

“You’re fired!”

Did the winner of the latest series of ‘The Apprentice’ lie on his CV? Or did he just ‘exaggerate’ slightly? The debate rages on.

1 Read the personnel terms and check you can use these words. Create sentences about yourself with some of them.

employment	recruitment	skills	abilities	salary
CV	interview	qualification	experience	panel

2 Study the paragraph headings (a–d). Then scan the article and match them to the correct paragraph (1-4).

- (a) **New horizons** (b) **Economical with the truth** (c) **TV show result criticised** (d) **“And the winner is ...”**

[1] Even the British Prime Minister, Gordon Brown, has been drawn into the debate: should Lee McQueen have won the Apprentice, given that he lied about his CV? Last month, the last five minutes of the fourth series of the UK reality TV show drew a record 10 million viewers. It was the climax of 12 gruelling weeks in which teams are given tasks to complete in an attempt to become the winner. For the victor, there’s the tantalizing prospect of a well-paid job with the show’s famous host, Sir Alan Sugar, former head of Amstrad. For the losers, the famous words: “You’re fired!”

[2] However, the latest result has divided the nation. Lee wrote on his CV that he had been to college for two years. In fact he only attended four months. He was found out. Many employment and recruitment specialists were quick to condemn Sir Alan’s decision to employ McQueen. ‘This is the wrong message to send to employers’, they said. Lie about your qualifications ... and you will be successful.

[3] Lee himself admits he made a mistake. In his eyes, he ‘enhanced his educational record’. In other words, he exaggerated. There is, after all, a difference between writing something totally false, and ‘embellishing’ your CV or being ‘a bit creative’. A spokesperson for the programme said that although the winner ‘exaggerated his dates of attendance’; this has nothing to do with his real skills and abilities.

[4] So, what happens now? Lee McQueen takes up a job as the sales director of a new digital marketing company, part of Sir Alan’s business empire. Meanwhile, another participant, Claire Young, who was the favorite to win the show, has just been offered a job at an even higher salary! The rest of us are left wondering about the ethical problem. Some would argue that in real life Lee McQueen would not have got the job. An interview panel would have judged that he had put down false information. But this is not real life. It’s a television show! Mind you, Lee’s £100,000 salary is real enough; he’s just bought a Porsche ...

3 Read the whole article. What are the two points of view about the announcement of the winner?

4 Find words in the article from their definitions.

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| (a) discovered a fact or piece of information | (paragraph 2) |
| (b) experts in a particular area | (paragraph 2) |
| (c) someone whose job is to officially represent an organisation | (paragraph 3) |
| (d) starts doing something regularly, like a job | (paragraph 4) |
| (e) large powerful group of companies ruled by one person | (paragraph 4) |
| (f) involving the principles of deciding what is right and wrong | (paragraph 4) |
- (Definitions from or based on: Macmillan English Dictionary Ed 2. 2007 Text © A & C Black)

5 Work in small groups. Discuss the questions and report back to the class.

- Would you have made Lee McQueen the winner, despite the false information on his CV?
- Is it permissible to ‘exaggerate slightly’ on a CV? If so, give examples.
- Do you have an equivalent TV show to ‘The Apprentice’ in your country? Is it popular? Would you participate if you had the chance?