

"1,000 IDEAS & ACTIVITIES FOR LANGUAGE TEACHERS"

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Britain releases secret UFO records

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THE ARTICLE

The British government has released over 1,000 pages of secret files on UFO sightings to the public. It is the first time records on flying saucers and other unexplained objects have been made available. Britain's National Archives put the documents online following requests from members of the public. Britain's freedom of information laws meant the documented reports could no longer be kept a secret. Officials said that the names of many individuals who claimed they saw UFOs have been blacked out to respect their privacy. They also said that information that was vital to protect national security would not be released. There is a lot of data from the 1970s and '80s, when the Cold War was at its height. In these two decades, Russian fighter planes were often mistaken for alien spacecraft. The reports do not say what people mistook little green men for.

Despite the secrecy of the documents, none of them contains any proof that aliens exist. UFO expert David Clarke said: "The Ministry of Defense doesn't have any evidence that our defenses were breached by alien craft...They never found one, nor bits of one." There are a number of unexplained cases in the reports, but those in the know said that there are usually logical explanations for these sightings. "The most common things are aircraft lights, bright stars and planets, satellites...and things like that," explained another UFO specialist, Nick Pope. One of the documents is a 1979 report prepared for British politicians that rubbished the idea of "UFology." It stated that: "Her Majesty's government has never been approached by people from outer space." There are many people who disagree. The archive site is full of drawings and reports that suggest we are not alone.

WARM-UPS

1. ALIENS: Walk around the class and talk to other students about aliens. Change partners often. After you finish, sit with your partner(s) and share your findings.

2. CHAT: In pairs / groups, decide which of these topics or words from the article are most interesting and which are most boring.

secret files / UFO sightings / online documents / information laws / privacy / aliens / secrecy / proof / defences / logical explanations / stars / planets / satellites

Have a chat about the topics you liked. Change topics and partners frequently.

3. LOGICAL EXPLANATIONS: Do you have answers for the world's mysteries? Complete this table with your ideas about the things in the left column. Talk with your partners about your answers. Change partners often and share your findings. Who has the most logical explanations?

Things	Your logical explanation
UFOs	
ghosts	
telepathy	
hypnotism	
the Yeti	
miracles	

4. HELLO ALIEN: What would you ask an alien if you met one in your local coffee shop? With your partner, write some questions you would like to ask the alien. Take turns in being the alien and answering the questions. Change partners and answer your new partner's questions.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

5. HEADLINE PREDICTION: With your partner(s), use the words in the "Chat" activity above to predict what the news article will be about. Once you have your story, change partners and share them. Who was closest to the real story?

6. UFO: Spend one minute writing down all of the different words you associate with the word 'UFO'. Share your words with your partner(s) and talk about them. Together, put the words into different categories.

BEFORE READING / LISTENING

1. TRUE / FALSE: Look at the article's headline and guess whether these sentences are true (T) or false (F):

- | | |
|---|-------|
| a. Britain's government has put documents from aliens on the Internet. | T / F |
| b. British laws make it impossible to get info from the government. | T / F |
| c. A lot of data from the seventies and eighties was very cold. | T / F |
| d. Many British people mistook Russian fighter pilots for little green men. | T / F |
| e. Some of the released documents show proof of alien life. | T / F |
| f. The British government never found any evidence of flying saucers. | T / F |
| g. A government report said Britain has never been visited by aliens. | T / F |
| h. Many people believe there is evidence to suggest we are not alone. | T / F |

2. SYNONYM MATCH: Match the following synonyms from the article:

- | | |
|---------------------|--------------------|
| 1. released | a. spoken to |
| 2. flying saucers | b. confidentiality |
| 3. claimed | c. aliens |
| 4. vital | d. made public |
| 5. little green men | e. rational |
| 6. secrecy | f. broken |
| 7. breached | g. essential |
| 8. logical | h. disregarded |
| 9. rubbished | i. UFOs |
| 10. approached by | j. stated |

