Mystery Solved!

Unit Overview

• Unit 5 is about mysteries, both natural and human-made. Students will learn about the curious behavior of some species in the animal kingdom. Students will learn about strange structures in England and speculate on their origins, as well as learn about an equally strange journey an ancient boy took to visit them.

• Students will discuss possible explanations for several phenomena, some of which have explanations that are widely agreed upon, and some of which remain a mystery.

• Ask students what they think is meant by the unit title, “Mystery Solved.” Explain that mysteries are events or situations that people find difficult to understand or explain. They often drive people to spend a lot of time studying and thinking about the causes of them, so that when the true explanation is found (or “solved”), the investigator feels both relieved and triumphant. Tell students that people who solve mysteries are often honored by their peers.

• Preview the unit by asking students the following questions:

1. Have you ever seen something you couldn’t explain? What was it?
2. Do you think everything has a logical explanation? Why or why not?
3. What is something mysterious you would like to know the answer to?
4. Are there any local mysteries in the area where you live? What are some possible explanations?

Photo Caption

This photo is of a Moai, a giant statue found on Easter Island. Easter Island is an isolated island in the Pacific Ocean. Although it technically belongs to Chile, it is quite far away from the mainland nation. 2,150 miles (3,460 kilometers). There are approximately nine hundred Moai on Easter Island. They were built by the Rapa Nui, a Polynesian people, hundreds of years ago. Recently new theories have come up to explain how the Moai were built and moved into their current positions. However, why they were built remains a mystery.

Unit Outcomes

In this unit, you will learn to:

• use modal verbs in the past, present, and future
• speculate about mysteries
• refute ideas
• use wh-questions to help you plan a story

VOCABULARY

Animal mysteries

GRAMMAR

Modals of possibility in the past, present, and future

LISTENING

A news story about a miraculous rescue

SPEAKING

Explain mysterious places in the world

VIDEO

Discoveries in a Village Near Stonehenge

READING

The Boy with the Amber Necklace: Early Visitors to Stonehenge

WRITING

Use a graphic organizer to tell a story

OUTCOMES

• use modal verbs of possibility in the past, present, and future
• speculate about mysteries
• refute ideas
• use wh-questions to help you plan a story

Warm-Up Questions

• Ask students what they know about this statue and the Rapa Nui.
• Have students discuss Question 2 in pairs. Ask them what makes each animal so unusual. Then, have them consider whether there is any animal native to their area that other people might consider strange or unusual.
• Have students write down their three answers to Question 3. Then, survey the class to find out which places were most popular. If any of the places mentioned are unfamiliar to the class, ask that student to share what he/she knows.

Background Information

Great mysteries cause people to stop, question their beliefs, and look for explanations. Throughout human history, mysteries in the natural world have been the source of many legends and traditions. As scientists uncover new information, our understanding of human history and the natural world changes.

Scientists have long wondered how the Moai were built and moved into position on Easter Island. The Rapa Nui did not have the help of the wheel or even large animals at the time that these massive statues—some weighing upwards of 9 tons—were erected. Now a new theory hypothesizes that the particular shape of the Moai would allow them to “walk” their way across the island with nothing more than some rope and several hands to guide the way. By fixing several ropes around the statues, the particular pot-bellied shape of the statue allowed people to use its own weight to rock it forward (or in any other direction) and guide it into its final place on the island.
Grammar

Vocabulary

Animal Mysteries

Sam the Parrot
Parents are popular pets because they’re friendly and intelligent. Sandy, who2 knew of this parrot named Sam, saw a strange set of things happen. Sam started talking and saying very difficult words. Sandy couldn’t understand why. She found out that Sam had been brought on board as an extra bird. There is this3 type of bird that Sandy by looking at (3)_______

PARROT FACTS:
• Parrots can talk! They have a kind of) like people do. They do it! to into (5)_______
• Parrots forms close pair bonds. In the wild, a parrot couple can stay together for decades.4 ______
• We know that parrots feel that “three’s a crowd.”

Language Notes

The word case can refer to a situation in general. However, case can also be used to talk about a specific situation that is being investigated. In the second situation, one might talk about “solving a case.” In other words, uncovering the answer to a mystery.

The word surroundings is always plural, but it is a noncount noun.

Point out that there’s a word used in “Pants? I’m” (taken from the expression, “Two company, there’s a crook.”) to explain to students that it expresses a feeling of discomfort when a third person joins a pair.

Literally, uncover means to take the cover off of something. Often, only by removing a cover can you see what’s inside of something, which explains its connection to revealing something hidden.

