

Nonfiction Reading Test

The Bermuda Triangle

Directions: Read the following passage and answer the questions that follow. Refer to the text to check your answers when appropriate.

The Bermuda Triangle is an area in the western Atlantic Ocean. It is between Florida, Puerto Rico, and Bermuda. Many strange things have happened in this region. Boats, airplanes, and people have disappeared. Some say that this is just an urban legend. They try to explain the odd events. Others think that there is something paranormal at work. Let's look at some of the events and explanations.

In 1918 a US Navy ship called the *USS Cyclops* left Brazil. It was headed to Baltimore with 309 crew mates. It was also loaded with lots of metal ore. Some say it was overloaded. But inspection records show that the ship was properly loaded and secured. The last time witnesses saw the *USS Cyclops* was in Barbados, where it made an unscheduled stop. Neither the boat nor the crew were ever seen again.

Many have tried to explain this disappearance. Some say the ship sank due to the heavy ore. Others say submarines or other warships sunk it. Some note that the ship had one bad engine. They claim that it made an unscheduled stop because it was taking on water. But we are all left to wonder, because no wreckage or remains of the ship or its crew were ever found. It just disappeared in the Bermuda Triangle. The US Navy records this as the largest loss of life outside of combat in its history.

In 1945 the US Navy sent five combat planes on a training mission known as Flight 19. The pilots' compasses stopped working. Then they lost radio contact. This happened over the Bermuda Triangle. The pilots did not return to the base. Neither they nor their planes were

ever found. The Navy sent another plane on a rescue mission on the same day. This plane had a thirteen-man crew. They were looking for the missing pilots or planes from Flight 19. But this rescue plane and its crew also disappeared.

The Navy looked into the incident. They think that the leader of Flight 19 made an error. Since the compasses on the planes weren't working, they think the pilots went the wrong way. Then the planes then ran out of fuel. They also think that the rescue plane exploded due to a gas leak. Since then, there have been many attempts to find wreckage from Flight 19. A treasure hunter named Graham Hawkes searched for over 20 years. Yet nothing was ever found.

Many incidents like these have happened in the Bermuda Triangle region. Boats, planes, and people go missing. Some believe that paranormal activity is at work. They think that the missing people and crafts are transported to another dimension. Others say UFOs are involved. Some think that the Lost City of Atlantis has something to do with it. But there is no evidence to support any of these theories.

Skeptics think that writers exaggerate stories about the Bermuda Triangle region. They note that the number of missing boats and planes in that area is not much greater than any other part of the ocean. Also, insurance companies do not charge extra to cover transport in this region. Some think the stories of the Bermuda Triangle are told to sell books and magazines. Writers may sensationalize the events because people are fascinated with ghost stories. What do you think?

1. Based on the context in the FIRST paragraph, what is the meaning of the phrase *urban legend*?
 - a. A story that has never been told
 - b. A story often repeated but probably not true
 - c. A story that is factually accurate
 - d. A story that takes place in a large city

2. Which best expresses the AUTHOR'S PURPOSE in the THIRD paragraph?
 - a. To convince readers that the *USS Cyclops* was abducted by aliens.
 - b. To entertain readers with funny anecdotes about the *USS Cyclops*.
 - c. To share explanations about the disappearance of the *USS Cyclops*.
 - d. To compare the disappearance of the *USS Cyclops* with Flight 19.

3. Which CONCLUSION does Graham Hawkes failure suggest?
 - a. Something paranormal or supernatural MAY HAVE happened to Flight 19.
 - b. Something paranormal or supernatural DEFINITELY happened to Flight 19.
 - c. Something paranormal or supernatural DEFINITELY DID NOT happen to Flight 19.

4. Which event happened FIRST?
 - a. Flight 19 lost radio contact.
 - b. Graham Hawkes began looking for Flight 19.
 - c. The plane searching for Flight 19 disappeared.
 - d. The compasses on Flight 19 stopped working.

5. Which event happened LAST?
 - a. The plane searching for Flight 19 disappeared.
 - b. Graham Hawkes began looking for Flight 19.
 - c. The Navy lost radio contact with Flight 19.
 - d. The Navy investigated Flight 19's disappearance.

6. Which SUPPORTS the theory that something paranormal happened to the *USS Cyclops*?
 - a. Some records noted that the *USS Cyclops* had one bad engine.
 - b. The *USS Cyclops* made an unscheduled stop in Barbados because it was taking on water.
 - c. Inspection records show that the *USS Cyclops* was properly loaded and secured.
 - d. The *USS Cyclops* was carrying a lot of heavy ore.

7. With which statement would AUTHOR most likely AGREE?
 - a. The disappearances in the Bermuda Triangle can only be explained by supernatural activity.
 - b. Authors are always totally neutral and unbiased when writing about the Bermuda Triangle.
 - c. The idea that something paranormal happens in the Bermuda Triangle is ridiculous and absurd.
 - d. It may be unlikely that there is paranormal activity in the Bermuda Triangle, but it is possible.

8. Which statement is an OPINION?
 - a. The Bermuda Triangle region is mysterious.
 - b. Boats have disappeared in the Bermuda Triangle.
 - c. The US Navy investigates disappearances.
 - d. Mr. Hawkes didn't find wreckage from Flight 19.

What piece of evidence from the article that suggests paranormal or supernatural activity in the Bermuda Triangle do you find most compelling or interesting? Why?

What piece of evidence from the article that suggests normal or natural activity in the Bermuda Triangle do you find most compelling or interesting? Why?