3. PHRASE MATCH: Match the following phrases from the article (sometimes more than one combination is possible):

- | | |
|--|-------------------------|
| 1. secret files on | a. a secret |
| 2. flying saucers and other | b. of "UFOlogy" |
| 3. reports could no longer be kept | c. privacy |
| 4. blacked out to respect their | d. little green men for |
| 5. what people mistook | e. unexplained objects |
| 6. proof that | f. explanations |
| 7. our defenses were breached | g. UFO sightings |
| 8. logical | h. are not alone |
| 9. politicians that rubbished the idea | i. by alien craft |
| 10. reports that suggest we | j. aliens exist |

WHILE READING / LISTENING

GAP FILL: Put the words into the gaps in the text.

The British government has _____ over 1,000 pages of secret files on UFO sightings to the public. It is the first time records on flying saucers and other unexplained objects have been made _____. Britain's National Archives put the documents online following requests from _____ of the public. Britain's freedom of information laws meant the documented reports could no longer be kept a _____. Officials said that the names of many individuals who claimed they saw UFOs have been _____ out to respect their privacy. They also said that information that was vital to protect national _____ would not be released. There is a lot of data from the 1970s and '80s, when the Cold War was at its _____. In these two decades, Russian fighter planes were often mistaken for alien spacecraft. The reports do not say what people _____ little green men for.

secret
height
available
security
released
mistook
members
blacked

Despite the _____ of the documents, none of them contains any proof that aliens exist. UFO expert David Clarke said: "The Ministry of Defense doesn't have any _____ that our defenses were breached by alien craft...They never found one, nor bits of one." There are a number of unexplained cases in the reports, but those in the _____ said that there are usually _____ explanations for these sightings. "The most common things are aircraft lights, _____ stars and planets, satellites...and things like that," explained another UFO specialist, Nick Pope. One of the documents is a 1979 report _____ for British politicians that rubbished the idea of "UFOlogy." It stated that: "Her Majesty's government has never been approached by people from outer space." There are many people who _____. The archive site is full of drawings and reports that suggest we are not _____.

disagree
logical
evidence
alone
bright
secrecy
prepared
know

LISTENING: Listen and fill in the spaces.

The British government _____ 1,000 pages of secret files on UFO sightings to the public. It is the first time records on flying saucers and other _____ been made available. Britain's National Archives put the documents online following requests from _____. Britain's freedom of information laws meant the documented reports _____ a secret. Officials said that the names of many individuals who claimed they saw UFOs have been blacked _____ privacy. They also said that information that was vital to protect national security _____. There is a lot of data from the 1970s and '80s, when the Cold War was at its height. In these two decades, Russian fighter planes _____ alien spacecraft. The reports do not say what people mistook little green men for.

Despite the secrecy of the documents, none _____ proof that aliens exist. UFO expert David Clarke said: "The Ministry of Defense doesn't _____ our defenses were breached by alien craft....They never found one, _____." There are a number of unexplained cases in the reports, but _____ said that there are usually logical explanations for these sightings. "The most common things are aircraft lights, bright stars and planets, satellites..._____, " explained another UFO specialist, Nick Pope. One of the documents is a 1979 report prepared for British politicians that _____ "UFOlogy." It stated that: "Her Majesty's government has never been approached by people from outer space." There are many people who disagree. The archive site is full of drawings and reports that _____.

AFTER READING / LISTENING

1. WORD SEARCH: Look in your dictionaries / computer to find collocates, other meanings, information, synonyms ... for the words 'flying' and 'saucer'.

flying	saucer
---------------	---------------

- Share your findings with your partners.
- Make questions using the words you found.
- Ask your partner / group your questions.

2. ARTICLE QUESTIONS: Look back at the article and write down some questions you would like to ask the class about the text.

- Share your questions with other classmates / groups.
- Ask your partner / group your questions.

