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SCHOLASTIC

News

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MORE MEGA MYSTERIES!

# ARE ALIENS REAL?



For decades, people have spotted strange objects in the sky. Many say they're seeing visitors from outer space.

### INSIDE THIS ISSUE

Was this girl a witch?



What killed King Tut?



Why is this lake pink?



# DO ALIENS EXIST?

People have been seeing strange objects in the sky for decades. Are they alien spacecraft? Even the U.S. government is trying to find out.

AS YOU  
READ

Think about why so many people believe in UFOs.

**J**une 1947: Kenneth Arnold flies his plane over the mountains of Washington State. He sees nine glowing objects speed by. Arnold says they moved like saucers skipping across the water. Soon, reporters come up with a name for the objects: flying saucers.

November 1975: Travis Walton and six others see a disc-shaped object in Arizona. Walton goes in for a closer look—and disappears. He returns five days later. He claims that aliens had beamed him up to their ship.

November 2004: Two U.S. Navy pilots observe an oval aircraft hovering over the Pacific Ocean. The craft moves toward them, then quickly zooms away.

GO  
ONLINE!

Learn more about UFO sightings.

## WORDS TO KNOW

**phenomena** *noun, plural.* unusual or remarkable things or events

**extraterrestrial** *adjective.* coming from or existing beyond Earth

# KLIST?

These are just a few of the many reports of UFOs—unidentified flying objects. These unexplained **phenomena** have led many people to wonder if we are alone in the universe.

## Strange Sightings

For decades, books, movies, and TV shows have told stories of spaceships carrying **extraterrestrial** beings. But in real life, thousands of people report seeing UFOs every year.

Many who haven't seen a UFO still think they're real. In a recent survey of 26,000 people in 24 countries, nearly half said they believe that aliens exist. Even the U.S. Department of Defense investigates UFO sightings.

"When you see something in the sky that's not an

airplane, you wonder what it is," says Luis Elizondo. He says he led the Defense Department's UFO program for eight years. "Our job was to figure that out."

## No Explanation

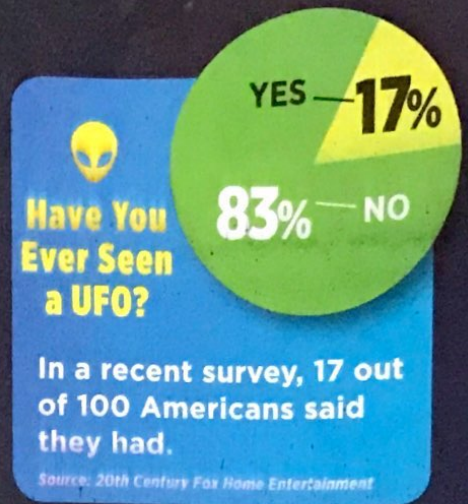
Sometimes, UFOs are really just shadows caused by sunlight or clouds. Other times, they're secret military planes (see *below*).

But often, says Elizondo, UFOs cannot be explained. People describe oddly shaped objects that move at sharp angles and high speeds.

"Whatever they are," Elizondo says, "they do not fit our current understanding of aircraft technology."

## Unanswered Questions

Elizondo can't say for sure whether those UFOs are



carrying aliens. There is no real proof that aliens exist. But no one has proved that they do not exist either.

After all, humans have explored only a tiny part of our solar system. And each year, scientists discover more planets, billions of miles away. How can we be absolutely sure that life does not exist on any of those faraway planets?

"If you don't ask the question, you'll never find the answer," says Elizondo.

