OOPS!

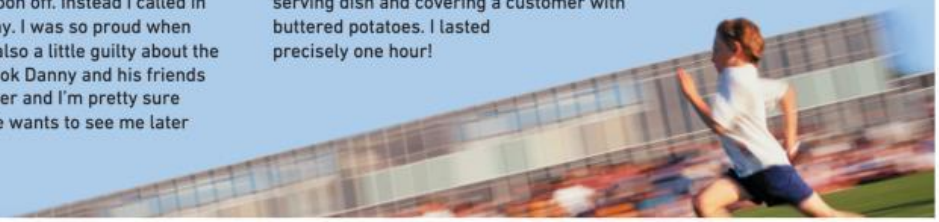
So, you think that twisting the truth a little doesn't really matter? Read about four people whose white lies had unexpected consequences. Take Alice for example, ...

A ALICE I was just married, and desperately wanted my new mother-in-law to like me. So, when she asked for my opinion of her outfit at a family dinner, I was full of admiration. No way was I going to tell the truth! The dress was purple, flowery and completely outdated. Instead I told her how lovely it was. I'd completely forgotten about the incident until she gave me a birthday present a few months later – an identical purple dress. She said it was because I'd clearly admired hers and she was looking forward to seeing me in it at the party. I wore it and hated every minute of my party that year. I'm much more careful these days about the white lies I tell. And the dress? Well, unfortunately, it somehow shrank in the wash and I haven't been able to wear it again ...

B HOLLY My young son had been looking forward to his first sports day at primary school for weeks, and I'd promised to be there, cheering him on. Then, the weekend beforehand I checked my work diary and realised I'd agreed to attend a meeting that same afternoon. If I didn't go to sports day, I would be letting down my son, but if I didn't go to the meeting, I'd be letting down my boss. What I should have done was admit my mistake and ask for the afternoon off. Instead I called in sick and I went to the sports day. I was so proud when Danny won his race, although also a little guilty about the meeting. The problem was, I took Danny and his friends for an ice cream in the park later and I'm pretty sure I saw my boss's car go past. He wants to see me later and I think I know why.

C ELLA It was only a very small exaggeration really. Well, OK, it was more of a lie – but not a big serious one. I was applying for my present job and listed my hobbies as drama, cross-country running, travelling – and then added gardening because I thought it was a bit different. I even mentioned that I'd won an award. Ha! Truth was I'd won third prize for a miniature garden at school when I was eight and in fact my mum had done most of it. So, when my office wanted ideas about designing a new outside space for our building, guess who they came to for advice? I could have lied again and made something up, but I came clean. Luckily everyone was good about it and we had a laugh sharing stories of other white lies that had had consequences later on. It was Shakespeare who said 'the truth will out', wasn't it? He was right.

D EMILY I had no idea what silver service was – but I said I did when I was being interviewed for a job as a waiter recently. I thought it would be something I could pick up as I went along, after all it wasn't as if I was an inexperienced waiter – I had served in restaurants before. However, I totally underestimated the difference between waiting tables in a small Italian restaurant, dealing mainly with pizzas and pasta dishes, and the rather more upmarket hotel I was going for. It turns out that silver service involves using a silver serving spoon and fork in the right hand to serve vegetables or meat from a dish held in the left. I definitely shouldn't have pretended I could do it! Trying to manipulate everything at the same time resulted in my dropping the serving dish and covering a customer with buttered potatoes. I lasted precisely one hour!



EXAM TASK

7 **You are going to read an article about telling white lies. For questions 1–10, choose from the sections (A–D). The sections may be chosen more than once.**

Which person

1 wanted to impress a relative? ☐
2 was unable to continue in her work? ☐
3 lied when faced with a difficult choice? ☐
4 corrects herself when describing the seriousness of her lie? ☐
5 endured a difficult social event to maintain a lie? ☐
6 is still unaware of the consequences of her lie? ☐
7 confessed to having lied before it was discovered? ☐
8 assumed something that turned out to be wrong? ☐
9 didn't enjoy an event completely as a result of her lie? ☐
10 changed her attitude to lying as a result of an experience? ☐

LIVEWORKSHEETS