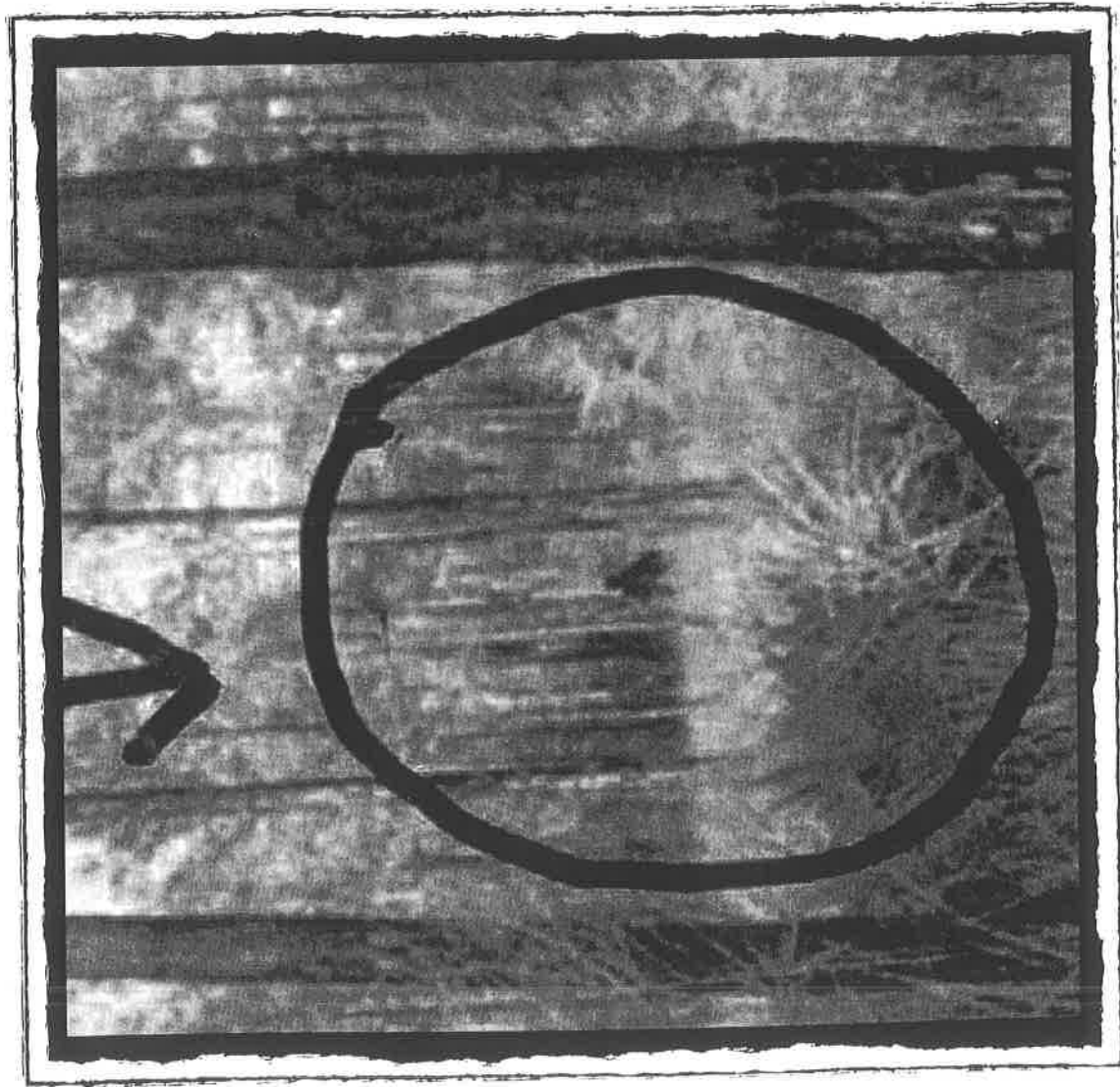


THE FLORIDA SKUNK APE

It was a cool February night in 1970. H. C. "Buz" Osborn and four companions were sleeping peacefully in their tents. They were all worn out after a day spent studying a Native American burial ground in southern Florida. Suddenly, at 3 A.M., a noise woke them. Looking up, they saw a strange eight-foot creature standing just outside the flap doors of their tents. It was covered with hair and, according to one of the men, "smelled awful." But the creature did not harm the men, and soon it disappeared into the dark night.