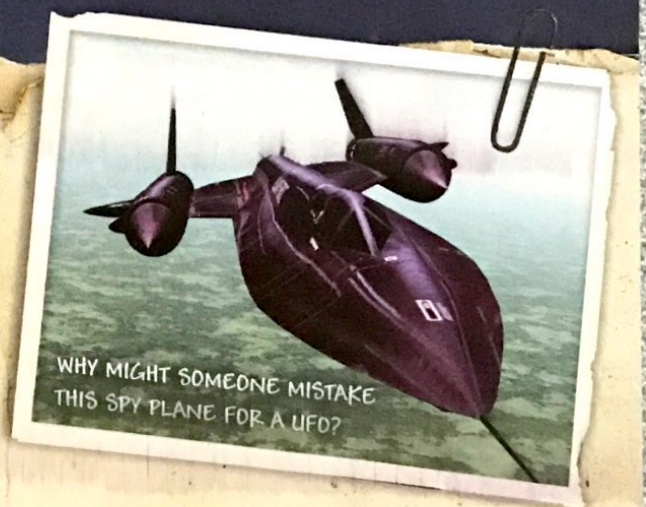
—by Jennifer Li Shotz



## THE MYSTERY OF AREA 51

Area 51 is a super-secret U.S. Air Force base in the Nevada desert. This testing site for spy planes opened in 1955. But the U.S. government denied it existed until 2013. Some people say that's because the government is hiding aliens there. There have been countless reports of odd aircraft flying in the area.

**TOP SECRET**



# WAS SHE A Witch?

More than 300 years ago, girls in Salem, Massachusetts, blamed witches for their bizarre behavior. What really happened?

It was a bitterly cold day in January 1692. Howling winds whipped through Salem Village in the Massachusetts Bay Colony. But inside one home, something even more chilling was happening.

Nine-year-old Betty Parris and her 11-year-old cousin Abigail Williams crawled on the floor. Their bodies twisted like pretzels. They said invisible spirits were biting them.

A doctor determined that the girls were under a witch's spell. Soon, other girls in Salem began having similar outbursts. Before long, innocent people were put on trial—and put to death—for practicing witchcraft.

But what really happened? More than three centuries later, no one knows for sure.

## Living in Fear

To understand how the panic spread, it helps to know more

about the people of Salem at the time. They were mostly settlers from England called Puritans. This religious group lived by strict rules. Many had lived through wars with American Indians whose land they had stolen. The Puritans feared more attacks. Disease and starvation were also

constant worries.

Life was especially hard for women and girls. Their lives were almost completely controlled by men.

Perhaps most important, Puritans thought all their hardships were caused by forces of evil. So it made sense that witches were blamed for the girls' strange behavior.

"Everyone believed in witchcraft," says Mary Beth Norton, an expert on the events in Salem. "It was the explanation for all kinds of weird things."

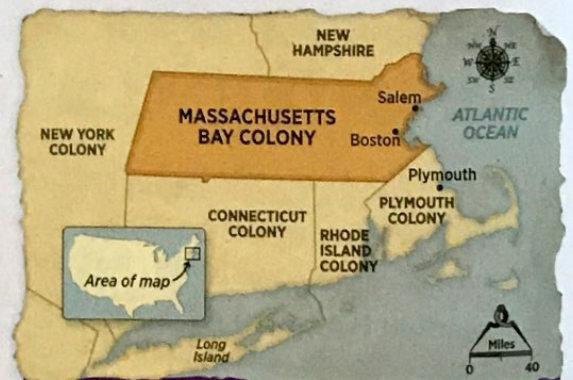


## Courtroom Chaos

Betty and Abigail accused three women of cursing them. As news spread, **hysteria** broke out in Salem. Neighbors accused one another of witchcraft.

By the time the Salem witch trials began in May 1692, the town was gripped by fear. Even without evidence, about 150 people were accused of being witches. Twenty people were put to death. Others died in jail.

By 1693, the scare was over. The Puritans still believed in witchcraft. But they realized it was unjust to accuse people of things without any proof.



In which direction would you travel to go from Salem to Plymouth?



Today, we use the term “witch hunt.” It describes a situation in which fear leads people to wrongly accuse others—just like what happened in Salem.

### Innocent Victims

We now know that the people of Salem weren't witches. But *something* had caused the girls to act so strangely.

One theory is that food poisoning brought on the girls' odd behavior. But most historians dismiss this idea. Some think that the girls faked the whole thing. However,

Norton and some other experts blame the stresses of Puritan life. They believe that the girls were so **tormented** by fear that they became physically ill.

