



Real-Life Ghost Busters

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

The movie “Ghostbusters” might have made ghost hunting a joke. But hunting for ghosts is no laughing matter for a lot of folks. All over the world, thousands of people are searching for spirits.

What does it take to be a ghost hunter these days? First, you have to believe in ghosts and other supernatural wonders. One ghost hunter described ghosts as humans who have passed out of their bodies while their spirits stay 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 they are 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. This allows you to record sounds that the human ear might 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. An infrared thermometer measures cold spots in a room.



Even with all this equipment, there's no guarantee that you've found a ghost. Nonbelievers argue that there is an everyday explanation for everything. That strange sound might 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 might 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?



BEFORE YOU READ

Think about these questions before you read: Do you believe in ghosts? Do you think people can “bust” ghosts? What are ghosts anyway? Check out the “ghostbusting kit” in this picture.

This passage is told from the point of view of people who believe in ghosts and ghostbusting. Be prepared to agree or disagree with this information.



WHILE YOU ARE READING

There are plenty of big words in this passage. But they might not be as hard as they look! Readers have two main tools for figuring out tricky words: looking *inside* the word for chunks of meaning and looking *outside* the word for clues in the passage.

As you read, use a pencil or highlighter to highlight any words you think you or others might have trouble with. You might have to come back and revisit them later.

AFTER READING

Some things to think about:

1. Was there anything you agreed with in this passage? Was there anything you disagreed with?
2. Why do you think people go hunting for ghosts?
3. What do you think is the most important part of the ghost-hunting kit?
4. Highlight all the words that have three syllables or more. (There are lots!) Put a star beside the ones you were not able to figure out.

Something to do: The next two pages give you some tools for figuring out tricky words.



CHUNKING WORDS

Sometimes big words are easier than you think! If you chunk a big word into parts, you might be able to figure it out.

Syllables are easy word chunks: **e-quip-ment** or **ther-mo-me-ter**. Syllables help you say the word, but they don't help you understand the meaning.

Another way to break up words is to look for chunks of meaning. These include **root words**, **prefixes** (added to the beginnings of words) and **suffixes** (added to the ends of words). Take the word **unbelievable**, for example. You know what the root word – *believe* – means. When you add the suffix “*able*” the word means *can be believed*. And if you add the prefix *un* to the beginning, it means the opposite: *can't be believed*.

Now you try:

1. Someone who “busts ghosts” is a _____ because *er* means _____.

Find another word in this passage with the same suffix *er*: _____

2. Add a prefix to change the word *finished* to its opposite: _____.

3. The prefix *electro* means “having to do with electricity.” Find two words in this passage with the prefix *electro*: _____

4. The prefix *super* means *beyond* or *over*. If something is *supernatural*, then it's _____ nature.

5. *Ultra* has a similar meaning to *super*. It means *very, extremely*. *Sonic* refers to sound. So what does *ultrasonic* mean?



POWERFUL PREFIXES

Prefixes are syllables added to the beginning of a word to change the meaning of a word. Many prefixes make a word mean its opposite, such as *unfinished*.

Feel free to get some help from a dictionary.

Word	Prefix	What the word means	Another word with that prefix
unfinished	Un	Not finished	unhappy
supernatural			
nonbelievers			
electromagnet			
infrared			
ultrasonic			

