

Performer Houdini

Harry Houdini (1874 to 1926) was a Hungarian-American illusionist and stunt performer, noted for his sensational escape acts. He first attracted attention as “Harry Handcuff Houdini” on a tour of Europe, where he challenged police forces to keep him locked up. Soon he extended his repertoire to include chains, ropes slung from skyscrapers, straitjackets under water, and having to hold his breath inside a sealed milk can.

In 1904, thousands watched as Houdini tried to escape from special handcuffs commissioned by London’s Daily Mirror newspaper. Another stunt saw him buried alive and only just able to claw himself to the surface. While many suspected that these escapes were faked, Houdini presented himself as the scourge of fake magicians and spiritualists. As President of the Society of American Magicians, he was keen to uphold professional standards and expose fraudulent artists. He was also quick to sue anyone who pirated his stunts.

Are the following statements true, false, or not given in the text?

1. Houdini was more successful in Europe than in America.
2. Many people were skeptical about Houdini’s escape acts.
3. He took legal action against those who tried to copy him.

(Bài tập có nguồn từ website của thầy Simon)

Keywords in the questions	Words in the text
Skeptical (adj)	Suspect (v): nghi ngờ
Took legal action against	Sue (v): kiện cáo
Copy(v)	Pirate (v): sao chép bất hợp pháp

Words	Meaning	Example
Skeptical (about/ of s.th) (adj): nghi ngờ	Having doubts that a claim or statement is true or that something will happen	<i>I am skeptical about his chances of winning.</i> (Tôi nghi ngờ về cơ hội chiến thắng của anh ấy.)
Sue (s.b) (for s.th) (v): kiện, khởi kiện	To make a claim against somebody in court about something that they have said or done to harm you	<i>They threatened to sue if the work was not completed.</i> (Họ đe dọa sẽ kiện nếu công việc không được hoàn thành.)
Pirate s.th (v): sao chép trái phép	To copy and use or sell s.b’s work or a product without permission.	<i>Jones was accused of having pirated the scientist’s work.</i> (Jones bị buộc tội vì đã sao chép trái phép công trình của 1 nhà khoa học.)