have power! Every time you tell the truth, you earn a little bit of trust from others. When people trust us, they can rely on us in both little situations and big situations alike. If you get into the habit of always telling the truth with little things, you will find it easier to tell the truth when bigger topics come up! Honesty is the best policy.

Here are some important examples of what honesty looks like (all pictures are provided below):

- **Show a picture of two friends:** Honesty means you only say things about people that are true. Telling lies about others or talking unkindly hurts their feelings. It also takes away the trust others have in us and they might not want to spend time with us.
- **Show a picture of a child with a broken plate:** Honesty means your actions are truthful. Have you ever broken something and tried to hide it so you wouldn't get in trouble? That was not honest. We must always be honest, even when our actions were not positive. It is important to face the consequences. If not, we will get in double trouble: one for the lie and two for the action (like that broken plate!).
- **Show a picture of a child telling a story:** Honesty means you don't make up stories and say they are the truth. Telling stories can be very fun, but not when we use our made up stories in place of the truth. When you lie and tell a pretend story to explain what happened, you are not being honest. Remember, honesty is always the best policy!



## Empower

20 minutes

We are going to read (or listen to) a story about a boy who makes excuses and tells lies to try and cover up his bad behavior. It's called David Gets in Trouble. We are going to do an "interactive read aloud" of this story which means we are going to pause throughout the story so we can talk about how David's choices are either showing honesty or dishonesty.

### David Gets in Trouble by David Shannon

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vCcMYqbqjoM>

#### **Pause at 0:43: "I didn't mean to!"**

Have you ever said this to your parents or teacher? What did David do wrong? Why did he break the vase? How could he use honesty to make things better?

#### **Pause at 0:54: "It was an accident!"**

Have you ever broken something? What did David do wrong? Why did the window break? What honest words could he use to make things better?

#### **Pause at 1:28: "My dog ate my homework!"**

Did the dog really eat his homework? Why did David tell this lie? Have you ever told a lie to cover up your choices? How can David use honesty to fix his lie?

#### **Pause at 1:54: "But she likes it!"**

Do you really think the cat likes having her tail pulled? What could David say that uses honesty to explain his choices?

#### **Pause at 2:31: "No, it wasn't me!"**

Is David being honest here? What did he really do? Why is he lying? How can he use honesty to make things better?

#### **After the end of the story:**

Did David make the right choice at the end of the book? How did he make things better? What else can we do when we find ourselves being dishonest? (Stop right away, ask if we can fix what we broke, accept consequences, etc.)

## Reflect



5-10 minutes

Honesty is the best policy! When we tell the truth the first time every time, people know that they can count on us! Our friends, our family, and our teachers need to be able to trust us. When we are honest in our words and actions, others know we are trustworthy. Sometimes being honest can be very difficult, especially when you know you did something wrong and it is time to speak up. Just remember: it is always best to be honest.

## Extension Ideas



- As a class, create a book that illustrates ways to show honesty in class. Challenge your class to identify difficult situations that might lead to lying: breaking something, forgetting something, etc.



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LEARNING.

The Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL) has been reviewing evidence-based SEL programs since 2003. Kindness in the Classroom® meets CASEL's SElect Program and is included in the CASEL Guide to Effective Social and Emotional Learning Programs.

Kindness in the Classroom® met or exceeded all of CASEL's criteria for high-quality SEL programming. Kindness in the Classroom® received CASEL's highest designation for high-quality SEL programming.

<https://casel.org/guide/kindness-in-the-classroom/>



A child hiding a broken plate behind her back.



A child standing next to a friend smiling.



A child talking with a thought bubble showing a picture of a dog eating her homework.