

NOVA & MAYA - Learning Companion

Chapter 10 Printable Message Packet

The Lie That Sounds Helpful

Before printing

- Print one-sided at 100% size. An adult handles scissors.
- All situations are fictional and low pressure. A responsible adult is present in every child-facing case.
- Never connect the game to a child's real pickup, family, health, pet, safety, or current uncertainty.
- Never lie about real conditions. After the activity, explain which fictional information was revealed in stages.
- Keep later outcomes and the adult key covered until their reveal points.

No-printer version

Display one page at a time. Children choose message numbers and labels aloud. Keep outcome pages covered until the activity says to reveal them.

Packet contents

- Three complete younger-child cases and message choices
- Sentence strips, three-column sorting mat, and rewrite forms
- Promise Control Test and seven message-label cards
- Two complete older-child cases with staged outcomes and review sheets
- Position cards and flexible adult answer key

Younger Case 1: Museum Bus

FICTIONAL SITUATION

A fictional class is safe inside a museum with Ms. Chen. Heavy rain has delayed the bus. The driver has not given an arrival time.

MESSAGE 1

The bus will be here in five minutes. Everything is fine.

MESSAGE 2

The bus is delayed. We do not know when it will arrive.

MESSAGE 3

I don't know when the bus will arrive. I do know we are safe inside with Ms. Chen. We can play the exhibit game while she checks again.

First choice: _____ Which one feels most comforting right now? _____

Younger Case 2: Robot Demonstration

FICTIONAL SITUATION

A fictional science-club robot will not start. The children are with Mr. Ortiz. The repair helper is checking it, but no finish time is confirmed.

MESSAGE 1

The robot will work in ten minutes. I promise.

MESSAGE 2

The robot is not working. The repair time is unknown.

MESSAGE 3

I don't know when the robot will work. I do know the helper is checking it. We can test our introduction while we wait.

First choice: _____ Which one feels most comforting right now? _____

Younger Case 3: Rained-Out Picnic

FICTIONAL SITUATION

A fictional group is safe in the community room with Auntie Jo. Rain has paused the picnic. The weather notice does not say when the rain will stop.

MESSAGE 1

The rain will stop very soon, and the picnic will happen.

MESSAGE 2

The picnic is paused. The weather is uncertain.

MESSAGE 3

I don't know when the rain will stop. I do know we are dry and together. We can start the indoor scavenger hunt now.

First choice: _____ Which one feels most comforting right now? _____

Museum Bus Sentence Strips - Cut Apart

M1-S1 The bus will be here in five minutes.	M1-S2 Everything is fine.
M2-S1 The bus is delayed.	M2-S2 We do not know when it will arrive.
M3-S1 I don't know when the bus will arrive.	M3-S2 I do know we are safe inside with Ms. Chen.
M3-S3 We can play the exhibit game while she checks again.	

Robot Demonstration Sentence Strips - Cut Apart

M1-S1 The robot will work in ten minutes.	M1-S2 I promise.
M2-S1 The robot is not working.	M2-S2 The repair time is unknown.
M3-S1 I don't know when the robot will work.	M3-S2 I do know the helper is checking it.
M3-S3 We can test our introduction while we wait.	

Rained-Out Picnic Sentence Strips - Cut Apart

M1-S1 The rain will stop very soon.	M1-S2 The picnic will happen.
M2-S1 The picnic is paused.	M2-S2 The weather is uncertain.
M3-S1 I don't know when the rain will stop.	M3-S2 I do know we are dry and together.
M3-S3 We can start the indoor scavenger hunt now.	

Younger Message Sorting Mat

WE KNOW	WE DON'T KNOW YET	WE CAN DO NEXT

Younger Three-Part Rewrite Forms

MUSEUM BUS

I don't know yet _____

I do know _____

We can _____

Promise Control Test: Can the speaker control every promise? YES / NO / NOT SURE

ROBOT DEMONSTRATION

I don't know yet _____

I do know _____

We can _____

Promise Control Test: Can the speaker control every promise? YES / NO / NOT SURE

RAINED-OUT PICNIC

I don't know yet _____

I do know _____

We can _____

Promise Control Test: Can the speaker control every promise? YES / NO / NOT SURE

Message Labels and Promise Control Test

Cut-Apart Labels

FACT Supported by confirmed evidence.	ESTIMATE A best calculation with a stated basis.
HOPE Something wanted, not confirmed.	PROMISE A commitment the speaker claims will happen.
UNKNOWN Something not yet known or checked.	CARE Words that show someone is not alone.
NEXT STEP A useful action people can take now.	
PROMISE CONTROL TEST Ask: Is this promise about something the speaker can actually control? Controlled: 'I will stay with you while we wait.' Not controlled: 'Help will arrive in five minutes.'	

Older Case 1: Help Will Arrive Soon

FICTIONAL SITUATION

A youth science team is waiting in a staffed indoor room after a building communication fault. Coach Rivera is with everyone. The room is safe, but the system cannot confirm when technical help will reach them.

INFORMATION

Confirmed facts: Everyone is accounted for; Coach Rivera is present; the room is safe; the main connection is unavailable.

Estimate: Past faults often took 10-20 minutes, but today's fault has not been diagnosed.

