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## **Homeless man in credit card honesty**

<http://www.breakingnewsenglish.com/1008/100815-honesty.html>

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15th August, 2010

# THE ARTICLE

From <http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/1008/100815-honesty.html>

A homeless man in New York has repaid the trust paid in him by a woman who gave him her credit card. Jay Valentine, 32, was standing on a Manhattan street asking for small change when Merrie Harris, 45, lent him her Platinum AmEx card. Onlookers were shocked to see the woman hand it over and walk off. Valentine said he bought deodorant, body wash, a pack of cigarettes and bottled water, all costing about \$25. A short time later, he went back to the restaurant where Ms Harris was eating to return the card to her. For his efforts, he was awarded the title of Most Honest Homeless Man in the City. Valentine also received an offer from a New York-based airline to apply to be a flight attendant and \$5,000 from an anonymous Texan.

Ms Harris, an advertising executive, was also applauded for her act of generosity and trust. She told reporters she never doubted Mr Valentine would do anything dishonest with her card, saying: "What he did was no surprise to me." She asked: "Are we only supposed to trust people we know?" Valentine said he never thought about abusing Harris' trust in him: "I wasn't tempted at all. She trusted me, and I didn't want to violate that trust," he said. He added: "It sets a good example that people in need – like me - can and should be trusted." What is now in question is the security procedures of the store Valentine shopped in. Staff obviously did not check his signature or look at the photo id on the AmEx card.

# WARM-UPS

**1. HONESTY:** Walk around the class and talk to other students about honesty. Change partners often. Sit with your first partner(s) and share your findings.

**2. CHAT:** In pairs / groups, decide which of these topics or words from the article are most interesting and which are most boring.

*homeless / credit card / small change / lending money / honest / flight attendant / applauded / generosity / trust / doubt / a good example / security / signature*

Have a chat about the topics you liked. Change topics and partners frequently.

**3. TRUST:** What trustworthy things have you done? Complete this table and show it to your partner(s). Change partners and share what you wrote. Change and share again.

Trust with...	Trustworthy act
Parent	
Best friend	
Teacher	
Stranger	
Neighbour	
Myself	

**4. DISHONESTY:** Students A **strongly** believe dishonesty is something that will disappear from humans one day; Students B **strongly** believe the opposite. Change partners again and talk about your conversations.

**5. TRUSTWORTHY:** Who's the most? Rank these and share your rankings with your partner. Put the most trustworthy at the top. Change partners and share your rankings again.

- Best friend
- Teacher
- Doctor
- Country leader
- Biggest hero
- Police officer
- Sales assistant
- Parent

**6. GENEROUS:** Spend one minute writing down all of the different words you associate with the word 'generous'. Share your words with your partner(s) and talk about them. Together, put the words into different categories.

# BEFORE READING / LISTENING

From <http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/1008/100815-honesty.html>

**1. TRUE / FALSE:** Read the headline. Guess if a-h below are true (T) or false (F).

- |                                                                          |       |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------|
| a. A woman lent a homeless man her American Express credit card.         | T / F |
| b. The man bought a few expensive items and then returned the card.      | T / F |
| c. The man received an award for his honesty.                            | T / F |
| d. The man got a job offer from an American airline.                     | T / F |
| e. The woman was a little suspicious she would never see her card again. | T / F |
| f. The woman suggested we should trust people more, even strangers.      | T / F |
| g. The man said not all needy people can or should be trusted.           | T / F |
| h. Staff in the shop did not properly check the man's signature.         | T / F |

**2. SYNONYM MATCH:** Match the following synonyms from the article.

- |                 |                   |
|-----------------|-------------------|
| 1. homeless     | a. kindness       |
| 2. small change | b. given          |
| 3. onlookers    | c. nameless       |
| 4. awarded      | d. identification |
| 5. anonymous    | e. clapped        |
| 6. applauded    | f. coins          |
| 7. generosity   | g. methods        |
| 8. violate      | h. passers-by     |
| 9. procedures   | i. break          |
| 10. id          | j. vagrant        |

**3. PHRASE MATCH:** (Sometimes more than one choice is possible.)

- |                                      |                                     |
|--------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| 1. repaid the trust                  | a. and walk off                     |
| 2. Merrie Harris, 45, lent           | b. at all                           |
| 3. hand it over                      | c. an anonymous Texan               |
| 4. received                          | d. act of generosity                |
| 5. \$5,000 from                      | e. paid in him                      |
| 6. applauded for her                 | f. no surprise to me                |
| 7. she never doubted Valentine would | g. security procedures of the store |
| 8. What he did was                   | h. him her Platinum AmEx card       |
| 9. I wasn't tempted                  | i. an offer                         |
| 10. now in question is the           | j. do anything dishonest            |

