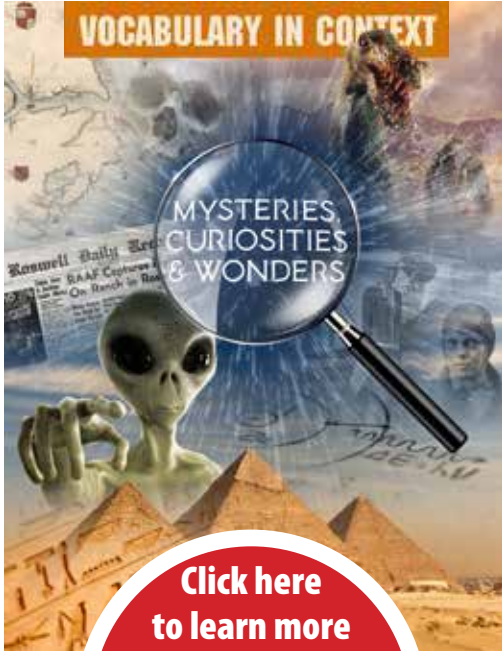




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MYSTERIES, CURIOSITIES & WONDERS

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ALIENS AT ROSWELL?

“RAAF CAPTURES FLYING SAUCER on Ranch in Roswell Region” ran the headline in the *Roswell Daily Record* on July 8, 1947. This story initiated the Roswell legend that still circulates today: A flying saucer crashed on a ranch outside of town, and the US military **surreptitiously** brought the debris and alien bodies back to the base. The following day, the public was told that what was discovered was a simple weather balloon.

How much of the story is true? Could events that occurred ten years apart, blended with the public’s paranoia about UFOs, evolve into the myth we have today? On the other hand, is the government covering up an alien invasion? Both theories originated from a single incident, but then deviated.

On June 14th, a cattle rancher, Mac Brazel, was walking with his eight-year-old son and saw that something had fallen on his property. When he investigated the wreckage on July 4th, he found what he described as “rubber strips, tinfoil, a rather tough paper, and sticks.” Two weather balloons had gone down in the area in the past, yet this debris looked completely different. Brazel had never seen anything like it before and neither had the local authorities. After being informed of the accident, the Roswell Army Air Force hurriedly retrieved the debris and brought it back to their base. The following day, they gave their official report: It was just a weather balloon.

Speculation began almost immediately: What really happened? What, exactly, did Brazel find? Was the **gullible** public easily misled by a lying government? Recently acquired information may hold the answers.

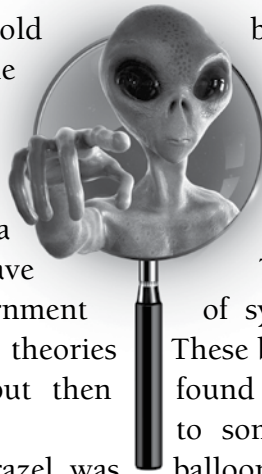
Brazel could have been right. What he saw may *not* have been a typical weather balloon. Declassified military reports describe a top-secret program called Project MOGUL. The items Brazel found may have been created by the United States for **reconnaissance** purposes. In 1947, in the middle of the Cold War, tensions were high between the United States and the Soviet Union—a communist dictatorship made up of Russia and other countries in Eastern Europe. Fearing nuclear war, the US created a system that could detect the sounds of aircraft and missiles.

The government developed balloons made of synthetic rubber, parchment, and plastic. These bear a striking resemblance to what Brazel found and, furthermore, would look unfamiliar to someone who had seen ordinary weather balloons before.

Even if the mysterious debris could be explained by Project MOGUL, what could account for the alien bodies people believe were found with the wreckage?

One explanation is that in the 1950s, the US military wanted to design better parachutes. To test the physical effects on falling pilots, the Air Force dropped mannequins resembling humans near Roswell. Witnesses may have seen army vehicles driving to the site to recover them and, **incredulously**, believed the government was taking away alien corpses. In fact, the mannequins likely inspired the image of aliens (called “Grey Aliens” or “Greys”) that is prevalent in the modern media.

Then, in 1956, a KC-97G airplane crashed near Roswell. A fire in the cabin had killed the crew, and the bodies that were removed from the



wreckage were barely recognizable as humans. When they were taken to be autopsied, even the nurses in the hospital thought the dead men were extraterrestrials. If a nurse could make such a mistake, couldn't the average citizen?

