

Historical Foundations of Magic and Illusion

History Of Magic · Practice Test · 15 Questions

1. Which 19th-century illusionist is credited with the invention of the 'Pepper's Ghost' optical illusion, although it was named after another researcher?

- A) John Henry Pepper
- B) Henry Dircks
- C) Jean-Eugène Robert-Houdin
- D) Gustave Adolphus Davenport

2. In 1875, the Royal Polytechnic Institution in London hosted the debut of which famous levitation illusion, originally engineered by John Nevil Maskelyne?

- A) The Psycho
- B) The Floating Lady
- C) The Levitation of Princess Karnac
- D) The Astral Body

3. What was the specific name of the 17th-century 'miracle' trick performed by Isaac Fawkes that involved the rapid production of eggs and ribbons from empty containers?

- A) The Egg Bag
- B) The Multiplying Egg
- C) The Fawkes Feat
- D) The Inexhaustible Bottle

4. Jean-Eugène Robert-Houdin was sent to Algiers by the French government in 1856 to perform magic for what specific political purpose?

- A) To establish a French school of magic
- B) To weaken the influence of Marabout religious leaders
- C) To entertain the French colonial garrison
- D) To recruit local informants

5. What mechanical apparatus did John Nevil Maskelyne use in his 'Psycho' illusion, which allowed it to play chess against audience members?

- A) A concealed human operator
- B) A pneumatic air-driven system
- C) A series of clockwork gears and weights
- D) A magnetized board controlled from offstage

6. The illusionist known as 'The Great Lafayette' (Sigmund Neuberger) died in a catastrophic fire in 1911 at which specific venue?

- A) The Hippodrome in London
- B) The Empire Theatre in Edinburgh
- C) The Winter Garden in Berlin
- D) The Orpheum in San Francisco

7. Which seminal work, published in 1584, is considered the first English-language book to reveal the secrets behind sleight-of-hand tricks?

- A) The Discoverie of Witchcraft
- B) Hocus Pocus Junior
- C) Natural Magick
- D) The Art of Conjuring

8. Harry Houdini's 'Chinese Water Torture Cell' was first performed in 1912 under what original title?

- A) The Upside-Down Jail
- B) The Water-Filled Coffin
- C) The Suspended Torture Cell
- D) The Underwater Escape

9. Adelaide Herrmann, known as the 'Queen of Magic,' became the first woman to perform which dangerous theatrical illusion after the death of her husband?

- A) Sawing a Woman in Half
- B) The Bullet Catch
- C) The Burning of a Woman
- D) The Vanishing Elephant

10. What is the historical significance of the 'Egyptian Hall' in Piccadilly, London, regarding the history of magic?

- A) It was the site of the first magic convention
- B) It was the primary venue for England's 'Home of Mystery'
- C) It was the birthplace of the Magic Circle
- D) It was where Houdini first performed in Europe

11. Which illusionist was known for the creation of the 'Kellar Rope Tie' and was a major influence on the early stagecraft of Harry Houdini?

- A) Alexander Herrmann
- B) Harry Kellar
- C) Chung Ling Soo
- D) Buatier de Kolta

12. Chung Ling Soo, a famous stage persona, was actually an American magician whose real name was what?

- A) William Ellsworth Robinson
- B) Charles Joseph Carter
- C) Herbert Albini
- D) Horace Goldin

13. The illusion 'Metamorphosis,' involving a trunk and a swap between two people, was popularized by which duo in the late 19th century?

- A) The Davenport Brothers
- B) The Herrmann Brothers
- C) The Maskelyne Brothers
- D) The Zancigs

14. What scientific principle is utilized in the 'Black Art' stage technique, which allows objects to appear and disappear in plain view?

- A) Polarized light reflection
- B) Strict control of ambient light and matte black surfaces
- C) High-frequency vibration
- D) Visual persistence of vision

15. Who was the French magician, often cited as the 'Father of Modern Magic,' who moved magic from street fairs to formal theatrical settings?

- A) Jean-Eugène Robert-Houdin
- B) Bartolomeo Bosco
- C) Philippe Talon
- D) Henri Decremps