This is the moment parents dream about; all those years of helping with homework, all that money spent on tuition and books have been doing to get here. 

Cheat as much as you want. It'll only make you a better person.

Teacher Resource Guide

CURIO.ca | CBC Learning
ABOUT THIS TEACHER RESOURCE GUIDE

Activities and projects were researched, designed, and written by Joana Angela Milano.

This guide was produced by the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation in association with Ontario Institute for Studies in Education (OISE) of the University of Toronto.

Reproduction rights for this Work are not governed by any license executed by CANCOPY or any other reprography collective.

© 2014 Canadian Broadcasting Corporation. All rights reserved.

Published by:

CBC Learning | CURIO.ca
P.O. Box 500, Station A
Toronto, Ontario
M5W 1E6

Email: curio@cbc.ca
Web: www.curio.ca
# Table of Contents

Focus Critical Thinking Questions ................................................................. 1  
Enduring Understanding .................................................................................. 1  
Overview of *Faking the Grade* .................................................................... 2  
Goals of the Teacher Resource Guide.............................................................. 2  
Recommended Grade Levels, Subject Areas and Curriculum Links............... 2  
Previewing Activities ...................................................................................... 3  
Viewing Activities ........................................................................................... 7  
Post-Viewing Projects ..................................................................................... 10  
Final Notes ....................................................................................................... 12
Enduring Understanding

Nobody wants to live in a country where everybody is cheating. Nobody wants to go down that slippery slope to a total corruption. And when people get a glimpse of that, I think there is a sense of pulling back, and wanting to do something, and wanting to reform, and wanting less cheating.

- David Callahan, author of The Cheating Culture

Focus Critical Thinking Questions:

What is the price of honesty? Of dishonesty?
Can dishonesty be justified?
Faking the Grade

Overview of Faking the Grade

It is estimated that at least 70 per cent of university students cheated at some point during their high school years. Many continue to cheat (and few get caught) once they move on to post-secondary education. Research shows those who cheat in school go on to cheat in life. Those cheaters are everywhere because ours is a culture where honesty has been de-valued and a win-at-any-costs strategy is encouraged. In Faking the Grade, students, administrators, parents and teachers speak about their experiences around what is known as “Academic Integrity,” while experts provide insight into why students cheat. All of this is set in the context of some shocking, real-life examples of dishonesty—from students paying others to sit exams for them, to teachers changing the marks on standardized tests to make themselves and their schools look good. It all prompts an important question: What does all this cheating say about how important honesty is to our children and to all of us?

Goals of the Teacher Resource Guide

This resource aims to utilize the controversial topic of cheating and dishonesty to develop habits of mind (e.g. dealing with ambiguity and inquiry-mindedness) of a careful and conscientious thinker. All the activities are accompanied with guiding critical thinking questions as students are also practicing listening, speaking, reading and writing skills. Most of the activities involve students working with each other to foster knowledge-building and mindful critical thinking. In inquiry-based learning, students are at the centre of their education which means that they consider not only themselves as sources of knowledge but their peers, too. Each activity can stand alone and can be modified according to students’ needs. Post-viewing activities are project-based to empower students in doing their own research and (re)building their own knowledge.

Recommended Grade-Levels, Subject Areas and Curriculum Links

Cheating is a prevalent act, especially in academic contexts. We must be careful in introducing and debriefing the documentary with students. Be clear and transparent in our goals for showing the documentary. As teachers, we are aware of the extent and impact of cheating in learning and how it truly jeopardizes student success and meaningful learning. We should be certain of our rapport with students to effectively facilitate the delicate and ethical discussions during and after watching the documentary. Recommended subject areas are the following:

- English
- Literacy Preparation and Recovery
- Equity Studies
- Social Sciences
- Career Studies
PREVIEWING ACTIVITIES

Activity 1: Bookend Friend

Goals: To activate students’ own knowledge and collaborate on building knowledge with others