We may never know what really happened. The truth has been buried along with the innocent victims of the Salem witch hunt.

—by Lisa M. Herrington

### WORDS TO KNOW

**hysteria** *noun*. a situation in which people behave in an uncontrolled way, often because of fear

**tormented** *verb*. caused extreme physical or mental pain

## SIGNS OF A Salem Witch

In Salem in 1692, it didn't take any real proof to show that someone was using witchcraft. People could be accused of being a witch if ...

**They had a birthmark** or mole—even though most people had them (and still do).



**A dog got sick** after eating a “witch's cake.” It was a gross mixture of rye flour and the accuser's urine!

**A neighbor's cow died**, his crops were ruined, or he had just about any other type of bad luck.



**DEBATE  
IT!**

# What Killed King Tut?

In 1922, the long-lost tomb of King Tut was discovered in Egypt. Tut became king of Egypt more than 3,300 years ago when he was just 9 years old. Ten years later, the boy king was dead. What happened to the famous ruler?

We asked two experts to weigh in.





## **Chariot Crash**

**Chris Naunton**

President of the International Association of Egyptologists


I've studied about 100 years' worth of evidence, such as X-rays of Tut's mummy and notes from the discovery of his tomb. I believe injuries from a chariot accident killed Tut.

 X-rays of Tut's mummy show that his ribs and heart are missing. One reason for that could be that they were so badly damaged that they had to be removed from his chest before burial.

 It's likely that the damage to Tut's chest happened as a result of a chariot crash. After all, many chariots



were found in Tut's tomb. And ancient Egyptian rulers were known to ride the horse-drawn vehicles while hunting or during battle.


 Some say Tut died from an infected broken leg. But a chest injury is usually more serious than a leg injury.

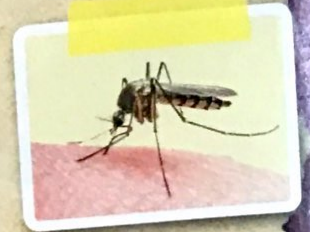
## **Poor Health**


**Zahi Hawass**


Archaeologist, Egyptologist, and Author

I helped conduct high-tech medical tests on Tut's mummy, taking more than 1,900 images. It's most likely that Tut died from a combination of diseases and infections.

 Medical tests have revealed that Tut was unhealthy. He had a disease called malaria. The illness is carried by mosquitoes and can be deadly if left untreated. Tut also had a bone disease that prevented blood from flowing properly into his fingers and feet.



 Tests show that shortly before Tut died, he broke his leg. I believe his leg got infected. Back then, an infection like this could prove deadly.

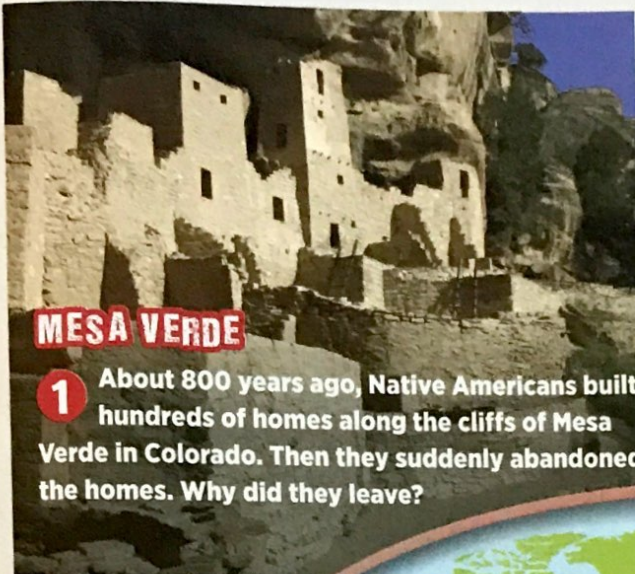
 Tut might have broken his leg in a chariot accident. But the accident isn't what killed him. It was his poor health and an infection from the broken leg.

**What Do YOU Think?** Highlight two pieces of evidence to support your opinion. Use that evidence to write a summary of your opinion. Then cast your vote at [scholastic.com/sn4](http://scholastic.com/sn4)!



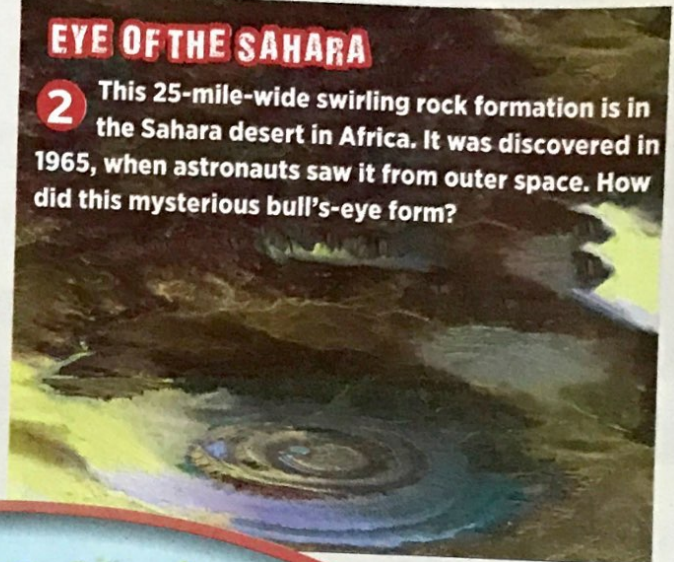
# Most Mysterious Places

Check out these strange spots. Write the number of each in the correct spot on the map. Which mysterious location would you want to explore?



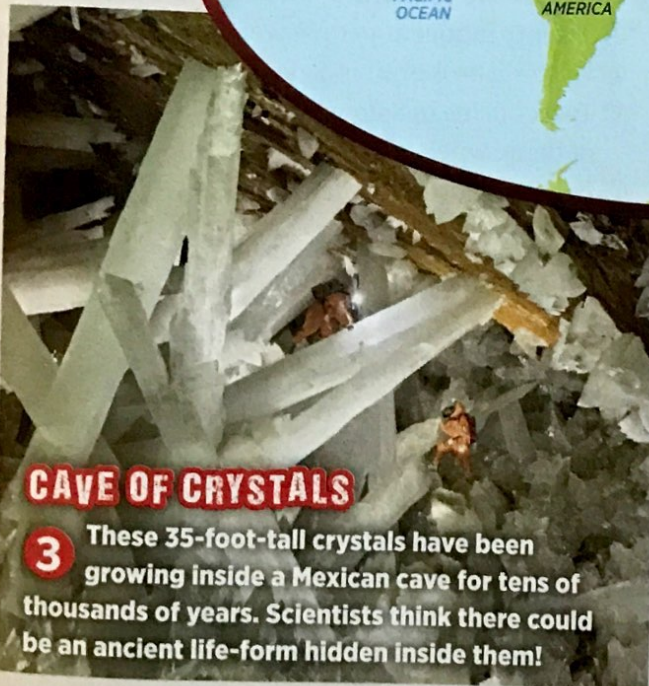
## MESA VERDE

**1** About 800 years ago, Native Americans built hundreds of homes along the cliffs of Mesa Verde in Colorado. Then they suddenly abandoned the homes. Why did they leave?



