

#12059 BUZZ, BUZZ, BUZZ, DID YOU HEAR ABOUT...?

SUNBURST VISUAL MEDIA, 2004

Grade Level: 3–6

16 Minutes



CAPTIONED MEDIA PROGRAM RELATED RESOURCES

[#12054 LEARNING ABOUT HONESTY](#)

[#12056 DOING THE RIGHT THING: BUILDING CHARACTER](#)

[#12060 LISTEN TO WHAT I JUST HEARD!](#)

[#12064 LET'S MAKE UP](#)

**Buzz, Buzz, Buzz:
Did You
Hear About...?**

Grades 3-5

health
character
respect
drugs
career
harassment
violence
bullying
responsibility
alcohol
conflict
anger

8649

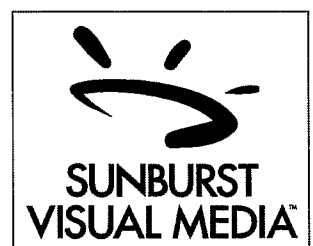


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PROGRAM OVERVIEW

Why Should Children View This Program?

Being intensely social creatures, children in the middle elementary grades typically forge connections with others through an ongoing exchange of thoughts, ideas, and experiences. Unfortunately, a good many of the thoughts, ideas and experiences that circulate around school include “buzz”—rumors and gossip that may or may not be true, but which students consider too good to keep to themselves. As this “buzz” passes from one child to another, it all too often gets blown up into something quite different from the truth, and can end up causing trouble and hurt feelings.

Using realistic scenarios, **Buzz, Buzz, Buzz: Did You Hear About...?** helps students in Grades 3 to 5 recognize how rumors and gossip get started, the ease with which they are spread, the serious consequences that may arise as a result, and how to use truth to battle both rumors and gossip. In exploring the issues involved, viewers learn why it’s important not to repeat the stories they hear, or start a rumor themselves. “If there’s buzz around your school,” the program advises, “check it out first, and better yet, don’t spread the buzz.” Thought-provoking discussion questions, suggested activities, and reproducible handouts all designed to reinforce the issues presented are to be found in this Teacher’s Guide.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After viewing the program and completing the activities in the Guide, children will:

- understand that rumors and gossip are stories that people spread without knowing whether or not they are true.
- recognize how rumors and gossip start and are spread.
- be aware of the reasons people might spread rumors and gossip.
- understand that spreading rumors and gossip can cause trouble and hurt feelings.
- learn that truth is the best defense against rumors and gossip.

PROGRAM CONTENT

The program consists of three scenarios relevant to children's experience, each of which revolves around an incident of rumor or gossip. A host introduces each of the scenarios, making clear why people start rumors or gossip, the serious consequences that may result, and how to stop rumors and gossip from spreading. A short music sequence with lyrics reinforcing the points made follows each scenario.

Before-Viewing Questions

1. When you hear a story about someone or something going around school, do you believe it? Should you?
2. What does the word "buzz" mean to you? What does it have to do with rumors and gossip?
3. How would you define a rumor? How would you define gossip?
4. Can spreading a rumor or gossip have serious consequences? Why or why not?

PROGRAM SUMMARY

Two brief clips of kids spreading rumors opens the program. The host then asks viewers, “So, what’s the buzz at your school?” Buzz, she goes on, consists of rumors and gossip, stories that float from one person to another. Such stories, she explains, can end up causing trouble and hurting feelings. So it’s important to recognize how rumors start, she says, and understand that gossip can have unintended and sometimes serious consequences.

She defines a rumor as a story that people repeat without knowing whether it’s true people start rumors for different reasons: they might think it’s funny, they might want to get even with someone else, or it might be they’re jealous. Short scenes illustrate such situations. As an introduction to the first scenario, the host explains that people may start a rumor either because they have only partial information, or they interpret something in a way that’s not exactly right.

Part 1: Goofy Gossip

Mike and Melanie are on the school grounds putting up signs for the fifth-grade bake sale, when something flies into Melanie’s eye. Dropping her sign, she yells “Owww! My eye!” Mike rushes over, and as he looks closely into Melanie’s eye, Steve and Karen walk by. From their point of view, it looks like Mike and Melanie are kissing. Finding this of more than passing interest, they decide to hide nearby to see how events unfold.

Mike, meanwhile, suggests going to the school nurse, and because Melanie’s having trouble seeing, offers her his hand. From their hiding place, Steve and Karen see the hand-holding, remember the supposed kissing, and can’t wait to tell their friends all about it. The rumor has started, the host tells viewers, and it won’t take long for it get around the school.

Soon enough, Mike and Melanie find themselves subject to lots of teasing and ridicule. Exceedingly upset, they set the record straight by telling the other kids exactly what happened. As the music sequence that follows this scenario points out, “When rumors aren’t true, that’s not good —You gotta stop a rumor by spreading the truth.”

Part 2: It's All Gossip

Other ways rumors can start are when someone doesn't get the whole story or the when someone mixes up facts, the host tells viewers. This often happens, she explains, when someone overhears a conversation not meant for their ears. Kyle's story illustrates. Allison is sitting outside the school nurse's office at the same time Kyle is talking to the nurse inside, and overhears them discussing Kyle's progress in recovering from Lyme Disease. He's much better now, he tells the nurse, who advises him to continue taking precautions. "You can't be too careful when it comes to Lyme Disease," she tells him.

Allison has misinterpreted what she has just heard, but that doesn't stop her from spreading the word at band practice that the reason Kyle has been out of school so long is because he has a disease, Lyme Disease. Worse, she tells everyone, the nurse says the disease is real easy to get if you aren't careful. Unfortunately, what she has to say impresses and scares her classmates.

