

1. Listen to the following news reports and complete the transcripts.

Massachusetts Police Catch Dog Stealing from Toy Drive

The police department in Franklin, Massachusetts has found the culprit involved in the _____ disappearances of toys from their Christmas _____ drive. The "robber" was the department's own therapy _____, Ben. The dog was _____ on camera walking down a hallway with a doll in his mouth. Ben's stash of toys was found under a desk in the _____. The toys had all been chewed and were _____ to be recovered, but officers _____ to replace them. Ben has since been banned from the toy _____, and the officers have taken precautions to prevent this from _____ again.

Time Magazine Names Climate Activist Greta Thunberg Person of the Year

16-year-old _____ activist Greta Thunberg has been named Time Magazine's 2019 Person of the Year. Thunberg was _____ recognized for her activism in 2018 when she began to spend her _____ days protesting in front of the Swedish parliament building. She soon gained the _____ of other students and formed a student strike _____ called "Fridays for Future". Since then, she has challenged world _____ to reduce carbon emissions at several United Nations (UN) conferences. Time announced their _____ to name her their Person of the Year on Wednesday. She is the youngest person ever to be _____.

2. Listen to the news report and select the best title for each news story.

News Story One:

Giant Crocodile Eats Dog and Bites Man
Man Becomes Latest Fatality in Attacks
Huge Creature Lashes out at Man and Canine

News Story Two:

Injured Woman and Missing Cat Result of Twister
Woman Missing After Tornado Hits Town
Frightening Storm Causes Damage in the Thousands

News Story Three:

Man Battles Burned Fish in House
Man Disposes of Ring Out the Window
Kitchen Sink Holds Man Hostage

News Story Four:

Winter Hike Over Mountain Turns Deadly for Family
Snow Storm's Grip Strands Family on Outing
Family Lost After Car Breaks Down on Weekend Drive

3. Listen to the following news reports and choose the correct answer for each question.

Grandmother Shares Fourth Thanksgiving with Man She Accidentally Texted

Comprehension Questions

1. When Dench first texted Hinton, she was trying to text

her uncle her sister her grandson

2. After taking the picture, the two

posted it on social media put it in a photo album showed it to their friends

3. In total, Dench and Hinton have spent

four Thanksgiving dinners together three Thanksgiving dinners together
five Thanksgiving dinners together

World's Oldest Living Couple Celebrates Their 80th Anniversary

Comprehension Questions

1. John and Charlotte met in

College high school senior living

2. John says the secret to a long life is

getting enough sleep worrying less living in moderation

3. The official date of John and Charlotte's anniversary is

December 22nd December 24th December 15th

Do you know what a conspiracy theory is? Look at this definition:

a conspiracy theory: /kən'spɪrəsi 'θɪəri/ a theory or belief that there was a secret plan behind a major event

4. Watch the video about "Area 51: The Center of Conspiracy Theories" and complete the transcript.

In the early 1950's, US _____ were conducting low flying recon _____ over the USSR. But there were constant worries of them being spotted and shot _____. So, in 1954, President Eisenhower authorized the development of a top _____, high-altitude recon aircraft dubbed... Project Aquatone. The _____ required a remote location that wasn't easily accessible to civilians or _____. Area 51 fit the bill perfectly. It was in the Nevada desert near a _____ flat called Groom Lake. No one knows exactly why it's called Area 51, but one _____ suggests it came from its proximity to the Nevada _____ Test Sites. The Nevada Test Site was divided _____ number-designated areas by the Atomic Energy Commission. The location was already familiar _____ for the military as it has served as a World War II aerial gunnery range. In the _____ of 1955, sightings of "unidentified flying _____" were reported around Area 51. That's because the Air _____ had begun its testing on the U-2 aircraft. The U-2 can fly _____ than 600,000 feet. At the time, normal airliners were _____ in the 10,000 to 20,000 feet range. While military aircraft topped out _____ 40,000 feet. So, if a pilot spotted the tiny speck that was the U-2 high _____ it, they would have no idea what it was and they would usually let air _____ control know someone was out there. Which is what led to the increase of UFO sightings in the area. While Air Force _____ knew the UFO sightings were U-2 tests, they couldn't really tell the _____. So they explained the aircraft sightings by saying they were "_____ phenomena" and "high-altitude _____ research." The testing of the U-2 ended in the late 1950s; but, Area 51 has continued to serve as the _____ ground for many aircraft, including: the F-117A, the A-12 and the Tacit Blue. No one knows for sure what Area 51 is up to these _____. The government never even publicly acknowledged the _____ of the base until 2013, with the release of declassified CIA _____. But if you're ever at the Las Vegas airport, keep an eye out for some small, unmarked, _____ planes in a fenced-off area. They're how Area 51 _____ get to work from their homes in Vegas.