While the argument explaining the event through historical events may seem convincing, it contains several flaws. To begin with, if the government wasn't covering up an alien spacecraft, why did the Air Force remove the debris immediately? Furthermore, if the balloon were part of Project MOGUL, why did it take so long for the truth to be released, long after the Cold War had ended? Since the balloons had all been replaced with newer technology, why would **archaic** equipment be protected for so long?

Another major issue with this argument is that the three incidents described happened over the course of nine years. It certainly is possible for people to accidentally and **erroneously** meld several separate events into one. However, isn't it foolish to believe such a **convoluted** story as that one?

It is also impossible that the dummy drops and the airplane crash inspired the image of the Grey Aliens. That **depiction** of alien life appeared long before Roswell. In 1933, Swedish author Gustav Sandgren wrote the following in his work *Den okända faran* (*The Unknown Danger*):

[...] the creatures did not resemble any race of humans. They were short...and their heads were big and bald, with strong, square foreheads, and very small noses and mouths, and weak chins. What was most extraordinary about them were the eyes—large, dark, gleaming, with a sharp gaze....

The description bears great similarity to how we generally depict an extraterrestrial—and came fourteen years before the Roswell incident.

Another event that often goes unreported and **corroborates** Brazel's story is the testimony of Mr. and Mrs. Wilmot, Roswell residents who saw a UFO in the sky around the same time as the crash, giving additional **credence** to Brazel's account. They described an aircraft that was "oval in shape, like two inverted saucers, faced mouth to mouth....glow[ing] as though light were showing through from inside," They also said it traveled at 400-500 mph across the sky without a sound. Could it be the object they saw was the same as Brazel's—or possibly an accompanying ship?

Arguments made on both sides of the Roswell incident are very convincing, which is why there is ongoing **discourse** among believers and skeptics. Are people's imaginations leading them to believe outlandish things? Or are secretive studies of extraterrestrial life being hidden from the public? Possibly, nobody will ever know the truth.

EXERCISE 1 WORD LIST

Use the context in which the word is used to determine what the word probably means. Write a brief definition in the space provided.

- archaic:** _____

Since the balloons had all been replaced with newer technology, why would **archaic** equipment be protected for so long?
- convoluted:** _____

Another major issue with this argument is that the three incidents described happened over the course of nine years. It certainly is possible for people to accidentally and erroneously meld several separate events into one. However, isn't it foolish to believe such a **convoluted** story as that one?
- corroborate:** _____

Another event that often goes unreported and **corroborates** Brazel's story is the testimony of Mr. and Mrs. Wilmot, Roswell residents who saw a UFO in the sky around the same time as the crash, giving additional credence to Brazel's account.
- credence:** _____

Another event that often goes unreported and corroborates Brazel's story is the testimony of Mr. and Mrs. Wilmot, Roswell residents who saw a UFO in the sky around the same time as the crash, giving additional **credence** to Brazel's account.
- depiction:** _____

It is also impossible that the dummy drops and the airplane crash inspired the image of the Grey aliens. That **depiction** of alien life appeared long before Roswell.
- discourse:** _____

Arguments made on both sides of the Roswell incident are very convincing, which is why there is ongoing **discourse** among believers and skeptics.
- erroneous:** _____

Another major issue with this argument is that the three incidents described happened over the course of nine years. It certainly is possible for people to accidentally and **erroneously** meld several separate events into one. However, isn't it foolish to believe such a convoluted story as that one?
- gullible:** _____

Was the **gullible** public easily misled by a lying government?

9. **incredulous:** _____

Witnesses may have seen army vehicles driving to the site to recover them and, **incredulously**, believed the government was taking away alien corpses.

10. **reconnaissance:** _____

The items Brazel found may have been created by the United States for **reconnaissance** purposes...Fearing nuclear war, the US created a system that could detect the sounds of aircraft and missiles.

11. **surreptitious:** _____

A flying saucer crashed on a ranch outside of town, and the US military **surreptitiously** brought the debris and alien bodies back to the base. The following day, the public was told that what was discovered was a simple weather balloon.

EXERCISE 2 USING WORDS IN CONTEXT

Fill in the blank with the vocabulary word that best completes the sentence. In some cases, you may need to change the tense or form of a verb or the number of a noun.

discourse credence gullible corroborate archaic reconnaissance
convoluted depiction erroneous incredulous surreptitious

1. Liz got a failing grade on her assignment because of her _____ interpretation of the directions.
2. The tour guide's discussion of the mining industry was so _____ that it confused the visitors, who felt that they had not learned anything.
3. The _____ of Bigfoot in the television series did not match the description provided by the witnesses.
4. The scout went on a(n) _____ mission to learn the position of the German army.
5. The antagonist of the play lurked _____ in the shadows and eavesdropped on the two main characters' conversations.
6. Many _____ medical practices, such as the use of leeches, have been replaced with newer, more effective practices.
7. The presentation ended with a formal _____ between two geology experts who had differing opinions about the fossils.
8. Photographs and video recordings may _____ the idea that the chupacabra, a legendary goat-eating creature, actually exists.