Explains the host, what Allison is repeating is called gossip, which is when people talk about other people behind their backs, even though the story is none of their business. Allison doesn't have all the facts, the host points out, but gossip often starts with a rumor and then spreads quickly. Allison's gossip buzzes around the school, with the result that soon everyone is sure they will catch what Kyle has unless they stay away from him.

Horried by finding that Allison's gossip has made him a pariah, Kyle puts an end to the rumor buzz and the gossip by giving his classmates the facts—that you can't get Lyme Disease unless you're bitten by a tick. In the music sequence that follows, viewers learn that "Gossip hurts people and it's not smart; The best way to stop gossip is not to start."

Part 3: Rumors Aren't Cool!

Rumors, however, aren't always about other people, says the host. She explains that sometimes people spread rumors about themselves, to make themselves look cool, or to get attention. But like any lie, a rumor can have unpleasant consequences, as Katie found out.

Sitting around with Melanie, Megan, and Ashley, Katie hears about all the exciting things her friends will be doing over the summer. Melanie's going to the state capital because her brother's basketball team made the finals, Megan will be spending three weeks at her aunt and uncle's lake home where she will learn water-skiing, and Ashley will be learning water-skiing, too, because her sister's friend has offered to teach her.

Katie has no such exciting plans, so to seem as cool as her friends, she makes up a story. Her cousin Sabrina is a very good swimmer. So Katie tells her friends that Sabrina has made the Junior Olympics team, and she, Katie, will be going to California during the summer to see Sabrina compete. As it turns out, Katie's news gets the reaction she wants. Everyone is abuzz. Enjoying the attention, Katie starts to elaborate on the story.

It doesn't take long, however, for Sabrina to find out about the rumor and confront Katie. Katie doesn't understand why Sabrina is upset, since the story she told is positive, not mean or nasty. That doesn't matter Sabrina tells her, a lie is a lie. Besides, she says, when the story gets back to the swim team, I'll look like a fool. Katie apologizes immediately, but Sabrina is more interested in why Katie started the rumor. Hearing that Katie did it to look cool, she tells her cousin, "It's bad to lie and make up stories."

Sabrina insists that Katie set the record straight, and when Katie says she'll look like a jerk, Sabrina notes that Katie should have thought about that before she made up the story. She advises Katie to tell her friends she got mixed up, and cautions her not to do it again. "A lie usually backfires," Sabrina says. After a music sequence that urges students not to create a rumor, ". . . though it may seem cool," the program concludes with a review by the host about how to combat rumors and gossip.

GUIDELINES FOR GROUP DISCUSSION

Group discussion is an invaluable way to explore ideas and issues, foster creativity, and build communication and social skills. The following guidelines can help you maintain a “discussion-friendly” classroom:

- **Create a climate of openness and acceptance.** Encourage students to show respect for the opinions of others and model this behavior yourself.
- **Establish ground rules.** Students can participate in formulating the rules for discussion. Rules will vary, but should include some of these general principles:
 - No putdowns, ridicule or sarcasm.
 - Everyone may speak without interruption.
 - Everyone has the right to pass.
- **Guard against inappropriate self-disclosure.** An intense discussion may lead students to reveal inappropriate information about themselves or others. Sensitivity and vigilance can help you head off such revelations.
- **Probe behind the neat and tidy answers.** Children are good at telling adults what they think adults want to hear. To find out what students really think, it is often helpful to prolong discussion time and encourage greater depth. Offer a “What if...?”; bring out issues such as fairness, justice, intent or lack of it, and so on. Children have a remarkable capacity to discern complexities and subtleties, and their discussions can be very rich.
- **Pause for discussion.** Some children may benefit from pausing for discussion after each segment of the program. This gives them the opportunity to more immediately reflect on the content as well as on their own experiences.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Part 1: Goofy Gossip

1. How would you define buzz? How is it spread?
2. Does buzz go on at your school? Discuss whether it is a problem.
3. What is the definition of a rumor? What are some reasons people might decide to start a rumor?
4. What is wrong with Steve and Karen's interpretation of what is going on between Mike and Melanie? What could they have done to learn the facts?
5. How did Mike and Melanie stop the rumor?
6. Suppose you hear a rumor that's true. Does that make it okay to repeat? Do you think a truthful rumor is different from an untruthful one?

Part 2: It's All Gossip

1. How did the rumor about Kyle's disease get its start? What did Allison do that she shouldn't have done?
2. Does gossip differ from spreading rumors? Explain your answer.
3. Have you ever heard someone repeat gossip? Did you think about whether or not it was true? Why or why not?
4. Suppose the gossip is true. Does that make it okay to repeat? Do you think truthful gossip would be as hurtful as untrue gossip?
5. What's wrong with repeating gossip? What should you do instead?
6. Have you ever been able to stop the spread of gossip about someone? Describe the incident and its outcome, making sure that you refer to the people involved as "a friend" or "someone I know."

Part 3: Rumors Aren't Cool!

1. What are some reasons people might spread rumors about themselves?
2. Is such a rumor any different from a lie? Why or why not?
3. Why do you think Katie felt she had to make up a story? Why would she want to make the story bigger and bigger?
4. What happens when Sabrina hears the rumor? How did the rumor make her feel?
5. Katie tells Sabrina, "I didn't say anything bad about you." Does this make Katie's lying right? Why or why not?
6. What does Sabrina tell Katie to do to set the record straight? What is Katie's response?
7. Sabrina tells Katie, "A lie usually backfires." Do you agree? Why or why not?

