

Internet texts

Famous hoaxes – or were they?

- a) *Talk about these events, and what you do or don't believe. Give reasons for your opinions. Use the Useful phrases on p. 37 of your book.*
- b) *Do you know any other stories that are hard to believe but maybe true? Do some research on the internet and discuss different stories.*

Tip

- When somebody stages a **hoax**, the person is playing a trick on the public. A typical hoax often features realistic photos that show something unbelievable like a UFO, or a monster.
- A **conspiracy theory** often involves an event or situation that a group of people would like to keep secret in a cover-up. The conspiracy theorists often see governments at the center of cover-ups.

Bigfoot

Bigfoot is a large, hairy creature, half man half monster. Bigfoot has been seen all across North America, but especially in the West of the USA. Huge footprints have been found in many places, and this is the reason for the name. The legend is hundreds and perhaps thousands of years old: another name for Bigfoot is Sasquatch, a Native American word. In 1967, two men made a short film of Bigfoot in a forest in California. To watch it on the internet, search for 'Bigfoot film 1967'. Some experts say it may be real. Others say it's probably a man in a gorilla suit. What do you think?



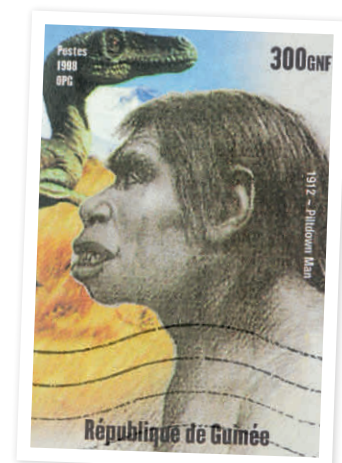
The Loch Ness monster

There have been many photos and films of things which could be the Loch Ness monster. The most believable is often considered to be a 1934 photo which seems to show clearly the head and neck of the monster. It seemed to prove Scotland's most famous legend, and the public were very excited about it. To see the photo online, search for 'Loch Ness monster photo 1934'. Do you believe in the Loch Ness Monster?



Pitldown man

In 1912, a scientist called Charles Dawson announced that he had discovered a strange and very old skull. Some parts looked like a human skull, but other parts looked like the skull of an ape. For many years scientists had been looking for the 'missing link' between apes and humans. It seemed that Dawson had at last found it. What do you think?



footprint [ˈfɒtprɪnt] Fußabdruck ○ gorilla [gəˈrɪlə] Gorilla ○ suit [su:t] Kostüm ○
to prove [pru:v] beweisen ○ skull [skɔ:l] Schädel ○ to announce [əˈnaʊns] ankündigen;
durchsagen ○ ape [eɪp] Affe

The Roswell UFO

There are two versions of this story of an event in 1947. Which version do you believe?

Version 1: An alien spaceship crashed in the desert near the town of Roswell in New Mexico. The United States government took the spaceship and the dead aliens inside it, and has kept them in a secret place near Roswell ever since then. In 1995 an old black-and-white film was found which showed some doctors doing tests on a dead alien. It proved that the stories about the Roswell UFO were true.



Version 2: A United States Air Force spy balloon crashed in the desert near the town of Roswell in New Mexico. Some people who saw the crash believed it was an alien spaceship, and this started a conspiracy theory of a government cover-up. In 1995 a black-and-white film appeared which seemed to show some doctors doing tests on a dead alien. This was a hoax made to make money for the media company which 'found' the film.

spy balloon [spaɪ bə'lu:n] **Spionageballon** **cover-up** ['kʌvəʊp] **Vertuschung**
to appear [ə'piə] **auftauchen; erscheinen**

orangutan [ɔ:'ræŋgə'tæn] **Orang-Utan** **to question** ['kwɛstʃən] **fragen; hinterfragen** **disprove** [dɪs'pru:v] **widerlegen**

The truth ...

Bigfoot
The film has been seen by several scientists and other experts. Most of them said it was a hoax, but some said that it may be real. This is mainly because the creature in the film does not walk in the same way as a human.

The Loch Ness Monster
For many years it seemed that the photo might be real. However, more modern scientific techniques in the 1990s proved that the photo is a fake. The 'monster' is probably a model.

Pitdown Man
For many years, many scientists believed that the skull was real. However, in the 1950s it was discovered that the skull was part human, and part orangutan. These parts weren't even very old. It now seems surprising that most scientists in 1912 did not even question whether or not it was real. Charles Dawson had made other hoax objects before then.

The Roswell UFO
The film with the alien is definitely a hoax. The man who made it later said that it was not real, but was based on a secret film he had seen. Was the UFO an American spy balloon or a spaceship from another planet? It's impossible to prove or disprove either story.