



Urban Legends in Different Countries (B1)

A. WARM-UP QUESTIONS

1. What urban legend from your childhood still sticks with you?
2. Why do people pass along scary stories even when they aren't true?
3. Do urban legends teach lessons or just entertain? Give an example.
4. How does a story change when it moves to a different country?
5. What detail makes a legend feel believable to you?

B. VOCABULARY PREVIEW

Match up as many words and meanings as you can. (Definitions are shuffled.)

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|-------------------------|--|
| ___ 1. folklore | a. to describe something as bigger or worse than it is |
| ___ 2. rumor | b. a joke that tricks people |
| ___ 3. witness | c. to appear in someone's mind again and again, like a ghost |
| ___ 4. eerie | d. a story that warns people about danger or bad behavior |
| ___ 5. debunk | e. an unexpected change in a story |
| ___ 6. chilling | f. strange and a bit scary |
| ___ 7. twist | g. making you feel cold or afraid |
| ___ 8. haunt | h. someone who sees an event happen |
| ___ 9. vanish | i. to show that a story or claim is false |
| ___ 10. prank | j. to disappear suddenly |
| ___ 11. cautionary tale | k. unverified talk that spreads from person to person |
| ___ 12. exaggerate | l. traditional stories shared by a community |

Reading

Urban Legends

Why scary stories refuse to die

1. Every culture has a story that refuses to fade away. In Japan, people whisper about a masked woman who stops strangers and asks, "Am I beautiful?" before revealing a terrible smile. In Mexico, the weeping ghost La Llorona warns children to stay close to their parents or risk being taken away. In Scotland, a dark shape moves through the cold waters of Loch Ness, becoming a national symbol. These stories survive because they are both exciting and useful—they entertain while carrying hidden warnings. Over time, small details change to keep the tales fresh, but the core message stays the same.
2. Urban legends spread quickly, often crossing borders without anyone knowing where they started. A famous example is the story of the disappearing hitchhiker: a driver picks up a quiet passenger, only for them to vanish from the car before reaching their destination. This story has been told in Poland, Korea, Brazil, and many other countries, with the road, clothing, and setting changing in each version. Yet the feeling remains: an ordinary night suddenly turns strange and unsettling.
3. Most of these legends can be proven false, but that doesn't weaken their power. They survive because they tap into shared fears—being alone, getting lost, or meeting someone dangerous. They also work as cautionary tales, quietly reminding people to slow down when driving, avoid walking alone at night, or check in with loved ones. In this way, scary stories do more than frighten us; they protect us, even if only a little.



COMPREHENSION

1. What warning does La Llorona give in the Mexican legend?
2. Why do details in old stories often change over time?
3. What happens in the “disappearing hitchhiker” legend?
4. Why do scary stories survive even after being proven false?
5. How can legends work as a form of protection?

VOCABULARY REVIEW

- 1.The museum exhibit explored local ____ and myths.
- 2.The scary video was easy to ____ after experts checked it.
- 3.A shopkeeper claimed to be a ____ to the strange event.
- 4.The empty streets felt ____ after dark.
- 5.The story’s final ____ surprised everyone.
- 6.The ghost story serves as a ____ for teens who stay out late.
- 7.He tends to ____ when telling stories about danger.
- 8.The figure seemed to ____ into the fog.
- 9.They later learned it was only a harmless ____.
- 10.Old memories can ____ a town long after an accident.

GRAMMAR REVIEW - PRESENT PERFECT VS PAST SIMPLE

- 1.I ____ (hear) that legend many times, but last night I ____ (hear) it from my grandmother.
- 2.She ____ never ____ (see) the lake monster, but she ____ (visit) the town last year.
- 3.The police ____ (investigate) the rumor yesterday, but they ____ (find) nothing.
- 4.How many legends ____ you ____ (hear) from other countries?
- 5.They ____ (debunk) similar stories in the past, yet people still believe them.
- 6.I ____ (tell) you this story before, or not?
- 7.We ____ (watch) a documentary about La Llorona last weekend.
- 8.He ____ (move) to Scotland in 2020 and ____ (be) interested in the myth since then.
- 9.The tale ____ (start) decades ago but it ____ (change) many times.
- 10.Have you ever ____ (feel) eerie while walking home at night?

DISCUSSION

- 1.Which legend from your country would you share with a visitor, and why?
- 2.When does a legend help society, and when does it cause harm?
- 3.Should schools use legends to teach safety lessons?
- 4.How has the internet changed the way legends spread?



CRITICAL THINKING

Choose one urban legend and trace how it changes across countries. Identify what details shift, what stays the same, and what fear the story taps into.

