

Letter to the Reader from Nancy Wilcox Richards



Dear Boys and Girls,

When I was in Grade One I told my classmate, Rosemary, that I was celebrating my birthday that very day, and Rosemary was invited to my party. Unfortunately, Rosemary showed up at my house that evening with a birthday present. You might ask, why was this unfortunate? Doesn't everybody love to get presents? Well, there was just one teeny tiny problem – it wasn't my birthday! This "birthday fib" eventually found its way into the book, *How to Fix a Lie*.

And that's what authors do. I think writing is a bit like creating a recipe. Instead of using sugar, butter and flour, we take bits and pieces of real life (like getting caught telling a lie) – or things that are funny, interesting or heart-warming – and we add in some imagination; mix it up, and the result is a story. Hopefully it is a story that you will enjoy.

A lot of events in my books come from my experiences as an elementary teacher. Sometimes I'd need to address a bullying issue going on in my classroom. Sometimes a student would crack a funny joke or do something that totally amazed me. These little bits of classroom life might find their way into a book I am working on. I always hope that whatever I write rings true for you, the reader.

I think lying requires a certain amount of imagination. And as a kid, I must have had a great imagination! But now that I am a grownup, I don't tell lies any more. Instead I use my imagination and channel it into something creative: a story. And it's so much fun!

So, if you have a great imagination, perhaps you'll use it in some creative way. Maybe you'll build a great invention. Perhaps it will lead you on a discovery adventure. Or perhaps you'll write a fascinating story! The possibilities are endless.

Happy Reading and Writing!

Nancy Wilcox Richards



How to Fix a Lie

Curriculum Links

- Language Arts
- Friendship
- Pioneers
- Character Education: honesty, trust and acceptance

Language Arts Activities:

Activity 1: Readers Theatre

Have students do a dramatic reading from *How to Fix a Lie*. The following link offers students a chance to experiment with fluency and expression:

http://www.scholastic.ca/bookfairs/teachers/pdfs/spring2012/btscripts_howfixlie.pdf

Activity 2: Creative Writing

Have students create a "Recipe for Friendship." First, generate a list of common recipe words (e.g., mix, roll, stir, add). Then brainstorm friendship qualities (e.g., loyalty, honesty, kindness). Have students work with a partner to create the recipe. It might use phrases such as add a generous heaping of humour, stir in patience, etc. Display the recipes in your library.

Activity 3: Posters

Discuss the qualities of a good friend. Create "Wanted – Best Friend" posters.

Friendship Activities:

Activity 1: Ice Breaker

Much of *How to Fix a Lie* revolves around one of the main characters making up stories. Play "Two Truths and a Lie". To play this fun game, everyone comes up with two true stories or facts ("two truths") about themselves and one made-up story (a lie). Students have to guess which story/fact is a lie. For example, I could say: "I was born in Boston. I love to go skydiving. I rescued a child from drowning." Once everyone has made his or her choice, I would admit that I have never been skydiving.

Activity 2: Secret Pals

Students draw names of other classmates and send anonymous notes, cards or give small treats for one week. At the end of the week have students try to identify their secret pals.



Pioneer Activities:

Activity 1: Pioneer Toy: Button Whirligig

Create your own pioneer toy.

You will need:

- A large flat button
- 1 metre string

Directions:

Thread the string through one of the bottom buttonholes and then through a hole directly across from it.

Tie the ends of the string together.

Adjust the button so that it is in the centre of the length of string. (There will be approximately a quarter of a metre of string on either side of the button.)

Hold one end of the loop in each hand.

Swing the whirligig around in a circular motion.

Move your hands in and out causing the button to unwind and then rewind the string.

Activity 2: Pioneer Games

Students might enjoy playing a few games that originated during pioneer times.