3. GAP FILL: In pairs / groups, compare your answers to this exercise. Check your answers. Talk about the words from the activity. Were they new, interesting, worth learning...?

4. VOCABULARY: Circle any words you do not understand. In groups, pool unknown words and use dictionaries to find their meanings.

5. TEST EACH OTHER: Look at the words below. With your partner, try to recall how they were used in the text:

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• released• saucers• secret• privacy• vital• mistook	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• proof• bits• common• rubbished• outer• alone
---	---

STUDENT ALIEN SURVEY

Write five GOOD questions about aliens in the table. Do this in pairs. Each student must write the questions on his / her own paper.

When you have finished, interview other students. Write down their answers.

	STUDENT 1 _____	STUDENT 2 _____	STUDENT 3 _____
Q.1.			
Q.2.			
Q.3.			
Q.4.			
Q.5.			

- Now return to your original partner and share and talk about what you found out. Change partners often.
- Make mini-presentations to other groups on your findings.

ALIEN DISCUSSION

STUDENT A's QUESTIONS (Do not show these to student B)

- a) What did you think when you read the headline?
- b) What springs to mind when you hear the word 'alien'?
- c) What do you know about aliens?
- d) Are you surprised the British government kept these documents secret?
- e) Do you think there are aliens and that we are not alone?
- f) Would you like to read the documents released by the British government?
- g) Does your government keep a lot of things secret?
- h) What do you think of people who claim they saw alien spacecraft or aliens?
- i) What would you do if an alien knocked on your front door?
- j) Why do people think aliens are green?

Britain releases secret UFO records - 15th May, 2008
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ALIEN DISCUSSION

STUDENT B's QUESTIONS (Do not show these to student A)

- a) Did you like reading this article?
- b) What would the world do if a government had proof that aliens exist?
- c) Would you like there to be aliens out there somewhere?
- d) What is the most logical explanation for alien sightings?
- e) What's your favourite movie about aliens?
- f) What do you think aliens look like?
- g) What kinds of things are you in the know about?
- h) Would you like to study UFOlogy?
- i) What questions would you like to ask an alien?
- j) Did you like this discussion?

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LANGUAGE

The British government has released over 1,000 pages of secret files on UFO (1) _____ to the public. It is the first time records on flying (2) _____ and other unexplained objects have been made available. Britain's National Archives put the documents online following requests from (3) _____ of the public. Britain's freedom of information laws meant the documented reports could (4) _____ longer be kept a secret. Officials said that the names of many individuals who claimed they saw UFOs have been blacked (5) _____ to respect their privacy. They also said that information that was vital to protect national security would not be released. There is a lot of data from the 1970s and '80s, when the Cold War was (6) _____ its height. In these two decades, Russian fighter planes were often mistaken for alien spacecraft. The reports do not say what people mistook little green men for.

Despite the (7) _____ of the documents, none of them contains any proof that aliens exist. UFO expert David Clarke said: "The Ministry of Defense doesn't have any evidence that our defenses were breached by alien craft....They never found one, nor (8) _____ of one." There are a number (9) _____ unexplained cases in the reports, but those in the know said that there are usually logical explanations for these sightings. "The most common things (10) _____ aircraft lights, bright stars and planets, satellites...and things like that," explained another UFO specialist, Nick Pope. One of the documents is a 1979 report prepared (11) _____ British politicians that rubbished the idea of "UFOlogy." It stated that: "Her Majesty's government has never been approached by people from outer space." There are many people who disagree. The archive site is full of drawings and reports that suggest we are not (12) _____.

Put the correct words from the table below in the above article.

