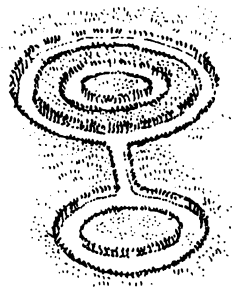


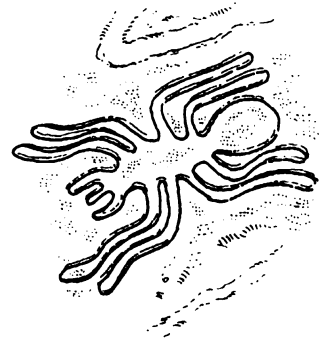
19b Unsolved mysteries

Mysteries

1 One summer in the early 1980s, strange patterns appeared overnight in cornfields across the English countryside. Observers were impressed by the regularity of the circular shapes and beauty of the designs. Some corn circles were as big as 60 meters across, others just one meter. The patterns were made by flattening but not breaking the corn, but there was no sign of human or animal approach to the sites as the corn in the surrounding area was undisturbed. ■



2 In the Nazca desert of southern Peru there is an amazing display of art laid out on the desert floor. Outlines of animals have been 'drawn' by removing the dark stone layer which covers the desert to reveal the light-coloured sand underneath. There's a bird which measures 120 meters across, a spider of 50 meters, a monkey, a whale and other birds, fishes and strange plants. The pictures were not discovered until 1941, but they are thought to date from about AD 900. The strange thing is that these pictures can only be seen from the air. ■



3 The winter of 1884 was an exceptionally cold one in southern England. One morning, people got up to find that the rivers had frozen over and a blanket of snow lay everywhere. Then they noticed a mysterious line of footsteps running up to their doors, through their gardens, over rooftops, crossing fields and covering an area of about 100 miles. They looked like donkey's hooves, but they were in a single line as if the animal had been walking on two legs. ■



4 On an island off the north of Scotland, a lighthouse was built in 1895. A year later, just before Christmas, Joseph Moore and his crew were due to take supplies by ship to the three men living in the lighthouse. Because of bad weather conditions, their departure was delayed until the 26th December. As they approached the island, they expected to see a sign that the men on the lighthouse had seen the ship, but there was no response. The ship's horn was sounded, but nobody appeared from the lighthouse. Joseph and three other men decided to go and investigate. In the lighthouse, the beds had been made and the dishes from the last meal had been washed. All the clocks had stopped. But there were no men. They searched the island and found nothing apart from some damage caused by storms earlier that month. The last entry in the log book, on 15th December, reads, 'Storm ended, sea calm. God is with us.' ■



5 Mr and Mrs Downes were walking home from church in Bristol in March 1977 when they heard something which sounded like a button falling onto the ground. In fact it was a hazel nut, and it was followed by hundreds more appearing out of the clear blue sky. The Downes took some home and found them good to eat. Not long after that, they were followed by showers of peas and beans. ■



19c

Unsolved mysteries

Possible explanations

a

Other people looking for a more rational explanation think that these strange showers could have been caused by whirlwinds sucking up the plants from the ground and dropping them elsewhere.

b

One of the men who helped to search the island thought that the men might have wanted to disappear – they could have been picked up by a passing ship and taken to Australia to start a new life.

c

At first, people thought they may have been messages from outer space.

d

Alternatively, aliens might have been sending free gifts from the air as a friendly gesture.

e

Many people were convinced that they had been visited by the devil.

f

They continue to appear with increasingly complicated designs, but nowadays people tend to think people must be creating them.

g

It is believed by some people that the Indians must have been able to see their creations from the sky.

h

One person even suggested that it could have been a kangaroo which might have escaped from a nearby zoo!

i

It is believed by most historians that the pictures were created for religious purposes – in other words, they must have been put there as presents for the gods.

j

Another theory was that they could have been caused by the wind.

k

Aliens from another planet may have collected some samples of our plants for investigation and then thrown them out of their spaceships when they had finished with them.

l

One possible explanation was that the marks were made by birds with ice on their feet.

m

In 1957, an American set out to prove that people could have flown in hot-air balloons using the materials that would have been available to them at that time.

n

It is thought that one of the men could have gone mad and caused the deaths of all three men.

o

A journalist offered another explanation – even though the sea was calm, a freak wave might have taken the men by surprise and swept them into the sea.

Unsolved mysteries Worksheets **19b** and **19c**

NOTE: Use Worksheets 19b and 19c for this activity.

ACTIVITY

Groupwork: reading, speaking

AIM

To read about unsolved mysteries and to speculate about possible explanations.

GRAMMAR AND FUNCTIONS

Past modals to speculate about the past

May have or *might have* to talk about something which possibly happened or was true in the past

VOCABULARY

Mysterious events

PREPARATION

Make one copy of Worksheet 19b (mysteries) for every five students in the class and cut it up as indicated. Make one copy of Worksheet 19c (possible explanations) for every five students in the class.

TIME

40 minutes

PROCEDURE

- 1 Explain to the students that you are going to tell them about something strange which happened last night. Tell them that you got up this morning to find that a hole had appeared in the road outside your house and that neither you nor your neighbours can explain what happened. Ask the students if they can think of any possible explanations. Encourage them to be as imaginative as they like with their suggestions. For example, something might have fallen out of the sky, somebody might have dug a hole, there might have been an earthquake, an animal might have dug a hole, an alien spaceship may have landed there.
- 2 Tell the students that they are going to read about some strange mysteries which have never been explained and that they are going to speculate about possible explanations.
- 3 Ask the students to work in groups of five.
- 4 Give one copy of Worksheet 19b (mysteries), cut up, to each group of students and ask them to take one section each. Explain that each section contains a different unsolved mystery.
- 5 Ask the students to take it in turns to read out their unsolved mystery to the rest of the group. The whole group should suggest two or three possible explanations for each one. Each student should write down the group's suggested explanations on the back of their section of the worksheet.
- 6 When they have listened to and speculated about the five mysteries, compare results.
- 7 Ask the students to stay in their groups for the next part of the activity. Give each group a copy of Worksheet 19c (possible explanations).
- 8 Tell the students that they are going to read some ways in which people have tried to explain the mysteries they have read about but that the explanations are not in the correct order. Their task is to match three possible explanations to each mystery.
- 9 Check their answers and ask them to choose the most likely explanation for each mystery.

ANSWERS

1 cfj 2 gim 3 ehl 4 bno 5 adk