Ten questions on the authenticity of the diary of Anne Frank

A great deal of reliable information is available about Anne Frank and her diary. But sometimes, on the Internet and elsewhere, lies are spread about the diary. There are books and pamphlets in circulation in which you can read that the diary is a forgery that was written by people other than Anne Frank herself. There are websites where it is claimed that parts of the diary are written in ballpoint pen. The Anne Frank House regularly takes successful legal action against attacks on the authenticity (the truth) of the diary. Anyone who is nevertheless confronted with lies about the diary can find the most important facts about its authenticity, in question and answer form, on these web pages.

Political agenda
The attacks on the authenticity of the diary need to be seen in a wider perspective. People who have claimed, or still claim, that the diary is not genuine have a political agenda. They often also say or write that the Holocaust never happened. Or they try to prove that there were no gas chambers at Auschwitz, and that the figure of six million Jews murdered during the Second World War is an exaggeration. The diary of Anne Frank is an important document of the Holocaust, and since the Second World War Anne Frank has become the most well known symbol of the persecution of the Jews. People and organisations that deny or trivialise the Holocaust are attempting to exonerate and rehabilitate the National Socialist system. Or, by spreading doubts on the fate of the Jews during the Second World War, they try to undermine the state of Israel’s right to exist.

Television and Internet
In Europe and North America the distribution of material in which the authenticity of the diary of Anne Frank is attacked – and often that the Holocaust is denied – is fortunately only the work of a few people. There are no serious scientists who doubt the fact that the Holocaust took place or that the diary of Anne Frank really was written by her. But in the Middle East, Holocaust denial has increasingly become a weapon in the struggle against Israel, and falsehoods about the Holocaust are put forward on television and the Internet on a wide scale. Many children in the Middle East learn at school that the diary of Anne Frank is a forgery. Through satellite television, these lies also seep through into the Western world. In addition, the people who spread material in which the Holocaust is denied or the diary of Anne Frank is attacked have in the Internet a means of potentially spreading their ideas very widely indeed. Every Internet user can be confronted with them, usually unwillingly. For this reason, the Anne Frank House wants to use all the means at its disposal – and therefore also our website – to repudiate the lies about the diary of Anne Frank.
Ten questions on the authenticity of the diary of Anne Frank:

1. Exactly what writings by Anne Frank have been preserved?

2. What research has been done into the authenticity of the diary?

3. Where did the five new diary pages suddenly appear from?

4. It has been said that there are entries in the diary in ballpoint pen. Is that correct?

5. Who are the people and organisations that claim that the diary of Anne Frank is a forgery?

6. Why shouldn't people claim that the diary is a forgery? What about freedom of speech?

7. What did Otto Frank do to counter the attacks on the authenticity of the diary?

8. What has the Anne Frank House done to counter the attacks on the authenticity of the diary?

9. Why is so little action taken against websites that deny the Holocaust and cast doubt on the authenticity of the diary?

10. Where can I find more information about Holocaust denial?

1. Exactly what writings by Anne Frank have been preserved?

12 June 1942 was Anne Frank’s thirteenth birthday. Among the presents she received was a notebook: an almost square album with a hardback red, white and green cover. This is where she would write her diary. Her first diary ends on 5 December 1942. Her second surviving diary book, a school exercise book, begins on 22 December 1943 and continues up to 17 April 1944. It is highly improbable that Anne Frank did not keep a diary between December 1942 and December 1943, so we must assume that this section has been lost. Her third and last diary volume, also a school exercise book, begins on 17 April 1944 and ends on 1 August 1944.

As well as her diary, Anne also wrote Verhaaltjes, en gebeurtenissen uit het Achterhuis ("Tales from the Secret Annexe") in a large accounts book, and she filled a small, narrow cash book with quotations: her Mooie Zinnenboek
Favourite Quotes Notebook). This Verhaaltjesboek and Mooie Zinnenboek have both been preserved.