9. Several _____ people believed the alien autopsy video was real, despite the overwhelming opinion that it was a hoax.
10. We were _____ when Mike said he had run a marathon in record time, especially since he didn't have any proof.
11. A manuscript from the 12th century lends _____ to the argument that King Arthur really existed.

EXERCISE 3 / **READING COMPREHENSION AND ANALYSIS**

Select the best answers to the following questions based on a close and thorough reading of "Aliens at Roswell?"

1. How is this passage organized?
 - A. chronologically
 - B. point and counterpoint
 - C. cause and effect
 - D. order of importance
 - E. by topic
2. The author's intention of this passage is to
 - A. convince the reader that extraterrestrials are real.
 - B. reveal the information that was leaked about Project MOGUL.
 - C. present two opposing sides on the Roswell debate.
 - D. explain why aliens are portrayed the way they are.
 - E. discredit Mac Brazel's and the Wilmots' stories.
3. Re-read the following excerpt from the passage:

"How much of the story is true? Could events that occurred ten years apart, blended with the public's paranoia about UFOs, evolve into the myth we have today? On the other hand, is the government covering up an alien invasion? Both theories originated from a single incident, but then deviated."

What is the purpose of the rhetorical questions?

- A. They capture the reader's attention.
- B. They introduce the opposing arguments to be discussed.
- C. They explain how the UFO myth began.
- D. They allude to the wreckage on Mac Brazel's property.
- E. They mimic the questions of the local authorities in Roswell in 1947.

4. When discussing the plane crash, the writer specifically mentions the opinions of the nurses in order to
- A. persuade the reader by stating the beliefs of specific individuals.
 - B. use the opinions of people with expertise to strengthen an argument.
 - C. distract the reader by introducing an unrelated topic.
 - D. oversimplify the problem and easily discredit it.
 - E. get the reader to adopt the popular opinion.
5. What would be the best alternative title for the passage?
- A. Mac Brazel's Famous UFO
 - B. Truth of Roswell Discovered
 - C. Roswell: Skeptics vs. Believers
 - D. The Link between Roswell and Aliens
 - E. The Government Conspiracy called Roswell

EXERCISE 4 / **MAKING INFERENCES**

Choose the best answer.

1. If the computers in the lab are **archaic**, they most likely
 - A. have outdated technology.
 - B. don't work properly.
 - C. are used frequently.
 - D. need to be replaced.

2. Of the following, which is the best example of a **surreptitious** act?
 - A. decorating a hall for a party
 - B. listening to a friend's secret
 - C. writing a novel by one's self
 - D. sneaking into a movie theater

3. If students had to listen to a **convoluted** lesson, they would most likely
 - A. believe that the teacher did not provide enough details.
 - B. need to look up the information after class.
 - C. understand the material and ace their test.
 - D. link the information to other things they know.

4. Which of the following is the correct use of the word **credence**?
 - A. We couldn't come to a credence on a restaurant, so we ordered take-out.
 - B. There is no credence to the Bill of Rights in the Constitution.
 - C. The evidence gave credence to the defendant's innocence.
 - D. The credence of her comment made me disbelieve what she said.

5. Based on information in the passage, which of the following information can be inferred about Project MOGUL?
 - A. The US was developing nuclear weapons at the time.
 - B. The conflict between the US and Soviet Union began after WWII.
 - C. The balloons were being used to spy on the Soviet Union.
 - D. The balloons were based on alien technology obtained by the Soviet Union.

EXERCISE 5 / **ROOTS, PREFIXES, AND SUFFIXES**

Answer the questions below that are designed to help you arrive at some conclusions about word families and origins.

1. Briefly define **credence** in your own words. What part of speech is **credence**?

2. Briefly define **incredulous** in your own words. What part of speech is **incredulous**?

A. What root do **credence** and **incredulous** share?

B. List some other words that probably share the same root as **credence** and **incredulous**. Define each in your own words.

C. Briefly explain in your own words how **credence** derives its meaning from its parts.

D. Briefly explain in your own words how **incredulous** derives its meaning from its parts.