B • After pairs have discussed their explanations, have them prepare a written report about their theories. Tell them to follow this format: Title: The case of…

• Facts: We know that…

• Conclusion: Therefore, we conclude that…

Extension

Have pairs of students write an animal mystery and then answer the two questions below. Come up with a theory for each mystery.

Animal Mystery: Frogs Disappearing

We know that parrots feel that “three’s a crowd.”

Language Case

Some scientists have studied something shocking among frog populations world-wide. Out of 6,000 frog species, one-third are facing massive decline. There is one certain, but no one knows that frogs are very sensitive to their surroundings—especially to changes in the air and water.

Here’s what different people had to say about the situation.

1. “It was shocked to hear that most of the frogs in this area have died out. That just can’t / must be true!”

2. “With all the research tools we have, I’m certain we can figure this out. There must / couldn’t be a simple answer to this mystery.”

3. “I can’t find any frogs today. At first, I thought they might not be in any danger. But now I know that isn’t true.”

4. “It’s pretty obvious that humans are at fault. We couldn’t have / must have done something to damage the environment… and that’s killing off the frogs.”

5. “Some people say that dogs and cats killed all the frogs in this area, but that couldn’t / had been the only cause.”

B Why do you think that frogs are disappearing worldwide? Read the possible cause in Exercise A. Discuss each cause with a partner.

Possible cause of population decline: predatory, climate change, loss of habitat, clue, loss of human populations, disease.
Background Information

Traditionally, surfers swim out into the ocean and face down on their boards and, when a big wave comes along, they swim in order to catch up with the wave, and then stand up to ride it. In recent years, a different type of surfing, tow-in surfing, has been developed. In this style, a helicopter, tows the surfer into the surfing, has been developed. In this style, a different type of surfing, tow-in surfing, has been developed. In this style, a helicopter, tows the surfer into the ocean and faces down on their boards and, when a big wave comes along, they swim in order to catch up with the wave, and then stand up to ride it.

A • Explain to students that English has many different names for groups of animals, some of which are quite unexpected. Ask students if they are aware of groups of animals in their native languages. For homework, have students search for English collective nouns for animals and bring in two separate pieces of paper, an animal name and its group name. For example: litter (for kittens); pack (for dogs); flock (for birds); school (for fish); murder (for crows). Collect and shuffle all of the animal names together and all of the group names together, and challenge the class to pair each animal with its corresponding group name.

B • Call on students to guess what happened to Erik and explain why.

C • Before you play the recording, have students read through the categories of information they will listen for. Tell students to read the incomplete sentences given. Based on the categories and the information given, ask students to predict the answer.

D • Play the recording of the news story.

Audio CD Track 10

Answers: 1. Ocean Beach; 4. attacked, shark

Play the recording of the conversation.

Audio CD Track 11

Answers: 3. towed/pulled; 5. sharks, 6. pods, dolphins, 7. circled, protected

Now listen to the news story about what happened to Erik. Complete the sentences below.

1. where he surfs. He surfs at...
2. what the doctors expect. They expect him to make a complete...
3. why he was so far away. He was...
4. what happened to him. He was...
5. what happened to his surfboard. The...
6. who helped him. He was helped by...
7. how they helped him. They...

Now listen to two friends talking about Erik. Complete the rest of the sentences in Exercise B.

E • Listen to the news story about what happened to Erik. What do you think happened to Erik? Discuss with a partner.

F • Now read the entry from Julio’s travel diary about his visit to the area in the photo. Then discuss the questions with your partner.

Work with your partner. Close your books and practice retelling Erik’s story.

Use one of the expressions in Exercise D and some of the words below:

aggressive mystery observation twist unharmed

A • Look at the photo of the trees and discuss the questions with a partner.

1. something mysterious happened to these trees. What is your theory of what happened?
2. what else can you observe in the photo? What else can you see in the trees’ surroundings?

B • Now read the entry. Ask your partner to retell the story to you in your own words.

C • Work with your partner and prepare a presentation on poster paper that encourages people to save the trees. Your poster should include the following information (as well as your own art work):

1. what do you think is causing the trees to die? There are many theories. Discuss each one (as well as your own ideas) with your partner.
2. what do you think actually happened? Agree on the idea that you think best explains the mystery.

D • Present your ideas to the class. The class votes on the best presentation.

Extension: Have students write a newspaper story about the trees in their own words. Have them consider these questions:

1. Is it important to save the spiders, too? When could the spiders be useful?
2. Is it important to save the trees? Have them consider these questions:

E • Give students the option of retelling the story on their own, or role-playing a conversation between two people, as in the audio recording.