Unknown: Whether help has received the message and when anyone will arrive.

Possible actions: Stay together; try the backup contact; give another update in ten minutes; prepare the equipment list.

MESSAGE A - FALSE CERTAINTY

Help will arrive in five minutes. Please remain calm.

MESSAGE B - COLD FACTS

Arrival time unknown. Main connection unavailable. Remain in room.

MESSAGE C - HONEST AND HELPFUL

I cannot confirm when help will arrive. I can confirm that everyone is together with Coach Rivera and the room is safe. We are trying the backup contact now and will give another update in ten minutes.

Message to send: _____ Unsupported claim, if any: _____

Older Case 1 Outcomes - Reveal in Order

IMMEDIATE OUTCOME

The five-minute message makes the group relax quickly. The cold message increases questions. The honest-and-helpful message lowers some worry because it names a safe fact, a next step, and the time of the next update.

LATER OUTCOME

Eight minutes pass. No help arrives. People who heard the five-minute claim ask why they should trust the next system message. The backup contact still has no reply, but Coach Rivera can honestly report that the room remains safe and the next check is underway.

REVIEW

KEEP, REVISE, or REPLACE: _____

What changed after the later outcome? _____

Which claim lacked evidence? _____

What would you send now? _____

Older Case 2: The Delayed Show

FICTIONAL SITUATION

A school performance is delayed by a lighting fault. All performers are safe backstage with Ms. Patel. Families are seated. A technician is working, but no restart time is confirmed.

INFORMATION

Confirmed facts: The stage is closed; performers are safe with Ms. Patel; the technician is checking the lighting panel.

Estimate: Similar repairs usually take 15-30 minutes.

Unknown: Whether this fault is similar and whether the show can restart tonight.

Possible actions: Give a new update in fifteen minutes; open the lobby activity tables; explain ticket options if cancellation becomes necessary.

MESSAGE A - FALSE CERTAINTY

The show will begin in ten minutes. Thank you for waiting.

MESSAGE B - COLD FACTS

Performance delayed. Restart time unknown.

MESSAGE C - HONEST AND HELPFUL

The show is delayed while a technician checks the lighting. Similar repairs often take 15-30 minutes, but we cannot confirm this one yet. Everyone is safe, the lobby activity tables are open, and we will update you in fifteen minutes.

Message to send: _____ Unsupported claim, if any: _____

Older Case 2 Outcomes - Reveal in Order

IMMEDIATE OUTCOME

The ten-minute message creates quick relief. The cold message leaves families unsure what to do. The honest-and-helpful message lets families choose whether to wait at their seats or visit the lobby tables.

LATER OUTCOME

Twenty minutes pass. The show has not restarted. The technician reports that another test is needed. Families who heard the ten-minute claim are frustrated. Families who received an update time are ready for the promised new information, even though the answer is still uncertain.

REVIEW

KEEP, REVISE, or REPLACE: _____

What choice did the honest message preserve? _____

Which estimate had a stated basis? _____

What would you send now? _____

Older Message Review and Rewrite Sheet

Case: _____ Chosen message: _____

Sentence 1 label: _____ Evidence or basis: _____

Sentence 2 label: _____ Evidence or basis: _____

Sentence 3 label: _____ Evidence or basis: _____

Sentence 4 label: _____ Evidence or basis: _____

Claim lacking evidence: _____

Honest unknown: _____

Statement of care: _____

Useful next step: _____

Our revised message:

Position Cards

POSITION A

When someone is frightened, it can be acceptable to leave out some uncertain details until they are calm enough to use them.

POSITION B

Leaving out important uncertainty can take away someone's ability to choose, even when the goal is comfort.

IMPORTANT LIMIT

Neither position permits inventing a false fact.

UNSURE

I need another reason, example, or piece of evidence.

EVIDENCE

Case and sentence: _____ Reason: _____

COUNTEREXAMPLE

A time the other position might work better: _____

MOVE

I stayed / moved because: _____

Flexible Adult Answer Key

Younger cases

- Message 1 in each case is emotionally warm but claims an outcome the speaker does not control. Do not call a child dishonest for choosing it first.
- Message 2 separates uncertainty from false certainty but offers little care or action.
- Message 3 includes one honest unknown, one confirmed fact, and one useful next step. Other rewrites can pass if every claim is supported or controlled.
- Controlled promises include staying with someone, checking again, or giving an update at a stated time. Arrival, weather, repair success, and exact completion times are not controlled by the speaker.

Older Case 1

- Message A turns a hope into a promise with no evidence. Its immediate calm does not make the claim true.
- Message B contains facts and an unknown but lacks care and a useful next step.
- Message C clearly separates the unknown, confirmed safety facts, actions, and a controlled promise to update in ten minutes.

Older Case 2

- Message A supplies an unsupported ten-minute restart claim.
- Message B is accurate but does not help families decide what to do while waiting.
- Message C labels the 15-30 minute range as an estimate based on similar repairs, preserves the unknown, provides choices, and promises only an update the speaker can control.

Adult debrief

Explain that all information and outcomes were fictional and staged. Ask what made the first choices reasonable, which later evidence mattered, and how the revised message protected both comfort and choice. Accept more than one defensible message when its labels and evidence are clear.