**Two versions**
From June 1942 onwards, the diaries of Anne Frank describe in a penetrating way the daily life of the eight Jewish people in hiding in the 'secret annexe' on the Prinsengracht canal in Amsterdam. Anne Frank rewrote her diary entries herself in the secret annexe, with a view to them possibly being published after the war. She did this on sheets of carbon copy paper: the so-called "loose sheets." On these loose sheets of paper she reorganised and rewrote her earlier diary entries: she reordered texts, sometimes combining entries from various dates under one date, and considerably shortening some sections. In this way she created a second version, in which the events of December 1942 to December 1943 are described. The loose sheets have been preserved: their last entries date from 29 March 1944. So the first version of the diary was not fully preserved, while the second version was unfinished.

**Publication**
To help in the search for a publisher for Het Achterhuis (The Secret Annexe, as Anne had named her second version) Otto Frank had parts of the diary entries typed out in late 1945. In doing so he left out some sections, moved others and made some corrections. This created a typescript, but it was not yet a book. At Otto Frank’s request, his friend Albert Cauvern then made a second typescript. With Otto Frank’s permission, Cauvern changed nine of the thirteen names that Anne herself – with a view to possible publication – had invented for the people in hiding in the secret annexe and their helpers. Both typescripts have been preserved. Finally, an editor from Contact Publishers became the third person to work on the texts, correcting typing errors and bringing the manuscript into line with the publisher’s “house style.” All of this resulted in the first Dutch publication of The Secret Annexe in June 1947.

**Three versions under one cover**
Otto Frank, who died on 19 August 1980, stated in his will that all of his daughter’s manuscripts should be left to the Dutch nation. The Dutch government transferred the stewardship of the manuscripts to the National Institute for War Documentation (Rijksinstituut voor Oorlogsdocumentatie, RIOD), which later became the Dutch Institute for War Documentation (Nederlands Instituut voor Oorlogsdocumentatie, NIOD). In 1986, NIOD published the three versions of the diary described above – the preserved original diary entries, the version rewritten by Anne Frank herself, and the edition compiled by Otto Frank and published by Contact publishers in 1947 – together under one cover: De Dagboeken van Anne Frank (The Diaries of Anne Frank).

The original diary of Anne Frank and a number of other documents written in her own hand have been exhibited in the Anne Frank House since 1986.
2. What research has been done into the authenticity of the diary?

Because of the persistent accusations against the diary of Anne Frank in the 1960’s and 70’s, a number of investigations were carried out into the diary’s authenticity, partly on Otto Frank’s initiative. The most extensive investigation was carried out in the first half of the 1980’s by the Netherlands Forensic Institute at the request of the National Institute for War Documentation. The results of this research were presented in a report of over 250 pages. The main section of the report is taken up with the findings of a detailed handwriting comparison, but a forensic document analysis was also carried out. *The Diaries of Anne Frank*, the so-called "Critical Edition" that was published by the NIOD in 1986, contains a 65-page summary of the Forensic Institute report. The NIOD concludes: "(...) the report of the Netherlands Forensic Institute has convincingly demonstrated that both versions of the diary of Anne Frank were written by her in the years 1942 to 1944. The allegations that the diary was the work of someone else (...) are thus conclusively refuted." (*The Diary of Anne Frank. The Revised Critical Edition*, 2003, p. 186).

German research

Earlier research had also been done before the Forensic Institute’s investigation in the 1980’s. In 1959, Anne Frank’s manuscripts were studied by graphologists (handwriting experts) in Germany, as part of the preparations for a legal action that was brought by Otto Frank. In March 1960, the Hamburg graphologists came to the conclusion in their 131-page report that all the notations in the diaries and the loose sheets, and all the corrections and additions, were ‘identical’ with Anne’s handwriting. The report also concluded that the loose sheets were not written before the three diary books. Finally, the conclusion was made that “(...) the text published in German translation as *Das Tagebuch der Anne Frank* may be considered true to its sources in substance and ideas." (*The Diary of Anne Frank: The Revised Critical Edition*, 2003, p. 87.) A very limited investigation also took place in Germany in 1980, also in preparation for legal proceedings, and this time carried out by the Federal Criminal Police Office (the *Bundeskriminalamt* or BKA) in Wiesbaden. The BKA came to the conclusion that all the types of paper and ink used were manufactured before 1950, and could therefore have been used in the war years.

