

Worksheet 2

Urban Myths

Mythical Cryptids

'What is a myth? It is a story that pretends to be real, but is in fact unbelievable. Like many urban myths it has been passed around (usually by word of mouth), acquiring variations and embellishments as it goes. It is a close cousin of the tall tale. There are mythical stories about almost any aspect of life.'

What do we get when urban myths meet the animal kingdom? We find a branch of pseudoscience called cryptozoology. Cryptozoology refers to the study of and search for creatures whose existence has not been proven. These creatures (or cryptids as they are known) appear in myths and legends or alleged sightings. Some examples include: **sea serpents, phantom cats, unicorns, bunyips, giant anacondas, yowies** and **thunderbirds**. Some have even been given actual names you may have heard of – do **Yeti, Owlman, Mothman, Cyclops, Bigfoot** and the **Loch Ness Monster** sound familiar?

Task 1: Choose one of the cryptids from the list above (or perhaps one that you may already know of) and write an informative text identifying the following aspects of this mythical creature:

◇ *Description*

◇ *Features*

◇ *Location*

◇ *First Sighting*

◇ *Subsequent Sightings*

◇ *Interesting Facts (e.g. how is it used in popular culture?
Has it been featured in written or visual texts?)*

Task 2: Cryptozoologists claim there have been cases where species now accepted by the scientific community were initially considered urban myths. Can you locate any examples of creatures whose existence has now been proven but formerly thought to be cryptids?

Extension Activities:

- Cryptozoology is called a 'pseudoscience' because it relies solely on anecdotes and reported sightings rather than actual evidence. This makes it, therefore, not a recognised branch of zoology or even a discipline of science. Write an argument text in response to the topic: Cryptozoology should be considered a recognised branch of zoology.
- Write an imaginary text about coming into contact with a cryptid of your choice. The story can be written via a first person narrative voice (told from the main character's point of view) or third person narrative voice (told by a narrator).