² In the morning, the campers found five-toed footprints around their tent. The prints were 17½ inches long and 11 inches wide. They must have been made by the massive creature the men had seen the night before. Osborn was a no-nonsense kind of guy. An engineer and amateur archaeologist, he had never believed in the Florida legend about a Skunk Ape living in the remote regions of the Everglades. But, Osborn said, the visitor early that morning and the prints it left behind "made a believer out of me."

The Skunk Ape is Florida's version of Big Foot, or Sasquatch. The arrow points to a figure in the circle that many say proves the Skunk Ape exists. Others believe that it's only a man in a gorilla suit.



³ Osborn and his friends haven't been the only people to notice this odd creature. Since the 1920s, there have been numerous sightings of the so-called Florida Skunk Ape. The descriptions all fit a similar pattern. The Skunk Ape has been reported to be seven or eight feet tall. Most eyewitnesses have guessed that it weighs at least 300 pounds. They agree that its body is covered with black or brown hair. And they all say that the Skunk Ape has a truly offensive odor. It smells like a mixture of rotten eggs, moldy cheese, and goat dung. According to an old legend, it smells this way because it spends most of its time hiding in muddy abandoned alligator caves. It is this stench that gives the creature its name.

⁴ Similar broad-shouldered, hulking humanoids have been seen in many other parts of the world. There is a hairy fellow named Bigfoot who allegedly roams the high mountains of California. Sasquatch has been sighted in the Pacific Northwest. Then there is the Abominable Snowman, or Yeti, who is said to live in the Himalayas.

⁵ Could the Florida Skunk Ape be a relative of these mysterious creatures? Could it have survived all these years in the Everglades? If it wanted to hide, of course, the vast swamp wouldn't be a bad

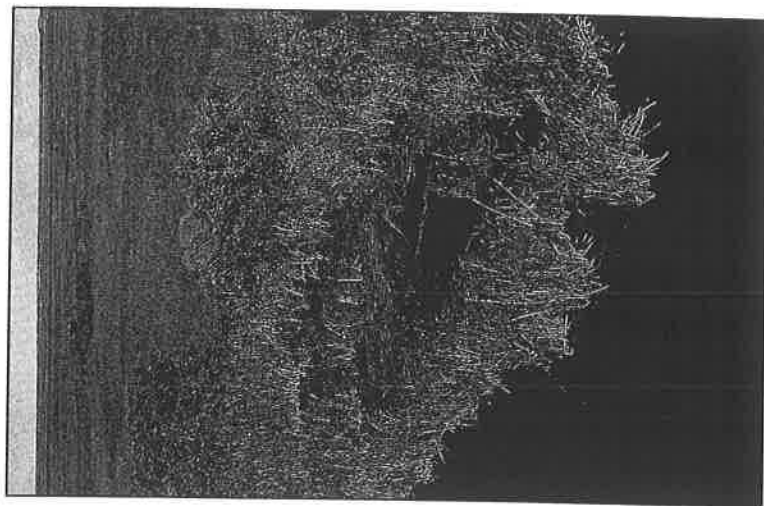
place to do it. Before the Civil War, runaway slaves sometimes found refuge in the Everglades. So, too, did the Seminole Indians during their war with the United States. Since the 1920s, however, the Everglades have been shrinking under the pressure of human development. Are there now more Skunk Ape sightings because this creature's habitat is getting smaller?

⁶ From all accounts, the Skunk Ape is a nice guy—for a monster. There are no reports that it has ever hurt anyone. In fact, it appears to be a vegetarian who likes beans. A popular story is that campers who leave a pot of lima beans outside their tent at night will wake up the next morning to find that the beans are gone.

