

Real-Life Ghost Busters

*If there's something strange going on in your neighborhood, who ya gonna call?
Ghostbusters!*

The movie "Ghostbusters" may have made ghost hunting a joke, but looking for ghosts is no laughing matter for a lot of people. All over the world, thousands of people are searching for ghosts, and even claiming to "bust" them.

What does it take to be a ghost hunter these days? First, you have to believe in ghosts and other supernatural phenomena. One ghost hunter described ghosts as human beings who have passed out of their bodies, while their spirits still remain on earth. According to believers, these ghosts haunt the places they died or places they loved when they were alive. They might have unfinished business: perhaps warning of something that is going to happen or explaining something that already did happen. Sometimes they just want to bring messages of comfort to those who miss them.

Then, you need some special equipment. A "deluxe ghost-hunting kit" is available online for \$99. It contains an EVP (Electronic Voice Phenomena) listener that enables you to record sounds that the human ear may not be able to hear. An EMF (Electromagnetic Field) meter detects changes in the air that might indicate ghostly energy. There's an ultrasonic motion sensor to note movements in the dark and an infrared thermometer to measure cold spots in a room.

Even with all this equipment, there's no guarantee that you've found a ghost. Non-believers argue that there is an everyday explanation for everything. That strange sound may just be an animal or a distant radio. EMF detectors can be fooled by microwaves. And there's no proof that ghosts cause changes in temperature. A ghost-hunting kit may look like scientific equipment, but it is fake science, say skeptics.

According to surveys, about a third of people believe in ghosts. Another third absolutely do not believe. The remaining third are not sure. Which group do you belong to?

GLOSSARY:

phenomena: [fi-**nom**-uh-nuh] facts, occurrences, or circumstances observed or observable: *to study the phenomena of nature.* (singular: phenomenon)

skeptic: (skēp'tik) someone who questions or disagrees with ideas that are accepted by others