BULLETIN BOARD STARTERS

- Create a concept web about rumors and gossip. Tack a large piece of oaktag to the bulletin board, write the words “rumors” and “gossip” in the center in big letters and circle it. Invite students to come up with any word or short phrase they associate with these two words. Write each suggestion on the oaktag, drawing a line from the center circle to each word or phrase and grouping similar suggestions together. Have students look at the web together and lead a short discussion on whether or not the words all seem to be related. Leave the web on the bulletin board for students to write in additional words if they wish.
- Invite students to create a four-panel cartoon story about an individual who finds out that someone has spread a rumor about him or her, and how he or she is able to stop the rumor. Have students use balloon captions to move the story along. Display the finished work on the bulletin board.
- Haiku is a form of Japanese poetry that consists of 17 syllables in three lines. Here is an example:

If you tell a lie
Someone maybe hurt and sad.
The truth is better.

The first line has five syllables, the second has seven syllables, and the third line has five syllables. Have students create haikus based on why truth is the best way to combat a rumor or gossip. Display the finished poems on the bulletin board.

- Invite students to interview a parent or other grown-up about whether a lot of rumors or gossip buzzed around when they were in school. Have students ask the person interviewed to describe, if possible, a particular incident and its outcome, and then write it up. Post the compositions on the bulletin board for others to read.
- Have each student compose a short essay about why someone might think starting a rumor would be fun, and how the rumor’s spread can cause trouble for both the rumor-monger and the person about whom the rumor is spread. Post the essays on the bulletin board.

SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES

Language Arts; Communication

To help students understand how rumors are spread, have the class participate in a game of “Telephone”. With everyone in a circle, start the game off by whispering a message of a sentence or two to the student on your right, who in turn whispers it to the next student, and so on. When the message comes back to you, announce aloud what you heard. Then announce what you said originally. Lead a discussion on why the message might have changed and why it’s important to recognize how rumors and gossip often get distorted in the telling and the serious consequences that may result.

Language Arts; Critical Thinking

Many incidents in movies and television sitcoms are based on one character’s starting a rumor about another, or making up a story about themselves to seem more important than they really are. Invite students to watch out for one or more such incidents they might see in a movie or show over the course of a week or ten days. Ask them as they watch to think about the question, “What did you learn about the consequences that can result from spreading a rumor or gossip?” Have them give an oral or written report to the class on what they learned.

Music; Creative Expression

Copy the lyrics of the program’s songs on the chalkboard. Lead students in reciting the words of each song together, or ask for volunteers to sing a solo, using any tune they prefer. Divide students into groups of three or four. Ask each group to come up with an original stanza or two of additional lyrics, asking, “Did You Hear About . . .?” and describing how rumors start small and then blow into something different from the truth. Groups may choose to perform the lyrics in any number of musical styles, from rock to rap to opera.

Art; Creative Expression

Give each student a piece of oaktag or heavy construction paper and have them create posters “selling” the importance of stopping rumors and gossip by making sure the truth gets out. Have them look at advertisements in magazines and newspapers for ideas. Tell them they can work on their own or with a partner. Display the finished posters on classroom walls or outside the classroom, if possible, for other students to see.

Language Arts; Creative Expression

Explain that people who are always gossiping or spreading rumors often end up not being believed at all. Read aloud to students one of the most popular of Aesop’s fables, “The Boy Who Cried Wolf.” Have students write their own interpretation of the story and illustrate it, or as an alternative, draw a four-panel cartoon illustrating their interpretation, using balloon captions to move the story along. Display the students’ creations on the bulletin board or classroom walls.

LYRICS

Buzz, buzz, buzz did you hear the buzz?
There's a story goin' round—
Did you hear what it was?
When rumors aren't true - that's not good.
You gotta stop a rumor by spreading the truth!

Buzz, buzz, buzz did you hear the buzz?
There's a story goin' round—
Did you hear what it was?
Gossip hurts people and it's not smart
The way to stop gossip is not to start!

Buzz, buzz, buzz did you hear the buzz?
There's a story goin' round—
Did you hear what it was?
Don't start a rumor—though it might seem cool
Rumors cause trouble, that's the rule

SEND-HOME PAGE

Dear Family Member:

Your child has viewed a video program called “**Buzz, Buzz, Buzz: Did You Hear About...?**” This program is designed to help students in the middle elementary grades understand what rumors and gossip are and how they are spread. Its goal is to help students recognize the serious consequences that may result from repeating rumors and gossip, and to show them how they can stop the further spread of any rumors or gossip they hear.

The video makes clear that:

- a rumor is a story that people repeat without knowing whether or not it is true.
- people may start a rumor either because they have only partial information or fail to interpret what they see or hear correctly.
- gossip is when someone talks about another person behind their back, even though the story is none of their business.
- sometimes people spread rumors about themselves, to make themselves look cool or to get attention.
- the best way to combat rumors and gossip is to not start them, avoid listening to them, and to use truth as the best defense.

Talk with your child about the importance of not spreading gossip or not passing on stories about others that may or may not be true. Create openings for discussion by asking “What if?” questions. “What if you heard something about someone that isn’t meant to get out, or just isn’t true?” “What if someone started a story on purpose and it caused trouble?” What if the rumor is about you? Reading books together about rumors and gossip can also provide a springboard for discussion. Here are two books that can help:

Love, Ann. *The Prince Who Wrote a Letter*. Child’s Play International, 1995.

Moser, Adolph. *Don’t Tell a Whopper on Friday: The Children’s Truth-Control Book*. Landmark Edition, 1999.

TAKE-HOME BOOK

Draw pictures to go with the words, and then cut and staple the pages to make a book.



Alyssa overhears Sam tell Matt he didn't get a good grade on the big math test.

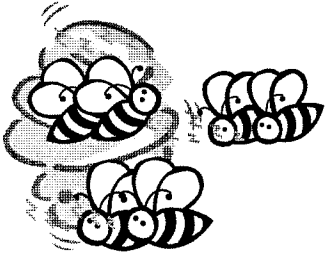
Alyssa tells Chelsie that Sam may be flunking math.

Chelsie spreads the story that Sam might be held back.

Soon everyone in the class knows the story.