F • Have students discuss the Ask and Answer questions in pairs. Then, bring the class together and ask volunteers to share any stories they know about animals who helped humans, either real or fictional.
Circular Mysteries of the World

STONEHENGE

Stonehenge is an ancient site near England that was created in a circle.

Cinematic: 3100 BCE–1000 BCE

Builders: unknown

Watch the video about Stonehenge and a nearby settlement called Durrington Walls. Match each description with one of the locations.

A Stonehenge
B Durrington Walls

1. has been looted.
2. was a large community.
3. is an obsession for Mr. Pearson, an archaeologist.
4. is located upstream.
5. is not a solitary, isolated place.
6. has been digging around Stonehenge since 1999.

Answers:
1. C
2. D
3. B
4. A
5. A
6. C

An archaeologist explains what you think Stonehenge may have been used for. Think back to the answer you gave on page 54. Watch the video and complete the sentences.

According to an archaeologist, Stonehenge was not an (1) monument. People lived in (2) and (3) of Stonehenge. Durrington Walls may have contained dozens of houses.

Stonehenge
Durrington Walls

1. permanent; 2. isolated; 3. difficult

1. 10-15 min. C
2. 5-10 min. B
3. 5-10 min. A
4. 10-15 min. C

Mystery Solved!

Before You Watch

A Use this activity to review dictionary skills with the class. Have students scan a word’s full entry when they look it up in the dictionary to make sure that they are choosing the most relevant definition. In the case of the word novel, for example, students will need to identify the adjective novel, meaning new or original, rather than the more common noun novel, which refers to a long, fictional narrative.

Answers:
1. permanent; 2. isolated; 3. novel; 4. solitary

Language Notes

• Help students with the pronunciation of the word complex. Point out that it is used in the video as a noun, so the accent is on the first syllable. Contrast its use as an adjective, with the accent on the second syllable.

• Point out the use of the word dead in the video, as well as on p. 54. Contrast to students that the phrase the dead is synonymous with dead people.

• Point out that the word loot can be used as both a noun and a verb. As a noun, it refers to objects that are stolen. It is a noncount noun.

• Have students listen for the word timber in the video and ask what they think it means. If necessary, tell them it is another name for “wood.”

B Give students time to read the sentences before you play the video.

Answers:
1. isolated; 2. temporary; 3. poorest; 4. dead

Language Notes

• Tell students that the word skeleton is also used to talk about the frame of a building or the outline of a plan. Show them the relationship between these meanings.

• Point out that BCE stands for “before the Common Era” and explain the time period it covers.

B Give students ten minutes to read the information on their own and take notes about which theory they find most convincing for each mystery. You may ask students to identify which theory they find least convincing and explain why.

C Review the Speaking Strategy with the class before they divide into pairs. Ask students to mention in what situations they might use the moderate tone and when they might use the stronger tone. Point out which phrases you use depends not only on what you are talking about, but who you are talking to. If the person you are speaking with feels very strongly about his or her argument, sometimes it makes sense for the speaker to adopt a more moderate tone in order to get his or her point across.

• Mention to students that they can also use the language they learned in the Grammar chart on p. 51 (for strong certainty, weaker certainty, impossibility) to refute theories. For example, Stonehenge could be a monument to the dead, but... and The crop circles couldn’t have been created by “burning” the fields with beams.

Outcome: Upon completing this exercise, students will have met the Outcome refer to ideas.

Extension

Have students revise the theories about frog population decline listed on p. 51. Have pairs repeat Exercise C based on the theories about frogs.

4. 10-15 min. A
5. 25-30 min. C

Extension: 10-15 min.

A Students are not familiar with the images, encourage them to speculate about what and where they are. Remind students to use different modal depending on their degree of certainty.

Language Notes

• Tell students that the word theories about frogs.

Theories are based on frog population decline listed on p. 51.

Speaking

5-10 min. A
10-15 min. B
25-30 min. C

Extension: 10-15 min.

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Language Notes

• Tell students that the word skeleton is also used to talk about the frame of a building or the outline of a plan. Show them the relationship between these meanings.

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The Boy with the Amber Necklace

3,500 years ago, Stonehenge was attracting visitors from all over the world, including one from the Mediterranean. Who was he? Let’s see if you can answer this question: What makes trips like these possible?

Amber beads. What it tells us: Amber would have been considered an exotic material. He was from one of the highest levels of society. "It seems likely that the boy traveled from somewhere in the Mediterranean region," said archaeologist Andrew Forbes.

