

Listen to the recording and fill in the gaps

Sea monsters

Question: What animal is _____, has a big head, enormous eyes, _____ lion, a long neck, a body like a snake and lots of arms like an octopus?

But sailors have been telling stories about giant creatures of the sea _____. The monsters that sailors and fishermen describe _____ different but it's often an animal like a giant snake, at least 30 feet long, with an enormous _____. It sometimes actually attacks the ship. Some of these sea monsters _____ big pieces of seaweed or wood, but other stories are not so easy to explain. So what can these monsters be?

They could be sharks

There is an unusual type of shark that is shaped like an eel. It has a frill around its neck, which could look like a lion's mane. But the biggest one ever caught _____. Another type of shark, the 'basking shark', _____ feet in length. In the 1970s a Japanese fishing boat caught an enormous dead 'monster' with a long neck. Scientists tested some small pieces of the animal and discovered _____ basking shark. When these sharks die, parts of them rot very quickly, _____ a very strange shape. But this doesn't explain stories about _____, moving sea monsters.

They could be just very big snakes

The biggest snake in the world is the anaconda. One was found _____ measuring 35 feet, but there are no photographs _____. South American Indians tell stories of even bigger ones. The problem with this theory is that the anaconda is native to South America and _____.

They could be giant squid

This is an interesting theory. Scientists _____ giant squid really exists but we _____ because they live in deep, cold water. They can be up to 50 feet in length and have the biggest eyes in the animal kingdom – over one foot in diameter. (And there are reports of much bigger ones too.) They have a strong mouth like a bird's beak _____ steel cables, and five pairs of arms, or tentacles. One pair is longer and thinner and _____. People have seen giant squid attacking whales for _____. In the 1960s some Russian sailors reported watching _____ between a whale and a giant squid. Both animals died; the whale was found dead with the squid's arms _____, and the squid's head was found in the whale's stomach. There are also reports of giant squid attacking ships, maybe thinking that they were whales. So stories of giant sea snakes wrapped around ships _____ of a giant squid.

They could be giant octopuses

These creatures also exist – there _____ varieties _____ octopus _____ bodies _____ big _____ 23 feet around. _____ there _____ also stories _____ there _____ unknown variety _____ grows much, much bigger. An enormous animal was found dead and rotting _____ beach _____ Florida _____. Parts _____ seemed _____ huge arms over 30 feet long. Scientists tested _____ but couldn't agree whether it was a whale or an octopus. The giant octopus, has a strong mouth like the giant squid but only _____. They live at the bottom of the sea and use _____ arms to move around _____ rocks. This explains why we don't see _____ very often.

They could be ancient sea animals which have survived from the time of the dinosaurs.

We know that strange animals lived in the sea during pre-historic times, and many of them were very big indeed. They didn't look like fish and they had _____ surface of the water to breathe _____. Perhaps, when the dinosaurs _____, these sea creatures survived and _____ oceans ever since.

Is that possible?

Well, _____. In 1938 a strange fish was caught in the Indian Ocean. Scientists eventually identified it as a coelacanth (pronounced 'seel-a-kanth'), which everyone _____ had died out over 70 million years ago. And another type of coelacanth was found in the 1990s in _____ Asia.

So, do any of these explanations convince you? Or do you think that deep down at the bottom of the sea, where _____ explored, there are strange creatures that are still completely _____?

Listen again and answer the following questions (TRUE = T / FALSE = F / NOT GIVEN = NG)

1. **T/F/NG?** The common description of a sea monster given by fishermen is that of a giant snake
2. **T/F/NG?** These monsters can turn themselves into big pieces of wood
3. An eel is: a. a snakelike fish b. a birdlike creature c. a lion-like creature
4. Which word defines “*long coarse hair growing from the crest of the animal's neck*”?
5. **T/F/NG?** Basking sharks decompose very quickly and only fragments can be found
6. **T/F/NG?** the biggest anaconda was found in the 1940s
7. **T/F/NG?** The anaconda can't survive outside South America
8. **T/F/NG?** Not all scientists agree that the giant squid really exists
9. **T/F/NG?** Squids have eyes that can reach a maximum of 50 feet in diameter
10. **T/F/NG?** Giant squids have 10 arms
11. **T/F/NG?** Giant squids prefer to attack ships rather than whales
12. **T/F/NG?** A dead giant octopus was found in Florida in the 1890s
13. **T/F/NG?** A giant octopus has four pairs of arms
14. The word “*eventually*” means:
a. after some time b. quite quickly c. by chance d. actually