

Liar, Liar

1 When trying to solve a crime, investigators learn a lot by interviewing people. They ask witnesses and suspects many questions. Unfortunately, not all the answers they are given are truthful. This makes the investigator's job difficult.

Often the investigator can test a witness

by asking them a question they already know the answer to. This gives the investigator some idea about the honesty of the witness. A lot of the time though, all investigators can do is call on their experience of people.

2 When all else fails, some investigators turn

to the lie detector, properly known as the *polygraph*. This machine was developed in America in the 1940s. It "catches lies" by measuring a person's breathing, sweating and blood pressure.

This is how it works ...

3 An operator who knows how to read the results properly controls the test. These people are highly trained. The results are shown as a series of wavy lines on graph paper.

The witness or suspect is seated in a chair. This is to minimise movement. Large straps are placed around the witness's chest. These measure the rate of breathing. Usually the speed of the breath, in and out, increases as a person becomes nervous. This may mean that the person is worried or trying to hide something.

4 Wires are also fitted to the fingertips. These react to changes in sweating (called *perspiration*) during the test. Most people seem to sweat more when they are nervous. If perspiration lifts during certain questions, the operator will make a note on the graph.

The third measure is a blood pressure band. This is placed around the arm and shows small changes in the person's blood pressure. If this increases it is another sign of nervousness.

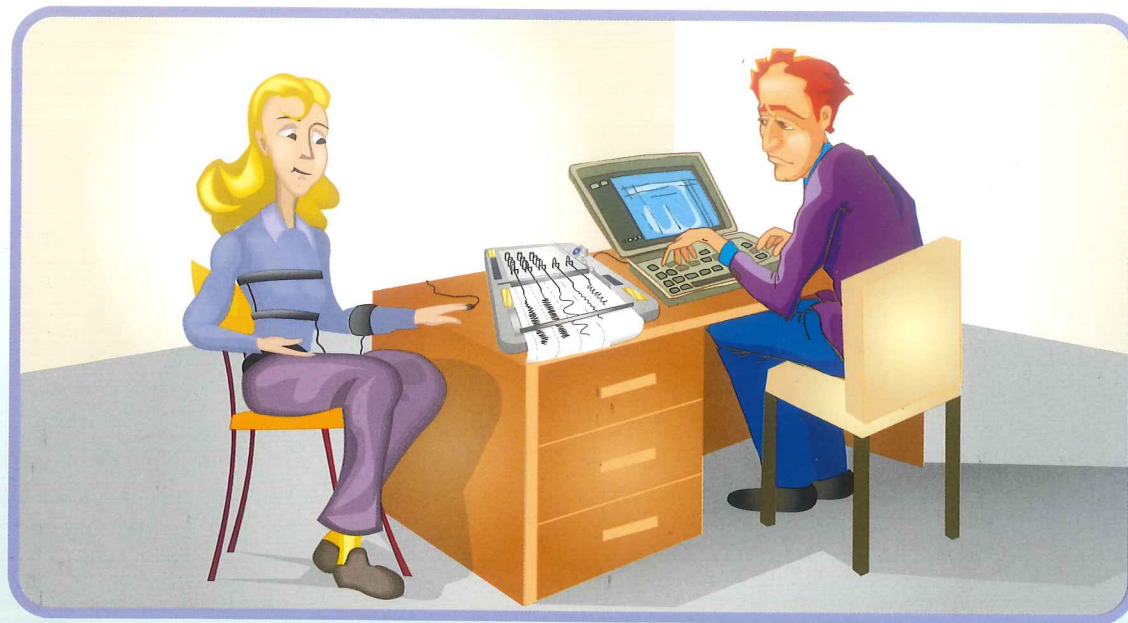
These three measures give the operator the clues needed to tell if a person is lying.

5 The first questions that the witness or suspect is asked are called *baseline* questions. These give the operator an idea of how the person answers normally. A person may be asked standard questions about name, age, address and so forth. Sometimes a person will be asked to lie on purpose, just to see what a false answer looks like. It is then easier for the operator to see when a person is lying.

6 Polygraphs are not always correct. Some people can become very nervous just sitting in a room plugged into the lie detector. Others are able to control themselves enough to give a false result. In other words, they beat the machine.

New polygraphs use computers. This has made them more accurate; they are almost never wrong. A new machine, made in Europe, tests a person's brain patterns. So far, no one has been able to trick this machine.

Do you know how to lie well? Do you think you could beat the machine and remain totally calm? I don't think so!



Questions

- 1 Lie detectors don't measure one of the following. Which is it?
 - a breathing
 - b blood type
 - c blood pressure
- 2 A lie detector draws
 - a lines.
 - b crimes.
 - c pictures.
- 3 Fingertip wires measure
 - a sweat.
 - b breathing.
 - c temperature.
- 4 The first questions are called
 - a simple questions.
 - b baseball questions.
 - c baseline questions.
- 5 If you can make the machine give a false reading it is called
 - a lying.
 - b baselining.
 - c beating the machine.
- 6 Evidence provided by a modern lie detector is
 - a accurate.
 - b inaccurate.
 - c unreliable.

Vocabulary

Match the words from the text to the clues. The brackets show the text sections ().

suspect nervous remain minimise witnesses

- 7 People who have seen an occurrence (1)
- 8 The opposite of maximise (3)
- 9 To feel anxious and uneasy (4)
- 10 A person who is presumed guilty of a crime (5)
- 11 To stay a certain way (6)

Alphabetical Order

The following words appear in the text. When placed in alphabetical order, which one would be **first**?

- 12 three, trying, turn, test
- 13 person, purpose, properly, polygraph
- 14 learn, lot, large, lying
- 15 suspect, some, sweating, sign

Back To The Text...

- 16 Investigators usually like suspects to do a Lie Detector Test.
 - a true
 - b false
- 17 What would be a good sub-heading for section 5?
 - a All Wired Up
 - b Baseline Questions
- 18 The purpose of this text is
 - a to persuade.
 - b to explain.

Think About This

What would the operator do first? Choose **a** or **b**.

- 19 a Ask the suspect a baseline question.
b Place the straps on the suspect.
- 20 Why has the writer used brackets in section 4?
 - a They show nouns.
 - b They show emphasis.
 - c They hold extra information.
- 21 Polygraph machines
 - a only prove guilt.
 - b are only used on criminals.
 - c can prove a person to be innocent.
- 22 Look at the illustration on the front of the card. Whose hands do we see?
 - a the suspect and the police officer
 - b the police officer and the operator
 - c the suspect and the operator
- 23 "Beat the machine" in section 6 really means
 - a to be faster than it.
 - b to outsmart it.
 - c to beat it up.

Challenge Option

Drawing: Draw a picture of a police officer looking for clues at a crime scene.