Estimated time: 5 minutes before watching the documentary, plus a short debrief after

Materials: Notebooks and pens

Focus: Literacy (brainstorming, gathering information)

Instructions:
- Write the name of the documentary on the board: “Faking the Grade.”
- Put students in pairs. Students will deconstruct the title. See guiding critical thinking questions below for sample brainstorming prompts.
- With their partners (Bookend Friend), students will record their notes in point-form.
- After watching the documentary, students will find their Bookend Friend and discuss their thoughts. Students will consider their initial ideas by referring to their notes. They will examine if the documentary has changed or affirmed their previous stance.

Guiding Critical Thinking Questions (Before):
- Deconstruct the title: What does “fake” or “faking” mean to you? List some instances where faking happens on a global scale and on a day-to-day basis.
- In what instances does our society deem “faking” as acceptable and unacceptable?
- If we are faking the grade, then does the title assume that the grade is an accurate measure of a student’s worth?

Guiding Critical Thinking Questions (Debriefing with the Bookend Friend):
- Did the documentary change my opinions about cheating? How?
- Was the documentary consistent with what I know about cheating and school culture?
- Who was the most compelling person in the documentary for me? Who was the least compelling? Should the producers interview another source or group of people?
Activity 2: Linear Array

Goals: To explore the concept of honesty and generate multiple interpretations; to practice dealing with ambiguity and dealing with situations that are open to more than one interpretation

Estimated time: 10 minutes

Materials: Linear Array Image or handout (to save paper, copy and paste two or three linear array images on a page)

Focus: Critical thinking (considering multiple perspectives)

Estimated time: 10 minutes

Materials: Linear Array Image or handout (to save paper, copy and paste two or three linear array images on a page)

Focus: Critical thinking (considering multiple perspectives)

Instructions:

- If this activity is done as a class, draw the image of the linear array on the board and students can just copy the image on their notebooks. You may decide to create a handout with the image, if preferred. The image looks like this:

  Concept: HONESTY (Or TRUTH)

  Extreme: __________  Extreme: __________

- Brainstorm with your class a list of words related to your chosen concept. You may choose a different concept (e.g. cheating, fake, authenticity, etc.) depending on your class profile and grade level.
- Arrange the words on the linear array. Label the extremes based on the list of words generated Sample labels may be: general/specific, ethical/unethical, abstract/practical.
- Students will put ticks on the line to mark each word’s placement.
- If this activity is done individually, give students a handout and allow them to brainstorm the words on their own first. After 3-5 minutes, students will arrange the words on the linear array with a partner or a small group.

Guiding Critical Thinking Questions:

- How and from where do we learn a word’s definition?
- Can we regard dictionaries as an objective source of a definition? Why or why not?
- Why do words end up having multiple definitions or interpretations?
Activity 3: Reading/Interpreting a Profile

Goals: To become aware of one’s own bias and stereotypes; to identify norms and how they are established, perpetuated and challenged; to establish the concept of social hierarchy through a more familiar context (your own school and its streams)

Focus: Critical Thinking, Equity and Social Justice

Materials: Cut-up pieces of construction paper with a specific letter grade written on them

Estimated time: 20 minutes

Instructions:

- On pieces of colored construction paper, write a random name on the top left corner and one letter grade on the top right corner: A+, B, C+, D. Each student gets one letter grade. Students should not share their information with their classmates. Distribute the letter grades evenly. The grade card should look something like this:

  **Student 1:**
  
  C+

  Write profile here

- Students will create a profile of a student who has received a final overall grade written on their grade cards. Consider personality attributes, habits, quirks, or maybe even physical appearances (e.g. “smart” students are often portrayed wearing thick glasses). It is anticipated that students who receive a grade that falls on the extreme high or low will be easier to profile (portrayed in exaggeration by popular media) whereas grades that fall in the middle will result in vague descriptions.