3. Where did the five new diary pages suddenly appear from?

In 1998, five previously unknown pages from the diary of Anne Frank cropped up. They were five loose sheets that Otto Frank had already set apart before the publication of the diary in 1947. They were made public by Cor Suyk, a former employee of the Anne Frank House. Suyk’s explanation was that Otto Frank had given him the five sheets for safe keeping. The loose sheets were sold by Suyk to the Dutch nation, and subsequently added to the rest of the diary, which was held by the Netherlands Institute for War Documentation (NIOD). The five pages were first included in the fifth edition of *De Dagboeken van Anne Frank* (2001).
followed by the *The Diary of Anne Frank: The Revised Critical Edition* (2003). In all probability, Otto Frank did not want to make these diary fragments public because of Anne’s rather hurtful observations about his first wife, who died in Auschwitz, and their marriage.

"With a probability bordering on certainty"

The NIOD asked the Forensic Institute – which had already carried out extensive research into the authenticity of the diary in the first half of the 1980’s – to also investigate these five loose sheets. The Forensic Institute concluded after forensic document and handwriting analysis that "the handwriting in the questioned documents and the handwriting in the reference material, consisting of loose sheets in the diary of Anne Frank, were produced – with a probability bordering on certainty – by the same hand.’ (*The Diary of Anne Frank: The Revised Critical Edition*, 2003, p. 184.) That is the most certain degree of identification that the Netherlands Forensic Institute can give. In other words: there is no reason whatsoever to presume that the five returned loose sheets were not written by Anne Frank.

4. It has been said that there are entries in the diary in ballpoint pen. Is that correct?

No, that is not correct. All the diary entries are written in various types of ink and (coloured) pencil, not in ballpoint. The document analysis by the Netherlands Forensic Institute showed that the main part of the diary and the loose sheets were written in grey-blue fountain pen ink. In addition, Anne also used thin red ink, green and red coloured pencils and black pencil for her annotations: not ballpoint. Nevertheless, the allegation can still regularly be seen on extreme right-wing websites and elsewhere that the diary of Anne Frank is written in ballpoint pen. Sneering remarks are made about "A. Frank the ballpoint girl," and it is pointed out that the ballpoint pen only came into common use in Europe after the Second World War. The conclusion forced by this allegation is that the texts in the diary could not have been written by Anne Frank herself.

Annotation sheets

The origin of the "ballpoint myth" is the four-page report that the Federal Criminal Police Office (the *Bundeskriminalamt* or BKA) in Wiesbaden, which was published in 1980. In this investigation into the types of paper and ink used in the diary of Anne Frank it is stated that "ballpoint corrections" had been made on some loose sheets. The BKA’s task was to report on all the texts found among the diaries of Anne Frank, and therefore also on the annotations that were made in Anne’s manuscripts after the war. However, the Dutch investigation by the Forensic Institute in the mid-1980’s shows that writing in ballpoint is only found on two loose pages of annotations, and that these annotations are of no significance for the actual content of the diary. They were clearly placed between the other pages later. The researchers of the Forensic Institute also concluded
that the handwriting on these two annotation sheets differs from the writing in the diary "to a far-reaching degree." Photos of these loose annotation sheets are included in the NIOD’s publication (see The Diary of Anne Frank: The Revised Critical Edition, 2003, pages 168 and 170). In 1987, a Mr Ockelmann from Hamburg wrote that his mother had written the annotation sheets in question. Mrs Ockelmann was a member of the team that carried out the graphological investigation into the writings of Anne Frank around 1960.

A life of its own
In short: the "ballpoint myth" is easy to disprove. The careless wording of the BKA report from 1980 – a report that for the rest in no way challenges the authenticity of the diary – or at any rate its openness to several interpretations, has taken on a life of its own in extreme right-wing circles. The "ballpoint myth" is based on the simple fact that, around 1960, two annotation sheets with ballpoint writing were inserted between the original pages. These texts were written by a graphological researcher, and are not included in any edition of the diary (apart from the Critical Edition, where photos of the annotation sheets are reproduced). In July 2006, the BKA found it necessary to state in a press release that the 1980 investigation cannot be used to call the authenticity of the diary into doubt.