Here are a few suggestions:

- Drop the Handkerchief

Nowadays this game is known as "Duck, Duck, Goose." Students form a circle. One student is chosen to be 'it'. She/he runs around the outer edge of the circle with a handkerchief or cloth. This student drops the cloth behind someone in the circle. That person picks up the cloth, runs in the opposite direction of 'it'. The two students race back to the place where 'it' began. Whoever does not get back to fill in the empty space is now 'it'.

- Blind Man's Bluff

One student is blindfolded. The other students are in a circle around him/her. Someone turns the blindfolded person around several times. The blindfolded person now tries to tag a student in the circle. Whoever is tagged becomes the next blindfolded person.

- Chain Tag

Select two students to be 'it'. These two students hold hands and begin chasing others. When another student is tagged, that person links hands with one of them to make a chain of three. The chain grows longer as more students are tagged.

- Who Has the Button?

Students form a circle with their hands out, palms together. Another student, the leader, takes a button and goes around the circle and places his/her hands in everybody else's, one by one. The leader will drop the button in one student's hands. However, she/he continues to place his/her hands in others so no one knows where the button is except for the giver and receiver. The leader says, "Button, button, who's got the button?" Students reply, stating their guesses such as, "Sara's got the button." Once the student with the button is finally guessed, that student is the one to distribute the button and start a new round.

Others games to consider include checkers, marbles, and jack straws.

Character Education Activities:

Activity 1: The Fair Eggs-periment

Brainstorm ways of accepting each other. Or similarly, create a list of rules called "How to be a Friend".

Discuss how Gracie, known to tell lots of lies, was rarely believed when she told the truth. Because of this, she often felt left out and this perpetuated her need to tell more lies as she sought acceptance by her peers. Try the following experiment to exemplify how someone (such as Gracie) felt when excluded, and how kindness helps to support others.

Materials:

- Clear drinking glass filled with water
- 1 fresh egg (preferably dyed a bright colour so it is easier to see)
- ¼ cup salt
- Permanent marker
- Tablespoon

Carefully place the egg in the glass of water. Tell the students that the egg represents someone (perhaps Gracie) who is not being treated fairly. Sinking to the bottom of the glass represents how someone who is left out or mistreated feels (e.g., sad, depressed, defeated, unappreciated, unloved). Remove the egg from the water and set it aside. Add salt to the water, one tablespoon at a time. As you stir in each spoonful, explain that the salt represents different ways to show fairness towards others. For example: following the rules when playing a game, taking turns and sharing, treating others with honesty and respect, and taking action to help someone being treated unfairly. After you have added all of the salt, put the egg back in the water. Now, it will float. Explain that "Gracie" is now supported with kindness and "held up" by the fairness and acceptance of others. (Adapted from *10-minute Life Lessons for Kids* by Jamie Miller).

Activity 2: The Cover-up

Try the following experiment as a discussion-starter about the value of honesty.

Materials:

- A bucket (about 20-25 cm wide)
- Pennies or dimes (1 per student)
- A quarter

Fill the bucket two-thirds full with water. Carefully place the quarter at the bottom, in the centre. Begin by saying that telling a lie may seem like a simple way out of a problem. However, usually when we tell a lie, we end up telling even more lies in order to cover up the first lie. (Give an example, either made up or from your own personal experience.) Explain to the students that their challenge is to cover up the quarter by using a penny. Ask each student to try to cover the quarter by dropping a penny (from at least 5 cm above the water) into the bucket. After everyone has had a turn, discuss the following questions:

1. How well did the penny cover the quarter?
2. How many actually landed on the quarter?
3. How does this activity compare to trying to cover up a lie that we told?
4. Does someone have to tell more lies to cover up the first lie?
5. What happens when you are caught lying?
6. How easy is it for others to trust you again?
7. Why is telling the truth easier than lying even if the truth may get you in trouble?

(Adapted from *Activities that Teach Family Values* by Tom Jackson)

Activity 3: Research

Research how to say "honesty" in other languages. Display the words in a prominent area of your school. Some suggestions might include: Ehrlichkeit (German), l'honnêteté (French), katapatan (Filipino), ärlighet (Swedish), onestà (Italian), etc.

