

Unexplained Disappearances in the Bermuda Triangle

VOCABULARY WORDS

1. Supernatural (Adjective) /ˌsuːpərˈnætʃrəl/ believed to be caused by a force beyond scientific understanding or the laws of nature
Example: A shapeshifter is an example of a supernatural being.
2. Alien (Noun) /ˈæliən/ a creature from another planet
Example: E.T. is my favorite movie about an alien.
3. Navigator (Noun) /ˈnævɪgeɪtər/ someone whose job is to plan and direct the route of a person or vehicle
Example: He is very good in directions and became the ship's navigator.
4. Magnetic (Adjective) /mægˈnetɪk/ relating to, showing or capable of being attracted by magnetism
Example: The Earth's magnetic core keeps us gravitated towards it.
5. Compass (Noun) /ˈkʌmpəs/ an instrument that uses magnets to show direction
Example: We need to bring a compass on our camping trip.



On December 5, 1945, five US Navy planes left Fort Lauderdale, Florida. Shortly afterward, they disappeared forever. It was sunny when the group, known as Flight 19, left on a training activity. The leader, Charles Carroll Taylor, was an experienced pilot.

What happened on December 5, 1945?

But as the group turned north almost two hours into the flight, the flight tower in Fort Lauderdale received a message from Taylor saying he couldn't see land. Less than an hour later

came the last words ever heard from Flight 19: "We're completely lost." Then, one of two planes sent to find the group also disappeared.

What were the last words heard from Flight 19?

Were they ever found?

Although stories of strange activity in the region date back to Christopher Columbus, the disappearance of Flight 19 led the area to be dubbed the "Bermuda Triangle" — a triangle in the North Atlantic roughly between Bermuda, Puerto Rico and Miami, Florida. It's believed that about 50 ships and 20 planes have disappeared there.

How many ships and planes have been lost in this area?

People have thought of all sorts of theories to explain the disappearances, including supernatural activity, aliens, sea monsters and more. A more realistic theory is that navigators got confused by the way magnetic compasses worked there. A compass usually points to magnetic north. But true north — the geographic north pole — is actually up to 1,000 kilometers away.

What's a more realistic theory that people have thought of regarding the disappearance of people?

The Bermuda Triangle used to be along one of the rare lines where a magnetic compass points to true north. Navigators who didn't know this could easily get lost. However, magnetic north moves about 55 kilometers each year, and this line is now in the middle of the Gulf of Mexico.

What is quite unusual about magnetic north?

Another explanation for the Bermuda Triangle's lost ships and planes is the Gulf Stream, a strong ocean current that can cause unpredictable storms and giant waves, and which also flows through the area.

What could be another reason for the disappearances in the Bermuda Triangle?

DISCUSSION

1. Have you ever gotten lost while traveling?
2. What are the worst weather conditions you've traveled in?
3. Have you spent much time in or around the ocean?
4. What parts of the world would you most like to sail around?
5. Would you rather be a pilot or sailor?