

1

Legend or truth?

Unit overview

TOPIC: Urban legends and other stories

TEXTS

Reading and listening: an article about urban legends

Listening: a radio show about urban legends

Reading: an article about mythological creatures

Writing: a newspaper article about an urban legend

SPEAKING AND FUNCTIONS

A discussion about urban legends

Telling urban legends

LANGUAGE

Grammar: deduction and probability

Vocabulary: expressions with *story*

Warm up

Books closed. Tell students the following story:

My cousin's friend went on holiday to Los Angeles last year. He was driving on the interstate when he noticed a man changing a flat tyre, so he stopped to help. The man asked my cousin's friend for his address so that he could send a thank you note. A few days later, my cousin's friend received a thank you note in the mail ... along with a cheque for \$10,000 signed by Bill Gates!

Ask students if they think the story is true. If not, ask them why not. Could it be possible?

- a** Books open. Ask students to look at the pictures and discuss what they think is happening in each one. Help with any difficult vocabulary and listen to some of their ideas in open class.

Answers

There is an alligator on a city street and a girl with a sore cheek.

- b** Tell students they are going to read an article in which the pictures are explained, in order to check their ideas in Exercise 1a. Encourage students not to look up every new word but just to read and get the general idea of the text. You could give them a time limit to encourage them to read the text quickly.

- c** ▶ **CD1 T7** Play the recording while students read, listen and fill the spaces in the text with one of the phrases. Allow students to compare answers with a partner before feedback.

TAPESCRIPT

See the reading text on pages 12 and 13 of the Student's Book.

Answers

A 4 B 7 C 1 D 6 E 2 F 5

Clause 3 is not used.

- d** Read through the questions with students to check understanding. Give students time to read the text closely and to check their answers with a partner before feedback.

1 Read and listen

If you set the background information as a homework research task, ask the students to tell the class what they found out.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Alaska (population c. 700,000) is the largest state in the United States by area. It is situated to the northwest of Canada. The USA bought Alaska from Russia for \$7.2 million (\$113 million in today's money) in 1867. Alaska has more than three million lakes and is home to wonderful animals such as caribou, moose and reindeer.

New York City (population c. 8.4 million) is the most populous city in the United States. It is a centre of arts and culture and over 800 different languages are spoken there, making it the most linguistically diverse city in the world. Many TV programmes and films have been made there, so many districts and landmarks in New York City are well-known, including the Statue of Liberty, Times Square, Broadway, Manhattan, Central Park and many more.

Florida (population c. 18.8 million) is a state in the southwestern United States. It is known as the Sunshine State because of its warm climate. The capital is Tallahassee and the largest city is Jacksonville. Perhaps the most famous city in Florida is Miami.

Answers

- 1 Crime and horror, schools and universities, food contamination and the Internet.
- 2 Most urban legends are untrue.
- 3 The story of alligators living in the New York sewers. It arose in the 1930s when reportedly people flushed baby alligators (brought back from holidays in Florida) down their toilets when they grew too big.
- 4 The internet can give you information on how true certain urban legends are.
- 5 Mankind's compulsion for storytelling; the cautionary nature of many urban legends; a comparison between urban legends and traditional fairy tales.
- 6 The fact that they change our behaviour.

- e** Check students understand the definitions. Ask them to find phrases or expressions in the text which have the same meaning. Let them compare answers with a partner before feedback in open class.

Answers

- 2 by word of mouth
- 3 crop up
- 4 traced back
- 5 a wide range of issues
- 6 climate of fear
- 7 largely irrelevant
- 8 not one single case

Discussion box

In pairs or small groups, students go through the questions in the box and discuss them. Monitor and help as necessary, encouraging students to express themselves in English and to use any vocabulary they have learned from the text. Ask pairs or groups to feedback to the class and discuss any interesting points further.

* OPTIONAL ACTIVITY

Students may like to invent their own urban legends. Divide the class into small groups and ask them to brainstorm possible elements for an urban legend. Explain that the story must be believable and include elements that are common to everybody. You may like to offer some ideas of your own to get them started. Circulate and help with vocabulary as required. When students have created a legend, elect one student from each group to tell their legend to the class and hold a vote on which is the best one.