READING ACTIVITY

CONSPIRACY THEORIES.

Though I never believe them, I can waste hours when I should be studying, reading about conspiracy theories. Here is a selection of my favorite ones! Read the article carefully and then answer the true or false questions below. Do you know of any other conspiracy theories? Do you believe in any of them?

Apollo Moon Landing

Amazingly, a serious following of people believe that the Apollo moon landing of 1969 did not take place. Rather, conspiracy theorists claim that the U.S. government in some type of dark room staged the entire thing in order to spark patriotism and support among the populace. Suggestions that the government tampered with evidence (such as doctoring tapes, transmissions and moon rock samples) are referred to often by believers in this theory, which is argued in outer space discussions to this day. The Flat Earth Society was the first and most prominent organization to argue that the landing was staged in a Hollywood studio based on an old movie script.

Area 51

The conspiracy theory of a secret government testing facility called Area 51 is so seductive that a video game was created based on what such a place would look like and what must go on there. Common claims include alien cover-ups, radioactive testing, nuclear experimentation and genetic modification of humans to create a "super-race" someday in the distant future. Officially, what is typically referred to as "Area 51" is little more than a military base located in Nevada for development and testing of weapons and aircraft systems. Unsurprisingly, however, conspiracy theorists have taken great imaginary liberties with what they claim is the "real" purpose of the secretly situated facility.

Skull and Bones

No secret society is more shrouded in mystery than Yale's infamous Skull & Bones fraternity. Known informally as "Bones", the society has produced several U.S. presidents and presidential candidates (most recently George W. Bush and John Kerry, respectively) and is known for assigning nicknames to members – like "Hamlet" and "Uncle Reemus" – based on classical literature. Like all secret societies, no outsider truly knows what goes on during Bones meetings and initiations, but we do know that each Skull & Bones class meets each Thursday and Sunday night during their senior year to carry out their mysterious activities. One rumor has it that initiation requires spilling the beans on your entire sexual history to the other members, though this of course cannot be confirmed. The group is said to exert influence on its members throughout their lives, including when they rise into positions of power in government and business.

Elvis

Finally, we arrive at that timeless poster boy of conspiracies, Elvis Presley. The "official" story has Presley's fiancée being found unresponsive on the floor of his hotel suite 1977. Remarkably few people have accepted this as truth however, choosing instead to believe that "The King" faked his own death. Popular explanations include Elvis wanting to avoid debt collectors and an Elvis look-alike who supposedly bought a plane ticket to Buenos Aires shortly before his death. Why he would walk away from hundreds of millions in future earnings for any of these reasons is seldom addressed, but then again, we probably "just don't get it." Fortunately, this story should die down in another 20 years or so, when no one can claim Elvis is still alive with a straight face.

Are these statements true or false?

1. Lots of people think the moon landing never really happened, and was just a trick played by the US government.

True false

2. The idea of Area 51 was so interesting that a movie was created about it.

True false

3. Area 51 is actually a military base.

True false

true

4. There have been presidents who were members of the Skull and Bones society.

True false

5. What the Skull and Bones group do during their meetings is public knowledge.

True false

6. Many believe that Elvis never really died and that the whole story was a hoax.

True false

7. Some even believe that Elvis faked his own death so he wouldn't have to pay money that he owed.

True false