5. Who are the people and organisations that claim that the diary of Anne Frank is a forgery?

Apart from a few deluded eccentrics, all the people (and groups of people) who seriously claim that the diary of Anne Frank, or parts of it, are a forgery fall into the category of Holocaust deniers. They are people who, by means of an attack on the diary, attempt to sow doubt about the fact that the Holocaust truly took place, that six million Jews were murdered during the Second World War, and that the Nazis ever built any gas chambers. They are people with a political aim: by denying or trivialising the Holocaust, they try to prove or make it appear reasonable that Nazism was (and is) a much less malevolent system than everyone thinks. Because it forms an accessible introduction to the Holocaust to people all over the world, and is often used in schools, the diary of Anne Frank is a popular target for these old and new Nazis.

Pseudo-scientific arguments
Holocaust deniers – also called negationists – come in all shapes and sizes. There are some who wrap themselves in a scientific cloak: they call themselves revisionists or historical revisionists. Using pseudo-scientific arguments, they try to revise the history of the Second World War. One of the most widely translated and distributed revisionist texts about the diary of Anne Frank is the ‘study’ by the French scientist Robert Faurisson, published in 1978 under the title Le Journal d’Anne Frank est-il authentique? ("The Diary of Anne Frank: Is It Authentic?"). Faurisson has repeatedly been sentenced to fines and prison terms
for spreading the libellous claim that no gas chambers existed in the Second World War, and for incitement to discrimination and racial hatred.

"Zionist propaganda"
Holocaust denial does not only take place in the western world, but also – and in recent years increasingly – in the Middle East. There it is mainly used as a weapon in the struggle against the state of Israel. Sowing doubt about the fate of the Jews during the Second World War, and proclaiming that the diary of Anne Frank is not authentic, is done primarily to "prove" that the Holocaust is 'Zionist propaganda'. In this way, people try to undermine the state of Israel’s right to exist. In Iran, the denial of the Holocaust is even official state ideology, but in the Arabic world too – and increasingly in Turkey – Holocaust deniers are presented in the media as serious scientists. It is striking how many of the revisionist texts that circulate in the Middle East (on the Internet and elsewhere) are of European or American origin.

6. Why shouldn’t people claim that the diary is a forgery? What about freedom of speech?

Freedom of speech is an important human right in every democratic society. It means that each individual is free to publicly express all kinds of ideas, opinions and standpoints, without prior censorship. But freedom of speech does not mean that anyone can say or shout anything in public with impunity. Just like all other fundamental human rights, there are also limits to freedom of speech that may not be crossed. Inciting hatred, murder or violence, and the distribution of libel, are punishable offences. The spreading of demonstrable untruths about the diary of Anne Frank is not only extremely insulting to those directly involved, it is also discriminatory and offensive to all victims of the Holocaust and their surviving relatives.

Lawful or unlawful
It is only after a statement has been made that a court can decide if it is unlawful. On this point, the United States and the countries of the European Union have very different traditions. A limit will not be imposed on freedom of speech so quickly in the United States. It is not for nothing that the First Amendment of the American Constitution states that no laws may be made that unnecessarily restrict this freedom. In Europe, limits on freedom of speech will be set earlier if the right to protection against discrimination is at issue. While the denial of the Holocaust is not illegal in the USA, there are laws in Germany, France and some other European countries that make the spreading of lies about "Auschwitz" – and thus also lies about the diary of Anne Frank – a criminal offence. A considerable number of the books and websites where the diary of Anne Frank is attacked come from the USA.
7. What did Otto Frank do to counter the attacks on the authenticity of the diary?

From the late 1950’s until his death in 1980, Otto Frank opposed attacks on the authenticity of the diary in his words and writings, but also by legal means. The first allegations against the diary came in 1957 and 1958 in obscure Swedish and Norwegian periodicals. In them, among other claims, it was alleged that the American journalist and novelist Meyer Levin was the author of the diary. Levin wanted to make a stage adaptation and a film of the diary in the USA, but was not supported in this by Otto Frank. The conflict between Meyer Levin and Otto Frank reached the press, and was used by right-wing extremists as an argument to call the authenticity of the diary into question. It is unclear whether these first attacks on the diary were seen by Otto Frank, but the fact is that he did not lodge a complaint.