If students have difficulty thinking of urban legends, write the following items on the board and ask students to create an urban legend using five or six of the words or phrases.

old man little girl alien dead cat cupboard
 car buried in the garden umbrella \$1 million
 hat banana computer toilet fridge
 Egyptian mummy burglar very sunny day

2

Grammar

* Deduction and probability

- a** **Weaker classes:** Tell students an urban legend, either one of your own or the following story:
I have a friend called John who I have known for ten years. Last week, he went to the supermarket to buy some bread. He took it home and started to make a sandwich. When he cut into the bread he found a piece of paper with an address written on it. It was in his town, so he was curious and went to the address. He knocked on the door and a woman answered. He told her about the piece of paper and she was very surprised. She said that the same thing had happened to her and showed him the piece of paper she had found. On it was written John's address. They got married six months later.

Write the following on the board:

John is my friend.

John went to the supermarket.

They both found a piece of paper in a loaf of bread.

The pieces of paper had their addresses on them.

John married a girl who lived near him.

Ask students if they think the sentences are possible or if they really happened. Write *must*, *might*, *may* and *can't* on the board. Elicit the meaning and use of each verb from students. In pairs, students think of sentences using the modal auxiliaries.

Possible answers in brackets:

John is my friend. (It must be true.)

John went to the supermarket. (It might be true.)

They both found a piece of paper in a loaf of bread. (It might be true.)

The pieces of paper had their addresses on them. (It can't be true.)

John married a woman who lived near him. (It might be true.)

Ask students to focus on whether the actions in the sentences took place in the past or the present and ask what happens when we use the modal auxiliaries in the past (modal + *have* + past participle). In pairs, students write sentences explaining why they think the sentences are true or not. During feedback, write correct answers on the board and focus on the use of the perfect participle.

Possible answers

John must be your friend.
 John may/might have gone to the supermarket.
 They might have found a piece of paper in the bread.
 The pieces of paper can't have had their addresses on them.
 John might have married a woman who lives near him.

Continue with the procedure for stronger classes.
Stronger classes: Ask students to look at the sentences in the book. Students work together to decide on the best answer. Check answers, focusing on the different levels of probability expressed by each of the modal auxiliaries.

Answers

2 b 3 c 4 a 5 b 6 a

- b** Check understanding of *hung up* (to finish a phone call). Ask students to complete the sentences using a suitable modal verb. Explain that there may be more than one answer.

Answers

2 can't be 3 will know / must know / might know 4 must have made / might have made 5 must have said 6 must have watched

- c** In pairs, students discuss the difference in meaning between the sentences. Encourage them to think about the context in which each sentence was said and the types of evidence that the speakers have based their assumptions on. Discuss in open class.

Answers

- In sentence a, the speaker is almost certain that it is James at the door. In sentence b, it is possible that James is at the door.
- In sentence a, the speaker is certain that Monica knows where her brother is. In sentence b, the speaker thinks it is possible that Monica will know where her brother is.
- In sentence a, the speaker is sure that her sister has reached New York. In sentence b, the speaker thinks it is very probable that her sister has reached New York.

Language note

Students often make the following mistake:

- **That mustn't be John at the door. He's in Spain.* (substituting *mustn't* for *can't*)
 Tell students that when using modal auxiliary verbs for deduction and probability, *can't* is the opposite of *must*.
- May* and *might* often have a similar meaning when we talk about possibility. However, point out to students that *may* is more commonly used in formal written language and *might* is preferred in speech. *Might not* has a short form *mightn't*. *May not* cannot be shortened to **mayn't*.
- We can add *well* to both verbs to express a strong possibility:
The picture may well be very valuable. (it is very possible)
- Could* can also be used to express possibility. In spoken English, expressions such as *maybe*, *perhaps* and *I think* are used instead of *may* and *might*.


Grammar notebook

Remind students to note down the rules for deduction and probability and to write a few examples of their own.

* OPTIONAL ACTIVITY

Collect some pictures from magazines and newspapers. Pictures should show unusual or unexplained situations, e.g. a group of people laughing, a man running, etc. Pin the pictures around the classroom. Write the following questions on the board: *Who are the people? What is the relationship between them? Where are they? What are they doing? Why?* Divide the class into small groups and ask groups to circulate and answer the questions about each picture. When groups have discussed all the pictures, listen to some of their ideas in open class as feedback.

3 Listen

- a** Look at the pictures on page 14. In pairs, students describe what is happening in each story. Monitor and help with vocabulary if required. Listen to some of their ideas in open class, but do not tell them the correct order of the pictures at this stage.
- b**  **CD1 T8** Tell students they are going to listen to a radio show in which the stories in Exercise 3a are told. Students listen and number the pictures in the order that they hear the information. Encourage students to concentrate on the task and not to worry if they don't understand every word. Check answers.