- After 5-10 minutes of individual student work, put students who have the same grade card in a group. Students will share their findings with each other and identify similarities and differences. The groups will write their overall profile findings on the chart paper and tape it on the board for the class to see and discuss.
• Special Note: Be mindful that the discussions do not attack an individual student and their current marks. Before the smaller group or class discussions commence, let the students know that this activity is not meant to put the spotlight on a particular student. This activity is an exercise on identifying patterns of thinking and behaviour influenced by agents of socialization (e.g. media, pop culture, parents, school culture).

Guiding Critical Thinking Questions:

❖ Can grades be an accurate signifier of a good student/bad student? In what ways can “a good student” also be “a bad student” and vice-versa? Aside from grades, what could be an accurate signifier of student success?

❖ What streams does your school offer? What do you think is the purpose of streaming (e.g. academic, applied, gifted, etc.) in high school?

❖ Based on your school culture, how freely can one student move from one stream to another?

❖ Based on your observations and experiences as a student, do people (teachers and students) act differently when interacting with a student who belongs to a particular stream? (This question is a good potential segue into a discussion of privilege: what it means to have it and the price that students pay to be a part of a particular group. The last idea corresponds to the reasons for cheating as presented in the documentary.)
VIEWING ACTIVITIES

Activity 1: Cheaters Chart
Goal: To practice inquiry-mindedness and explore seemingly uncomfortable and unanswered questions; to practice thinking broadly and seeing the structural and institutional implications of an individual misconduct

Materials: Pen and paper (or handouts, if necessary)
Estimated time: The duration of the documentary, post-discussion time may vary

Focus: Literacy (note-taking, listening, categorizing, summarizing), Critical thinking, Equity and social justice (class, gender)

Instructions:
- Draw three columns on the board.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Who cheated?</th>
<th>How did they cheat?</th>
<th>Why did they do it?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Students will copy this table into their notebooks (or you may produce a handout with more detailed instructions).
- As students watch the documentary, they will fill in the chart with the appropriate information.
- After the documentary, discuss the chart as a class. If needed, recreate the chart on the board and have the students stand up and write their answers in the appropriate column.

Guiding Critical Thinking Questions:
- Do the “How” and “Why” columns reveal a pattern of thinking or behaviour?
- What rewards do the individuals in the documentary anticipate as a result of their cheating? How do the rewards (and the extent of punishments) differ for every individual who committed the act?
- Examine the “Who” and “How” columns. How does a person’s class or social status influence the level and scope of cheating and the corresponding punishment?
  - In the documentary, researcher Don McCabe from Rutgers University states that “the higher the income of [students’] parents, the more likely they were to cheat, and the better they were doing in school, the more likely they were to cheat, except for the kids
who were doing poorest in school, you know. And the poor kids, I think, the poor academically performing kids were cheating to survive because [students] at the very top were cheating to thrive.” What is the difference between thriving and surviving? What are the outcomes of “cheating to thrive” and “cheating to survive”?

- Privilege (as a social justice term) is defined as “rights, advantages, and protections enjoyed by some at the expense of and beyond the rights, advantages, and protections available to others. In this context, privilege is not the product of fortune, luck, or happenstance, but the product of structural advantages. One automatically receives privilege by being a member of a dominant group. Because dominant groups occupy the positions of power, their members receive social and institutional advantages... Privilege is socially constructed to benefit members of the dominant group” (Sensoy and DiAngelo, 2012, p. 58).

  - In the documentary, university students refer to med schools, law schools and grad schools as their desired destinations and a primary reason for students to cheat (The “Why” column should reveal this pattern). What are the social benefits that members of these professions receive? (The answer to this question will speak to the institutional benefits that a privilege group receives. The discussion may lead to systemic privileges, barriers, and discrimination.)