How to Fix a Lie

Create an acrostic poem.

R _____

E _____

S _____

P _____

E _____

C _____

T _____

How to Fix a Lie

Create an acrostic poem.

F _____

R _____

I _____

E _____

N _____

D _____

How to Fix a Lie

Create an acrostic poem.

E _____

M _____

P _____

A _____

T _____

H _____

Y _____

Design a Wanted Poster advertising for a good friend. Include a drawing of your friend and list the qualities you would like your friend to have. (Example: Must be honest. Can keep a secret.)

WANTED: A Good Friend

Activity created by Nancy Wilcox Richards © 2014.

How to Fix a Lie

Word Search

A E S I R P R U S G
B I R T H D A Y Y B
B H N W N R E S S R
Y T R E I L I E U A
M R I E E T R I O C
D R N C N F D C V E
F R A S T E W A R L
R E E N O I P R E E
B L I E Z N E G N T

Abby

Gracie

pioneer

friend

stew

birthday

lie

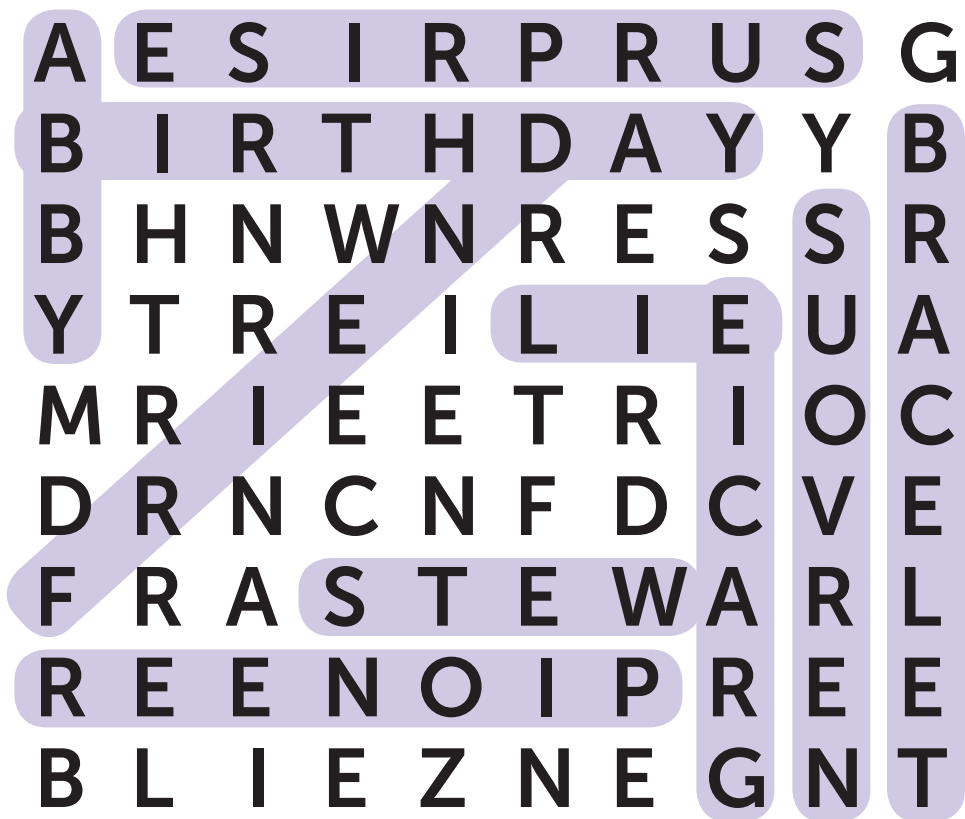
surprise

nervous

bracelet

How to Fix a Lie

Word Search Solution



- | | |
|---------|----------|
| Abby | birthday |
| Gracie | lie |
| pioneer | surprise |
| friend | nervous |
| stew | bracelet |