

The Clean No

Eight activities

Activity 1: Remember the story

1. What does the youth director ask Sara-Lee, and what is Sara-Lee's honest answer?
2. What happens to the classmate who dodged the trip committee with a "family thing"?
3. How does Sara-Lee's mother decline the dinner committee, and what does she offer instead?
4. What bounded yes does Sara-Lee offer the director, and how does it go?

Activity 2: Fact or guess

1. Sara-Lee tells the youth director she is too busy for anything at all. Fact / Guess
2. The committee chair moves the meetings to Wednesday so the classmate can attend. Fact / Guess
3. Sara-Lee's mother gives the dinner committee a detailed excuse. Fact / Guess
4. The director says she will ask Sara-Lee again next term. Fact / Guess

Activity 3: Think and write

1. "An excuse is a loan." Explain the loan: what does it buy, and what is the interest?
2. The mother says, "There's nothing wrong with my reason, so I don't need to hide it inside a better-sounding one." What makes a reason respectable, in the story's terms?
3. "A straight no from you is worth more than a padded yes." Why can a director build on a straight no?

Activity 4: Apply it - Kaylie's two asks

1. Kaylie is asked to (a) head the decoration committee for the school dinner the same month as her play's dress rehearsals, and (b) bake one cake for it. Write Kaylie's clean no for (a) with her mother's two-part shape: the true reason in one sentence, then the real partial yes. Why does (b) belong in the sentence?
2. Kaylie's friend says, "Just tell her your grandmother is visiting." Give two costs of that version, from the story.
3. When IS it right not to give a reason at all? One or two sentences.

Activity 5: Scrambled words (from the story)

1. SEXCUE
2. RETM

3. GAGUE

4. DAPDED

Activity 6: Word work

Match each word to its meaning from the story.

1. padded a. the true state of how much you can take on
2. gauge b. softened with something untrue to make it land gently
3. loan c. something that makes today softer and costs you later
4. handover d. passing a role to the next person properly

Activity 7: Word search

Find the eight words hidden in the grid. All words run left to right.

```

H O N E S T W B F Y
E X C U S E N O R S
C H A I R I Q Z X J
T E R M F Y G H U P
A S K E D S T C D E
G R O U P J K V W B
G A U G E P L M N O
H A N D O V E R Q Z
X J K V W B F Y G H
U P L M N O R S T C

```

The eight words: HONEST, EXCUSE, CHAIR, TERM, ASKED, GROUP, GAUGE, HANDOVER.

Activity 8: Your turn - the sentence you owe

Think of one thing you are currently saying a padded yes or a padded no to. Write five lines: the clean sentence (true reason, one breath), and - if you have one - the real partial yes that could go inside it.