TAPESCRIPT

Narrator: Story one

Presenter: OK, it's just after twenty past ten and time for 'A Likely Story'. And on the line we've got Kate from Huddersfield. How are you, Kate?

Kate: Hiya. I'm fine.

Presenter: And how's Huddersfield this morning?

Kate: Oh, a bit wet and cold. You know, the same as ever.

Presenter: Well, let's see if we can bring a bit of sunshine into your morning. Are you ready to play?

Kate: Yes.

Presenter: You know the rules. I'm going to tell you an urban legend and you've got to tell me if you think the story's true or not. Get it right and we'll send you a goody bag with lots of nice things in it. Get it wrong and you get nothing.

Kate: OK.

Presenter: So, here we go. This story was sent to us by a Mr Don Goodwill who swears it's true because he heard it at his local golf club! I have to say that it's the first time we've heard this one but that doesn't mean anything, Kate, it's really up to you.

So, the story involves a keen golfer, a tee – and I'm not talking about the meal or drink here but that little plastic thing golfers balance their balls on – and some rather nasty pesticide they were using to keep the grass growing on the golf course. So this golfer goes out to play his usual round of golf. He plays his first shot, picks up his tee, puts it between his lips and walks off to play his next shot. This habit of carrying his tee in his mouth, I should explain, was an old habit of his, not very hygienic I know, but something he'd always done. Well at the end of 18 holes, he complains to his friend that he's feeling a bit strange. However, he soon feels better, goes home and forgets all about it. Over the next few weeks, he plays several more rounds of golf and each time complains of feeling more and more ill. One day he collapses on the golf course. He's rushed to hospital where he is found to have burns all over his skin and a really high temperature. Ten days later, unfortunately he dies. After a long investigation, it is found that he died of poisoning from the pesticide that they were using on the grass which he had slowly ingested into his body each time he put his tee into his mouth.

Kate: Wow.

Presenter: So, Kate. What do you think? True or completely made up?

Kate: Well, I've never played golf so I can't say I really have any idea if this is possible or not. But it sounds too incredible to be true.

Presenter: So you're saying it's false.

Kate: Yep. I am. I don't believe this could happen. ... No way! It's true?! I don't believe it.

Presenter: It is, Kate. I'm sorry. It happened to a golfer called George Prior back in 1982.

Kate: Well, as I said, I've never played golf and now I don't think I ever will.

Presenter: Not a bad idea. Kate, thanks for taking part. Sorry you got it wrong.

Kate: Well, I'm used to it – it's the story of my life! But no problem. Thanks. Bye!

Narrator: Story two

Presenter: Our next listener is Phil from Manchester. Hi, Phil, are you ready to play?

Phil: Yes, let's do it.

Presenter: Now this is a story that's doing the rounds on the internet at the moment and it really is one of the strangest stories we've come across in a long time.

The story starts with a Russian warship picking up three Japanese fishermen who they find swimming in the sea. They take the men back to dry land and ask them how they came to be in Russian waters. The men explain that they were out fishing when a cow fell from the sky and landed on their boat, sinking it immediately. Well, of course, this story puts the men straight into a Russian prison on suspicion of being spies. However, and this is where it gets really strange, a few weeks later, the Russian air force admit that the crew on one of their cargo planes had stolen a cow in Siberia and loaded it onto the plane. However, halfway through the flight, the cow had panicked and the men had been forced to open the back of the plane and push it out. And that is how a cow came to be flying through the sky and hit the Japanese fishing boat. Of course, when they heard this story, the authorities had no choice but to release the fishermen.

Phil: That's it.

Presenter: That's it. So Phil, what do you think? Is there any truth to the story or do you think they're pulling our leg?

Phil: Well, it does sound kind of ridiculous. I mean if it was true, it would have been on the news, wouldn't it? No. It isn't true. I'm sure of that. ... Yes!!

Presenter: Well done, Phil. There's no fooling you. A bag of goodies will be making its way to you shortly.

Phil: Thank you.

Presenter: Well, that's all for today's 'A likely story'. Be sure to join us tomorrow when we'll ask two more listeners to give us their thoughts on some of the more unlikely stories floating around out there in cyberspace.

Answers

Story 1: a c b The story is true.

Story 2: f e d The story is false.

- c** In pairs, students use the pictures to retell each of the stories. If students need help in making their stories effective, spend some time eliciting vocabulary from the listening text and writing it on the board. Useful vocabulary in story 1: *golf club, golfer, tee, pesticide, poisoning*. In story 2: *Russian warship, Japanese fishermen, cow, spies, prison, release*. As feedback, listen to some of the stories in open class.


