

English in Mind Second edition

Level 5 Unit 1

Lesson Plan

Fossils: Myths, Mystery and Magic

THE
INDEPENDENT

AIMS

- To read extensively and study a text related to the Unit theme
- To scan for specific language and read for detailed comprehension
- To understand words in context
- To revise and practise the use of modals of deduction in the past
- To develop fluency
- (Further work) detailed reading and information exchange; article writing (collaborative writing)

Total time (approx): 1 hour 20 minutes (not including further work)

(Note: Some exercises can be set for homework)

Reading comprehension (1): scanning

- 3 The first paragraph presents the main theme of the article and is therefore key to engaging students fully in the text. Exercise 2 will have prepared them for some of the tricky vocabulary, so they should now be able to read and answer the first question. They should discuss the second question in pairs (possible answers are provided in the Key).

Key:

- 1 'a rich folklore sought to explain these enigmatic relics from the past'
- 2 To bring order and reassurance to a world that was confusing, mysterious and full of danger.

Time: 4–5 minutes

Lead-in

- 1 The aim of this activity is to introduce students to the theme of the text and activate background knowledge and vocabulary. Check understanding of the words 'fossils', 'myths', 'mystery' and 'magic'. Put students into pairs or small groups and ask them to discuss the two questions. After a few minutes, ask for some feedback and write some ideas on the board.

Time: 5–7 minutes

Vocabulary: words in context

- 2 Hand out the article. This pre-reading task aims to encourage students to use context to work out the meaning of some less common words, thereby developing coping strategies for tackling difficult texts. Before starting the matching activity, students should find the italicised words in the text and speculate on their meaning with a partner. Do the first example with them to demonstrate how context supports meaning. Students then work individually to complete the task. Answers can be compared first in pairs and then as a class.

Key: 1b 2f 3d 4j 5a 6g 7e 8e 9h 10i

Time 12–14 minutes

Reading comprehension (2): understanding detail

- 4 This task demands a mix of skills – prediction and discussion to activate background and language schemata, scanning and intensive reading skills. Encourage students to imagine what the fossils might have looked like to prehistoric people and what explanation they might have given for them. If necessary, put a few ideas on the board to support them. Get some feedback and note any further ideas. Then ask students to read paragraphs 2 to 7 of the article and to make notes in the table. For difficult vocabulary items, encourage them to deduce meaning from context before using a dictionary. They can then compare answers in pairs before full class feedback.

Key:

Object / Fossil	Myth surrounding it	Other details?
1 Skull on top of bones	Cave-dwelling dragons feeding on other animals	Found by prehistoric hunters in northern Europe; probably bones of woolly rhinoceros
2 Fossilized sharks' teeth	Pointed thumbnails of a mountain goblin	Japanese myth of Tengu Man

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3 Fossilized shell of ammonites (marine molluscs)	Symbol of the god Vishnu	Kept in temples in India to purify water
4 Fossils of mollusc-like brachiopods	Known as 'stone swallows'; able to fly during thunderstorms	Chinese myth – fossils also known as 'Shiy-yen'

- Because 'many resembled parts of the human body, and so became associated with the practice of sympathetic medicine – curing like with like.'
- The moment when he 'realised that the peculiar stone tongues that fell out of rocks were actually the teeth of ancient sharks [and] was able to prove his theory after dissecting the head of a huge shark'.

Time 10–12 minutes

Grammar (1): modals of deduction in the past

- 5 Students are required to match the meaning of the modal verbs to the use in the examples. Encourage them to work in pairs to allow for discussion and support. In feedback highlight the form of the negative modal in the past, 'can't' rather than 'mustn't', and stress that these are assumptions based on evidence. Elicit the form of the past modals of deduction (modal + *have* + past participle) and put on the blackboard.

Key: 1b 2a 3c

We use modals of deduction when we (b) have made an assumption based on evidence.

Modals of deduction in the past = modal + *have* + past participle

Time 3–5 minutes

- 6 This activity provides practice in distinguishing between the uses of the modals of deduction in the past. Initially the activity is best done individually. After a few minutes, students can work in pairs to discuss their answers. Provide feedback.

Key

- She might have got lost or someone might have taken her hostage. / She can't have got lost –
- No way! He must have had some whisky.
- You can't have spoken to him – he was with me all night.

- He might have gone into town to buy a few things but he never said.
- I can't have left it in the gym as I bought a drink afterwards.

Time 8–10 minutes

Grammar (2): deduction and probability

- 7 This activity provides further practice as well as extension work relating to other modal verbs encountered in the Student's Book. Remind students to use context as an aid to understanding the different meanings of modals: for example, 'can't'/'couldn't' may refer to lack of ability as well as to logical impossibility. To allow weaker students time to read and process information, the activity is best done individually and then ideas discussed in pairs. Provide feedback.

Key:

- No difference in meaning. Both possibility.
- (a) = possibility (which didn't happen). (b) = possibility/uncertainty
- Subtle difference in meaning: (a) certainty (perhaps we have details of his schedule) (b) logical certainty (we have made an assumption). The degree of certainty is greater in (a) than in (b).
- No difference in meaning. Both uncertainty.

Time: 4–6 minutes

- 8 This activity provides less controlled practice than in Exercise 6. Students work individually and then discuss their answers in pairs. Provide feedback and elicit the difference in meaning between different correct answers.

Key:

- They can't have walked / couldn't have walked from Big Ben to Piccadilly – it's too far.
- There's a man with a pizza at the door – Alanis must have / will have ordered one.
- All the biscuits have gone! Your younger sister must have eaten them / might have eaten them./could have eaten them.
- She might have gone / been to Camden Market on a Saturday or Sunday – she can't remember.

Time: 5–7 minutes

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- 9** Students can now develop ideas generated by the text while building fluency and improving conversational strategies. Remind them about urban myths (discussed in the Student's Book) and ask them to consider the link between this phenomenon and the folklore surrounding fossils. (Both not only reflect a human 'compulsion for storytelling' but may also be seen as the product of a 'climate of fear'.) Allow students to talk freely in small groups. Monitor discussions and note any errors for later.

Time: 5–7 minutes

Further work

- 10a** *Reading and speaking: information exchange.* Give each student one of the fossils (described in paras 9 to 21) to read about in detail. They should then complete a table similar to the one in Reading comprehension (2). Encourage them to write notes using their own words and to compare them with those of other students reading about the same fossil. Students then exchange information about the different fossils with a partner, using their notes

rather than referring back to the text. If students are particularly interested in the topic, introduce a ranking activity to initiate further discussion. Tell students that the Minister for Culture only has a limited budget to 'save' some of these exhibits. Which three should be chosen? Why? Students discuss in twos, then fours and then as a whole class to decide on the outcome.

- b** *Speaking and writing.* Students work in pairs to create an article for a magazine that deals with mysteries and the unexplained. Students can invent or re-write one that they know of. Encourage them to brainstorm their ideas, plan their article, and then write the first draft. Exchange papers for peer editing and correction. 'Publish' the articles by putting them around the room or use them in the future for a reading race / error correction activity.

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