

The week before the class is scheduled to discuss the nature of truth, I ask the students to keep a 24-hour truth journal. They are to choose a

particular 24-hour time period and make a note every time they tell a lie or think someone is telling a lie to them. At the end of the period they are to write a short reflection, summarizing their observations and then reflecting on what they observed. I also ask them to note whether they were truthful in doing the assignment.

This assignment is helpful in preparing them for a richer discussion with more nuance than abstract discussions of truth. It helps them to think more deeply about why people do lie, under what circumstances, how people balance honesty with other values and the consequences of lying over the short and long term. It can also provide examples of double standards, as invariably some will excuse their own exaggerations but be put off by those who do the same to them.