4 Vocabulary

* Expressions with story

- a** Students match the expressions to the definitions. If they are unsure about any of the vocabulary, ask them to guess the meaning. Encourage students to think of these expressions as single pieces of vocabulary even though they are made up of various words. Let them check their answers with a partner before feedback. If students are still unclear about the meaning of any of the expressions, give them a context in which it would be used.

Answers

2 d 3 e 4 b 5 a 6 h 7 c 8 g

- b** Pre-teach *fault* and *broke*. Students read the dialogues and circle the correct words. Do not check answers at this stage.
- c**  **CD1 T9** Play the recording so students can check their answers to Exercise 4b. Give students the opportunity to practise saying the dialogues in pairs. Make sure they pronounce the expressions correctly. Ask for some examples from a few pairs.

TAPESCRIPT/ANSWERS

1

A: Dad – I thought I might go out with my friends tonight.

B: Well, OK, but if you want to go out, you have to do your homework first – end of story!

2

A: Where's your homework?

B: Sorry, miss, I had to go shopping and cook dinner and, well, to cut a long story short, I didn't have time to do it.

3

A: I'm sorry I lost your camera, but really it was Sally's fault.

B: Well, I'm going to talk to Sally and hear her side of the story.

4

A: Let's go to the cinema.

B: Yeah, good idea – but I'm broke, can you buy my ticket?

A: Again?! It's the same old story, isn't it?

5

A: Sorry I didn't come last night.

B: But why didn't you phone me? And please don't make up a story about your phone not working!

6

A: Where's your homework?

B: Well, I did it, but then my dog ate it.

A: Oh right! That's a likely story!

7

A: So – how did you do in the test?

B: I failed again! It's the story of my life!

Get it right!

Refer students to the Get it right! section.

These exercises can be used as homework, or for fast-finishers.

Vocabulary notebook

Encourage students to start a new section called *Expressions with 'story'* in their notebook and add these words. They may find it useful to note down translations of the words too.

5 Speak

Tell students they are going to do an activity called *A likely story* in which they read some information, then tell a story to their partner, who has to decide whether it is true or not.

Divide students into pairs and give each student a letter A or B. Ask students A to look at the instructions on page 15, while students B turn to page 125 and read their questions. Allow students to ask any questions about vocabulary to ensure they understand meaning.

Give students time to add details to their stories in order to make them sound convincing. Monitor and help with vocabulary as necessary. In pairs, students tell each other their stories. Listen to a few of the stories in open class.

At the end of the exercise, tell the class that student A's story is true and student B's story is not true.

Weaker classes: Students may benefit from working together with a partner when they are adding details to their stories. Allow students to write their stories before speaking. Encourage them to look at their notes as little as possible.

Culture in mind

6 Read and listen

Warm up

Books closed. Write the following on the board:

1 *teeth, prehistoric* 2 *long arms, footprints*


3 *fishing boats, tentacles*

Tell students that the words are included in three descriptions of mythological creatures. Ask them to discuss in pairs what they think the stories might be about and to imagine what the creatures look like. Ask some pairs to give feedback.

- a** Students open their books to look at the pictures and tell you what they can see. Students read the texts and match the photos with the paragraphs. Check answers.

Answers

1 C 2 A 3 B

- b**  **CD1 T10** Students listen and read the texts again to answer the questions. Tell them it is not important to understand every word at this stage. After the first listening, let students compare their answers with a partner. Check answers. If necessary, play the recording again, pausing to clarify any problems.

Answers

1 bunyip, Kraken 2 Meh-Teh 3 bunyip
 4 Kraken 5 Meh-Teh 6 all three

Discussion box

In pairs or small groups, students go through the questions in the box and discuss them. Monitor and help as necessary, encouraging students to express themselves in English and to use any vocabulary they have learned from the text. Ask pairs or groups to feedback to the class and discuss any interesting points further.

* OPTIONAL ACTIVITY

If you would like your students to do some further work on the vocabulary in the text, you can use the following exercise. Write the following definitions on the board and ask students to find words and expressions with the same meaning in the text. The words are in the order of the text. To make the exercise more challenging, you could write them on the board in a different order.

- 1 *very frightening* (terrifying)
- 2 *look similar to* (bear a close resemblance to)
- 3 *made up* (invented)

- 4 *supposedly* (allegedly)
- 5 *until now* (so far)
- 6 *stories* (sagas)
- 7 *difficult choice* (dilemma)
- 8 *appearing unexpectedly* (cropping up)

7 Write

The planning for this exercise can be done in class and the newspaper article set as homework.