Lothar Stielau and Heinrich Buddeberg
Otto Frank took legal action in Germany on three occasions against people who had claimed that his daughter’s diary was a forgery. Early in 1959 he lodged a criminal complaint on the grounds of libel, slander, defamation, maligning the memory of a deceased person and anti-Semitic utterances against the German teacher Lothar Stielau (a teacher of English in Lübeck, and member of the extreme right-wing Deutsche Reichspartei). Stielau wrote in a school newspaper: "The forged diaries of Eva Braun, of the Queen of England and the hardly more authentic one of Anne Frank may have earned several millions for the profiteers from Germany's defeat, but they have also raised our own hackles quite a bit." Otto Frank's criminal complaint was also directed against Stielau's fellow party member Heinrich Buddeberg, who defended Stielau in a letter sent to the Lübecker Nachrichten newspaper. Following a detailed and thorough investigation into the authenticity of Anne Frank’s handwriting, the District Court in Lübeck ruled that the diary was authentic, and Otto Frank’s complaint was upheld. A sentence was never passed because Stielau and Buddeberg withdrew their allegations on the basis of the preliminary investigation. This investigation and the cross-examination of the witnesses had convinced them that the diary was genuine. They expressed remorse over their statements, which they had made without any attempted corroboration. At this, Otto Frank agreed to a settlement, something that he later regretted: "Had I but known that there would be people who would consider a settlement in this case as insufficient proof [of the authenticity of the diary], I should certainly not have dropped the case." (The Diary of Anne Frank. The Revised Critical Edition, 2003, p. 90.)

Heinz Roth
In 1976, Otto Frank brought a legal action before the District Court in Frankfurt against Heinz Roth, from Odenhausen in Germany. Through his own publishing company, Roth had distributed numerous neo-Nazi pamphlets with titles like The Diary of Anne Frank – A Forgery, and The Diary of Anne Frank – The Great Fraud. After two years, the court ruled that Roth must not make these or similar
statements in public, on penalty of a maximum fine of 500,000 Deutschmarks (about € 250,000). On appeal, Roth put forward the report of the French scientist Robert Faurisson in his defence, but this did not convince the German court. Roth’s appeal was rejected in 1979. Although he had died in 1978, a higher appeal was still submitted to the Federal Supreme Court, which referred the case back to the Court of Appeal in Frankfurt. According to the Supreme Court, Roth had had too little opportunity to prove his allegations, and he should be given this opportunity in a retrial. The fact that the defendant had already been dead for two years apparently played no role in this judgement: ultimately the case never came before the Frankfurt Court of Appeal.

**Ernst Römer and Edgar Geiss**

A third German lawsuit involving Otto Frank (as a joint plaintiff) ran from 1976 to 1993. It all began when Ernst Römer handed out pamphlets after theatre productions of "The Diary of Anne Frank" with the headline *Bestseller – A Lie*. The Public Prosecution Service decided to prosecute Römer, and later also his sympathiser Edgar Geiss, who handed out the same pamphlets in the courtroom. The two cases were tried together. Römer was sentenced to a fine of 1,500 Deutschmarks (about € 750) and Geiss to six months imprisonment, and they lodged an appeal. The appeal case dragged on for so long mainly because an investigation was first carried out by the Federal Criminal Police Office, and it was then decided to wait for the German translation of *The Diary of Anne Frank* (the "Critical Edition"). This appeared in 1988, and could be used as evidence. Römer decided not to proceed with his appeal, because of his advanced age, so that only Geiss remained. One of his appeals was successful: the distribution of libel in pamphlets carries the comparatively short time limit for prosecution of six months, so the case was dropped because this statutory limitation had expired.

8. **What has the Anne Frank House done to counter the attacks on the authenticity of the diary?**

The Anne Frank House has also opposed attacks on the authenticity of the diary in its statements and writings and also, in a number of cases, by legal means.

"**Free Historical Research**"

In 1976, the Anne Frank House was a joint plaintiff in the legal action taken by Otto Frank against Heinz Roth at the District Court in Frankfurt (see previous question). The Anne Frank House also dedicated itself to countering offensive lies about the diary after Otto Frank’s death. For example, the Anne Frank House, together with other organisations, took legal action against the revisionist mail-order company *Vrij Historisch Onderzoek* (Free Historical Research, VHO), one of the main distributors of material denying the Holocaust and attacking the diary of Anne Frank in the Dutch-speaking world. Based in Antwerp in Belgium, Free Historical Research had been distributing the report *Le Journal d’Anne Frank est-il authentique* by Robert Faurisson since 1985, and in 1991 it published
the booklet *The “Diary” of Anne Frank: a critical approach*. This book contained the Faurisson report and an introduction by the Free Historical Research publisher Siegfried Verbeke. The booklet was also sent unsolicited to libraries and private individuals in the Netherlands.

