Pamela Meyer TED - How to spot a liar

<https://www.ted.com/talks/pamela_meyer_how_to_spot_a_liar>

Note: These classes were designed for a two hour post proficiency conversation class. I normally set the video as homework for my students the week before.

# Warmer – 2 truths and a lie

The old classic activity. Write three sentences about yourself on the board; two true and one false, I wrote:

1. I met Leo Messi and Mascherano on the beach.
2. I collect comic books.
3. I used to be a builder before I was a teacher.

Give students two minutes to ask you questions to try and catch you in a lie. Then they must say which one they think is true and explain why, did they pick up on any vocal or body language signals. Then reveal which one is a lie (number 2 for me). Award one point to each student that guessed correctly and one point to yourself for each student you duped.

Now give students five minutes to do the same; write three sentences about themselves, two true, one false and continue the game. The winner is the person with the most points, who earns the title master liespotter.

* Who was the best liar?
* Who was the best liespotter?

# Vocabulary Matching ( in the vocab sheet)

Give out the vocabulary matching sheet and the transcript. Put students in pairs and have them complete the exercise, the vocabulary words are in order as they appear in the transcript so if they get stuck they can find the word in context to aid their understanding.

Key:

1-k, 2-d, 3-j, 4-c, 5-a, 6-v, 7-t, 8-r, 9-q, 10-n, 11-e, 12-u, 13-l, 14-w, 15-x/b, 16-x/b, 17-p, 18-m, 19-o, 20-h, 21-I, 22-s, 23-g, 24-f.

# Discussion Questions

The answers to the comprehension questions can be found underlined in the transcript.

Write the following quotes from the talk on the board:

“We’re all liars”

“lying is a cooperative act”

What does she mean? Do you agree?

1. Why do people lie? Brainstorm on the board.
2. How much money did she say was lost because of fraud? *Nearly a $trillion.*
3. How much money is lost to fraud in your country?
4. Can you think of any big fraud cases?
5. How often are we lied to on an average day? *From 10-200 times*
6. What does she say about when strangers meet for the first time? *That they lie to each other on average 3 times in first 10 minutes.*
7. What does she say about the difference between men and women? *That men tend to lie more about themselves while women lie to protect people.*
8. Do you think this is true?
9. What does she say about marriage and relationships? *That married people lie to each other in 1 in every 10 interactions.*
10. What lies do couples tell each other?
11. Are these little white lies?
12. What does she say about animals lying? *Coco the gorilla blamed a kitten for ripping a sink off the wall.*
13. What does she say about how children develop their deception skills? *Babies fake crying, children hiding, bluffing and flattering to get what they want.*
14. She says we live in a post truth society, what does she mean by that? *With the internet, politics and capitalist society we are surrounded by scammers, and exaggeration.*
15. How often do normal people distinguish a lie from the truth? *54% of the time*
16. How often do liespotters distinguish a lie from the truth? *90% of the time.*
17. What are the speech patterns of a liar we see in the Clinton video? *Emphatic denial, formal phrases, distancing language.*
18. What are the body language patterns? *Freeze upper body, too much eye contact, blink more, chatter with fingertips, fidget, don’t smile with eyes.*
19. Could you identify these actions in the videos?
20. Are you a good liespotter?
21. What other videos did she show? *Grieving mothers, lying politicians.*
22. What did she say about the attitudes of honest/dishonest people? *Dishonest people tend to be more detailed, and stick to a chronological order.*

Reference

<https://freeenglishlessonplans.com/2015/04/24/ted-talk-pamela-meyer-how-to-spot-a-liar/>