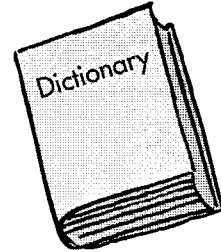
When Sam hears what everyone is saying, he is upset. He decides to set the record straight.

He makes it clear that he only missed two problems, which was disappointing, but still good.



LOOK IT UP

Use a dictionary to look up the meaning of the following words. Then define each one, using your own words, and put each in a sentence to show you understand its meaning.

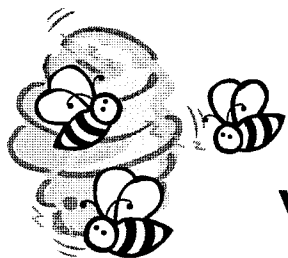


A Misunderstanding is _____

A Rumor is _____

A Rumormonger is _____

Gossip is _____



WHAT'S IN A WORD?

There are lots of hidden words in the word **MISUNDERSTANDING**. See how many words of three letters, four letters, or five or more letters you can find. The letters do not have to be in the same order as in the word "misunderstanding". Here are a few to start you off.

M-I-S-U-N-D-E-R-S-T-A-N-D-I-N-G

Three letters

sun

tan

Four letters

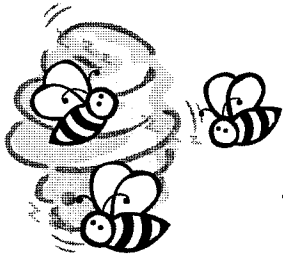
true

dine

Five or more letters

stand

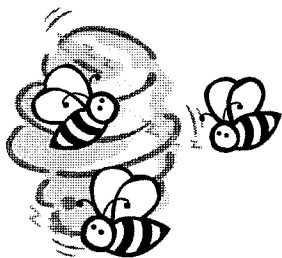
grind



WHAT'S THE BUZZ?

Just as a bee buzzes from flower to flower, so a rumor buzzes from person to person. Have you ever heard a rumor and repeated it to someone without checking it out? Describe the situation and its outcome. Draw a picture of how you felt when you found out the rumor wasn't true.

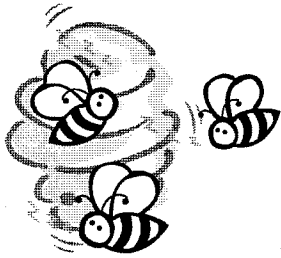




AGREE OR DISAGREE?

Here are some statements about rumors and gossip. Mark each one to show whether you agree or disagree. Then get together with a partner or a small group to discuss your answers.

Agree	Disagree	
		1. Repeating a rumor is different from repeating a harmless fact.
		2. A rumor often starts with information that's not exactly right.
		3. When you hear a secret, it's hard not to repeat it.
		4. A good way to stop gossip is to ask questions.
		5. Rumors often start small but then get blown up into something very different.
		6. It's not really lying to spread a rumor about yourself.
		7. Starting a rumor can lead to a lot of fun.
		8. The best way to fight a rumor is to make sure everyone knows the truth.
		9. If you know someone is a gossip, it's a good idea not to repeat the things that person tells you.
		10. Gossip that's true can be as hurtful as gossip that isn't true.



HOW IT GOT STARTED

Make a storybook about how the gossip about Mike's kissing Melanie got started.

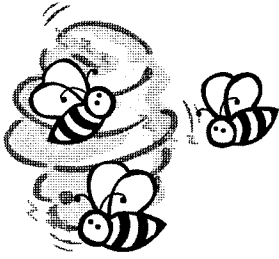


When Melanie got something in her eye,
Mike bent over to look more closely.

Steve and Karen walked by and thought
Mike and Melanie were kissing. They hid
nearby.

Mike suggested Melanie go see the school
nurse. Because Melanie's had trouble see-
ing, Mike took her hand, to lead her along..

Steve and Karen rushed to e-mail every-
body that Mike and Melanie were kissing
and holding hands.



IT'S THE RIGHT THING

Write your own ending to each of these sentences.

Not starting a rumor about someone is best because...

Using truth and facts to battle rumors is a good thing to do because...

It's not a good idea to make up stories to make yourself appear cool because...

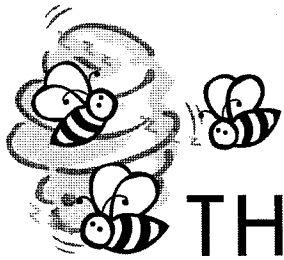
Name _____

WHAT COULD YOU DO?

Imagine that your best friend tells you he/she just heard someone saying something about you that you know is not true. What could you do? What could you tell him/her to do?

Write about it. It's better not to use people's real names in the story.

[illegible]



THE SCOOP ON RUMORS

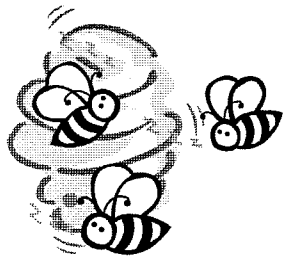
Rumors get started because people...

- hear news that's too good to keep to themselves
- want to feel a part of a group
- want attention
- want to seem cool
- think spreading a rumor is fun
- think buzz is better than boredom

You can act to stop a rumor by...

- making the rumor stop with you
- getting the true facts
- not taking part in spreading something hurtful
- refusing to be an audience
- ignoring it

Making use of these ideas of how rumors start and can be stopped, get together with one or two partners and write a short play. If you like, perform it for your classmates.

