

Maritime Mysteries

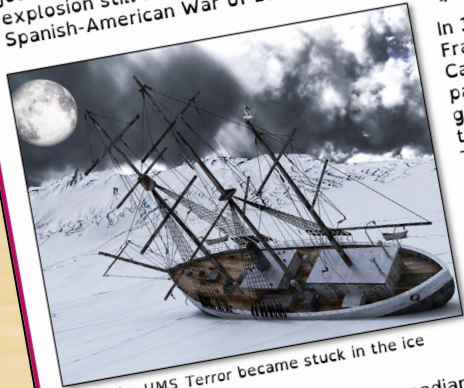


CREATIVE WRITING FROM NONFICTION

3. THE EXPLOSION OF THE USS MAINE

In January of 1898, a rebellion broke out in Cuba against Spanish rule. At that time, Spain ruled much of the Caribbean, and Cuba wanted independence. The United States sent one of the first American battleships, the USS Maine, down to Havana to protect its interests during the rebellion. On February 15th, 1898, the USS Maine spontaneously exploded in the Havana harbor, killing 268 sailors. This immediately caused outrage and debate: had the Spanish blown up the ship? Should the US go to war with Spain?

Top naval officers at the time disagreed on the cause – some saying it was a Spanish mine, and others saying it was an internal explosion on the ship. American newspapers covering this event resorted to yellow journalism, often exaggerating facts or making things up. The explosion still remains a mystery, the loss of the USS Maine during the Spanish-American War of 1898.



The HMS Terror became stuck in the ice

Indigenous people of the arctic Canadian were starving and resorting to cannibalism. Even physical proof with the fur traders, people dismissed the Inuit accounts as myth and instead believed the ship had fallen victim to Mother Nature.

People started to believe the Netsilik Inuit and the Erebus was renewed. In 2014 and

Maritime Mysteries

Ghost ships, mysterious patches of ocean, underwater cities – these are all mysteries of the sea passed down from generation to generation. According to NOAA (National Ocean and Atmospheric Administration), only 5% of the world's oceans have been explored. That's why so many maritime mysteries go unexplained. Here are ten mysteries from the deep blue sea.

1. PAVLOPETRI

What was the inspiration for the myth of Atlantis? Possibly the sunken city of Pavlopetri, off the coast of Greece. In 360 BCE, the philosopher Plato told the story of Atlantis, a utopia with great technological advances and a mighty navy. According to Plato, the city fell out of favor with the gods, and they plunged it beneath the sea. The location of Atlantis has never been found, and most scientists believe it is entirely myth.



Diver at Pavlopetri

In 1967, archeologist Nicholas Flemming and a team from Cambridge University discovered the underwater ruins of Pavlopetri. Tests have shown that this city was occupied as early as 2800 BCE and likely sunk around 1000 BCE after a series of earthquakes. Although we can't say for sure what happened to Pavlopetri, it could have inspired Plato's story some 600 years later. Today, you can scuba dive to explore the ruins of Pavlopetri.



2. THE KRAKEN

If you're into sea monsters, you surely know about the fearsome kraken. First described in the early 1700s, this giant squid is said to hunt the seas off the coast of Norway. This monster has captured the imagination of writers like Victor Hugo (who wrote *The Hunchback of Notre Dame*) and Jules Verne (who wrote *Around the World in 80 Days*), as well as inspired appearances in popular culture like *Pirates of the Caribbean: Dead Man's Chest*.

8. THE BERMUDA TRIANGLE

A mysterious oceanic location and a series of unexplained disappearances? The Bermuda Triangle, ranges from Florida to Bermuda.



The Bermuda Triangle

maritime mystery stories, but do the facts hold up? Some have come under criticism for ignoring logical explanations, and human error. According to the US Coast Guard, there is no other part of the ocean. Moreover, Gaddis, as some of his critics have pointed out, is his book deal (*Invisible Horizons*, 1965)? Or, is the Bermuda Triangle?

THE GHOST SHIP LADY LOVIBOND

The *Lady Lovibond* is notoriously superstitious, and no one had any feelings about the *Lady Lovibond* setting sail on the night of February 13th, 1748, with several women on board. The captain, Simon Reed, and his new wife were set out on their honeymoon tour. A friend of the captain's, John Rivers, was also onboard. He was in love with Annette, and his mother later said she wanted to get revenge on Simon Reed. Some versions of this story say that Rivers took the helm of the ship into the Goodwin Sand, a quicksand.

What happened to those aboard. Fifty years after the *Lady Lovibond* were recorded. In 1798, it was able to make a quick course and heard sounds of merriment and the *Lady Lovibond* crash, but the rescue teams. Since then, sightings have been reported. Is this a case of ghost ship? Or is this a case of

Students read an article about ten maritime mysteries

CREATIVE WRITING: Flash Fiction

Flash Fiction is a very short story that still has plot, character development, and conflict. Since you don't have pages and chapters to develop your ideas, it can be challenging to draw your audience into the story. The trick is to get right to the heart of what's important to the story you want to tell.

Write a piece of flash fiction (1 page, handwritten) based on one of the following prompts about maritime mysteries. Feel free to write in first person or create a main character.

STORY STARTS

1. Tell a tale about a fictional ship's disappearance. What do people say happened to it? What evidence was ever found (or not!)?
2. You're setting sail for the summer on a historic tall ship. Unfortunately, your ship runs into a sea monster! Write about your encounter.
3. There's a mysterious spot in the ocean, and no one can explain it! What happens when you travel there?

Brainstorming

It can be helpful to come up with ideas before you get started. Many flash fiction writers choose one element to focus on (plot, characters, conflict, theme, setting) as they write since space is limited. Fill out each of these boxes, but you don't have to use all of these ideas when you write – just choose the best ones!

Write a one-sentence summary of your story.

Write three adjectives to describe each of your characters.

CHARACTERS

BRAINSTORMING: The Best Idea Wins!

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WHAT STORY WILL YOU TELL?

STORY STARTS

1. Tell a tale about a fictional ship's disappearance. What do people say happened to it? What evidence was ever found (or not!)?

For each **Story Start**, imagine what you'd write about. Write down notes about your reactions and first ideas.

2. You're setting sail for the summer on a historic tall ship. Unfortunately, your ship runs into a sea monster! Write about your encounter.

They choose one place as the setting for a piece of Flash Fiction. Differentiate with a condensed version (left) or an expanded version (middle and right).

WORD WORK: Close Reading

CAPTIVATING

IN YOUR OWN WORDS

Why do people find the Yonaguni Monument captivating?
What is another place people may describe as "captivating," and why would they use this word?

When the author describes the Sarah Joe's movements as erratic, how does this word choice impact the mood of this section?

ERRATIC

IN YOUR OWN WORDS

According to the author, reputable scientists believe the Bermuda Triangle mystery. Give an example of another section in this article that cites a reputable scientist.

REPUTABLE

IN YOUR OWN WORDS

WORD WORK: Close Reading

UTOPIA

IN YOUR OWN WORDS

According to the article, people have been looking for the utopia of Atlantis for centuries. What do you think they hope to find?

How do you think the existence of a colossal squid in southern oceans could have inspired Norwegian tales?

COLOSSAL

IN YOUR OWN WORDS

YELLOW JOURNALISM

IN YOUR OWN WORDS

What are some modern examples of yellow journalism?

Includes a vocabulary in context activity!
Also includes a Teacher's Guide and sample writing.