**Civil proceedings**
The Anne Frank House joined together with the Anne Frank Fonds in Basel to initiate civil proceedings against Verbeke, Faurisson and Free Historical Research. The Anne Frank House and the Anne Frank Fonds demanded a ban on the distribution of the booklet in the Netherlands, under penalty of a fine of 25,000 Dutch guilders. In December 1998 the Amsterdam District Court found for the plaintiffs and upheld their demand for a ban, a judgement that was confirmed on appeal in 2000. Other legal actions against Free Historical Research, which has greatly expanded its activities via the Internet, have been conducted since 1992.

**9. Why is so little action taken against websites that deny the Holocaust and cast doubt on the authenticity of the diary?**

Throughout the last decades of the twentieth century, doubt was cast on the authenticity of the diary of Anne Frank mainly through booklets, pamphlets and brochures from obscure Nazi publishers. The vast majority of these tracts barely, or never, reached a general public. But with the arrival of the Internet, distributors of Holocaust denial material have gained many new opportunities. Anyone who types "Anne Frank" into a search engine will not only find links to websites with solid and reliable information, but can also be confronted with websites where lies and falsehoods about the diary are presented. And by typing in the word "Holocaust" one quickly trips over revisionist websites. Where this is concerned the Internet is not only a wonderful, unbelievably huge library, but also a dunghill.

**Legal measures are not straightforward**
Combating Holocaust denial on the Internet it still in its earliest stages, as are campaigns against "hate sites" (websites inciting hatred and violence against minorities), cyber-terrorism and crime, and the distribution of child pornography on the Internet. The question of what is the best and most effective way of combating Holocaust denial and the distribution of lies about the diary of Anne Frank on the Internet is a complicated one. Partly because of the way the Internet operates across national borders, legal measures are not straightforward. Some revisionist and neo-Nazi groups use Internet service providers outside of Europe in order to escape legal action. The United States has a different tradition of legal powers against libel and defamation, so that Holocaust denial does not easily lead to prosecution. On the other hand, there are a number of websites based in the United States where the "arguments" of Holocaust deniers are demolished (see also the last question). On these sites, facts, figures and documents the disprove the lies of revisionist reports, based on
the philosophy that facts are the best and only remedy against the spreading of lies.

10. Where can I find more information about Holocaust denial?

There are a number of books and websites with reliable information about Holocaust denial and Holocaust deniers. If you want more information on this subject you can consult the titles listed below at the documentation centre of the Anne Frank House, or visit one of the listed websites.

Articles:

Barnes, Ian R.

Barnouw, David.

Barnouw, David.

Kuttner, Paul.

Books:

Evans, Richard J.

Finkelkraut, Alain.
Guttenplan, D.D.

Kahn, Robert A.

Kuttner, Paul.

Lipstadt, Deborah.
Denying the Holocaust : the growing assault on truth and memory / Deborah E. Lipstadt.

Lipstadt, Deborah.

Pelt, Robert Jan van.

Seidel, Gill.

Shermer, Michael.

Vidal-Naquet, Pierre.

Websites:
The Nizkor Project: Deceit and Misrepresentation: The Techniques of Holocaust Denial Website that discusses the techniques of Holocaust denial. Includes a FAQ section and details the denial of science, the toxicity of hydrogen cyanide, misrepresentation of the Holocaust, and fabrications concerning the Holocaust.
http://www.nizkor.org/features/techniques-of-denial

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Holocaust Denial on Trial: Truth Triumphs in 2000 Historical Court Victory

David Irving, a British writer, sued American professor and author Deborah Lipstadt and her British publisher, Penguin Books Ltd., for libel in a trial that took place in London, England, in 2000. Lipstadt is the author of the book "Denying the Holocaust - the Growing Assault on Truth and Memory," which was published by Penguin Books Ltd. The judge found in favor of the defendants. Transcripts, testimony, and news articles relating to the trial are available online. Emory University and the Institute for Jewish Studies present the information.

http://www.holocaustdenialontrial.org/