Amber is fossilized tree resin that usually has a yellow or orange color. It has been used as jewelry for thousands of years. In the case of the boy with the amber necklace, it became clear that he wasn’t originally from Stonehenge. Instead, he traveled to Stonehenge from a much warmer place.

The reason: amber is a warm-weather material. The researchers were able to learn even more about the boy. Because he was so young, they say the boy probably also acquired great kudos.

Sugar-sweet amber is an expression meaning from many different places.

Background Information
Amber is fossilized tree resin that usually has a yellow or orange color. It has been used as jewelry for thousands of years. Since this resin was once a liquid, amber often contains impurities and can sometimes even contain insects and spiders that lived millions of years ago. Most of the world’s amber (up to 80%) is from the area around the Baltic Sea.

Purpose for Reading
Students will read an article about Stonehenge, in particular, about how scientists are using modern technology to draw conclusions about what happened there over three thousand years ago. As students read the article, have them consider the same trip three thousand years ago. How would they answer this question: What makes the boy with the amber necklace so significant?

Language Notes
• Line 15: Teen can be used as a synonym of teenager.
• Line 27: Expression a local refers to a person who is originally from a given area.
• Line 30: Explain that profile has several different, but related meanings. As used here, profile refers to data representing a person’s traits. However, the most common meaning refers to the shape of a person’s head as seen from the side. Point out that the two meanings are similar in that they refer to specific, but incomplete, information about a person or object.
• Line 46: The verb bears in this case means shows or demonstrates.

Beyond the Reading
Have students choose a town on the Mediterranean coast and research how one would travel from that town to Stonehenge using modern transportation methods. Ask them: How long would it take? What would be the most difficult part of the voyage? How would they answer those same questions?
Writing

Purpose of Writing

Students will write a letter describing an imaginary journey to a mysterious site. They will use a graphic organizer to plan their writing and ensure that they address all of the critical details about their journey.

A Have students discuss these additional questions with a partner: Where is this person writing from? Where is he/she from originally? Where is he/she going? Who is he/she traveling with? Why is he/she traveling? How long has he/she been traveling?

Answers: 1. b, 2. a

B If students need help coming up with questions for their graphic organizers, give them examples. What—who are you? (give details) Who are you travelling with? What—What is the hardest/best part of your journey? What will you do when you get there? When—When are you travelling? Where—Where are you going to stay when you get there? Where are you going to start/end your journey? Why—Why are you visiting? Why is the trip fun/interesting/exciting? How—How are you travelling there? How are you going to pay for the trip?

Outcome: Upon completing this exercise, students will have met the Outcome use wh-questions to help you plan a story.

C Ask students whether asking questions prior to writing helped in creating their letters. Have volunteers explain why or why not. Have students share other ways they prepared to tell the story.

Extension

Have students write a response to their partner’s letters. Encourage them to both make observations and ask follow-up questions. Remind them to use modals to comment on their partner’s adventures.

Expanding Your Fluency

A Choose one of the objects in the photo and complete the role-play below.

Archaeologist: You have made a fascinating discovery and are meeting a reporter to tell the world about your exciting discovery. Think about how you would answer the questions from the list.

Reporter: Ask the archaeologist about the object using the questions from the list. You can add some of your own questions to the list.

B Switch roles and do the role-play again with the other object.

Answers: 1. a, 2. c

B Have students perform their role-plays in front of another pair. Then, have the groups of four vote on who told the most interesting and impressive story.

Photo Captions

The photo on the left is an image of the top half of an ancient Egyptian colossus being excavated in Aboukir Bay, off the coast of Egypt, where the Nile River enters the Mediterranean Sea. The statue, which is from the Ptolemaic dynasty, is of one of the Egyptian gods. It is not known how it ended up in the ocean.

The photo on the right is also of an antiquity. In this case, it is an ancient pot and some coins, probably of Greek origin. The circumstances and location of the items depicted in this image are not known.

Check What You Know

Refer to the exercises in the unit where each Outcome is addressed.

• use modals of possibility in the past, present, and future: Grammar, Exercise A, p. 51
• speculate about mysteries: Connections, Exercise B, p. 53
• refuse ideas: Speaking, Exercise C, p. 54
• use wh-questions to help you plan a story: Writing, Exercise B, p. 58

Rubric

Very Good

Satisfactory

Needs Improvement

Content

Use of graphic organizer to plan

Use of grammar

Organization

Unit 5

Expand your fluency

Check What You Know

• Where did you find it?
• Who used it?
• Why is it important?

Unit 5

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