

Honesty & Dishonesty

1. Reading. *Read the story of the ABC School of English.*

ABC School Dispute Resolved

Students and teachers of the ABC School of English announced yesterday that they were happy with the settlement that has finally been reached between them and the school's owner, Mr. Nigel Anthony.

"After a long fight, it's good to know that the students will get their money back and that the teachers will be paid," said John Ford, one of the teachers of ABC.

Four months ago, a group of teachers from the ABC School took its owner to court because they had not been paid. When three of them were fired afterwards, a series of demonstrations by teachers began in front of the school. The teachers were quickly joined by many students, who felt that the school had been very misleading in their publicity.

Both students and teachers had reasons to complain:

- Students had been told that they were guaranteed to pass an important international English exam if they took the ABC Special Exam Class. Many students did not have a high enough level of English to be in the class, took the exam and failed.
- Students had also been charged extra money for "multimedia support". In

practise this meant a small room with two computers that were attached to the internet. Most of the time this room was closed.

- The ABC School also guaranteed "small classes" and "reduced groups". Students were surprised to see that during the school year their class size grew from 8 to 15 students in one small classroom. One class had 25 students.
- Teachers were often not paid on time, and at the end they were not paid at all. They were never paid when they were sick, or for holidays.
- Teachers had to pay for all their own materials and photocopies.
- There was no staff room, and very little resources for the teachers to use.
- Both students and teachers complained that the school premises were very bad (dirty classrooms, broken lights, no toilet paper in the washrooms)

Mr. Nigel Anthony, who owns the ABC School of English and the **Turn Right** Driving School was not available for comment. Students and teachers said that they rarely saw him. He has an apartment in the city and a villa by the sea. Last week he said that if he had to pay back all the money he owed, the school would have to close.

2. Discussion. *Discuss these questions in groups.*

- Do you know any schools like the ABC School of English?
- What would you do if you were a teacher or a student at a school like this?
- Can you think of other examples when workers or clients have taken an employer to court and won?

3. Reading. *Here's what some people said about Mr. Nigel Anthony.*

*I've known him for years, those **underhanded** tricks do not surprise me. He was always a good neighbour. I'm surprised he would **stoop** to that – not paying his staff and lying to his clients!*

*He is nothing more than a **lowdown** cheat.*

*Nigel has been involved in **crooked** deals since he was a child.*

*You can't trust him, he **twists** everything and puts his own **slant** on it.*

And here is what Nigel Anthony says.

There are lots of people who distort the truth about me. I have always been a straight businessman, and an upright, law-abiding citizen. I'll be perfectly level with you, I thought that the teachers who worked for me were above this kind of lying. I'm sad that they are not.

4. **Metaphor** Look at the underlined words from the above quotes. Can you finish these sentences that explain the metaphors for honesty, dishonesty and truth?

In English,

Being honest is like being...

Being dishonest is like being...

Honesty and truth are like...

Dishonesty and lying are like...

5. **Role Play/ Debate** Imagine you are all at a town hall debate. The subject is about making laws to control the private academies (language academies and driving schools). Read the following role cards. You can add other arguments to them if you wish. When you are ready, begin the role play. Try to include some of the metaphorical language in exercise 3!

The Local Government

You have called this meeting to discuss making laws about private schools. The ABC School of English case has been in the news recently and you expect people will be upset. At the end of the session, you must decide what new regulations will exist, if any.

The Local Business Association

Your motto is: No Government Interference! You don't believe that making rules and regulations for private schools will help the situation. If the ABC School of English closes, it is because of bad business. You believe that the government is not very efficient and that it is better for businesses to control themselves.

The teachers/students group

You are worried that the things that happened at ABC could happen at other schools. You think that there needs to be more control at the local government level. Here are some suggestions you have:

The government should make a list of good schools that follow a set of guidelines (to be agreed by schools and government).

Schools that lie to their students in their publicity should be put on a black list of schools. Both lists should be made public.

The labour laws should be enforced when teachers do not get paid. Government should give legal advice or help to teachers who do not get paid by their school.

The local Union

You think that the local labour laws should be made stricter. You also think that the teachers at private academies should have the possibility of joining a union (at the moment they don't) and be allowed to go on strike.

The Private Academies Association

You agree that some guidelines should be presented to the academies. These guidelines could be designed by the government with school help. You don't want your teachers to all join unions or go on strike. You think that the ABC School of English is an exception, and that the majority of academies are much better.

Honesty and Dishonesty teaching notes

by Lindsay Clandfield

This is a vocabulary and idiom lesson for advanced students. The aim is to highlight the metaphorical meanings of several words and phrases related to honesty and dishonesty. The emphasis is on meaning, with an activity to incorporate these expressions into use.

COURSEBOOK LINK:

Try linking this lesson in with any coursebook unit on crime. What crimes, if any, is the school owner committing?

Many coursebooks use texts about lies and lying. This metaphor lesson could be used to supplement, or replace, one of those texts.

Stage One

Think of a time when you were a victim of dishonest behaviour or false advertising and tell the class the anecdote (this might take some pre-planning and thinking). Ask them what they would have done in your position. Have they ever been “ripped off”? What did they do about it?

Stage Two

Explain that they are going to read an imaginary newspaper article about some dishonest behaviour at a private language academy. Can anyone guess what form this behaviour might take? Write some suggestions on the board. Give out the article and ask the students to check their answers. Were they right? When they have finished, ask students to discuss in small groups the questions in number 2. Do feedback with the whole class.

Stage Three

The quotes all draw on the metaphors for honesty and dishonesty. Tell students to look up any words they do not know in their dictionaries. Read out the sentences and go over the new words. When students are ready, instruct them to complete the sentences to discover the metaphors for honesty and dishonesty in English. Are there similar expressions or ideas in their own languages?

Stage Four

This is a mini role play to get the students to use some of the language they have learned. Divide students into groups and give each group a card (one group is the government, one is the union and so on). Allow them some time to prepare their arguments, then hold the town meeting. You could follow this up with a general discussion on what is honest or dishonest behaviour.