

### Forged Letters LWS 3.

Why do people forge letters or documents? Apart from making money, what are other reasons for this? Can the business be profitable?



Forged passport with picture of himself in disguise enabled Lenin to escape to Finland in the fall of 1917. Warrant for his arrest had been issued in July of that same year.

#### 1. Listen and decide whether the statements are true (T) or false (F)

Alzo Slade knows how to forge a good letter and how to spy the forgery. \_\_\_\_

To get old paper, you can go into a book shop and tear out the blank pages that are on the back and the front. \_\_\_\_

You can't buy old ink anywhere nowadays. \_\_\_\_

First of all, authenticators look at the grammar. \_\_\_\_

If Churchill had used LMAO, Curtis Dowling thinks he would be more impressed. \_\_\_\_

Once they've looked at the Grammar, authenticators look at the hand-writing, or as in Lee's case – at the typewriters and the type face. \_\_\_\_

#### 2. Listen and repeat imitating in every possible way.

1. \_\_\_\_ If Churchill had used LMAO, I think I'd be more impressed. An authenticator will look out for the use of words that entered the English language after the letter was supposedly written.

2. \_\_\_\_ Once we've looked at the Grammar, we look at the hand-writing.

3. \_\_\_\_ Couple of times we've been able to catch someone out because the typewriter is slightly newer than the letter that is purporting to be old.

4. \_\_\_\_ Nowadays, we can just switch off the font. But back then, you needed a completely different typewriter to get the type face just right.

5. \_\_\_\_ After that, Curtis looks at who wrote the letter and the writing style.

6. \_\_\_\_ Certain people were very giving when they wrote letters. If you look at the letter from Elizabeth Taylor, whether it's to Richard Burton or a friend, she gushes.





7. \_\_\_\_\_ Whereas other people keep it short and sweet.

8. \_\_\_\_\_ Steve McQueen... really was more like a text. You know, he gave nothing away:

Dear Job,

See you on Wednesday.

All the best,

Steve.

3. Transcribe the snippets and then find the correct place for each one in the script (put the correspondent letter into the box).

- a. \_\_\_\_\_
- b. \_\_\_\_\_
- c. \_\_\_\_\_
- d. \_\_\_\_\_
- e. \_\_\_\_\_

**AS:** To prove his point, Curtis has \_\_\_\_\_ including a Noël Coward letter. And the funny thing is other experts often approve his forgeries as the real deal.

**CD:** As we're \_\_\_\_\_, somebody is forging a letter or a signature. Forgery has become big business globally. Even at the highest level even at organized crime. Because, \_\_\_\_\_ when you can fake a Picasso?

**AS:** It's a fact that many in the industry have had to accept.



Thomas Hoving at the Metropolitan Museum of Art who said that 40% of everything in the Met is forgery, \_\_\_\_\_ which 40% it was.

**AS:** Damn! 40% of the Met could be fake? Now, I wanna they've mentioned that at the famous Met Gala while all these \_\_\_\_\_, I imagine they don't.

Listen and check. \_\_\_\_\_.

#### 4. Join the expressions from the next snippet with their meanings:

|                           |                                                  |
|---------------------------|--------------------------------------------------|
| to hell with the people   | to feel comfortable and normal                   |
| catch up to her           | became familiar and confident                    |
| nailed the process        | used to say you don't care about them            |
| it ceases to be           | did successfully                                 |
| word slowly gets around   | a punishable by imprisonment crime               |
| hit her stride            | begin to affect her in a bad way                 |
| the jig is pretty much up | news steadily spreads                            |
| a jailable offence        | a dishonest plan or activity has been discovered |
| to feel herself           | comes or brings to an end                        |

#### Now, read the transcript and choose the correct option:

Now, back to Lee Israel. She's pretty much **hit her stride** / **nailed the process** that Curtis has been talking about. And she's forging hundreds of letters.

She **hit her stride** / **catch up to her** and money problems are behind her. And **to feel herself** / **to hell with** the people who didn't want to work with her before. Who needs them now?

She got a little too secure and began making little mistakes here and there that called attention to her.

This is where Lee starts to **feel herself** / **cease to be**, she's getting arrogant and she starts to slip, because she is making these Noël Coward letters a little too juicy.

What really-really called attention to the forgeries, was her lack of discretion and portraying Noël Coward's gay life.

Back then, being gay was **it ceases to be / a jailable offence**, so Noël would have been careful about what he wrote.

Unfortunately, Lee's mistakes **catch up to her / nailed the process** and someone's passed the error.

One of the dealers caught onto Lee and demanded a sum of money that she was unable to pay.

A dealer in NY confronts and blackmails her for five thousand dollars.

After forging of four hundred letters, Lee's busted. The memorabilia collectors circle is small and **the jig is pretty much up / word slowly gets around** that there are forgeries making their way onto the market. Lee's forgeries. She can't risk selling fakes anymore and she can't risk selling them herself.

She became a persona non grata in these circles.

Everyone knows her face so the jig is **pretty much up / a jailable offence** unless she can figure out a way to switch up her con.

This is where she goes too far where it **ceases to be / feels herself** a creative job and becomes more common theft.

**Listen and check:** \_\_\_\_\_

### **From Wiki:**

Her criminal prosecution was set in motion not over the forgeries she was selling to collectors, but over the forgeries she was slipping into library and museum files to replace the genuine letters she was stealing. The forgeries she sold had not involved interstate commerce or great sums of money, and so were overlooked by the FBI and other law enforcement. But when autograph dealer David Lowenherz learned that an Ernest Hemingway letter he had purchased from Israel's accomplice, Jack Hock, was supposed to be in the Columbia University archives, it was then discovered that Columbia's letter had been replaced by a forgery and Israel had signed the register for having examined that folder.

At this point, the FBI was called in and an investigation showed that Israel had stolen authentic letters, replacing them with forged copies, from several institutional collections. According to David Lowenherz, Israel and Hock were arrested together by the FBI when they met at a bank to cash Lowenherz's check from a sale.

