How to spot a liar - Pamela Meyer

From: http://www.ted.com/talks/pamela_meyer_how_to_spot_a_liar.html

1. **Discuss the following questions:**

   a. Why do people lie? List three reasons and compare your list to your peers’.

   b. Do you find it easy to spot a lie? What are the signs of a lie?

2. **Read the examples and match the bold words to the most suitable definition:**

   1. He was found guilty of obtaining money by **deception**.
   2. I tried to **conceal** my surprise when she told me her age.
   3. Is he going to jump or is he only **bluffing**?
   4. The company tried to **cover up** its employment of illegal immigrants.

   (     ) Make someone think you are going to do something when you really are not.
   (     ) To hide, to prevent something from being seen or known about.
   (     ) to stop people discovering the truth about something bad.
   (     ) the act of hiding the truth, especially to get an advantage.

3. **Listen to each part and answer the questions:**

   **Part 1 (from 00 to 2:35): First true about lying.**

   a. She begins telling the 3 things she’s going to talk about. What are these?

   b. What do lie spotters do?

   c. What is the 1st truth she mentions? Take notes on it:

   Discuss the sentences: Lying is a corporative act. Not all lies are harmful. Do you agree or disagree?

   (break) - skip from 2:40 to 3:15

   **Part 2 (from 3:15 to 5:03): Some numbers about lying**

   a. What is Harry Oberland’s (the con man) rule about lying?
b. She mentions some studies on lying. What are the discoveries of these studies?

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c. Complete the data she shows:

1. We lie _________________________________________

2. Extroverts _____________________________________

3. Men ____________________________________________

4. Women __________________________________________

5. If you are an average couple ___________________

6. If you’re unmarried ____________________________

Discuss the data she mentions. Do you think they are real in your country?

Discuss this part of the speech. Do you agree or disagree with that idea?:

- We wish we were better husbands, better wives, smarter, more powerful, taller, richer -- the list goes on. Lying is an attempt to bridge that gap, to connect our wishes and our fantasies about who we wish we were, how we wish we could be, with what we're really like

**Part 3 (from 5:03 to 6:50): Everybody lies**

a. What is the 2nd truth she mentions? Take notes on it:

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b. Who is Koko and what did she do? What did she want to exemplify with Koko story?

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c. What examples does she give to support her argument that we start lying very early?

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**Part 4 (from 7:09 to 9:10): About lie spotting and the speech**

a. She starts talking about how to identify a lie in the speech of the liar. What are the characteristics of qualifying language that she points in Bill Clinton’s speech?

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b. What does Freud say about keeping secrets?

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Discuss: what do you understand from this sentence?
   No mortal can keep a secret. If his lips are silent, he chatters with his fingertips.

**Part 5 (from 9:15 to 11:45): About lie spotting and body language**

a. Now she is going to talk about body language. What are the myths about body language that she mention?

b. What is the attitude of an honest person in an interrogation?

c. What is the attitude of a dishonest person in an interrogation?

d. What does she mention about how dishonest people tell a story?

**Discussion:** How far do you agree with the sentence:
   “We rehearse our words but we rarely rehearse our gestures”?

**Part 6 (from 11:45 to 12:45): spotting a liar**

a. What is the Duping Delight?

b. What is the man in the video lying about? What features of his body language helps to identify he is lying?

**4. The lying game:**

Divide the group in pairs or trios. One student has to tell a story that can be either true of false. His peers have to ask for details on that story and observe the speaker’s body language. At the end of the story, the peers have to guess whether the story was a lie or not. Students swap roles.