

Instructions

This worksheet explores the intriguing world of paranormal locations and supernatural legends. The exercises are designed to test your reading comprehension, vocabulary, and critical thinking skills in English. The final section challenges you to apply your foreign language skills to a similar theme. Read each section carefully and complete the tasks that follow.

Part 1: English - The Enigmatic Forest

Pre-Reading Activity

Before you read the passage, consider the following questions:

- What is your personal stance on paranormal phenomena (e.g., ghosts, UFOs, supernatural events)? Are you a skeptic, a believer, or somewhere in between?
- Can you name three places around the world famous for being "haunted" or mysterious?

Reading Passage: The Hoia Baci Forest

Often referred to as the "Bermuda Triangle of Transylvania," the Hoia Baci Forest in Romania is one of the most mysterious and paranormal hotspots on the planet. Its reputation is built on decades of inexplicable events, attracting thrill-seekers, paranormal investigators, and scientists alike. The forest is named after a shepherd who, according to legend, disappeared within its woods along with his entire flock of 200 sheep.

The most famous area within the forest is a near-perfectly circular clearing where no trees grow, and scientific analysis of the soil has yielded no explanation for the barren patch. This clearing is often the epicenter of **anomalous** phenomena. Visitors have reported a wide array of **disconcerting** experiences, from sudden, intense feelings of anxiety and nausea to mysterious rashes and burns appearing on their skin. Electronic devices are known to malfunction inexplicably, and disembodied voices are sometimes captured on audio recordings.

The forest's international fame began in 1968 when biologist Alexandru Sift took a photograph of a **purported** UFO hovering over the clearing. Since then, countless photographs and videos have emerged showing strange orbs of light and shadowy figures that defy rational explanation. These visual oddities, combined with the physical and psychological effects reported by visitors, create an **enigmatic** puzzle. While skeptics attribute these events to geological factors, infrasound, or simple mass suggestion, the sheer volume and consistency of the reported **phenomena** ensure that the Hoia Baci Forest remains a compelling and chilling destination.

Task A: Vocabulary in Context

Match the bolded words from the text with their closest definitions below. Write the correct letter next to the word.

1. **Anomalous:** _____
2. **Disconcerting:** _____
3. **Purported:** _____
4. **Enigmatic:** _____

5. **Phenomena:** _____**Definitions:**

- A. Causing one to feel unsettled; disturbing.
- B. Facts or situations that are observed to exist or happen, especially ones whose cause is in question.
- C. Mysterious and difficult to interpret or understand.
- D. Deviating from what is standard, normal, or expected.
- E. Claimed or appearing to be true, but not necessarily so; alleged.

Task B: Fact vs. Speculation

Read the statements below, all derived from the passage. Categorize each one as either a "Factual Claim" (something presented as a verifiable event or observation) or a "Speculative/Anecdotal Claim" (something based on legend, personal experience, or unproven belief).

- **Statement 1:** The forest is named after a shepherd who disappeared there with his flock.
- **Statement 2:** A biologist named Alexandru Sift took a photograph of an alleged UFO in 1968.
- **Statement 3:** Visitors often experience sudden feelings of intense anxiety and nausea.
- **Statement 4:** There is a circular clearing in the forest where vegetation does not grow.
- **Statement 5:** Disembodied voices are sometimes captured on audio recordings.
- **Statement 6:** Soil analysis has provided no definitive reason for the barren clearing.

Your Answers:

Factual Claims: Statement ____, Statement ____, Statement ____

Speculative/Anecdotal Claims: Statement ____, Statement ____, Statement ____

Task C: Critical Reflection

Answer the following questions in complete sentences. Your answers should be based on your own thoughts and analysis.

1. Why do you think stories of mysterious places like the Hoia Baci Forest hold such a strong and lasting appeal for people across different cultures?
2. The passage mentions that skeptics attribute the events to "mass suggestion." How much of a role do you think the power of suggestion plays when people visit a location with a frightening reputation? Explain your reasoning.
3. If science were to provide a definitive, non-paranormal explanation for every strange event in the Hoia Baci Forest, do you think the location would lose its allure? Why or why not?

Part 2: Foreign Language - Exploring Local Legends**Task D: Research and Report**

This task requires you to use the foreign language you are currently studying.

Instructions:

1. Choose a country where your target language is spoken (e.g., Spain for Spanish, Japan for Japanese, France for French, etc.).
2. Research a famous ghost story, supernatural legend, or mysterious location from that country. Examples could include La Llorona (Mexico), the Aokigahara Forest (Japan), or the Catacombs

of Paris (France).

3. In the space below, write a short summary (approximately 100-150 words) of the legend **in your target language**.
4. Try to include translations of the following prompt words to structure your writing: *legend, mystery, located in, locals claim, ghost/spirit, beware*.

(Write your summary here)

Answer Key

Task A: Vocabulary in Context

1. **Anomalous:** D
2. **Disconcerting:** A
3. **Purported:** E
4. **Enigmatic:** C
5. **Phenomena:** B

Task B: Fact vs. Speculation

- **Factual Claims:** Statement 2, Statement 4, Statement 6. (These are presented as documented events or scientific findings mentioned in the text).
- **Speculative/Anecdotal Claims:** Statement 1, Statement 3, Statement 5. (Statement 1 is a legend, while 3 and 5 are based on personal reports and experiences rather than universal fact).

Task C: Critical Reflection

Answers will vary. A strong answer will demonstrate critical thought and personal insight.

1. **(Example guidance)** Answers may touch upon humanity's fascination with the unknown, the desire for life to be more than what it seems, the entertainment value of fear, and the cultural role of storytelling.
2. **(Example guidance)** A good response will acknowledge the power of suggestion (placebo/nocebo effect) and how pre-existing beliefs can shape perception. It might argue that when people expect to feel scared or see something strange, they are more likely to interpret ambiguous stimuli in a paranormal way.
3. **(Example guidance)** Answers could argue both ways. Some might say a scientific explanation would ruin the mystery and thus the allure. Others might argue that the place would remain fascinating for its unique geological or psychological properties, and the legends would simply become part of its cultural history rather than its present reality.

Task D: Research and Report

Answers will vary based on the student's target language and chosen legend. A successful response will be written in the target language and accurately summarize a relevant legend, demonstrating appropriate vocabulary and grammar for a 100-150 word descriptive text. The use of the suggested prompt words should be evident.