

Unidentified Flying Objects

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What do you think about when someone talks about a UFO? Do you think about the cover of a science fiction novel? Do you think about a time when you were out late at night and saw something strange in the sky that quickly disappeared? A lot of people talk about UFOs as flying saucers – it seems to be the best description that they can come up with. Others state that UFO simply means unidentified flying object and that the flash of light that someone saw in the sky was either a plane, a helicopter or a reflection of light off of a cell phone tower or another metal object.

Reflections of light from a cell phone tower can't explain the "mysterious materials" found in Roswell, New Mexico in the late 1940s. While the United States military has always stood their ground that these materials were simply fragments of a research balloon, others offer another explanation. They argued that the materials were fragments of a UFO, an alien craft that crashed. If the Roswell, New Mexico story had never become so widespread, UFO and flying saucer may not be so common in our language, in novels, television programming, and films.

How common are UFOs? It's hard to say because many people who see an unidentified flying object in the sky are reluctant to report it. Either the person who saw a UFO believes that there is a far more logical explanation or simply thinks that no one would believe them if they did say something. And yet, there are UFO sightings that are shared and that become the topic of conspiracy theories.

One such incident occurred in 1980 in Rendlesham Forest in Suffolk, England. Those who saw the UFO all claimed to have seen flashing lights coming from an unidentified flying object that was descending towards the woods – a UFO that was roughly the size of a car and seemed to float on a beam of light. After reports were made about the object, it was discovered that trees were damaged, radio frequencies became nothing but static and soil samples later showed radioactive activity.

Similarly, in Gulf Breeze, Florida in 1987 tales of a UFO began to circulate when a man saw a strange light coming from his lawn. When he saw the flying saucer, he grabbed a camera and started shooting photos as proof of what he had seen. Of course, in this situation, the story was not just of a UFO sighting, but about repeated experiences and of the man being beamed up onto the craft.

Though discussions of these UFO sightings continue, and there have been audio recordings and photo documentation, it is still difficult to know whether or not the unidentified flying objects were actually from space. Many people have claimed that the photographs and stories in the examples above were fabricated.

In each case, both sides – the believers and the skeptics – find evidence to support their arguments. Those who believe in UFOs and alien visitations cite facts that they claim cannot otherwise be explained. Those who are skeptical offer their own explanations along with their own supporting evidence. Which side is right? For now, that's up to you to decide.



Comprehension / Vocabulary Questions

1. How do some people describe UFOs?
2. Which word in the second paragraph means small pieces parts that have broken off from a larger object?
3. What alternative explanations do people give for UFO lights?
4. What was the official explanation for the incident in Roswell, New Mexico?
5. Why don't some people report UFOs?
6. Describe what people saw in Rendlesham Forest in 1980?
7. What evidence was there in the forest in support of UFOs?
8. What happened in Florida in addition to a person seeing a UFO?
9. What do skeptics say about UFO sightings?
10. Throughout the text, the author used different adjectives and nouns to describe different types of light. What are they?

Gap Fill

Others state that UFO simply means unidentified flying object and that the of light that someone saw in the sky was either a plane, a helicopter or a of light off of a cell phone tower or another metal object.

Those who saw the UFO all claimed to have seen lights coming from an unidentified flying object that was towards the woods – a UFO that was roughly the size of a car and seemed to float on a of light.

When he saw the flying saucer, he a camera and started shooting photos as proof of what he had seen. Of course, in this situation, the story was not just of a UFO sighting, but about repeated experiences and of the man being up onto the craft.



Vocabulary	Definition / Example / Translation



Answers

1. How do some people describe UFOs? **Some people describe UFOs as flying saucers.**
2. Which word in the third paragraph means small pieces parts that have broken off from a larger object? **Fragments.**
3. What alternative explanations do people give for UFO lights? **They are lights from a plane or helicopter, a reflection from a cell phone tower or other metal objects.**
4. What was the official explanation for the incident in Roswell, New Mexico? **The United States military insist that it was a weather balloon that crashed.**
5. Why don't some people report UFOs? **People think either that there is a more logical solution or simply that people will not believe them.**
6. Describe what people saw in Rendlesham Forest in 1980? **They claimed to have seen flashing lights coming from an unidentified flying object that was descending towards the woods – a UFO that was roughly the size of a car and seemed to float on a beam of light.**
7. What type of evidence do people give in support of UFOs? **Photographs, damage to other objects such as trees, radio frequencies turned to static, radioactive activity, fragments.**
8. What happened in Florida in addition to a person seeing a UFO? **It was reported he was beamed up onto the spacecraft.**
9. What do skeptics say about UFO sightings? **That people fabricated the stories and manipulated photos.**
10. Throughout the text, the author used different adjectives and nouns to describe different types of light. What are they? **Flashing lights, a beam of light, a reflection of light, strange light, a flash of light.**

Gap Fill

Others state that UFO simply means unidentified flying object and that the **flash** of light that someone saw in the sky was either a plane, a helicopter or a **reflection** of light off of a cell phone tower or another metal object.

Those who saw the UFO all claimed to have seen **flashing** lights coming from an unidentified flying object that was **descending** towards the woods – a UFO that was roughly the size of a car and seemed to float on a **beam** of light.

When he saw the flying saucer, he **grabbed** a camera and started shooting photos as proof of what he had seen. Of course, in this situation, the story was not just of a UFO sighting, but about repeated



Speaking Task – Role-play

Role 1

A few days ago you saw a UFO. It was a mysterious experience. Ever since the sighting, you have been telling people in your town. Some people believe you and others don't but you are sure what you saw was real. You are in the supermarket, shopping when a person approaches you and want to ask you about the experience.

Checklist:

- What did you see?
- What proof do you have?
- Answer the person's questions
- Listen to the person's explanations and give your opinions.

You must use the following words: beam, descend and fragments.

Role 2

News is circulating in your town about a person who recently saw a UFO. You are very skeptical about these types of things but are interested and want to talk to the person. By chance, in the supermarket, you overhear a conversation and realize it is the person.

Checklist:

- Introduce yourself and ask the person about their experience
- Give them your opinion
- Ask for proof
- Give an alternative explanation for what they saw

You must use the following words: reluctant, report and circulate.

Debate Topics

- Aliens have visited Earth and live among us.
- Aliens exist but have not visited Earth.

Discussion Topic

- Why are photos of UFOs always bad quality?

Discussion Topic

- What proof would it take for you to believe in alien life?

Discussion Topic

- If you saw a UFO would you report it?

Discussion Topic

- There is always some truth in every conspiracy theory



Skeptic	Proof	Conspiracy
Flashing	Beam	Evidence
Roughly	To descend	To circulate
Reluctant	To claim	To report
.....
Talk about... Something you saw that you can't explain	Talk about... Your belief in aliens	Talk about... The strangest thing you have seen at night
Talk about... What things make you skeptical	Talk about... Conspiracy theories you believe in	Talk about... What proof you need to believe someone's UFO story

Writing Task

What?! You saw a UFO last night! I don't believe you.

Last night you saw a UFO. Write about your experience. Remember to include the following points:

- Where were you when it happened?
- What were you doing?
- What did you see exactly?
- What did you do after, who did you tell?

