

The Missing Painting

Level: B1

Read how Elena checks a surprising story before it appears in her town newspaper. Then answer the questions.

Reading text

Elena helped write a small newspaper for her town every month. On Monday, a photograph of an empty wall appeared on a local news page. Its caption said that a valuable painting had disappeared from the art centre. Soon, people online were calling it a theft, but the caption offered no evidence. Elena's editor told her to check the story before repeating the claim. He said, "A photograph shows an empty wall, not the reason for it."

Elena called the art centre and spoke to Sam, the caretaker. Sam said that he had moved the painting to a safe room on Sunday. He told Elena that rain had entered through a window and damaged the wall. The painting itself was dry, and a repair team was coming the next day. Elena did not publish Sam's words immediately; she asked to see the painting. At the centre, Sam opened the safe room and showed her the canvas.

The painting was there, covered with clean cloth and away from the wet wall. Elena also spoke to its artist, Rosa, on the phone. Rosa said that she knew about the move and was pleased it had been protected. Elena took a new photograph and wrote down the time and place. She compared her notes with the first caption and found a missing fact. The old caption never said that the painting had been moved for safety.

That evening, Elena wrote a short report with Sam's and Rosa's comments. She explained that the painting was safe and the wall needed repairs. Her editor checked both names and dates before the report went online. The original news page then changed its caption and removed the theft claim. Elena was glad the painting was safe, but she also remembered the first rumour. Next time, she would ask for a second source before trusting a dramatic headline.

Glossary

caption	words printed under a picture
theft	the act of taking something that belongs to another person
evidence	facts that help show what happened
editor	a person who checks a newspaper before it is published
caretaker	a person who looks after a building
canvas	the material used for a painting
source	a person or record that gives information for a report
headline	the title of a news story

Exercise 1: Choose the correct answer

Read the story and choose the best answer.

1. What did the first photograph show?
a) An empty wall b) A broken window c) The safe room
2. Why had Sam moved the painting?
a) To sell it b) To protect it from a wet wall c) To put it online
3. Who else confirmed that the painting was safe?
a) The photographer b) The repair team c) Rosa, the artist
4. What happened to the original news page?
a) It changed its caption b) It stopped publishing c) It printed a new painting

Exercise 2: Right or wrong?

Decide whether each statement agrees with the text.

5. Elena's editor wanted her to verify the story before publishing it. True / False
6. Sam said the painting had become wet. True / False
7. The first caption explained the reason for the empty wall. True / False

Exercise 3: Complete the sentence

Use a word or phrase from the story.

8. Sam ____ Elena that rain had damaged the wall. (say something to someone)
9. Rosa ____ that she knew about the move. (report words without naming the listener)
10. Elena explained that the painting ____ safe. (reported form of is)

Exercise 4: Listen and choose

Listening: online only.

Exercise 5: Listen and write

Listening: online only.

Answer key

Exercise 1: Choose the correct answer

1. a) An empty wall
2. b) To protect it from a wet wall
3. c) Rosa, the artist
4. a) It changed its caption

Exercise 2: Right or wrong?

5. True
6. False
7. False

Exercise 3: Complete the sentence

8. told
9. said
10. was

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