



APEX ENGLISH

Your voice. Global.

C1 · GENERAL ENGLISH

UNIT 4 · 4B

The great unknown

Theme · Media & Mystery



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The great unknown

Theme: Media & Mystery

Learning objectives

- Expand C1 vocabulary related to **mystery, evidence & the unexplained**.
- Use **speculation and deduction** accurately and idiomatically.
- Read a discursive text and discuss inferences beyond the literal.
- Speak fluently on the unit's theme with a partner or in a small group.

This booklet accompanies the digital lesson at

alunos.apexenglish.com.br/general-c1/4b. Interactive audio, video and drag-and-drop tasks live online; use this booklet in class and to review.

Ask the teacher — notes to bring to class



Class Book

Warm-up

In pairs, talk for about a minute on each prompt before feedback:

- 1 What comes to mind when you hear the theme **"Media & Mystery"**?
- 2 How comfortable are you using vocabulary about **mystery, evidence & the unexplained**? Give one recent example.
- 3 When did you last use — or misuse — **speculation and deduction**?

Reading

The comfort of a bad explanation

Every year, tens of thousands of adults are reported missing in wealthy countries. Nearly all of them come home within a week — embarrassed, tired, or simply out of range. But every year, a small percentage does not. Those cases become what investigators call "long-term unresolved" — cold, silent files that keep detectives and, curiously, the public up at night.

The strange thing about these unresolved cases is not their number, which is small, but the size of the space they occupy in the imagination. We invent scenarios for them. We whisper about affairs, debts, family secrets. We reach, almost immediately, for a bad explanation — because a bad explanation, cognitive scientists say, is easier for the mind to hold than no explanation at all.

Detectives who work these cases talk, again and again, about the discipline of not doing that. "The best investigator I ever worked with," one veteran said, "was a woman who could hold five theories in her head at once and refuse to marry the first one that felt satisfying." Cases collapse, she added, when a team falls in love with a hunch — because from that moment, every piece of new evidence gets bent to fit it.

Memory and cognitive researchers are now studying that same reflex in the rest of us. When we are told that something is unknown, our brains, quite quickly, generate an explanation and start defending it. This is not a moral failing. It is how the mind manages uncertainty. It is also, as any experienced detective will tell you, the fastest way to be wrong.

The practical takeaway is small and slightly uncomfortable. When we say we hate not knowing, what we really hate is the effort of leaving a gap unfilled. And that effort — the ability to sit with "I don't know" — is, perhaps counterintuitively, the beginning of clear thinking. Not only about missing persons. About more or less everything.

Comprehension — choose the best answer.

Ask the teacher — notes to bring to class



1. The writer's opening point about missing-person cases is that:
 - (A) their number is enormous
 - (B) their number is small but their imaginative weight is large
 - (C) most are never resolved
 - (D) detectives find them uninteresting
2. 'A bad explanation is easier for the mind to hold than no explanation at all' means:
 - (A) we prefer negative outcomes
 - (B) we prefer any narrative to a gap
 - (C) we distrust official accounts
 - (D) we forget quickly
3. According to the veteran detective, cases 'collapse' when:
 - (A) there are too many suspects
 - (B) the team falls in love with an early hunch
 - (C) there is no forensic evidence
 - (D) the media gets involved
4. Cognitive researchers claim the same reflex applies to:
 - (A) only trained detectives
 - (B) everyone facing uncertainty
 - (C) witnesses under stress
 - (D) elderly readers only
5. The writer describes generating a premature explanation as:
 - (A) a moral failing
 - (B) a professional lapse
 - (C) a normal way the mind manages uncertainty
 - (D) a rare event
6. The writer's practical takeaway is that:
 - (A) most mysteries are never solved
 - (B) we should trust our first hunch
 - (C) sitting with 'I don't know' is the beginning of clear thinking
 - (D) we should stop reading about unsolved cases

Ask the teacher — notes to bring to class



Vocabulary

Focus: *mystery, evidence & the unexplained*

Study these C1 items and their meanings.

a lead — a piece of information that might help solve a case

a hunch — a strong feeling about something, without hard evidence

a cover-up — a deliberate attempt to hide the truth

a red herring — a misleading clue that distracts from the real explanation

circumstantial evidence — evidence that suggests but does not prove

a plausible explanation — one that sounds reasonable and could well be true

an alibi — proof that a person was somewhere else at the time

to piece together — to gradually reconstruct a story from separate clues

Ask the teacher — notes to bring to class



Grammar

Focus: ***speculation and deduction***

Study the online lesson notes, then complete the interactive tasks at **alunos.apexenglish.com.br/general-c1/4b**.

Ask the teacher — notes to bring to class



Speaking

- 1 Tell a partner about a personal experience connected to **media & mystery**. Aim for at least two minutes without pausing.
- 2 Compare cultures or generations on this topic. Use at least three items from the *mystery, evidence & the unexplained* list.
- 3 Discuss: *Is it possible to be objective about media & mystery?* Justify your view.

Writing

Write 220–260 words on: **“Media & Mystery — what has changed in the last twenty years?”** Use at least four items from the vocabulary list and one structure from the grammar focus (*speculation and deduction*).

Ask the teacher — notes to bring to class



Workbook

Home practice

Complete on your own; check answers in class.