  - Read this CBC article on Justin Trudeau’s admittance to using drugs (http://www.cbc.ca/news/politics/is-justin-trudeau-s-pot-honesty-the-best-policy-1.1363605). How do his privileges and positions of power (e.g. political leader, family name, class, gender) influence his readiness to admit his misdemeanour and your reaction to his revelation? Would you be more or less forgiving toward someone who does not have the same privileges as a political and wealthy leader like Trudeau (say a student who plagiarized his/her paper or cheated on a final exam)? How would someone from the same privileged positions as Trudeau’s view his revelation?

  - Consider the privileges you have at the moment. Does a person’s privilege influence how you view, assess, and evaluate honesty or dishonesty? How do you evaluate your own acts of honesty and dishonesty?

Activity 2: Value Line

Goal: To practice formulating, reflecting, and expressing one’s opinion and biases

Estimated time: 10 minutes/value line

Focus: Literacy (formulating opinions, listening and speaking skills), Metacognition

Materials: None (arrange classroom in a way that leaves a good amount of space in the middle)

Instructions:

- Watch the first beginning of the documentary with the whole class. Stop the video at 7:50.
- Review the quote by David Tomar, a professional essay writer. He says that since we are
competing with both honest and dishonest people, we should just look away and “mind our own business” as he writes essays for others. Can competition justify dishonesty?

- Ask the students to line up in the middle of the classroom. Assign which side (front or back) will represent the “extreme yes” and the “extreme no.” Students will place themselves on the line based on their opinion.

- Elicit explanations for choosing a particular position in the line. Reflect on how the value line can challenge having “black and white” definitions and judgments. The concept of “gray area” could be a good point of reflection as well.

- Repeat the same process as you watch the whole documentary. You can engage the class in a value line activity at any point you anticipate student having a difference of opinions. Here are other suggested points for a value line activity:
  - At 9:50, University of Toronto students are interviewed and insist that they do not cheat. One student says that when students cheat their “biological laws” by staying up late and taking caffeine pills, they will start cheating the “institutional laws” (e.g. cheat on an exam). Does the motivation to cheat start within the students (internal), or does the pressure come from the institution’s expectations (external), or neither/both?
  - At 18:35, a discussion is presented on the adults’ (e.g. parents, government, academic institutions) role and influence on youth tolerance and willingness to cheat. These institutions are expected to have integrity, but they are also capable of cheating. Read this CBC short article on students’ view of honesty. Answer the last two questions in this article by creating a value line. [http://www.cbc.ca/newsblogs/yourcommunity/2012/06/should-students-be-taught-that-honesty-is-the-best-policy.html](http://www.cbc.ca/newsblogs/yourcommunity/2012/06/should-students-be-taught-that-honesty-is-the-best-policy.html).
  - At 29:00, the documentary sheds light on teachers and other people in various positions of power who cheat to achieve success. As students and younger members of society, does seeing adults cheat increase or reduce the negative impact of cheating? (This question should be followed up with a discussion on how we form our moral codes/ethics.)

- To further explore and compliment the discussion on morality and ethics, you may finish the unit or lesson with watching The Nature of Things: Babies: Born To Be Good with David Suzuki: [http://www.cbc.ca/player/Shows/Shows/The+Nature+of+Things/2012-13/ID/2296544019/](http://www.cbc.ca/player/Shows/Shows/The+Nature+of+Things/2012-13/ID/2296544019/). It features research on infants and young children and their responses to acts of kindness and injustice. This documentary offers a discussion on the biological innateness of our goodness and honesty as human beings. In addition, the show also presents a cross-cultural study of honesty and lying.
POST-VIEWING PROJECTS

Project 1: *This Hour Has 22 Minutes* (Group)

**Goal:** To communicate ideas as a product of inquiry; to practice refining ideas and responding to others; to construct a representation of learning to generate additional thoughts

**Estimated Time:** May vary (you may schedule individual presentations on different dates, or set aside one or two periods mainly for presentations.)

