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Detecting the Truth. Fakes, Forgeries and Trickeries - Educational Resources

Critical Challenge 1

Distinguishing the Forgery from the Fake

Student Handout 1.2

Historical Deceptions

Artefact	Fake or forgery?
Shroud of Turin: One of history's most famous deceptions is the burial shroud (cloth) known as the Shroud of Turin. It bears the image of a crucified man, and was thought to be the burial cloth of Jesus Christ. The Shroud of Turin first turned up during the Middle Ages, and recent carbon dating shows that both the cloth and the image were actually created during that period of time, centuries after the death of Christ. It is not, therefore, the true burial cloth of Jesus; in fact, the original shroud has never been found.	❒fake ❒forgery Reasons:
Hitler's Diaries: In 1981, 50 journals considered to be the diaries of Adolf Hitler resurfaced after, it was claimed, they had been recovered from a plane crash and hidden for decades. In fact, the diaries turned out to be a hoax carried out by Konrad Kujau, a German dealer in military artefacts.	❒fake ❒forgery Reasons:
James Ossuary: In November 2002, the Royal Ontario Museum thought they had landed one of the most exciting exhibitions when they were the first museum to display the ossuary of James, the brother of Jesus. An ossuary is a coffin or burial urn containing bones. The authenticity of the James ossuary (found in Israel in 2002) has been challenged and many now believe it is a modern creation that fooled many people.	❒fake ❒forgery Reasons:

Counterfeit $50 Bill: Despite the elaborate design of Canada's paper money, criminals continue to find ways to "print their own money." Over the past few years, many stores have started using ultraviolet detectors to catch counterfeit bills, while other stores refuse to accept $50 or $100 bills, fearing they may not be legitimate.

❒fake

❒forgery

Reasons:

The Case of the Dinosaur-bird Fossil: In 1999, *National Geographic* ran a cover story about a stunning new find in China: a feathered dinosaur that appeared to be the link between dinosaurs and modern birds. As it turned out, *National Geographic* ended up with "egg on their face" when it was revealed that the skeleton of the feathered dinosaur (*Archaeoraptor Liaoningensis*) had been created by an unscrupulous fossil-seller who blended dinosaur bones with bird bones.

❒fake

❒forgery

Reasons:

Shakespeare's Lost Play: During the late 18th century, William Henry Ireland successfully sold several fragments of the plays *Hamlet* and *King Lear*, claiming they contained the original handwriting of William Shakespeare. In reality, Ireland had copied Shakespeare's hand. He pushed his luck even further when he announced the discovery of a previously unknown Shakespeare drama called *Vortigern and Rowena*. When the text was closely examined by experts, it became apparent that the play was not by Shakespeare but was written by Ireland himself. Nonetheless, a theatre producer staged the play on April2, 1796 -- as an April Fools Day joke!

❒fake

❒forgery

Reasons: