



Yeti - Fact or Fiction?

1 For thousands of years, tales have been told about a mysterious creature that prowls the Himalayan Mountains. Known as the Yeti, or Abominable Snowman, its existence has been hotly debated over the last century. Debates about the existence of the Yeti falls into two groups. Some people argue there is something wandering around the Himalayas, but they cannot agree on what it is. Others argue that there is nothing at all like the Yeti

in the Himalayas — it is either an illusion or a hoax.

2 Himalayan legends, especially amongst the Sherpa people of Nepal, describe the Yeti as a large, hairy ape-like animal. It has human-shaped hands, large teeth, a pointy head and long arms. The Yeti walks upright, standing on two legs. It is believed to be bad luck if you cross paths with a Yeti. The legendary

Yeti has amazing strength, being able to throw boulders around the mountains as if they were pebbles. Legends tell how the Yeti kidnaps naughty children, hiding them in the Himalayas.

- 3 Other people believe the Yeti exists, but believe it is some type of animal, such as an ape or a bear. Millions of years ago, a giant species of ape lived around China, India and Vietnam. While these giant apes became extinct at least one hundred thousand years ago, there is a theory that a small family of them may have survived high in the Himalayas. Here they became known as the Yeti.
- 4 However, the Himalayas have the highest mountains in the world, and the upper peaks, where the Yeti is supposed to live, are too cold for apes. An animal, such as a bear, would have a better chance of living up there. This is why there is another theory that the Yeti is actually the rare Tibetan Blue Bear. Only a few people have ever seen this creature. The name Yeti actually comes from the Tibetan words 'yeh' and 'teh', which mean 'rock bear'.
- 5 But, there is also a very good chance that the Yeti does not exist at all. Over the last two hundred years a number of Western explorers have travelled through the Himalayas. This has led to varying reports about the Yeti, ranging from sightings, discovery of Yeti tracks and Yeti body parts.
- 6 One reported Yeti sighting happened in 1970, when the British mountaineer, Don Whillans, was climbing Mount Annapurna. He'd set up camp for the night when he heard strange yowling sounds. His guides told him these

were the cries of the Yeti. The next night, Whillans was woken up by a large, dark figure moving near his tent. He watched it for about twenty minutes before the creature vanished from sight.

- 7 This could be considered proof of the Yeti's existence, but there is also the chance this might not have happened at all. Annapurna is a very high mountain, with its lowest peak standing at 7219 m above sea level. There is little oxygen in the air at this height, making it difficult to breathe. Even worse, once a person is higher than 2100 m, it is harder for blood to carry oxygen into the brain. A lack of oxygen in the brain can cause people to see and hear things that aren't there. Maybe this is why the Yeti is only seen high up in the mountains.
- 8 It is more difficult to imagine footprints, however. The Yeti, being a large creature, would have big, heavy feet that would leave deep tracks when walking through soft snow. In 1951, two British mountaineers discovered prints that were 33 cm long and almost as wide. One of the mountaineers, Eric Shipton, took a famous photo of these tracks to prove the Yeti existed.
- 9 Proof at last? Perhaps not. Large footprints, such as those in the Shipton photo, can form through a process called 'freeze thaw'. A much smaller bear or mountain goat will leave a footprint in the snow, which will melt wider and deeper during the day. At night the cold mountain temperatures cause the hole to freeze again. This makes the footprint grow larger and change shape, so it doesn't look at all like the foot of the animal that made it.

10 In 1960, the famous mountaineer, Sir Edmund Hillary, led an expedition to learn about the existence of the Yeti. Monks in the Nepalese village of Khumjung gave Hillary a strange, half-cone object. They told him this was part of a Yeti's scalp. He also found a large, withered hand that looked very much like a human's. Called the Pangboche Hand, this was believed to have come from a Yeti.

11 Scientists have studied these and other body parts. In all cases the objects have come from either bears or goats. However, parasites found on some 'Yeti' skins are different to the sorts of bugs normally found on goats. Also, there are reports that an American explorer, Peter Byrne, swapped the real bones in the

Pangboche Hand in 1957 and the bones Hillary found were fake ones left there by Byrne.

12 Do you think there is enough evidence to prove the Yeti's existence? It is hard to believe that a legendary creature is leaving footprints in the Himalayas, but there may still be something unknown out there. The idea that there is an endangered species of bear, ape or goat, hiding high in the Himalayas is a more logical explanation.



Questions

- What don't the Sherpa people believe about the Yeti?
 - The Yeti has human-shaped hands.
 - It is good luck if the Yeti crosses your path.
 - The Yeti hides children in the Himalayas.
- Yeti comes from the Tibetan words for
 - blue bear.
 - big ape.
 - rock bear.
- Why might Don Whillans have not seen the Yeti?
 - He had a lack of oxygen to his brain.
 - He wasn't high enough in the mountains.
 - He had too much oxygen in his blood.
- Where did Hillary acquire the Yeti's scalp?
 - Pangboche
 - Annapurna
 - Khumjung
- 'Freeze thaw' is when
 - an animal makes a footprint in the snow.
 - snow melts during the day and freezes again at night.
 - deep tracks are left in soft snow.
- Why do a lot of people not believe in the existence of the Yeti?
 - Not enough people have seen a Yeti.
 - It's impossible for animals to live that high in the mountains.
 - The Yeti is part of Sherpa folklore.

Vocabulary

Find words in the text that match the meanings below. The word is in the section shown in brackets.

- Moves around in search of prey (1)
- No longer existing (3)
- An idea (4)
- Evidence that shows something is true (7)
- To look old and dried up (10)

Grammar

Words that sound the same but have different meanings are called **homophones**. E.g. **to, too** and **two**. Write the correct **homophone** in these sentences from the text.

- Four/For** thousands of years, tales have been told.
- Here/Hear** they became known as the Yeti.
- There/Their** is also a very good chance that the Yeti does not exist.
- He **heard/herd** strange yowling sounds.

Back To The Text...

- The writer has tried to provide reasonable scientific arguments for each case.
 - true
 - false
- In section 7 "... this is why yetis are only seen high up in the mountains" is
 - fact
 - opinion

18 Key words are important words that help you understand the main ideas. Which of the following is a key word in section 8?
a more b tracks

Think About This

- Look at the illustration on the front of the card. Which of the following sections describes this scene?
a six b seven
c eight d nine
- Chronologically, what occurred first?
a Shipton took the 'footprint' photo.
b Whillans saw a creature near his tent.
c Byrne swapped the real Pangboche bones.
- The main idea in section 4 relates to
a ancient apes.
b rock bears.
c the Himalayas.
- The writer believes that
a the Yeti exists.
b most of the explorers lied.
c it is unlikely that the Yeti exists.
- The first time the writer offers any real evidence is in
a section 3. b section 4.
c section 5. d section 6.

Challenge Option

Research: Yetis are said to come from Asia. Where would we find bigfoot or a bunyip?