# WHILE READING / LISTENING

From <http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/1008/100815-honesty.html>

**GAP FILL:** Put the words into the gaps in the text.

A homeless man in New York has \_\_\_\_\_ the trust paid in him by a woman who gave him her credit card. Jay Valentine, 32, was standing on a Manhattan street asking for \_\_\_\_\_ change when Merrie Harris, 45, lent him her Platinum AmEx card. Onlookers were shocked to see the woman \_\_\_\_\_ it over and walk off. Valentine said he bought deodorant, body wash, a \_\_\_\_\_ of cigarettes and bottled water, all costing about \$25. A \_\_\_\_\_ time later, he went back to the restaurant where Ms Harris was eating to return the card to her. For his \_\_\_\_\_, he was awarded the title of Most Honest Homeless Man in the City. Valentine also received an \_\_\_\_\_ from a New York-based airline to \_\_\_\_\_ to be a flight attendant and \$5,000 from an anonymous Texan.

*short*

*hand*

*offer*

*repaid*

*apply*

*efforts*

*small*

*pack*

Ms Harris, an advertising executive, was also \_\_\_\_\_ for her act of generosity and \_\_\_\_\_. She told reporters she never doubted Mr Valentine would do anything \_\_\_\_\_ with her card, saying: "What he did was no surprise to me." She asked: "Are we only supposed to trust people we know?" Valentine said he never thought about \_\_\_\_\_ Harris' trust in him: "I wasn't tempted at all. She trusted me, and I didn't want to \_\_\_\_\_ that trust," he said. He added: "It \_\_\_\_\_ a good example that people in need – like me – can and should be trusted." What is now in question is the \_\_\_\_\_ procedures of the store Valentine shopped in. Staff obviously did not \_\_\_\_\_ his signature or look at the photo id on the AmEx card.

*abusing*

*security*

*dishonest*

*check*

*applauded*

*sets*

*trust*

*violate*

## LISTENING – Listen and fill in the gaps

From <http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/1008/100815-honesty.html>

A homeless man in New York has \_\_\_\_\_ him by a woman who gave him her credit card. Jay Valentine, 32, was standing on a Manhattan street \_\_\_\_\_ when Merrie Harris, 45, lent him her Platinum AmEx card. \_\_\_\_\_ see the woman hand it over and walk off. Valentine said he bought deodorant, body wash, a pack of cigarettes and bottled water, \_\_\_\_\_. A short time later, he went back to the restaurant where Ms Harris was eating to return the card to her. \_\_\_\_\_ awarded the title of Most Honest Homeless Man in the City. Valentine also received an offer from a New York-based airline to apply to be a flight attendant and \$5,000 \_\_\_\_\_ Texan.

Ms Harris, an advertising executive, was also \_\_\_\_\_ generosity and trust. She told reporters she never doubted Mr Valentine would do anything dishonest with her card, saying: "What he did \_\_\_\_\_." She asked: "Are we only supposed to trust people we know?" Valentine said he \_\_\_\_\_ Harris' trust in him: "I wasn't tempted at all. She trusted me, and I didn't \_\_\_\_\_," he said. He added: "It sets a good example that people in need – like me – can and should be trusted." What is \_\_\_\_\_ procedures of the store Valentine shopped in. Staff obviously did not \_\_\_\_\_ look at the photo id on the AmEx card.

# AFTER READING / LISTENING

From <http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/1008/100815-honesty.html>

**1. WORD SEARCH:** Look in your dictionary / computer to find collocates, other meanings, information, synonyms ... for the words 'credit' and 'card'.

<b>credit</b>	<b>card</b>
---------------	-------------

- Share your findings with your partners.
- Make questions using the words you found.
- Ask your partner / group your questions.

**2. ARTICLE QUESTIONS:** Look back at the article and write down some questions you would like to ask the class about the text.

- Share your questions with other classmates / groups.
- Ask your partner / group your questions.

**3. GAP FILL:** In pairs / groups, compare your answers to this exercise. Check your answers. Talk about the words from the activity. Were they new, interesting, worth learning...?

