

READING COMPREHENSION 1

1) Read the article.

A

Victor Lustig was one of the most imaginative criminals in history. He won and lost several fortunes, had forty-five false identities, and was arrested at least fifty-times! Born near Prague in 1890, Victor grew up in a middle-class family and learnt to speak five languages fluently. However, he soon turned to a life of crime and in the 1920's, he emigrated to the USA.

**KING
CON!**

B

In Missouri in 1922, he used his most famous alias - rich Austrian aristocrat "Count" Victor Lustig. He paid a bank \$22,000 for a very old farm house that nobody wanted to buy. At the same time, he asked the bank manager to lend him \$10,000. The man agreed and they exchanged envelopes. However, the envelope that Victor handed over did not contain any money and Victor got away with both his original \$22,000 and the bank's \$10,000!

C

Three years later, he returned to Europe. He had already made \$40,000 in the USA. One afternoon, in a Paris café, Lustig saw a newspaper article which said that the Eiffel Tower was in poor conditions. The repairs were going to be extremely expensive and a few politicians had suggested demolishing it! This gave Lustig and ingenious idea - to sell the Eiffel Tower.

D

First, he asked a forgery to make some "official" government notepaper. Then, as "Deputy Director General of the Post Office" he wrote to five companies which he thought might be interested in buying the Eiffel Tower. He told the businessmen that the government had decided to demolish the Tower and sell the metal from it. He explained that the Tower was already thirty-six years old and the architect had never planned to build a permanent structure. Because the government's decision was controversial, the businessmen promised to keep the plan secret.

E

The five company directors then made their offers to buy the Eiffel Tower. Lustig chose the highest offer, took the cash, and escaped to Austria to enjoy his money. Each day, Lustig checked the Paris newspapers for news of his amazing con. But there was nothing - the businessmen, Monsieur Poisson was too embarrassed to tell anyone how Lustig had cheated him.

F

So Lustig returned to Paris, wrote to another five companies... And sold the Eiffel Tower for a second time! However, this time, his victim went to the police and Lustig had to flee to the USA.



2) Match paragraphs A-F with the correct heading. There are two extra headings.

1. A money machine. _____
2. A plan in Paris. _____
3. Caught at last. _____
4. Explaining the details. _____
5. He does it again. _____
6. Take the money and run away to enjoy. _____
7. The "Count" and the bank manager. _____
8. The origins of a thief. _____

3) Read the end of Lustig's story and match the paragraphs with the two headings you didn't use in Exercise 1.

G

Back in United States, Lustig continued to swindle people out of their money. One of his most successful idea was "The Magic Box" which could make banknotes. Of course, the box didn't work at all, but when he was arrested in Oklahoma, Lustig offered his "invention" to a local sheriff. The sheriff accepted the deal and Lustig walked free.

H

But finally, in 1935, he was arrested for the last time. At the end of his trial the judge found Lustig guilty and he was sent to Alcatraz prison, where he spent the next twenty years. Victor Lustig, the king of cons, dies in 1947.

4) Complete these definitions with the underlined words in the text.

- 1- An _____ is a false identity.
- 2- A _____ is when someone believes a criminal's lies and gives him money.
- 3- A person who makes realistic copies of money, documents, etc. is a _____.
- 4- When something causes arguments, we say it is _____.
- 5- When a plan is brilliant and original, we say it is _____.
- 6- To _____ is to escape quickly, especially when you are in danger.
- 7- To _____ something is to give it to another person.

5) Read the whole text about Victor Lustig again and circle the correct answer.

1. People still talk about Victor today because
 - a) the police never caught him.
 - b) he demolished the Eiffel Tower.
 - c) he committed some fascinating crimes.
2. Victor thought of his plan to sell the Eiffel Tower
 - a) while he was reading a newspaper in Paris.
 - b) while he was still in the USA.
 - c) when he was in prison.
3. The French businessmen thought Victor worked
 - a) as a journalist.
 - b) for the French Post Office.
 - c) as a government minister.
4. Victor's victim, Poisson, didn't go to the police because
 - a) he didn't want anyone to know how stupid he had been.
 - b) he believed Victor had really sold him the Eiffel Tower.
 - c) he admired Victor.
5. Victor sold the Eiffel Tower a second time because
 - a) the first time his victim didn't pay him.
 - b) it wasn't illegal.
 - c) it had worked perfectly the first time.
6. Victor's magic box
 - a) was a successful invention
 - b) was a con.
 - c) only worked sometimes.

READING COMPREHENSION 2

1. Read the article.

Who do you think you'll be?

What do you think you'll be doing in the future? Are you going to travel the world or maybe start up a business? Well, remember these two things:

- Being healthy is more important than getting rich.
- If you look after yourself, you will be happy.

Tell us about your goals for the future!

Thomas

I don't want to work for a company and stay in one place. I see myself finishing university and taking some time out. I'm going to travel around Australia and other places. Unless you travel, you won't get a chance to have different life experiences.

Lucia

I always wanted to travel into space, and now I think it may be a possibility in the future. Some scientists believe we'll be living on other planets in a decade or two. If we don't look after our Earth and protect the environment, we'll need to move into space, but I hope it won't be too soon.

Marcus

I'm going to start my own business and by the time I'm thirty, I want to make my first million euros! I'm going to get rich in my twenties. Then I'll retire young and enjoy life. I'll settle down and have a family. I can't wait!

Debbie

I've been thinking a lot about the future. I'll be studying at university for three years and after that, I'd like to spend some time in India. I might do some volunteering at a school.

Julia

I'm just a student now, but I've got some big plans for the future. I've started teaching myself to play the guitar so I can become a musician in a famous rock band. I'm going to be a star!

2. Then read the sentences and write true or false. (10 marks)

- A) Thomas is going to travel after university. _____
- B) He wants to settle down soon. _____
- C) Lucia thinks she won't travel into space. _____
- D) She says scientists believe we'll be living on other planets in a year or two. _____
- E) By the time he's thirty, Marcus wants to be rich. _____
- F) After he retires, he wants to have children. _____
- G) Debbie's university course is four years long. _____
- H) She wants to help people while she's in India. _____
- I) Julia is teaching in a music school. _____
- J) She is planning to work hard for many years. _____

3. Then answer the questions. Write complete sentences.

- A) Why does Thomas think it's a good idea to travel?
- B) Why does Lucia think we'll have to live in space one day?
- C) What does Marcus want to achieve by the time he is thirty?
- D) What does Debbie want to do while travelling in India?
- E) What are Julia's dreams for the future?