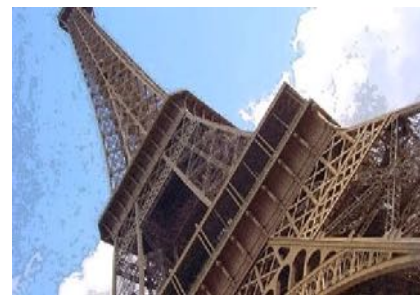


The Eiffel Tower is named after the engineer Gustave Eiffel, whose company designed and built the tower from 1887 to 1889.

Locally nicknamed "La dame de fer" (French for "Iron Lady"), it was constructed as the centerpiece of the 1889 World's Fair, and to crown the centennial anniversary of the French Revolution. Although initially criticised by some of France's leading artists and intellectuals for its design, it has since become a global cultural icon of France. It is the most visited monument with an entrance fee in the world.



When the exhibition closed its doors, the tower was not demolished. It was later used as a radio station.

In 1925, articles appeared in some newspapers reporting on the poor condition of the Eiffel Tower.



A man named Victor Lustig read one of these articles and had an idea. He stole stationery and envelopes from the French Post Office, which owned the tower. He wrote letters to five French

businessmen and invited them to a secret meeting in a hotel.

The businessmen showed up on time. A friend of Viktor Lustig's posed as his secretary. He led them into a conference room.

The five men sat at a long table and waited for Victor Lustig. Then he entered the room and said: "Gentlemen, the Postmaster General has instructed me to give you an important secret message. The Eiffel Tower is in a dangerous condition. Unfortunately, we must demolish it. I'm sure you understand why you are here. We're talking about 70,000 tons of scrap metal. A considerable amount!". The five businessmen listened to Lustig with interest. The businessmen then had a week to make their offer.

André Poisson made the highest offer. Viktor Lustig accepted the deal. He said to Poisson: "Monsieur, from now on you are the owner of the Eiffel Tower!"

Lustig and his secretary left France very quickly. But Poisson was ashamed and did not go to the police.

When Viktor Lustig found out that Poisson had not made a report to the police, he returned to Paris. And - it is almost unbelievable - he managed to sell the Eiffel Tower once again. A true sales genius, this Victor Lustig!

## COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS:

1. Where did the Eiffel Tower get its name from?
2. What was the original purpose of the tower?
3. Where else did you find iron structures like this in Gustave Eiffel's time?
4. What else was the top of the Eiffel Tower used for?
5. What did the French postal administration do when the tower began to rust in 1925?
6. What did Victor Lustig steal from the postal administration?
7. Victor Lustig invited five businessmen to a secret meeting. What line of business were they in?
8. Why did André Poisson win the deal?
9. What is the approximate weight of the Eiffel Tower?
10. Did André Poisson really become the owner of the Eiffel Tower?
11. Who helped Victor Lustig?
12. Why didn't André Poisson go to the police?
13. Why was Victor Lustig able to sell the Eiffel Tower a second time?