

READING COMPREHENSION

GOLD EXP-B1+ U2

Read the article and choose the answer (A, B, C or D) which you think fits best according to the text.

1 How did the writer feel about the book at their grandparent's house?

- A They thought it was terrible.
- B It used to give them a headache.
- C They used to get excited about reading it.
- D They didn't like it as much as the encyclopaedia.

2 What does the writer say about Nostradamus?

- A He only made predictions about medicine.
- B He talked mainly about the bad side of things.
- C He became famous for being a doctor.
- D His predictions have only just become popular.

3 According to the writer, what is the problem with Nostradamus' predictions?

- A Nobody likes reading them because they are poems.
- B Most people find it difficult to read them because they are in French.
- C We don't always know what Nostradamus wanted to say.
- D We don't know whether they are accurate or not.

4 What does the writer think about the disappearances in the Bermuda Triangle?

- A It's not unusual for planes to have communications problems.
- B There's probably a good explanation for many of them.
- C The newspapers have invented the stories about them to sell more.
- D It's surprising there aren't more of them.

5 According to the writer, what is unusual about the Nazca Lines?

- A They can only be seen properly from the air.
- B They were made from stones and sand brought from many kilometres away.
- C The lines in the ground are so straight.
- D A large amount of effort was needed to make them.

6 What does the writer say about the Loch Ness monster?

- A Sightings of it have been bad for tourism.
- B Nobody had heard of it until the 1930s.
- C Photographs of it were found to be true.
- D People are still keen to prove its existence.

Unexplained Mysteries

When I was a kid, my grandparents had an awesome book full of unexplained mysteries. Whenever I went to their house, I couldn't wait to get that book out. It was like an encyclopaedia full of weird and wonderful stories. There were people who could talk to ghosts, alien visitors from outer space and strange symbols from the past. It was so hard to get my head around these stories, but that was what I loved about them! In this article, I'm going to briefly talk about my favourite unexplained mysteries from that wonderful book ...

1 Nostradamus

Nostradamus was a French doctor who lived in the first half of the sixteenth century. He became famous because people believed he could tell what would happen in the future. His predictions covered everything from diseases to inventions to the end of the world, but they were mostly negative! Although his predictions have been popular for hundreds of years, people tend to be more suspicious about them these days. The problem is that because they are poems, it's often unclear what Nostradamus actually meant. They were also written in French and some of the translations have been less than accurate. For those reasons, critics argue that Nostradamus' poems can in fact be used to predict almost any event.

2 The Bermuda Triangle

The Bermuda Triangle is the name given in 1964 to a large area in the shape of a triangle which connects Bermuda, Florida and Puerto Rico. Strange stories appeared in the press in the 1940s after several aeroplanes went missing on a routine flight. One particular magazine article connected their disappearance with other unexplained mysteries in that area. Over the years, similar stories of missing ships and aircraft appeared in the news, talking about communications equipment which mysteriously stopped working and ships found without any sign of life. Some people claimed that the pilots and sailors had been kidnapped by aliens. No one knows the truth, but it's important to remember that a lot of ships sail through the Bermuda Triangle so it's not surprising that there are more accidents than in other places. The area is also particularly affected by storms and hurricanes, so we should probably look for a more natural explanation before blaming aliens or ghosts.

3 Nazca Lines

This collection of lines and designs covers a large area in the south of Peru. Historians believed they were created by the Nazca civilization which lived there until about 1,500 years ago, although it is now thought that some of the lines may be even older. Due to their size, they cannot be seen easily from the ground. This meant that many of them were undiscovered until the 1920s when people started to use aeroplanes to investigate the area. What they discovered were straight lines stretching for tens of kilometres and designs of animals. They had all been built very carefully by removing stones and sand from the ground. The lack of wind and rain has meant that the lines have survived for many years. There are many theories about why people put some effort into making them. However, the strangest one has to be that they were runways for aliens. No one knows the real reason for the Nazca Lines, but it's unlikely they were constructed by aliens.

4 Loch Ness Monster

The story of the Loch Ness Monster is famous all over the world. It's especially popular with the hundreds of thousands of tourists to Loch Ness annually. Many hope to spot Nessie, the legendary creature said to live in the lake ('loch' is the Scottish word for 'lake'). Locals had been talking about a sea monster inhabiting the waters for hundreds of years. In fact, a sixth-century story talks about a man being attacked by a creature from the water. However, in the 1930s, newspaper articles about recent sightings of Nessie attracted global interest. Photographs of this mysterious animal were published and one investigator even claimed to find footprints. However, none of this was found to be true. Despite this, there are several reported sightings every year. Scientists haven't given up either. They've used all sorts of technology such as satellites and underwater sensors to try to locate Nessie. Sadly, however, there's still no evidence that she actually exists.