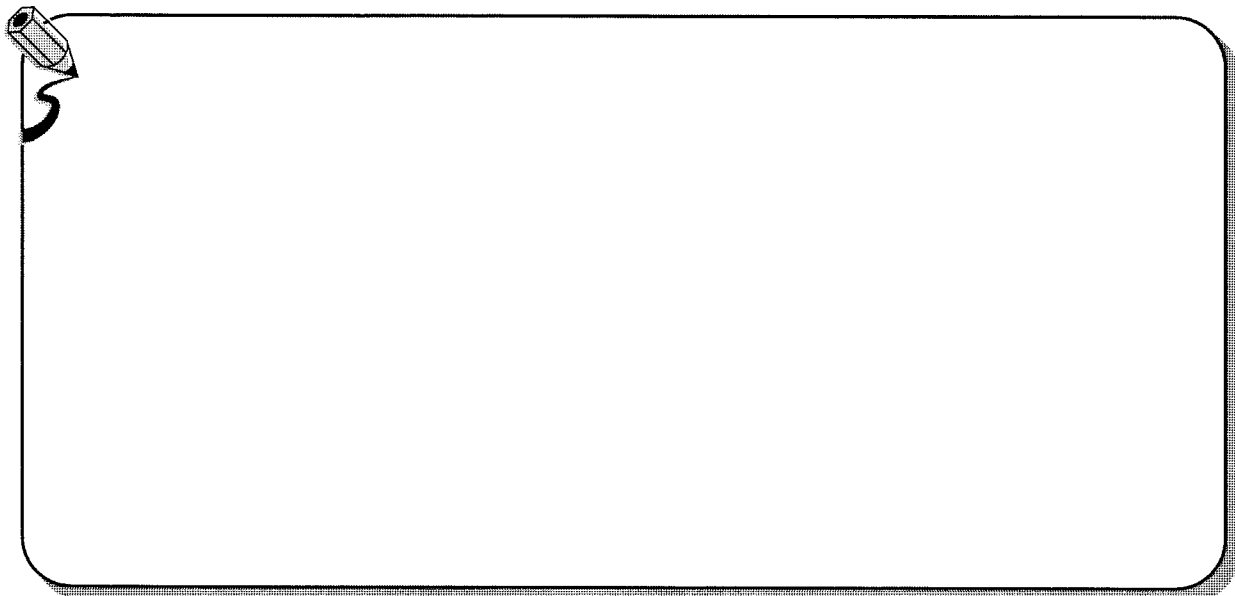


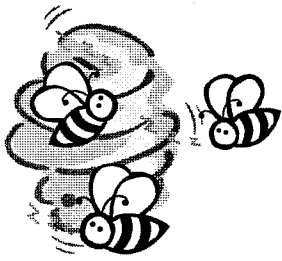
DO RUMORS HAVE LEGS?

A rumor without a leg to stand on will get around some other way. — John Tudor

Write a short paragraph about what you think is the meaning of this saying.

Now use your imagination to draw a picture of how a legless rumor gets around.





BE A POET

What have you learned about rumors and gossip? On the lines below, write a poem about it. Illustrate your poem if you like.



IF I WANTED EVERYONE TO KNOW, I'D TELL THEM MYSELF

Sometimes a rumor or gossip may be true. But that doesn't mean that it should be repeated. Very often, a true story can be just as harmful as a lie. Maybe even more hurtful. Write a story about someone whose private story is the subject of gossip. It may be something that is personal or something that the person just doesn't want others to know and talk about. As you write, imagine how you would feel if that happened to you.

SUGGESTED READING

General Reading for Educators and Parents

Coles, Robert. *The Moral Life of Children*. Boston: Atlantic Monthly Press, 1986.

A searching inquiry into the moral awareness of children.

Dunbar, Robin. *Grooming, Gossip, and the Evolution of Language*. Harvard University Press, 1998. A fresh and witty look at a provocative thesis: that the need for gossip is the human version of primate grooming.

Eyre, Linda and Richard. *Teaching Your Child Sensitivity*. Fireside, 1995. Explores the concept of sensitivity, provides parents with a practical guide for teaching and reinforcing sensitivity skills in their children.

Neubauer, Hans-Joachim. *The Rumour: A Cultural History*. Free Association Books, 1999. A wide-ranging tour of the historical and cultural manifestations of rumors that exposes the mechanisms that lend rumors their dynamism.

Pike, Kathy, et al. *Teaching Kids to Care and Cooperate: 50 Easy Writing, Discussion and Art Activities That Help Develop Self-Esteem, Responsibility and Respect for Others*. Scholastic Professional Book Division, 2000. Easy to adapt for any grade level, offers activities and ideas that focus on caring and cooperation.

Schulman, Michael, and Eva Mekler. *Bringing Up a Moral Child: A New Approach for Teaching Your Child to Be Kind, Just, and Responsible*. Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley Publishing Co., 1985. A guide for parents and educators.

Books for Grades 3 to 5

Clark, Kathy. *Rumor Has It*. Pocket Books, 2001. Stephanie and her friends are spending the summer in Europe, but Stephanie's old rival is spreading rumors about Stephanie to snag Stephanie's new French boyfriend for herself. For Grades 5 and up.