1. Her coat is still on the chair — she _____ far.
(A) can't have gone
(B) must have gone
(C) should have gone
(D) might not have gone
2. The car engine is still warm — someone _____ it in the last hour.
(A) can't have driven
(B) must have driven
(C) shouldn't have driven
(D) may not have driven
3. He didn't answer — he _____ his phone in the other room.
(A) can't have left
(B) must have left
(C) may well have left
(D) shouldn't have left
4. The messages were never read — she _____ them.
(A) must have seen
(B) can't have seen
(C) should have seen
(D) might well have seen
5. There _____ a perfectly ordinary reason — there always is.
(A) may well be
(B) can't be
(C) must not be
(D) shouldn't be
6. Nobody heard the door — she _____ very quietly.
(A) must have come in
(B) can't have come in
(C) shouldn't have come in
(D) wouldn't have come in

Ask the teacher — notes to bring to class

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Workbook · 4B. The great unknown

Home practice · speculation, deduction & mystery vocabulary · answer key included



Class Book

Full lesson · in-class material



Workbook

Home practice · with answer key

GRAMMAR

1 · Speculation & deduction — choose the correct option

10 min

1. Her coat is still on the chair — she _____ far.

a. can't have gone ✓

b. must have gone

c. should have gone

d. might not have gone

2. The car engine is still warm — someone _____ it in the last hour.

a. can't have driven

b. must have driven ✓

c. shouldn't have driven

d. may not have driven

3. He didn't answer — he _____ his phone in the other room.

a. can't have left

b. must have left

c. may well have left ✓

d. shouldn't have left

4. The messages were never read — she _____ them.

a. must have seen

b. can't have seen ✓

c. should have seen

d. might well have seen

5. There _____ a perfectly ordinary reason — there always is.

a. may well be ✓

b. can't be

c. must not be

d. shouldn't be

6. Nobody heard the door — she _____ very quietly.

a. must have come in ✓

b. can't have come in

c. shouldn't have come in

d. wouldn't have come in

Score: 6 / 6

Try again

VOCABULARY

2 · Complete with a word from the mystery bank

10 min

WORD BANK — DRAG OR TAP, THEN TAP A GAP

lead

hunch

red herring

alibi

cover-up

circumstantial

1. The evidence was strong but entirely **circumstantial** **circumstantial** — no one saw him at the scene.
2. That anonymous letter turned out to be a **red herring** **red herring** — it wasted three weeks of work.
3. She had a strong **hunch** **hunch** that the answer lay closer to home.
4. A retired colleague gave them their first fresh **lead** **lead** in six months.
5. The internal memo made it clear this was a **cover-up** **cover-up** from day one.
6. He had a solid **alibi** **alibi** — he was on a flight, in the air, at the time.

Score: 6 / 6

Try again

GRAMMAR

10 min

3 · Rewrite using the modal in brackets

1. *I'm confident she went out. (Rewrite with must have)*

Hide answer

She must have gone out.

2. *It's impossible that he heard the message. (Rewrite with can't have)*

Hide answer

He can't have heard the message.

3. *There is a strong probability that she took the call inside. (Rewrite with may well have)*

Hide answer

She may well have taken the call inside.

4. *It's theoretically possible that he simply forgot. (Rewrite with could have)*

Hide answer

He could have simply forgotten.

5. *I strongly suspect there is a mundane explanation. (Rewrite with there must be)*

Hide answer

There must be a mundane explanation.

VOCABULARY +

8 min

4 · Investigative collocations

DRAG THE MEANING ONTO THE WORD

Reset

to eliminate someone from the enquiry

to publicly reveal wrongdoing that was hidden

to investigate a promising piece of information

to gradually reconstruct a story from separate clues

to take a decision on a feeling rather than firm evidence

to follow a lead

to investigate a promising piece of information

Hide answer

to investigate a promising piece of information

to rule out a suspect

to eliminate someone from the enquiry

Hide answer

to eliminate someone from the enquiry

to act on a hunch

to take a decision on a feeling rather than firm evidence

Hide answer

to take a decision on a feeling rather than firm evidence

to blow the whistle on

to publicly reveal wrongdoing that was hidden

Hide answer

to publicly reveal wrongdoing that was hidden

to piece something together

to gradually
reconstruct a
story from
separate clues

Hide answer

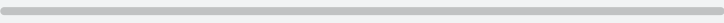
to gradually reconstruct a story
from separate clues

LISTENING

10 min

5 · Voice message · The figure on the path

Listen to a voice message someone leaves a friend after walking home late at night.

▶ 0:00 / 0:00   

1. Where and when does the incident happen?

Hide answer

On the path behind his building, near the canal, at about eleven at night.

2. What two ordinary explanations does he consider?

Hide answer

Someone waiting for a friend, or a delivery guy who had got lost.

3. What single detail makes him reject both?

Hide answer

He walked past twice and the figure was still there, in the same spot, in the same posture, twenty minutes later.

4. What modal-perfect structures does he use to speculate?

Hide answer

'It could have been someone waiting...', 'It might have been a delivery guy...',
'It can't have been either...', 'It might well have been nothing at all', 'There
must be a completely boring reason'.

WRITING

6 · A short first-person account (170–200 words)

22 min

Write a first-person account of a small mystery in your own week — something that *almost* had an ordinary explanation, but not quite. Use at least four modal perfects and at least four items of mystery vocabulary. End honestly unresolved — do not invent a tidy conclusion.

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