

the ARTICLE (for instructors)

Do You Believe in Ghosts?

Ghost stories have been with humankind for thousands of years. There are written accounts from the Chinese and Greeks, for example, which comprise some of the earliest written records of hauntings. But do people in our modern, well-educated civilization actually believe in ghosts?

The answer seems to be "yes," or at least it does in the US. More than half of the population considers the existence of ghosts as fact, according to a survey taken in 2003. This belief is in spite of the largely questionable and anecdotal scientific evidence. What's more, the poll revealed that few have seen hide or hair of any spiritual beings, but have instead founded their beliefs on TV and movies.

Many popular programs and movies have taken their inspiration from real life accounts, although quite a few of these have turned out false and clearly embellished before Hollywood even took a whack. Other stories have been very much manipulated by Hollywood, and so hardly resemble the original source. Regardless of how the stories have changed, real-life ghosts seem significantly less impressive than those depicted by Hollywood. Objects don't fly across the room, and people aren't possessed by spirits. At best, some describe an unusually creepy feeling, or strange spots of light appear on film, or something is glimpsed out of the corner of their eye.

But TV and movies are a ubiquitous part of today's world. Their affect on people can oftentimes be subtle and subconscious, and slowly influence beliefs, exactly as ghost stories of old.

How about you? Do you believe in ghosts?

Teacher's Notes:

* Underlined words in red typeface are the answers.

the ARTICLE (for students)

Do You Believe in Ghosts?

Ghost stories have been with humankind for thousands of years. There are written accounts from the Chinese and Greeks, for example, which comprise some of the earliest written records of hauntings. But do people in our modern, well-educated civilization actually believe in ghosts?

The answer seems to be "yes," or at least it does in the US. a) _____, according to a survey taken in 2003. This belief is in spite of the largely questionable and anecdotal scientific evidence. What's more, b) _____, but have instead founded their beliefs on TV and movies.

Many popular programs and movies have taken their inspiration from real life accounts, c) _____. Other stories have been very much manipulated by Hollywood, and so hardly resemble the original source. Regardless of how the stories have changed, d) _____. Objects don't fly across the room, and people aren't possessed by spirits. At best, some describe an unusually creepy feeling, e) _____.

But TV and movies are a ubiquitous part of today's world. Their affect on people can oftentimes be subtle and subconscious, and slowly influence beliefs, exactly as ghost stories of old.

How about you? Do you believe in ghosts?

Notes:

STEP ONE

Title: Speculate and/or discuss the contents of today's article from its title: "Do You Believe in Ghosts?"

STEP TWO

Questions: Read as much of the article as you can in two minutes. Guess the answers to the questions below, then listen to your teacher read the article. Try to confirm your answers.

a.	The earliest written stories about ghosts come from the Egyptians.	T / F
b.	Almost two-thirds of Americans believe in ghosts.	T / F
c.	TV and movies affect people's belief in ghosts.	T / F
d.	Real-life ghost stories are as exciting as the stories from Hollywood.	T / F
e.	According to the article, some people get a strange feeling when a ghost is nearby.	T / F

STEP THREE

Fill in the Blanks: Listen to your teacher read the article again. Fill in the blanks with the missing words.

STEP FOUR

Questions: Answer the questions to check comprehension.

a.	How many people in the US believe in ghosts?
b.	Why do people in the US believe in ghosts?
c.	How are real-life ghost stories and Hollywood tales different?
d.	What does the article say about real-life ghost stories?
e.	How are modern ghost stories the same as stories from long ago?

STEP FIVE

Discuss: Talk about the following questions in pairs/groups. Remember to support your answers!

a.	Did you like this article?
b.	Do you believe in ghosts? How about other monsters, like vampires or mummies? Why/not?
c.	How much do you think TV and movies affect your opinions and beliefs? Please explain.
d.	Are there any good ghost stories from your country? If yes, please tell one.