- Diersch, Sandra. *Great Lengths*. James Lorimer & Son, 1999. Jessie desperately wants to hang on to her position as Club Queen on the Vancouver swimming team, and doesn't care how she does it.
- Doyle, Dennis M., and Patrick Doyle. *Rumors at School*. Paulist Press, 2001. After he starts telling lies, 11-year-old Patrick finds that even a small fib can have serious consequences.
- Ketteman, Helen. *Armadillo Tattletale*. Scholastic, 2000. Armadillo uses his big ears to overhear everyone's conversations, but then repeats what he hears, giving it a little twist that makes everyone feel bad. For younger readers.
- Kimball, Kate. *The Secret's Out*. Minstrel Books, 1994. After Stephanie is identified as the person who writes the anonymous gossip column for the school newspaper, she worries her classmates will realize not all her stories are fact, and will throw her over.
- Kraus, Robert. *Mert the Blurt*. Simon & Schuster, 1988. A blabbermouth with whom no secret is safe finds a special niche in the news world. For younger readers.
- Krulik, Nancy. *Doug's Vampire Caper*. Disney Press, 1997. When Connie spreads the rumor that there's a Bat Master in the halls, Doug and Skeeter learn a valuable lesson in friendship.
- Krull, Kathleen. *The Night the Martians Landed: Just the Facts (Plus the Rumors) About Invaders from Mars*. HarperCollins Children's Books, 2003. How a radio play about a Martian invasion made so many listeners interpret fiction as fact. For Grades 4 and up.
- Levy, Elizabeth. *Rude Rowdy Rumors: Starring Brian and Pea Brain*. Harper Trophy, 1995. Brian's talent for soccer quickly leads him to become the victim of vicious rumors.
- Love, Ann. *The Prince Who Wrote a Letter*. Child's Play International, 1995. In this entertaining story, news about little Prince Paul's letter gets embellished by each person who receives and passes it on, almost causing a war between two countries before all is set right.

- Macdonald, Alan. *Snarlyhissopus*. Tiger Tales, 2002. As Pelican's news about a "spottyhippomus" spreads from animal to animal, the facts get hideously distorted, making it evident that the game of "telephone" is hard at work in the jungle.
- Lowell, Melissa. *Rumors at the Rink*. Bantam Books, 1995. The newest member of the Silver Blades Skating Team doesn't want her beloved coach to resign, and is willing to try anything to convince her to stay.
- Lowry, Lois. *Your Move, J.P.* Houghton Mifflin/Walter Lorraine Books, 1990. J.P. is in love, but he has a problem: the web of lies he spins, although inconsequential, threatens him with a series of ever-growing problems.
- Madonna. *Mr. Peabody's Apples*. Callaway Editions, 2003. A poignant lesson for kids about how we must choose our words carefully to avoid causing harm to others. For younger readers.
- Messer, Celeste M. *The Boy Who Cried Wolf (Adventures of Andi O'Malley, 9)*. Ashley Alan Enterprises, 2002. Andi must decide whether or not to believe a boy, known for his practical jokes and lying, who says he needs her help in order to avert a disaster.
- Moser, Adolph. *Don't Tell a Whopper on Friday: The Children's Truth Control Book*. Landmark Edition, 1999. Investigates the problems associated with telling lies, the importance of telling the truth, and ways that can help an individual choose to be truthful.
- Murphy, Catherine Frey. *Alice Dodd and the Spirit of Truth*. Atheneum, 1993. Trying to impress her artist aunt, 12-year-old Alice invents some exciting details about herself and her life, only to get into trouble once her fibs begin to backfire.

Internet Resources

For an article for kids, "The Scoop on Gossip":

http://kidshealth.org/kid/feeling/friend/gossip_p2.html

For an article, "Gossip and Rumors," from the PBS Website "It's My Life":

http://pbskids.org/itsmylife/friends/rumors/you_said_it.html

Related Materials from Sunburst Visual Media

“Put Yourself in Someone Else’s Shoes: Building Character”

16-minute program for Grades 3 to 5

“What Is Honesty? Building Character”

14-minute program for Grades 3 to 5

“*Student Workshop* Building Healthy Relationships”

24-minute program for Grades 3 to 5

“*Student Workshop* Harassment Hurts: Gossiping, Taunting, and Bullying”

23-minute program for Grades 3 to 5

“*Student Workshop* I Was Just Kidding! Learning About Harassment”

17-minute program for Grades 3 to 5

“Guess What I Just Heard? Rumors and Gossip”

Pamphlet for Grades 3-5

SCRIPT

MELANIE

Guess what I heard?

KYLE

What?

MELANIE

Jason's gonna be held back next year. Do you believe it?

KYLE

You're kidding. How do you know?

MELANIE

Eric told me. He heard it from Danny.

MUSIC SEQUENCE:

Buzz, buzz, buzz did you hear the buzz?

MIKE

Listen to this—Melanie told me that Jessica isn't going to invite Sam to her party.

ALLISON

No way! Are you sure?

MIKE

That's what she heard.

HOST

So—what's the buzz at your school? Who's got bad grades? Who's friends? Who's not? What I'm talking about of course are rumors and gossip. You know, those stories that float around from one person to another. Well, those stories can end up causing trouble and hurting feelings—someday maybe even you. It's important to recognize how rumors start and understand that gossip can have serious consequences. So, let's talk about the buzz!

HOST

Do you know what a rumor is? Well, technically, a rumor is a story that people repeat without knowing whether it's really true or not. Sometimes people start rumors because they think it will be funny.

JILL

Let's tell everyone that Amber wears boy's underwear!

KAREN

That's funny. Really funny.

HOST

Sometimes people spread rumors to get even with someone else or because they're jealous.

PETER

You know why Robert made the All-Star Team, don't you?

JOHN

No, why?

PETER

Because his father's best friends with the Coach.

HOST

Sometimes people start rumors because they see something happen—but they don't see the whole thing or they interpret what they see in a way that's not exactly right. Let's take a look.

Goofy Gossip**HOST**

One day Melanie and Mike were outside putting up signs for the 5th grade bake sale. Just as Melanie got the sign in the place, something flew in her eye.

MELANIE

Owww! My eye.

MIKE

What is it?

MELANIE

I don't know. It really hurts.

MIKE

Let me see?

HOST

At that same time Steve and Karen were walking by and saw Mike looking at Melanie's eye.

KAREN

What are Mike and Melanie doing?

STEVE

It looks like they're kissing.

KAREN

Wow! I think you're right.

STEVE

Quick hide over here.

MELANIE

It really hurts.

MIKE

We better go to the nurse.

MELANIE

My eye's all teary—I can't really see.

MIKE

Here—hold my hand.

STEVE

They're holding hands.