**4. VOCABULARY:** Circle any words you do not understand. In groups, pool unknown words and use dictionaries to find their meanings.

**5. TEST EACH OTHER:** Look at the words below. With your partner, try to recall how they were used in the text:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• repaid</li><li>• change</li><li>• hand</li><li>• pack</li><li>• efforts</li><li>• apply</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• act</li><li>• surprise</li><li>• supposed</li><li>• tempted</li><li>• example</li><li>• id</li></ul>
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# STUDENT HONESTY SURVEY

From <http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/1008/100815-honesty.html>

Write five GOOD questions about honesty in the table. Do this in pairs. Each student must write the questions on his / her own paper.  
When you have finished, interview other students. Write down their answers.

	STUDENT 1 _____	STUDENT 2 _____	STUDENT 3 _____
Q.1.			
Q.2.			
Q.3.			
Q.4.			
Q.5.			

- Now return to your original partner and share and talk about what you found out. Change partners often.
- Make mini-presentations to other groups on your findings.



# HONESTY DISCUSSION

STUDENT A's QUESTIONS (Do not show these to student B)

- a) What did you think when you read the headline?
- b) What springs to mind when you hear the word 'honesty'?
- c) How honest are you?
- d) What do you think of Merrie Harris?
- e) Who would you lend your credit card to?
- f) If someone gave you their credit card and an hour to buy anything, where would you go shopping and what would you buy?
- g) Do honest people get further ahead in life than dishonest people?
- h) What's the moral of this story?
- i) How do you think Mr Valentine's life will change from now?
- j) What would Mr Valentine and Ms Harris say to each other if they met?

*Homeless man in credit card honesty – 15th August, 2010*  
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# HONESTY DISCUSSION

STUDENT B's QUESTIONS (Do not show these to student A)

- a) Did you like reading this article?
- b) What's the biggest example of your own honesty?
- c) How many really generous people do you know?
- d) Which people in your life do you trust?
- e) Should we always trust people we don't know?
- f) Does Ms Harris' act set a good example?
- g) Have you ever abused anyone's trust?
- h) When was the last time you were dishonest?
- i) Should the staff that served Mr Valentine be spoken to about allowing someone to use another person's credit card?
- j) What questions would you like to ask Ms Harris and Mr Valentine?

# LANGUAGE – MULTIPLE CHOICE

From <http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/1008/100815-honesty.html>

A homeless man in New York has (1) \_\_\_\_\_ the trust paid in him by a woman who gave him her credit card. Jay Valentine, 32, was standing on a Manhattan street asking for small (2) \_\_\_\_\_ when Merrie Harris, 45, lent him her Platinum AmEx card. Onlookers were shocked to see the woman (3) \_\_\_\_\_ it over and walk off. Valentine said he bought deodorant, body wash, a pack of cigarettes and bottled water, all (4) \_\_\_\_\_ about \$25. A short time later, he went back to the restaurant where Ms Harris was eating to return the card to her. For his (5) \_\_\_\_\_, he was awarded the title of Most Honest Homeless Man in the City. Valentine also received an offer from a New York-based airline to apply to be a flight attendant and \$5,000 from an (6) \_\_\_\_\_ Texan.

Ms Harris, an advertising executive, was also (7) \_\_\_\_\_ for her act of generosity and trust. She told reporters she never doubted Mr Valentine would do anything dishonest with her card, saying: "What he did was (8) \_\_\_\_\_ surprise to me." She asked: "Are we only supposed to trust people we know?" Valentine said he never thought about abusing Harris' trust (9) \_\_\_\_\_ him: "I wasn't tempted at all. She trusted me, and I didn't want to violate that trust," he said. He added: "It (10) \_\_\_\_\_ a good example that people in need – like me – can and should be trusted." What is now (11) \_\_\_\_\_ question is the security procedures of the store Valentine shopped in. Staff (12) \_\_\_\_\_ did not check his signature or look at the photo id on the AmEx card.

