

## Reading

1 Do you believe in these creatures? Tick the ones you believe in.

1 ghosts	<input type="checkbox"/>	5 unicorns	<input type="checkbox"/>
2 aliens	<input type="checkbox"/>	6 werewolves	<input type="checkbox"/>
3 vampires	<input type="checkbox"/>	7 fairies	<input type="checkbox"/>
4 witches	<input type="checkbox"/>	8 mermaids	<input type="checkbox"/>

2 Do you think some of the creatures in 1 are more likely to exist than others? Which ones?

3 Read the article about a strange house. Which of the ideas in 1 are mentioned in the text?



# A house of mystery

In 1884, heartbroken Sarah Winchester left her home in Connecticut on the east coast of the USA as well as the graves of her husband and only child, and travelled across the country to California where a strange obsession awaited her. Did she know that it would last for the rest of her life?

When her husband passed away, Sarah inherited the Winchester gun and rifle company, which had made the Winchester family very wealthy. After the deaths of her child and husband, Sarah fell into a deep depression and decided to consult a medium. According to some sources, the medium explained that her family was being haunted by the ghosts of American soldiers and others killed by Winchester rifles. Supposedly the deaths of her daughter and husband had been caused by these spirits and Sarah Winchester might be the next victim. The medium said that to keep the ghosts happy, Sarah had to build a huge house for them. As long as she never stopped building the house, her life would not be in danger.

Sarah left Connecticut for California. There, in 1884, she bought a small unfinished farmhouse

and over the next thirty-eight years, she employed builders around-the-clock to add on room after room, and storey after storey. The building work never stopped, not even for weekends or holidays

and it produced the house known today as the Winchester Mystery House™. It originally had seven floors, but after an earthquake in 1906 it was reduced to four. Apart from the house's strange architectural features including a staircase that leads up to the ceiling, doors that open onto walls and secret passages that run between rooms and behind walls, it was also unusually large. At the time of Sarah Winchester's death, it had 160 rooms, 2,000 doors, 10,000 windows, 47 staircases and 13 bathrooms!

Sarah Winchester had strange habits, too. Apparently, she never slept in the same bedroom two nights in a row because she wanted to confuse any evil spirits that were waiting for her. She also used to visit the Blue Room at the centre of the house every night to communicate with the good spirits. She would ring a bell at midnight to call them and again at 2 am when it was time for them to leave. She



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