TEST- UNIT 6

Reading

Flight 19 and the Bermuda Triangle

On a sunny day over seventy years ago, five Navy planes took off from their base in Florida on a routine training mission, known as Flight 19. Neither the planes nor the crew were ever seen again. The mysterious disappearance made all the newspaper headlines, and a legend was born – the legend of the Bermuda Triangle.

The Bermuda Triangle is an area of tropical ocean roughly bounded by Miami, Bermuda and Puerto Rico. No one keeps statistics, but in the last century, numerous ships and planes have simply disappeared without a trace within the imaginary triangle. So, how mysterious is it? The Bermuda Triangle region certainly has some unusual features. In parts, it is very deep, and it has very strong ocean currents and the weather can be strange at time – there are hurricanes and storms quite often. Its most unusual recorded feature, though, is the fact that, because of its location, it is hard to get a correct compass reading within the triangle. Even Christopher Columbus, back in the fifteenth century, wrote in his ship's log book that there were strange compass bearings in the area. Despite all this, the region didn't get its name until August 1964, when Vincent Gaddis coined the term *Bermuda Triangle* in a cover story for *Argosy* magazine about the disappearance of Flight 19. After the article was published, journalists all over the world started looking for more stories about strange happenings in the mysterious tropical triangle.

Many theories have been used to explain what happened to the missing pilots, and to the many other travellers who have disappeared. Some have suggested enormous sea monsters, giant squid or extra-terrestrials may have been responsible, or that the pilots were kidnapped by aliens living under the sea. The reality, say many, is far less dramatic. They point out how dangerous weather conditions, human error, badly designed machines or just plain bad luck can explain the many disappearances. What most experts say is that the region south of Miami is full of ships and planes, of all shapes and sizes, at all times of the day, and that when an area is really busy it is statistically more likely to have more unusual accidents or disasters than quieter parts of the ocean. 'To say quite a few ships and aeroplanes have gone down in the Bermuda Triangle is like saying there are an awful lot of car accidents on a busy motorway,' says one expert.

The legend of the Bermuda Triangle, however, will be forever linked to the fateful flight that took place on 5th December 1945, and plenty of people will always refuse to believe that it

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was just an accident. The pilots were on a routine navigational training mission, but they got completely lost, and had to fly around the area trying to find out where they were. There are no landmarks in the middle of the ocean. The planes flew in one direction then another as daylight turned to stormy seas in the darkness.

On his radio, the lead pilot, Taylor, is heard making a plan – as soon as the first plane's fuel level went below 10 gallons, all five planes were to try to land at sea.

It seems likely that the planes must have carried out Taylor's plan. The problem was that their planes, although very strong and well-built, were not designed to land in water. The possibility of anyone surviving a landing in high seas was slim, the chance of surviving the night in the cold water was zero, and the likelihood of their broken planes making a quick descent to the bottom of the ocean was high. A massive land and sea search was mounted, but neither bodies nor wreckage were ever found. In the Navy's final report, the disappearance of Flight 19 was blamed on pilot error. Taylor's family protested and, after several reviews, the verdict was changed to 'causes or reasons unknown'. Whatever the cause, the American Navy certainly didn't feel it was due to the mysterious effects of the Bermuda Triangle.

Still, given a choice between the horrifying idea of a giant monster pulling an innocent ship to the sea floor, or human error, poor engineering or bad weather, who could resist the legend of the Bermuda Triangle?

5 You are going to read an article about Flight 19 and the Bermuda Triangle. Are the sentences true (T) or false (F)? Or is there not enough information (N) to say if the sentences are true or false? There is an example at the beginning (0).

0 Flight 19 disappeared over the Bermuda Triangle seventy years ago. _F_____

1 At the time, the disappearance of Flight 19 was not reported by the press. _____

2 The exact number of ships to have disappeared in the Bermuda Triangle in the twentieth century is not known. _____

3 The ocean's depth, currents and weather patterns are given as reasons why it is hard to get an accurate compass reading in the Bermuda Triangle. _____

4 Vincent Gaddis was the first person to write about the disappearance of Flight 19. _____

5 The majority of people suggesting theories say that the disappearances in the Bermuda Triangle can't be explained by usual events. _____

6 On a daily basis, only a few ships or planes are likely to cross the Bermuda Triangle region. _____

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7 The pilots of Flight 19 had only just begun their training mission when they got lost. _____

8 One reason why they got lost was that there were no objects or structures at sea to help them find out where they were. _____

9 It must have been night time when the planes tried to land at sea. _____

10 The family of one of the pilots refused to accept the Navy's conclusion in their final report. _____

(10 points)

Listening

6 [Track 109] You will hear the story of a ship called the *Mary Celeste*. For questions 1–10, choose the correct option to complete the sentences. There is an example at the beginning (0).

0 The radio programme is called ***Mystery Hour*** / *Mystery Time*.

1 The crew of the *Mary Celeste* disappeared in *1862 / 1872*.

2 When discovered, the *Mary Celeste* was sailing *towards / away from* New York.

3 There were *eight / ten* people on the *Mary Celeste*, including the wife and child of the captain.

4 All the *crew's valuable items / ship's lifeboats* were still on the ship when it was discovered.

5 One theory suggested that the ship might have been attacked by *monsters / pirates*.

6 The speaker says that loose barrels of alcohol were dangerous because they may have *fallen on people / caused an explosion*.

7 The speaker says that the crew might have got on to the lifeboat to *try to escape from the ship / wait to see what happened on the ship*.

8 The speaker explains that the decision to get on to the lifeboat was *quite sensible / very surprising*.

9 The speaker suggests the lifeboat may have sunk because *it was broken / the weather changed*.

10 They *later / never* found the lifeboat.

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(10 points)

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