

CHEATING!



A TALKING POINTS LESSON

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Table of Contents

Introduction.....	3
Cheating.....	4
Reading Comprehension Questions.....	8
Essential Vocabulary.....	9
Discussion Questions.....	11
Everyone Cheats!.....	13
Role Play.....	14
Two Truths and A Big Fat Lie!.....	15
Writing.....	16
Credits.....	17

Introduction

Do students cheat in your country? Why do they do this? What are their methods of cheating?

Have you ever cheated in an important test or exam?

Do you think cheating is acceptable?

Cheating

Read Jay's account of what happened to him when he thought he found the perfect system for cheating in a test.

I am terrible at tests. It's not fair and I should be given some kind of compensation for this — but none of the teachers care. And my college doesn't care at all.

I study hard. I work really hard and do all the prep. But when it comes to the test I just go to pieces.

It's not that I get a little tense and feel nervous. I wish it were only that.

No, I really feel like I am having a nervous breakdown.

My brain stops working and I can't remember a single thing. I have complete memory failure.

This happens in almost every test.

I don't completely fail the test. I can do much of it. But I don't get the score I should get. The score I really deserve.

So that is why I had to devise the method to help me get a better score.

I was very impressed with the way I thought of it. I should be praised for that alone.

I was at home, in my room and studying as per usual. I was staring at some charts on my computer and going over the books at the same time.

On my desk was a bottle of energy drink — I often have one of these drinks to give me more energy to study into the night.

Many students drink these energy drinks. They are perfect for all-night cramming sessions.

I was staring at the label when I noticed that it had a lot of information on it. I think legally it has to show all the ingredients and calories — things like that.

As I was looking at the numbers of sugar levels and carbohydrates that is when it hit me.

The text that they used to print all this information was very small. To read it you had to get very close to the label or you couldn't read what it said.

And then I came up with the perfect plan — or so I thought.

I looked online for information on how to copy something — for example, a label on the side of an energy drink.

There are many apps online to help you do this and I found one very easily. Within a few minutes, I realised I could copy the exact label on the bottle in my hand.

So that's what I did.

Once I copied it, I then rewrote all the text.

But instead of it reading things about sugar and calories and stuff like that, now it had all the information I needed to do my test the next day.

I just filled the label with all the equations and calculations I needed.

It took me about three hours to get it near perfect.

Then I printed it off and cut it to the right size. I had some glue and I used that to stick the new label — my cheat sheet — to the side of the bottle.

I refilled it with water and studied it carefully.

It looked like just a normal energy drink bottle. The label was identical.

Apart from all my secret notes.

I did the test the next day and I got 98%.

I think I could have got 100% but I thought it would be a good idea to get one or two answers wrong to avoid suspicion.

My plan worked.

But then I tried it again — and again.

And then in the middle of one test, the teacher came to my desk, picked up my bottle and examined it.

He shook his head and told me to leave.

And that was the end of that.

It's really so unfair.

Reading Comprehension Questions

What is Jay's problem? Describe it clearly.

Is he a poor student? Or good?

What happens when Jay does a test?

Is Jay pleased with himself about how he created his test plan?

What was he doing when he first thought of his method?

What was on his desk? What did Jay say that students use this thing for?

What information does the bottle have on its label? Why?

What does Jay use to copy the label?

What does he write on the label? Why does he do this?

What score does Jay get in the next test?

How many times does he use this method?

What happens in the final time he uses this method?

Essential Vocabulary

compensation	prep	go to pieces
tense	nervous	a nervous breakdown
memory failure	devise	impressed
praised	as per usual	staring at
energy drink	all-night	cramming
legally	ingredients	calories
sugar levels	carbohydrates	when it hit me
text	the perfect plan	apps
rewrote	stuff like that	equations
calculations	near perfect	glue
cheat sheet	refilled	identical
avoid suspicion	shook his head	unfair

Exercise

Write down all the words and phrases in your vocabulary notebook. Look in your dictionary and find the meaning of each word. Write the definition next to each word.

Then make up your own sentences using each word or phrase.

For example:

Notebook—*a small book with pages of blank paper that students use to make notes when studying.*

“I left my notebook at home so I was unable to make any notes in my English class.”

Discussion Questions

What do you think Jay means when he says I really feel like I am having a nervous breakdown?

He says: But I don't get the score I should get. The score I really deserve. What do you think he means by this? Describe his attitude here.

Jay says that many students in his school use energy drinks for all-night cramming sessions. Do you or anyone you know use energy drinks this way? What do you think of energy drinks? Do you think they are healthy or unhealthy?

Do you think Jay is entitled? Or does he have a real condition that prevents him from performing well in a test?

Do students in your country get stressed just before a test? Can you talk about this for a while?

Are tests necessary? What is the purpose of them?

What would be a better method of assessing students, do you think?

When was the last time you had to do a test? How did you do in it? Do you think you got the score you deserved? Why/why not?

In your country, do students cheat during a test? Talk about it.

How do you prepare for a test? Describe your methods.

Do you think cheating in a test is acceptable? why/why not?

If cheating is so endemic, maybe there is something wrong with the education system. What are your thoughts on this?

What is the most ingenious cheating method you have heard of? Can you describe this?

How do people cheat in other situations? For example, taxi drivers or shop staff?

Why do people cheat? Does it mean we are not honest? What can we do about it?

Everyone Cheats!

This is a group exercise.

Get into small groups of three or four students and think of two or three ways that people cheat for each of the situations below.

- College/University Students
- Office Workers
- Taxi Drivers
- Restaurant Staff
- Online Vendors

When you are ready, present your information to the class.

Role Play

This is a role play exercise.

There are two characters in this role play:

1. The principal of the school

2. Jay in the story at the beginning of the lesson

Jay has been caught cheating in an exam. The school has a zero-tolerance policy on cheating so now Jay must face some punishment.

In the role play, the principal wants to find out why Jay cheated. He is a great student so it is a big surprise to all the teachers. As the principal, you have to ask many questions to find out why Jay cheated.

And Jay is just ashamed and embarrassed. He doesn't want to admit that he gets nervous in an exam. But what choice does he have?

Create a role play scene, practice it and then show it to all the class.

Two Truths and A Big Fat Lie!

This is a speaking game.

Work independently and think of two true things about yourself and one lie.

One by one, each student must stand before the class and write all three sentences on the board.

For example:

- **I have been to Tokyo**
- **I never go to bed after 11pm**
- **I like to play chess with my grandfather**

One of these is a lie – the class must find out which one is the big fat lie. They can do this by asking the right questions.

If you are good at lying, you should be able to come up with some great answers and maybe a convincing story!

Go round the whole class until everyone has stood up in front.

Writing

You are Jay's father.

You are very embarrassed about Jay cheating in the exam and you want to express your apologies to the principal and assure him that it will never happen again.

Make sure your letter is sincere and heartfelt.

Credits

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