- a** Tell students they are going to read an urban legend from a newspaper. Pre-teach *prick, cowboy boots, stamped to death, fang, embedded, sole*. Students read the text quickly and answer the questions. Encourage students not to look up every new word or worry about the words in italics, but just to read and get the general idea of the text. Check answers.

Answer

It is probably from a tabloid newspaper as it is very sensational in tone.

- b** Explain to students that all of the words in italics are adverbs which are used to describe the sentence. In pairs, students circle the adverb which does not fit into the sentence.

Answers

- 1 *miraculously*
- 2 *tragically*
- 3 *overwhelmingly*
- 4 *mysteriously*
- 5 *Finally*
- 6 *Astonishingly*

Language note

Ask students to look back at the text and find adverbs that are used to describe a whole sentence or clause (adverbs 1, 4, 5, 6).

Adverbs describing a whole sentence or clause are known as comment adverbs. These adverbs make a comment on what we are saying. They can:

show how likely we think something is: *apparently, obviously, probably, undoubtedly*

show our attitude or opinion: *astonishingly, sadly, surprisingly, luckily*

show our judgement of someone's actions: *kindly, stupidly, carelessly*

Comment adverbs are most frequently placed at the beginning of a sentence, but can go at the end. They are separated from the rest of a sentence by a comma, or a pause when speaking.

Surprisingly, the champion lost the race.

The champion lost the race, surprisingly.

- c** Read through the titles with students. Ask them to discuss their ideas with a partner before open class feedback.

Possible answers

2 A detective story

3 A horror story

4 A story of survival

- d** Tell students they are going to write one of the stories in Exercise 3 as a newspaper article. Tell them to use the story in Exercise 7 as a model and to ensure that they use adverbs to make the story exciting and interesting. This can either be done in class or as homework. In a subsequent lesson, encourage students to read each other's stories and decide which is the best.

Memo from Mario



Legend or truth?

1 The unicorn in the garden

- ▶ This story is adapted from one by Thurber. Here, it is a skeleton for the students to complete by adding details and descriptions.

- ▶ Dictate the first sentence and then give the first instruction. Let students have time to write their description. Then repeat the sequence with the other sentences and instructions. You may have to help by writing *psychiatrist* and *straitjacket* on the board.

A man woke up and looked out of the window.
Describe the man.

He saw a unicorn eating a lily in the garden.
Describe the garden.

He woke his wife up and told her there was a unicorn in the garden. She said 'Don't be silly, there can't be; the unicorn is a mythical beast.'
Describe the wife.

The husband went outside to have a closer look at the unicorn, but it had gone. He sat down on a bench near the roses and went to sleep. He had a dream.
What did he dream?

The wife rang the psychiatrist and the police. She told them her husband was going mad. She asked them to come quickly with a straitjacket.
Describe the psychiatrist.

She told the psychiatrist: 'My husband said he saw a unicorn in the garden eating a lily.' The psychiatrist asked the husband: 'Did you see a unicorn in the garden eating a lily?' The husband replied: 'Of course not, the unicorn is a mythical beast.'
Finish the story.

- ▶ When the students have finished, put the stories round the walls so that they can read each other's work.

RATIONALE

This kind of quiet, individual, imaginative exercise can have a calming effect on a group and produce results that the students can feel proud of.

2 Yes, I have

- ▶ Write the questions below on the board. Add or change any questions you like. Demonstrate the activity by telling the students that they can choose a question to ask you, and that you will answer *Yes, I have*. They can then ask ten more questions before deciding whether or not you are telling the truth.

- ▶ Then put the students in groups of four to take turns asking each other questions. After asking their ten questions, the group should discuss whether they think the answers are true or not.

Have you ever eaten raw fish?

Have you ever left a restaurant without paying?

Have you ever found something valuable in the street?

Have you ever been to a volleyball match?

Have you ever been photographed with a famous person?

Have you ever had a conversation in a foreign language?

Have you ever cooked a meal for your whole family?

Have you ever been locked out of your house?

Have you ever painted a picture?

Have you ever broken a bone?

RATIONALE

This activity involves discussion and decision-making about possibilities. Answering the questions requires some quick, creative thinking.

Acknowledgement

- ▶ This is an activity from *Once Upon a Time*, Morgan and Rinvoluceri, Cambridge University Press, 1983.