

Debate Examples Ks2

Is It Right To Lie?

When you are little you are told that you should always tell the truth and everyone seems to agree that lying is wrong, but I think the situation is not as simple as it seems. I think you can also find cases where a lie doesn't seem to be wrong. If we think hard about it, I believe we can find many occasions when it seems justified to lie. I think we may even find times when a lie is better than the truth. Let me give you a few examples of truth and lies so that you can decide.

First of all, let's take some examples of 'bad' lies. If you find a £10 note on the ground and decide, wrongly, to keep it and then an old lady asks you if you have seen a £10 note anywhere, I think most people would agree that it is a very bad idea to lie and say you haven't seen one. It is 'doubly' bad because you have already done something bad in keeping the money and then you have compounded your bad action by lying to cover it up. Is there anyone with a sense of right and wrong who would say that this lie is not a bad thing to do?

Similarly, if you tell a friend that someone else has said bad things about them (even though they haven't) then that is pretty clearly a 'bad' lie and a bad thing to do. Again, it is bad for more than one reason: You have made someone unhappy by saying it and you have harmed the reputation of the other person who did not actually say anything bad. There are two victims and no excuses.

But now think of another example. Your lovely Nan has bought you some really ugly pink and green socks that you will never, ever wear. She says "Did you like your present?" Are you really going to say "No, Nan, I hate them and I will never ever wear them"? Of course not. You will say "They are lovely. Thank you!" You will say it because you do not want to hurt her feelings and you know she wanted you to be happy. So is that lie right or wrong?

Or what about if you see your friend Sam running past you around a corner and then thirty seconds later three school bullies come running up and say "Have you seen Sam?" Do you say "Yes, he just ran round that corner over there," or do you shrug and pretend you've seen no-one? You would be lying, but you would be doing it for a good reason – to help your friend. How can such a lie be wrong?

You could even go so far as to say that all your favourite fiction stories are a kind of lie. There isn't really a Wimpy Kid and the spider in Charlotte's Web was just an elaborate lie thought up by the writer E.B White. So are these books lies? I would say, most emphatically, that they are no such thing. Just because it didn't really happen, I don't think it makes it wrong to pretend that it did. The purpose of the writer's lie is to entertain people, not to harm them.

To conclude, I think we can say that some lies are wrong, some lies are right and some are a bit of both. It depends completely on what your intention is. If you are telling a lie in order to hurt someone or harm them, then that is completely wrong. If you are trying to avoid a problem for yourself and you are not harming someone else, then I think that is a half-right/half-wrong lie. Finally, I think that if you tell a lie to protect someone else or to protect their feelings then that is usually a good thing to do. But what do you think?