- | | | | | |
|-----|----------------|--------------|---------------|---------------|
| 1. | (a) signings | (b) siblings | (c) sightings | (d) sites |
| 2. | (a) cups | (b) saucers | (c) plates | (d) bowls |
| 3. | (a) members | (b) someone | (c) people | (d) aliens |
| 4. | (a) not | (b) now | (c) know | (d) no |
| 5. | (a) about | (b) under | (c) out | (d) in |
| 6. | (a) up | (b) on | (c) at | (d) down |
| 7. | (a) secret | (b) secrecy | (c) secretive | (d) secretary |
| 8. | (a) bits | (b) bytes | (c) bit | (d) bites |
| 9. | (a) for | (b) of | (c) in | (d) to |
| 10. | (a) are | (b) was | (c) is | (d) are being |
| 11. | (a) to | (b) out | (c) into | (d) for |
| 12. | (a) loneliness | (b) lonely | (c) lone | (d) alone |

HOMework

1. VOCABULARY EXTENSION: Choose several of the words from the text. Use a dictionary or Google's search field (or another search engine) to build up more associations / collocations of each word.

2. INTERNET: Search the Internet and find out about UFOs and aliens. Share what you discover with your partner(s) in the next lesson.

3. ALIENS: Make a poster about some of the most famous aliens from movies, books, cartoons, games, etc. Show your work to your classmates in the next lesson. Did you all have similar things?

4. HERE: Write a magazine article about alien spacecraft landing on Earth. Include imaginary interviews with the alien leader and your leader. Include questions about the future of Earth.

Read what you wrote to your classmates in the next lesson. Write down any new words and expressions you hear from your partner(s).

5. LETTER: Write a letter to an alien. Give him three pieces of advice on what it should do before it comes to Earth. Ask it three questions about its planet. Read your letter to your partner(s) in your next lesson. Your partner(s) will answer your questions.

6. DIARY / JOURNAL: You are an alien. Write your diary entry for one day in your journey through outer space. Include your thoughts on the planet Earth and the strange people who live there. Read your entry to your classmates in the next lesson.

ANSWERS

TRUE / FALSE:

- a. F b. F c. F d. F e. F f. T g. T h. T

SYNONYM MATCH:

- | | |
|---------------------|--------------------|
| 1. released | a. made public |
| 2. flying saucers | b. UFOs |
| 3. claimed | c. stated |
| 4. vital | d. essential |
| 5. little green men | e. aliens |
| 6. secrecy | f. confidentiality |
| 7. breached | g. broken |
| 8. logical | h. rational |
| 9. rubbished | i. disregarded |
| 10. approached by | j. spoken to |

PHRASE MATCH:

- | | |
|--|-------------------------|
| 1. secret files on | a. UFO sightings |
| 2. flying saucers and other | b. unexplained objects |
| 3. reports could no longer be kept | c. a secret |
| 4. blacked out to respect their | d. privacy |
| 5. what people mistook | e. little green men for |
| 6. proof that | f. aliens exist |
| 7. our defenses were breached | g. by alien craft |
| 8. logical | h. explanations |
| 9. politicians that rubbished the idea | i. of "UFOlogy" |
| 10. reports that suggest we | j. are not alone |

GAP FILL:

Britain releases secret UFO records

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Despite the **secrecy** of the documents, none of them contains any proof that aliens exist. UFO expert David Clarke said: "The Ministry of Defense doesn't have any **evidence** that our defenses were breached by alien craft...They never found one, nor bits of one." There are a number of unexplained cases in the reports, but those in the **know** said that there are usually **logical** explanations for these sightings. "The most common things are aircraft lights, **bright** stars and planets, satellites...and things like that," explained another UFO specialist, Nick Pope. One of the documents is a 1979 report **prepared** for British politicians that rubbished the idea of "UFOlogy." It stated that: "Her Majesty's government has never been approached by people from outer space." There are many people who **disagree**. The archive site is full of drawings and reports that suggest we are not **alone**.

LANGUAGE WORK

- 1 - c 2 - b 3 - a 4 - d 5 - c 6 - c 7 - b 8 - a 9 - b 10 - a 11 - d 12 - d