## Put the correct words from the table below in the above article.

- |     |                 |               |                  |               |
|-----|-----------------|---------------|------------------|---------------|
| 1.  | (a) paid        | (b) plaid     | (c) replayed     | (d) repaid    |
| 2.  | (a) changes     | (b) changing  | (c) change       | (d) charge    |
| 3.  | (a) head        | (b) hand      | (c) leg          | (d) knee      |
| 4.  | (a) costing     | (b) costed    | (c) cost         | (d) costs     |
| 5.  | (a) effects     | (b) affords   | (c) efforts      | (d) affects   |
| 6.  | (a) anonymously | (b) anon      | (c) anonymity    | (d) anonymous |
| 7.  | (a) applause    | (b) applauded | (c) applied      | (d) appliance |
| 8.  | (a) no          | (b) not       | (c) non          | (d) nor       |
| 9.  | (a) by          | (b) in        | (c) on           | (d) at        |
| 10. | (a) lets        | (b) nets      | (c) sets         | (d) bets      |
| 11. | (a) in          | (b) an        | (c) on           | (d) un-       |
| 12. | (a) enviously   | (b) furiously | (c) compulsively | (d) obviously |

Homeless man in credit card honesty – 15th August, 2010



# HOMework

**1. VOCABULARY EXTENSION:** Choose several of the words from the text. Use a dictionary or Google's search field (or another search engine) to build up more associations / collocations of each word.

**2. INTERNET:** Search the Internet and find out more about this news story. Share what you discover with your partner(s) in the next lesson.

**3. HONESTY:** Make a poster about honesty. Show your work to your classmates in the next lesson. Did you all have similar things?

**4. MR VALENTINE:** Write a magazine article about Mr Valentine. Include imaginary interviews with him and Ms Harris.

Read what you wrote to your classmates in the next lesson. Write down any new words and expressions you hear from your partner(s).

**5. LETTER:** Write a letter to Ms Harris. Ask her three questions about honesty. Give her three of your opinions on trust. Read your letter to your partner(s) in your next lesson. Your partner(s) will answer your questions.

# ANSWERS

## TRUE / FALSE:

- a. T      b. F      c. T      d. T      e. F      f. T      g. F      h. T

## SYNONYM MATCH:

- |                 |                   |
|-----------------|-------------------|
| 1. homeless     | a. vagrant        |
| 2. small change | b. coins          |
| 3. onlookers    | c. passers-by     |
| 4. awarded      | d. given          |
| 5. anonymous    | e. nameless       |
| 6. applauded    | f. clapped        |
| 7. generosity   | g. kindness       |
| 8. violate      | h. break          |
| 9. procedures   | i. methods        |
| 10. id          | j. identification |

## PHRASE MATCH:

- |                                      |                                     |
|--------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| 1. repaid the trust                  | a. paid in him                      |
| 2. Merrie Harris, 45, lent           | b. him her Platinum AmEx card       |
| 3. hand it over                      | c. and walk off                     |
| 4. received                          | d. an offer                         |
| 5. \$5,000 from                      | e. an anonymous Texan               |
| 6. applauded for her                 | f. act of generosity                |
| 7. she never doubted Valentine would | g. do anything dishonest            |
| 8. What he did was                   | h. no surprise to me                |
| 9. I wasn't tempted                  | i. at all                           |
| 10. now in question is the           | j. security procedures of the store |

## GAP FILL:

### Homeless man in credit card honesty

A homeless man in New York has **repaid** the trust paid in him by a woman who gave him her credit card. Jay Valentine, 32, was standing on a Manhattan street asking for **small** change when Merrie Harris, 45, lent him her Platinum AmEx card. Onlookers were shocked to see the woman **hand** it over and walk off. Valentine said he bought deodorant, body wash, a **pack** of cigarettes and bottled water, all costing about \$25. A **short** time later, he went back to the restaurant where Ms Harris was eating to return the card to her. For his **efforts**, he was awarded the title of Most Honest Homeless Man in the City. Valentine also received an **offer** from a New York-based airline to **apply** to be a flight attendant and \$5,000 from an anonymous Texan.

Ms Harris, an advertising executive, was also **applauded** for her act of generosity and **trust**. She told reporters she never doubted Mr Valentine would do anything **dishonest** with her card, saying: "What he did was no surprise to me." She asked: "Are we only supposed to trust people we know?" Valentine said he never thought about **abusing** Harris' trust in him: "I wasn't tempted at all. She trusted me, and I didn't want to **violate** that trust," he said. He added: "It **sets** a good example that people in need - like me - can and should be trusted." What is now in question is the **security** procedures of the store Valentine shopped in. Staff obviously did not **check** his signature or look at the photo id on the AmEx card.

## LANGUAGE WORK

- 1 - d    2 - c    3 - b    4 - a    5 - c    6 - d    7 - b    8 - a    9 - b    10 - c    11 - a    12 - d