**Output:** Written sketches and presentation

**Focus:** Literacy (viewing, representing, listening, speaking, writing), Critical thinking (analysis, synthesis, interpretation)

**Estimated Time:** May vary (you may schedule individual presentations on different dates, or set aside one or two periods mainly for presentations.)

**Output:** Written sketches and presentation

**Instructions:**

- Put students in groups of 3 or 4. Each group will present a 10-minute mock show, *This Hour Has 22 Minutes*. The project title may change to *This Hour Has 10 Minutes*. Show a sample episode in class from the show’s website: [http://www.cbc.ca/22minutes/](http://www.cbc.ca/22minutes/).

- Show students on a webpage or handout the supplemental documentary material, *The Top Ten Infamous Fakers and Cheaters* found on [http://www.cbc.ca/doczone/features/top-10-fakers](http://www.cbc.ca/doczone/features/top-10-fakers)

- As material for the groups’ mock shows, each student will choose, research, examine, and write up a spoof or short sketch on one of *The Top Ten Infamous Fakers and Cheaters*. Based on group size, students may choose to work on two figures. You may choose to approve other celebrity figures not included in this list.

- Class time may be set aside to analyze and study the sketches on *This Hour Has 22 Minutes*. Review the conventions of a satire. Note that these sketches work because the audience and the actors thoroughly understand the facts about the character and/or situation they are portraying. Comedy sketches do not simply “make fun” of a celebrity or situation, but are a serious social commentary through satire.

- Before their presentation date, students should submit a write-up of their sketches to the teacher for approval. Make sure their sketches are not racist, sexist, or homophobic in nature.

- Set aside class time for rehearsal. Encourage creativity. Support students by providing prop and costume materials where possible.

- When a group is doing their presentation, encourage the rest of the class to be respectful and engaged audience members.
• Evaluation and Assessment: You may choose to divide this project into three parts for marking—
(1) Planning, (2) Write-up of Sketches and (3) Presentation and Delivery. Self and peer
assessment forms may also be used to elicit feedback.

Project 2: Heroes, Heroines, and Villains (Individual)
Goals: To critically examine fictional heroes and
heroines in literature and how these figures
affirm or challenge the concept of honesty and
morality; to consider possible perspectives and
contexts where a popular stereotype or concept
is challenged

Focus: Critical thinking (questioning, analysis,
interpretation, evaluation)

Output: Essay and/or visual representation of
chosen hero or heroine.

Instructions:
• Review quote by Shmuley Boteach, a rabbi and parenting expert interviewed in the
documentary. He states that because of the rampant cheating in our society, “our world is
aching for more moral heroes.”
• Students will choose a hero/ heroine and villain from any form of literature (e.g. books, graphic
novels, television, film, other media). You will pre-approve their chosen characters before the
submission date.
• Students will examine their chosen characters. Heroes or heroines are supposedly models for
morality and goodness. They are usually the ones who “save the day” and make the right
decisions. People in a narrative turn to these characters for help and justice. However, the
literature eventually reveals these heroes’ and heroines’ moral flaws and inconsistencies.
Students will choose villains that demonstrate qualities that could possibly make them heroes or
heroines as well.
• The main task of this project is to outline the chosen character’s moral/ethical/good side and
the flaws and inconsistencies that complicate and jeopardize their role as moral figure. Follow
the same thought process in examining the chosen villain.
• Students must support each characterization with properly cited textual evidence.
• Students may choose to write this project in an essay format or a creative poster that show
required information.
• Provide popular examples of conflicted heroes and villains: Iron Man and The Dark Knight.
• Drafts and revisions may be assigned to engage students in the process of essay writing.
• Extension: Students may present their research and chosen characters to smaller groups and/or
the whole class.
• Evaluation: You may choose to create a rubric and checklist to track progress and marking.
FINAL NOTES

Previewing Activity 2 (Linear Array) was based on a Professional Development workshop handout distributed in a Curriculum and Instruction course at OISE, University of Toronto.

Work Cited