

**Reading**

**7 Read the article about a famous diamond. Six sentences have been removed from the article. Choose the best sentences (A–F) to complete the article.**

**The Hope Diamond**

Protected by strong glass, the biggest and most beautiful blue diamond in the world attracts the attention of visitors from many countries. It is one of the most popular exhibits at the Smithsonian Natural History Museum in Washington, D.C., USA, and its name is the Hope Diamond. (1) ..... Is it really true that the stone carries a curse and people who have touched the stone have suffered untimely deaths or financial disaster?

As with all legends, it is difficult to separate fact from fiction. The Hope Diamond has certainly had a mysterious past. It is believed to have been brought to the West from India by a French merchant traveller, Jean-Baptiste Tavernier, in 1669, and sold to the famous King Louis XIV. It was then called the French Blue and was an enormous stone. (2) ..... The stone was worn by the French kings until Louis XVI was imprisoned during the revolution. At this time, many of the crown jewels were stolen, including the French Blue, and the beautiful stone disappeared for 20 years. There are reports of its appearance later in London and finally, after many sales, different cuts and a lot of travelling, it was acquired by the Hope family in America and given a new name.

There is a strange twist to the ending of the tale of the Hope Diamond. Its final owner, merchant Harry Winston, donated the jewel to the Smithsonian in 1958. (3) ..... However, he didn't send it to the Smithsonian with the full protection that a diamond like that deserves – he put it in a brown paper envelope and sent it through the post, like a letter! (4) .....

The Hope Diamond has definitely been identified as coming from the original French Blue of the stolen French crown jewels and therefore still carries with it the curse! It is said that the curse started because the stone was stolen by Tavernier from a temple where it was the eye of a sculpture. The stories say that Tavernier was attacked by wild dogs in Russia and also that Louis XVI and Marie Antoinette died because of their connection with the stone.

(5) ..... The death of a Russian prince is also mentioned in the legends. Historians have proved that some of the stories are definitely false, but the belief remains that whoever touches the stone will suffer in some way. I imagine the Hope Diamond needs regular cleaning. (6) .....

- A However, visitors are not only attracted by the beauty, but also by the mysteries that surround this precious jewel.
- B Other deaths that may have been a result of the curse are the premature death of jeweller Jacques Colot and the murder of a diamond cutter, Wilhelm Fals, by his son.
- C I certainly wouldn't like to have the job!
- D Luckily, it arrived safely!
- E Since that time, it has been cut into smaller stones.
- F There is nothing particularly unusual about that.

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**8 Read the article again. Are these statements True (T) or False (F)?**

- |   |     |  |     |
|---|-----|--|-----|
| 1 The Hope Diamond is on display in France.         | T/F | 5 There is a famous legend that connects the stone with the death of a Russian prince. | T/F |
| 2 The Hope Diamond originally had a different name. | T/F | 6 All of the stories about the curse could be true.                                    | T/F |
| 3 The diamond has changed its shape over the years. | T/F |  |     |
| 4 It was sold to the Smithsonian in 1958.           | T/F |  |     |

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**Total / 12**