

METHODS OF FORGERY

The most common forgery is a signature. There are three types of forgery.

One of the most common and probably easiest to detect for a layperson is a **blind forgery**, where the forger uses his or her own handwriting. The forger does not even try to copy the original signature and may not even know what the signature looks like. This is usually the case in petition fraud and anonymous harassing subscriptions as well as many other civil and criminal cases. Investigators have the highest success rate in identifying this type of forger.

Copying a genuine signature by carefully drawing the signature is termed a **simulated forgery**. Often the forger practices the signature so much that he or she can avoid many of the hesitations and pen lifts usually seen in a forgery. Investigators can detect this by identifying the individual microscopic handwriting habits consistently present in the known signatures but missing from the questioned signature. The forger is often unable to duplicate *all* the victim's individual handwriting habits. This type of forgery can be very difficult to link to a suspect.

A third type of forgery is a **traced forgery**, which can be done by tracing a genuine signature onto a document using a light box or similar device. Other methods may use carbon paper or even pressing hard over a genuine signature and tracing the indentation. Stereomicroscopic examination can disclose this type of forgery, because the line quality may be inconsistent. Sometimes oblique lighting will show off the indentations.

forgery: an item prepared with the intent to deceive or defraud. It can be an autograph, a book, a painting, a baseball card, a stamp, an antique, almost anything.

blind forgery: one made without a model of the signature or writing being forged

simulated forgery: one made by copying a genuine signature






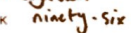


traced forgery: one made by tracing a genuine signature

ACTIVITY

Simulated Forgery

Use the handout provided by your teacher for the following exercise.

- A. Write your name (signature).
- B. Write your name again.
- C. (Leave blank.)
- D. (Leave blank.)
- E. Have someone copy your signature (after practicing on scrap paper).

| HANDWRITING EXERCISE | |
|---|--|
| A  | write your name (signature) |
| B  | do it again |
| C | leave this blank for now |
| D | ditto |
| E | have someone copy your signature |
| F | have someone else copy your signature |
| G  | disguise your signature |
| H  | write "eighteen" |
| I | have E copy this |
| J  | write "eighteen" but disguise your handwriting |
| K  | write "ninety-six" |
| L | have F copy this |
| M  | write "ninety-six" but disguise your handwriting |
| N 0123456789 | write the numerals 0 through 9 |
| O | have E copy them |
| P | have F copy them |
| R  | you write them with disguised writing |

1. Now go back to C and D and write your signature again. Examine your four signatures and note any differences. Look for the 12 basic characteristics that are described in Table 1.

- F. Have someone else copy your signature (after practicing on scrap paper).
- G. Disguise your signature.
- H. Write "Cleopatra."
- I. Have the same person who copied your signature for item E copy this.
- J. Write "Cleopatra," but disguise your handwriting.
- K. Write "ninety-six."
- L. Have the same person who copied your signature for item F copy this.
- M. Write "ninety-six," but disguise your handwriting.
- N. Write the numerals 0, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, and 9.
- O. Have the same person who copied your signature for item E copy the numerals.
- P. Have the same person who copied your signature for item F copy the numerals.
- Q. Write the numerals in disguised writing.
- R. Go back to items C and D and write your signature again. Examine your four signatures and note any differences. Look at the 12 characteristics listed and describe the differences based on these.
- S. Note similarities in your normal handwriting and your disguised handwriting in items G, J, M, and R. Normally you alter the major characteristics of your handwriting, but the minor ones give you away. What major characteristics from the 12 points did you change? What minor ones remain?
- T. Examine some of the signatures made by your classmates in items E, F, L, I, O, and P. Comment on some of the primary signs of forgery, such as which ones have:
 - a. the appearance of being written slowly.
 - b. blunt line endings and beginnings.
 - c. poor line quality with wavering and tremors of the line.
 - d. retracing and patching.
 - e. stops in places where writing should be free and smooth.
 - f. inconsistent letter formation.