

# Dishonesty: Clues and Consequences

## Overview:

Students discuss the kinds of dishonest behavior that their peers might display outside of school and then create hypothetical “whodunit” crime scenes of dishonesty. After the mysteries are solved, the students discuss the consequences of the crimes for all stakeholders (persons who were affected).

## Materials:

- Paper, pencils, or pens

## Procedure:

1. Ask the students to list types of crimes that occur in their community. Share answers. Ask them to list types of crimes that young people often commit. Share answers.
2. Explain that another, less newsworthy, infraction also occurs regularly: dishonesty. Ask the students to share examples of dishonest behavior. Discuss what makes one act of dishonesty worse than another. Discuss the effects and consequences of lies on the liar and on those being deceived.
3. Divide the students into groups of three. Tell them to write a “whodunit” involving dishonesty. Have them leave clues throughout their story that will help identify the dishonest character. Remind them of the examples of dishonest actions you discussed earlier.
4. On a separate sheet of paper, have them list who the liar is, how he or she was dishonest, why he or she acted that way, and ways the dishonest behavior could have been avoided. Everyone in the group must contribute.
5. Collect the stories and redistribute them to different groups. Have each group do the following:
  - Solve the caper and identify the dishonest culprit.
  - Explain how they arrived at their conclusion.
  - List how events might have unfolded if the liar had been honest.
  - Offer ways that characters in the story could have helped the liar be honest.
6. After collecting and reviewing the stories and responses, have each group share their crime and its solution.
7. (Optional) Invite a law-enforcement official speak to the class about the consequences of certain dishonest actions. Have the speaker discuss methods that help keep individuals from repeating such offenses.

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This lesson is from the *Good Ideas* book, available for purchase from the CHARACTER COUNTS! online store: <http://www.charactercounts.org/materials>

Inspired by the lesson plan “Fingerprint Detective” posted on the AskERIC Lesson Plans website ([www.ericir.syr.edu/Virtual/Lessons/Interdisciplinary/INT0021.html](http://www.ericir.syr.edu/Virtual/Lessons/Interdisciplinary/INT0021.html)).

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## McREL standards

### Language Arts

**Standard 1.** Uses the general skills and strategies of the writing process.

**Level III, Benchmark 5.** Uses content, style, and structure (e.g., formal or informal language, genre, organization) appropriate for specific audiences and purposes (e.g., to entertain, to influence, to inform).

<http://www.mcrel.org/Standards-benchmarks/>