KAREN

I can't wait to tell Jennifer and Michelle.

STEVE

I'm e-mailing Kevin and Josh when I get home.

HOST

Well this the start of a rumor and it won't take long to get all around the school.

STEVE & PETER

Hey kissy, kissy.

MIKE

You guys are weird!

PETER

Where's your girlfriend?

MIKE

What are you talking about?

STEVE

C'mon Mike. You're so busted. Karen and I saw you kissing Melanie.

MIKE

You're nuts.

KAREN

So is he a good kisser?

MELANIE

Who?

MEGAN

C'mon. Karen saw you and Mike kissing.

KAREN

And then you were holding hands. I saw it with my own eyes.

MELANIE

What?

HOST

Melanie and Mike are really upset. The kids are spreading stories about them that aren't true. And they're embarrassed. So, what can they do to battle the rumor? They can tell the truth. And that's what Melanie and Mike are going to do.

MIKE

Listen, Melanie got something in her eye and I was helping her get it out.

MELAINE

And then I couldn't see, so Mike helped get me to the nurse's office.

MIKE

So please tell everyone to stop spreading these stupid stories about us.

MELAINE

Yeah—it's really not nice.

HOST

The key to stopping the rumorbuzz? Set the record straight and soon that'll be the story that's buzzing around. But at least this time—the buzz will be the truth.

MUSIC SEQUENCE:

Buzz, buzz, buzz did you hear the buzz?

There's a story goin' round—

Did you hear what it was?

When rumors aren't true- that's not good.

You gotta stop a rumor by spreading the truth!

It's All Gossip

HOST

Rumors can also start because someone doesn't get the whole story or because they don't get the facts straight. That often happens when someone overhears a conversation that isn't any of their business. Here's what I mean.

NURSE

How are you feeling?

KYLE

Much better.

NURSE

Good. I was so sorry to hear that you had Lyme Disease. Let me take a look. Well, your rash is certainly improving.

KYLE

Yeah—it's a lot less red.

NURSE

Are you feeling achy? Some people with Lyme Disease get very achy.

KYLE

Not so much.

NURSE

Well it's important that you got treatment early—before it got worse. That can happen you know. And it can have long-term effects.

KYLE

I know.

NURSE

Did your brother get it?

KYLE

Yeah – it seemed like everybody on the camping trip got it.

NURSE

That's why it's so important to take all of the necessary precautions especially at this time of year. You can't be too careful when it comes to Lyme Disease.

ALLISON

You won't believe what I just heard?

SEAN

What?

ALLISON

You know why Kyle's been out of school?

JOHN

Yeah- he's been sick.

ALLISON

Not just sick. He has some disease. It's calleduhm....Lyme Disease.

JILL

Sounds disgusting.

ALLISON

And you get a rash—a big ugly rash—and it's all achy.

JOHN

How do you get it?

ALLISON

That's the thing. I heard him talking to the school nurse and she said it's very easy catch.

SEAN

Really?

ALLISON

Yeah—and Kyle said that everyone on his camping trip got.

JILL

Wow!

ALLISON

That's why you have to take...uhm...precautions.

JOHN

So we could catch it.

ALLISON

That's what she said. Mostly at this time of the year.

SEAN

Wow.

HOST

Let's look at this situation. Allison heard Kyle and the Nurse talking. She doesn't have all the facts, but that isn't stopping her from talking about Kyle to the other kids. The story that Allison is telling is called gossip. Gossip is when people talk about other people behind their backs, even though the story is really none of their business. Very often gossip starts with a rumor. In this case, the rumor is that Kyle has a disease that the other kids can catch. Where will the gossip end up? Let's find out.

JILL

Did you hear about Kyle?

PETER

No.

JILL

He has some disease that you could catch in a minute.

PETER

You're kidding.

JILL

No, anyone can get it. I would be careful if I were you.

PETER

Wow! That's scary.

PETER

Did you hear Kyle has some a weird disease. You get this disgusting rash.

MICHELLE

Are you sure?

PETER

That's what he said. And listen to this anybody can catch it.

MICHELLE

I And I sit right next to him in class.

PETER

You better be careful. You could catch it.

MICHELLE

Oooh! Gross.

MIKE

How do you know you can catch it?

PETER

That's what everybody's saying.

MIKE

You think it's true? Just because everybody says it.

PETER

Well...

MIKE

You should ask him.

PETER

Ask him? I'm not gonna go near him.

KYLE

Okay, first we have to take the scissors. Here Michelle, why don't you cut the string.

MICHELLE

Hold on.

KYLE

What's the matter with you?

MICHELLE

I heard you had some strange disease. I'm not touching touch anything you touch.

KYLE

What!

MIKE

That's so mean.

KYLE

What's going on?

MIKE

Well, people are saying that you have a disease and it's real easy to catch.

KYLE

You can't catch Lyme Disease.

MICHELLE

That's not what the nurse said.

KYLE

Who heard the nurse?

PETER

Allison—she was right outside.

KYLE

Well she shouldn't listen to other people's conversations...besides, she heard wrong.

MIKE

So what's the story. How do you catch it?

KYLE

You have to be bitten by a tick that's carrying the disease first.

SEAN

So, we can't catch it from you?

KYLE

No. Do you think I'd be allowed to come to school with a disease that you could catch?

MICHELLE

That make sense. I never thought of that. Wait 'til I tell Peter.

JILL

And Allison.

MIKE

And everyone else.

KYLE

Yeah. Please let everyone know that I'm okay. You can't catch this from me.

MICHELLE

Sorry.

HOST

Kyle knew the best way to stop the rumor buzz and the gossip. And that's the get the facts. If you don't know if a story is true—don't repeat it. But even if the story is true, you still shouldn't talk about someone behind their back. That's gossiping. Think about how you would feel if the gossip was about you.

