

DIRECTION: Read “Why Do People Believe in Ghosts?” and complete the following activities.

1. Choose any TWO of the following to answer (a-d). As an informational text, explain why the article includes the following features:
 - a. the discussion of the image captured by the author on her mobile phone (occurring at the beginning and the end of the text)
 - b. the discussion of the Hungry Ghost Festival on pages 2
 - c. the discussion of sleep paralysis on pages 3
 - d. the discussion of the human tendency to look for patterns on pages 3-4

Example answer to a task of this type:

- e. the discussion of haunted house tours in the U.K. and the U.S. **[This is for example purposes only; do not write an answer to this one.]**

In discussing the popularity of haunted house tours, the author is trying to measure the size of the interest in paranormal activities. In contrast to staged haunted houses (with masked performers and special effects), these tours are of places that some people believe to actually be inhabited by spirits. That people are willing to pay money to visit such places (or even spend the night in a supposedly real haunted houses) demonstrates how high the interest is in the spirit world, the topic of the paragraph in which this detail appears. If people are willing to spend time and money to do these sorts of things, it only makes sense that people are curious about the possibility of real ghosts. In this way, it is evidence for the claim.

- Sets up the topic
- Is easy to follow
- Doesn't assume the reader already knows the answer
- Actually explains something

NOT

Haunted houses are popular. This shows ghosts are popular. ← Explains nothing

2. Assuming that the images of ghostly people in cell phone pictures are not, in fact, ghosts: give an explanation for why people might think that they are using *just* the information in the article. Because this is an informational text, your evidence should be in the form of paraphrase (summary), not quotations. This should be a paragraph in length.
3. In paragraph form, choose ONE of the following tasks:
 - a. Describe a “ghostly” experience that you’ve experienced or heard about and give a non-ghostly explanation for the (seemingly) supernatural event. The rational explanation should be just as developed as the description of the event.
 - b. Describe a belief about the possibility of life after death and give a non-supernatural explanation for why people might believe in such ideas. The explanation of the reason for belief should be just as developed as the description of the belief.
 - c. Though less than a majority of Americans actually believe in ghosts, stories about ghosts in books, television, and movies are incredibly popular in this country. Describe a specific example of some type of ghost story and explain why it might still appeal to someone who

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does not believe in ghosts. The explanation of the why someone might like your example should be just as developed as the description of the example.

Example answer to 4a:

Once I experienced an unusual experience a few weeks after my first dog died. It was getting close to morning, and I was drifting in and out of sleep. Though I was still half dreaming, I gradually became aware that something else was in the room with me, and I thought I heard the familiar jangle of the identification tags on my deceased dog's collar. Suddenly, I felt a change in tension in the mattress springs as something jumped onto the bed, moving closer to my body. By this time I was almost fully awake, but I couldn't move, and I couldn't open my eyes. Instead I could only listen and feel as the presence inched closer to my legs, a presence that could only be my dog-- though of course no such thing should have been possible. This was extremely frightening to me, not only because I couldn't force myself to sit up (or even look at what was at the foot of the bed), but also because I was conscious enough to recognize that my dog couldn't possibly be there-- at least, not in the flesh. Eventually I gained enough presence of mind to force myself to sit up and open my eyes. Nothing was there, and except for myself, the room was completely empty.

Obviously, the paranormal explanation is that my dog was returning one last time to say good bye to me, perhaps even to comfort me in my loss. I'm not superstitious, though, so I did some research and learned about sleep paralysis and how sometimes if someone is awakened in REM sleep, not only can he or she not move, but he or she can even hallucinate. This aligns with my experience. The loss of my pet was a hugely traumatic experience for me, so it makes sense that my unconscious mind would want her to be with me again. Therefore, the idea that I would dream about her would only be natural. However, because I woke during this dream, my mind was playing tricks on me, confusing the dream world and the real world in a way that made it seem like a spirit was there with me. The reality, though, was almost certainly that my experience was grounded in the random firing of neurons within my brain-- not the return of a dead animal to the world of the living.