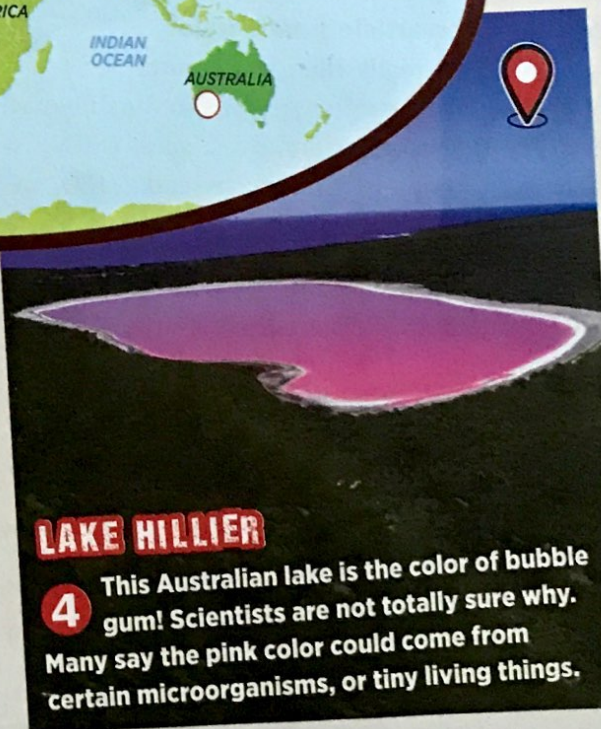
## EYE OF THE SAHARA

**2** This 25-mile-wide swirling rock formation is in the Sahara desert in Africa. It was discovered in 1965, when astronauts saw it from outer space. How did this mysterious bull's-eye form?



## CAVE OF CRYSTALS

**3** These 35-foot-tall crystals have been growing inside a Mexican cave for tens of thousands of years. Scientists think there could be an ancient life-form hidden inside them!



## LAKE HILLIER

**4** This Australian lake is the color of bubble gum! Scientists are not totally sure why. Many say the pink color could come from certain microorganisms, or tiny living things.



# Meet the Beasts

Aliens are not the only mysterious beings people say they've seen roaming around. This chart tells you about some other legendary creatures.

## Loch Ness Monster

### What It Looks Like

A 20-foot-long creature that looks like a dinosaur or sea serpent

### Where It's Been Spotted

A lake in Scotland

### Fast Fact

The most famous photo of the monster isn't real. Someone stuck a fake monster head on a toy submarine!



## Chupacabra

### What It Looks Like

A 5-foot-tall creature with huge claws, red eyes, and spikes on its back

### Where It's Been Spotted

Mexico and nearby countries

### Fast Fact

It has been blamed for attacks on goats, dogs, and other animals.



## Yeti

### What It Looks Like

A tall, apelike creature with gray, white, or brown fur

### Where It's Been Spotted

The snowy Himalayan mountains of Asia

### Fast Fact

The yeti is said to only come out at night. The beast is sometimes called the Abominable Snowman.



**1** Which beast is known as the Abominable Snowman?

\_\_\_\_\_

**2** Which creature is said to live in a lake?

\_\_\_\_\_



## WRITE ABOUT IT!

Pick one of the creatures to research. Do you think the beast is real? Why or why not?

## Do Aliens Exist? pages 2-3

- What is the article's main idea?
  - (A) UFOs are really alien spacecraft.
  - (B) No one knows if we're alone in the universe.
  - (C) The U.S. government investigates UFOs.
  - (D) Many people claim to have seen a UFO.
- Which TWO statements would Luis Elizondo most likely agree with?
  - (A) Kenneth Arnold actually saw a real alien spacecraft in Washington.
  - (B) UFOs move differently than regular aircraft.
  - (C) It is important to investigate UFO sightings.
  - (D) All UFO sightings are easily explained.
- UFOs are *phenomena* because \_\_\_\_\_.
  - (A) U.S. Navy pilots have seen them
  - (B) many people claim to have seen them
  - (C) they have no clear explanation
  - (D) they could be mistaken for spy planes



## Was She a Witch? pages 4-5

- Which of the following caused the others?
  - (A) Twenty innocent people were put to death.
  - (B) Hysteria broke out in Salem.
  - (C) Two cousins in Salem accused three women of being witches.
  - (D) People accused of witchcraft were put on trial.
- What is the unsolved mystery from Salem?
  - (A) what caused the girls' odd behavior
  - (B) why people believed in witchcraft
  - (C) what a witch hunt is
  - (D) why the Salem witch trials happened
- In the article, the phrase "the truth has been buried" means \_\_\_\_\_.
  - (A) Puritans buried witches' bodies
  - (B) the people of Salem hid the truth
  - (C) the truth is important
  - (D) the truth may never be known