MUSIC SEQUENCE:

Buzz, buzz, buzz did you hear the buzz?

There's a story goin' round—

Did you hear what it was?

Gossip hurts people and it's not smart

The best way to stop gossip is not to start!

Rumors Aren't Cool!

HOST

So we know that people spread rumors for all kinds of reasons: because they think it's funny, because they're jealous; because they don't get the story straight. But rumors aren't always about other people. Sometimes people spread rumors about themselves. They tell a story that they think will make them look cool or get them some attention. But like any lie, the rumor usually has unpleasant consequences. Take a look.

MELANIE

Guess where I'm going this weekend.

ASHLEY

Where?

MELANIE

To the state capital. My brother's baseball team made it to the finals, so we're all going. Isn't that cool?

KATIE

Wow. You're so lucky.

MELANIE

Yeah, they're going to play in the stadium—with dugouts and everything.

MEGAN

That is so cool.

MELANIE

Yeah, everyone is making such a big deal about it. It was in the newspaper and everything.

MEGAN

Well I have some news too.

MELANIE

What?

MEGAN

My aunt and uncle rented a house at a lake and I get to stay there for three weeks in the summer.

MELANIE

That is so cool!

MEGAN

Three whole weeks. And you can rent boats and go water skiing.

ASHLEY

Water skiing! Do you know how?

MEGAN

No, but I can take lessons at the community center.

ASHLEY

It's so funny that you're gonna take water skiing lessons.

MEGAN

Why?

ASHLEY

Because my sister just learned how and she and her friend said they'd teach me.

MEGAN

Then we can do it together.

ASHLEY

That'll be so much fun.

HOST

Well everyone had exciting and cool news. Everyone that is except Katie. She didn't have any news cool or otherwise. But as she sat there listening to her friends an idea came to her and suddenly she said...

KATIE

Well I have some exciting news too. You know my cousin Sabrina.

MEGAN

The real good swimmer?

KATIE

Yup, and guess what?

MELANIE

What?

KATIE

She made the Junior Olympic team.

MELANIE

What!

KATIE

Yup and she's gonna compete this summer in uhm California.

MEGAN

That is so cool.

MELANIE

Wow. Are you going to watch her swim?

KATIE

Of course.

MEGAN

When is it?

KATIE

Uhm...I'm not sure.

HOST

Well Katie's news was a big deal. And soon a lot of other kids heard about Sabrina and Katie's trip to the Junior Olympics.

PETER

I heard about your cousin. Awesome.

KATIE

Thanks.

JILL

Are you going to be allowed to hang out with the team?

KATIE

Oh...yeah.... Sabrina brings me everywhere.

JILL

Wow! You're so lucky.

HOST

Katie was really enjoying all the attention she was getting from the other kids. So she started to make the story even bigger.

KATIE

My cousin said that some of the swimmers from the real Olympic Team are coming to her meet and she's going to introduce me to them.

KAREN

Really.

KATIE

One time she met a Gold Medal winner.

MEGAN

Oh my gosh. That is so cool.

KATIE

One time she tried on the Gold Medal just to see how it looked on her.

STEVE

That's so cool.

KATIE

I bet I'll get to try one on too.

HOST

So the rumor kept going around and around and getting bigger and bigger. And it wasn't too long before the rumor got to Sabrina.

KAREN

Aren't you Katie's cousin Sabrina?

SABRINA

Yes.

STEVE

We heard all about you.

SABRINA

You did?

KAREN

Everyone at school is really excited for you.

STEVE

And so jealous that Katie's going to go with you.

SABRINA

Go with me? Where?

KAREN

To the Junior Olympics of course.

STEVE

We're all rooting for you.

SABRINA

Katie, I think we need to talk.

KATIE

What is it?

SABRINA

Have you been spreading rumors about me?

KATIE

Well... I never said anything bad about you.

SABRINA

I didn't say "bad" I said a rumor.

KATIE

Well

SABRINA

Have you been telling people I made the Junior Olympic Team?

KATIE

I only told Megan and Melaine and Ashley at first.

SABRINA

Well that was enough. Everyone thinks I'm on the team and now I look like I'm bragging

and trying to make myself a big deal. When this gets back to the team, I'm going to look like a total fool.

KATIE

I'm sorry.

SABRINA

Why did you do it?

KATIE

I don't know. It just kind of came out. I didn't plan to. We were all hanging out and everyone was saying all this cool stuff that they were doing and I wanted to look cool too so

SABRINA

You made up a story.

KATIE

Yeah.

SABRINA

And you started this rumor.

KATIE

But it wasn't anything mean or nasty about you.

SABRINA

That doesn't matter. A rumor doesn't have to be something mean or nasty or bad. But it is bad to lie and make up stories.

KATIE

I'm sorry.

SABRINA

Well you better set the record straight.

KATIE

What will I do? If I tell everyone I made it up, then I'll really look like a jerk.

SABRINA

You should have thought about that before you made up the story.

KATIE

You're right but what should I do now.

SABRINA

Tell them you got mixed up. Which by the way is true. You didn't have the story straight. And don't do that again. A lie usually backfires.

HOST

Sabrina is right on both counts. A rumor doesn't have to be a something bad about someone. And a made-up story is never good. So remember, don't lie, don't make-up stories and don't spread rumors or gossip.

MUSIC SEQUENCE:

Buzz, buzz, buzz did you hear the buzz?

There's a story goin' round—

Did you hear what it was?

Don't start a rumor—though you think it's cool

Rumors cause trouble, that's the rule

HOST

Buzz, buzz, buzz—Now that we've explored some of the issues and consequences of rumors and gossip we've learned that you can use the truth to battle rumors and that when it comes to gossip, don't even get started. We also found out that you should never start a rumor yourself. That can really backfire. If there's a buzz around your school—check it out first—and better yet don't spread the buzz around.

THE END