

1. Stranger than fiction

On December 5th, 1872, the boat Marie Celeste was discovered abandoned. Everything was in place and the captain's dinner was on his table, untouched. What happened? Who knows - it's a mystery. This week, we are offering some more mysteries for your students to discuss. Some of them have solutions and others don't, but Worksheet 2 contains a commentary on each mystery. There are two pages to print. Click here to get your copies.

<http://www.insideout.net/warehouse/worksheets/November/IO026S-strange.rtf>

Level: Intermediate and above* (see note below)

How to use the lesson:

1. Divide your class into pairs or small groups.
2. Give each of your students a copy of Worksheet 1. Ask them to read each mystery and discuss them in their pairs/groups. Move around the class and help students who are slower to get started with questions like (for Red Rain) "Why do you think the rain was red?", "Where do you think it came from?" etc.
3. After the students have discussed each of the mysteries, give each student in the class a copy of Worksheet 2. Ask your students to match one of the comments to one of the eight stories on Worksheet 1.
4. When everyone has done this, finish off with a class discussion about each of the mysteries to check whether any of your students have seen or heard anything connected to these mysteries before, and what opinions they hold on each one.

*Note: Although this type of activity is appropriate for an Intermediate class, there are a number of words which would probably be unfamiliar to students at that level. You might want to pre-teach the following: flesh, creature, jaws, nostrils, flippers, jellyfish, extinction, hoax, dorsal blowholes, lightning bolt, buzzards.

Commentary (matched with stories from Worksheet 1)

- a. Monkey Business
- b. Red Rain (story 3)
- c. Butterfly Return
- d. Red Rain (story 1)
- e. Gambian Sea Monster
- f. Mystery Circles
- g. Giant in the Sky
- h. Red Rain (story 2)

2. Related Websites

Send your students to these websites, or just take a look yourself.

<http://www.aisp.net/strange.htm>

plenty of links to strange phenomena

<http://www.forteantimes.com>

a magazine full of strange mysteries past and present

<http://www.einterface.net/gamini/paranorm.html>

yet more examples of the paranormal