

# English 96

## Discussion for Ericsson's "The Ways We Lie"

### Questions to Help You Prepare to Read

The following questions do not necessarily have specific answers. Rather they are intended to get you thinking about the problems that Ericsson tries to address in her essay

1. What exactly is a lie? You might consider looking the word up in a dictionary.
2. If someone tells a lie, is that person dishonest? Untrustworthy?
3. Are there situations where we can imagine the need to tell a lie and yet maintain our dignity and integrity?

### Questions to Help You After You Read

1. Without looking back at the essay, list as many kinds of lies identified by Ericsson that you can remember.
2. Look at the kinds of lies you remembered. Is there a reason why you happened to remember these kinds of lies?
3. In your own experience what do you believe is the most common kind of lie? How might you explain why your choice is the most common?
4. Think about a day, perhaps yesterday or today. Did you lie in any of the ways Ericsson describes? (Remember that one of the most powerful (according to her) is delusion!)
5. According to Ericsson, lying has become so common that it threatens to become a "cultural cancer" (page 128). What does she mean by this expression?
6. Ericsson quotes Martin Buber (a twentieth century philosopher) as saying: "The lie is the spirit committing treason against itself." What does Buber mean?

### Questions That Consider Your Response to Ericsson's Argument

1. In what ways do you agree with Ericsson on this topic?—explain why
2. In what ways do you disagree with Ericsson on this topic?—explain why
3. Discuss other ideas and/or responses you had as you read Ericsson's essay.