



Facilitator note: Fictional false suspicion and confidentiality. Do not ask students to share real secrets or real accusations. Keep invented examples invented. Distinguish a private fact from a dangerous one; if a student carries a secret about safety, it belongs with an adult, not in a discussion. Shraga's choices are his, in this story: calm repetition, one bounded question, and an adult on notice are shown as his legitimate options, not requirements.

Activity 1: Sequence

Order:

- A. Sender tells Shraga the secret on the bench.
- B. Shraga says his innocence once, without lobbying.
- C. A boy at the lunch table repeats the news.
- D. Sender hears his own brother say it in the hallway.
- E. Sender says, "You were the only one I told."
- F. The two walk to the bus corner together again.

Why can't Shraga's clean notebook serve as proof?

Activity 2: Fact, suspicion, or assumption?

Label F, S, or A.

- 1. A lunch table knows the news.
- 2. Shraga must have told someone.
- 3. Sender personally told one classmate: Shraga.
- 4. Only Shraga could have let it out.
- 5. Shraga did not tell anyone.
- 6. The cousin told the boy at the table.

Which items can Sender check, and which can he only choose to believe?





Activity 3: What can and cannot clear him

Shraga considers several responses: his word, his clean notebook, one calm question to the lunch-table boy, a full investigation of the chain, and telling a teacher the bare frame. Write one line on what each can and cannot do. Which ones does he actually use?

Activity 4: The traveling chain

Imagine every telling reaches only boys who have not heard it yet. The brother tells 1 cousin. The cousin tells 2 classmates. Each of those classmates tells 2 new boys. How many people besides the brother now know? If each of those 4 boys then tells 2 new boys, how many know altogether?

Activity 5: The three tools Shraga actually uses

Write all three, in your own words, from the story: (a) the calm answer to Sender, repeated as needed - plain sentences that say the truth, decline the investigation, and leave the door open; (b) the one bounded question to the lunch-table boy; (c) the sentence to the rebbi that puts an adult on notice without carrying the secret's content. Each must stay inside its limit.

Activity 6: Draw the answer scene

Draw the morning Shraga finds Sender before the first session. Show what can actually be seen: two boys, no audience, one speaking to the other before the room fills. Faces and poses are your choice. Caption the drawing with one line from the story that the scene turns on.





Activity 7: Two tools, two outcomes - a contrast from the story

(a) The notebook of clean lines: what does it produce for Shraga, and what can it never produce for Sender? Quote the story. (b) The calm spoken answer, repeated: what does it produce that the notebook cannot? Then answer: what finally clears Shraga - his defense, or the chain surfacing in Sender's own house? Which tool did which job?

Activity 8: Word grid

Find eight words left to right. Row/column numbering begins at 1.

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

SECRET, TRUST, PROOF, SILENCE, TRUTH, FRIEND, SPREAD, DENY. Which two words name what Shraga cannot produce and what he offers instead?





Teacher answer key

1. A, C, E, B, D, F. A boy who leaked would keep the same clean notebook; this record, written by Shraga about his own silence, cannot carry his innocence for Sender.
2. 1 F, 2 S, 3 F (as far as Sender knew - his parents and the principal already knew, and his brother had overheard), 4 A, 5 F (his own knowledge), 6 F. Sender can check facts like 1, 3, and later 6; item 5 he can only choose to believe. Items 2 and 4 are the arithmetic that felt like proof and was not - "only one person knew" was never accurate.
3. His word is what is doubted, though calm repetition keeps it available; this notebook, self-written and about his own silence, can clear him only for himself; one bounded question is fair and here reaches a dead end; a full investigation would spread the friend's private business; the teacher can watch without a trial. He uses his word (repeated calmly), the one question, and the adult on notice.
4. $1 + 2 + 4 = 7$ people besides the brother; then $4 \times 2 = 8$ more, so 15 altogether besides the brother. (Assume no overlap, as stated.)
5. Open. (a) The denial stated plainly, the refusal to investigate, willingness to repeat calmly, the standing offer ("when you're ready, I'm where I always am"). (b) A factual question bounded to what the boy himself heard ("Do you remember where you heard it?") - no digging backward into the family. (c) The frame without the content ("a private matter of my friend's is going around... stepped on, quietly"). Each tool inside its limit; no pleading, no invented suspects, no spilled secret.
6. Open. The drawing should catch an unwitnessed, unperformed moment - no crowd, no trial. Strong captions quote the story ("I understand exactly how it looks... It isn't." or "When you're ready to believe me, I'm where I always am."). Any honest rendering counts.
7. (a) The notebook settles Shraga's own account - "he already knows every line is clean" - but "a boy who leaked would write the same notebook," so it can never clear him for Sender. (b) The spoken answer can be believed; this notebook can only be read. What finally clears him is the chain surfacing in Sender's own hallway, heard and asked about by Sender himself. The defense kept Shraga steady and kept the friendship reachable; this particular record, being self-written and about his own silence, could not carry his innocence for him - a record someone else kept, of their own acts, would be a different thing.
8. SECRET row 1 columns 2-7; TRUST row 2 columns 4-8; PROOF row 3 columns 1-5; SILENCE row 4 columns 3-9; TRUTH row 5 columns 2-6; FRIEND row 6 columns 4-9; SPREAD row 7 columns 1-6; DENY row 8 columns 4-7. He cannot produce PROOF; he offers TRUST (or TRUTH). Accept reasoned pairings.