⁷ Most sightings of the Florida Skunk Ape have occurred at night or from a considerable distance. Photographs of the creature usually show nothing more than a brown speck in the distant background. In 1997, Vince Doerr, the fire chief of Ochopee, a tiny hamlet in the Everglades, saw something run across a road. "I was riding along when, 800 feet ahead of me, a brown-looking tall thing ran across the road. It wasn't a bear—that's for sure. It ran into the woods." Before it did, however, Doerr took a photo. The print

was too vague to tell for sure what it was. "I think it was somebody playing a hoax," said the skeptical Doerr. "I don't know who it is. But this [Skunk Ape] legend has been around here for years."

⁸ Not everyone agrees that the Skunk Ape is a fake. David Shealy, a longtime



The Skunk Ape roams the swampy land of the Florida Everglades.

resident of the swamp, saw the Skunk Ape when he was a boy. "I believe that there's something out there," he said. "And it's been around for a long time, but it's been hidden." Shealy has studied the reports and photos of the Skunk Ape. "At first, I thought maybe it was an escaped gorilla. But from the photographs, it looks to be six to seven feet tall, and the tallest gorilla is only about five feet."

⁹ Perhaps, though, Vince Doerr is onto something. Perhaps the Skunk Ape is just a prankster in a gorilla suit. That explanation makes economic sense. A mysterious beast in the Everglades would be good for tourism. However Shealy, a gift shop owner, denies that he is part of a hoax. "This isn't about money. I'm just telling you what I saw and what other people saw."

¹⁰ Dow Roland, a tour guide in the Everglades, said that some of his customers started screaming when they spotted an odd creature. "It looked like Bigfoot or someone in a big gorilla suit," reported Roland. But he went on to point out a couple of flaws in the gorilla-suit theory. It is awfully hot in the Everglades. So why would anyone want to run around the swampy area wearing such a hot outfit? Besides, pulling off such a loony

stunt could be dangerous. The prankster could get shot.

¹¹ So the legend of the Skunk Ape lives on. Is it for real or just a ploy to draw in tourists? Everyone in the Everglades seems to have an opinion. But one thing is certain—someone in Florida is crazy. Is it all the people who insist that the Skunk Ape really exists? Is it all the people who refuse to accept the evidence that "proves" the Skunk Ape's existence? Or could the only crazy person be some nut running through the woods in a sweaty gorilla suit risking getting shot? ●

If you have been timed while reading this article, enter your reading time below. Then turn to the Words-per-Minute Table on page 133 and look up your reading speed (words per minute). Enter your reading speed on the graph on page 134.

Reading Time: Lesson 14

Minutes: _____

Seconds: _____

A Finding the Main Idea

One statement below expresses the main idea of the article. One statement is too general, or too broad. The other statement explains only part of the article; it is too narrow. Label the statements using the following key:

M—Main Idea B—Too Broad N—Too Narrow

- _____ 1. A mysterious creature known as the Skunk Ape is said to inhabit the Florida Everglades.
- _____ 2. People have reported seeing mysterious, hairy humanoids in many parts of the world.
- _____ 3. The Skunk Ape gets its name from its stench, which has been described as smelling like a mixture of rotten eggs, moldy cheese, and goat dung.

_____ Score 15 points for a correct M answer.
 _____ Score 5 points for each correct B or N answer.
 _____ Total Score: Finding the Main Idea

B Recalling Facts

How well do you remember the facts in the article? Put an X in the box next to the answer that correctly completes each statement about the article.

1. H. C. Osborn is
 - ☐ a. the fire chief of Ochopee.
 - ☐ b. a gift shop owner.
 - ☐ c. an amateur archaeologist.
2. According to legend, the Skunk Ape spends much of its time in
 - ☐ a. the Himalayas.
 - ☐ b. abandoned alligator caves.
 - ☐ c. swamp water.
3. In the past, the Everglades was a hiding place for
 - ☐ a. Yeti.
 - ☐ b. Sasquatch.
 - ☐ c. the Seminole Indians.
4. The Skunk Ape is especially fond of eating
 - ☐ a. lima beans.
 - ☐ b. meat.
 - ☐ c. humans.
5. Vince Doerr thinks that the Skunk Ape is
 - ☐ a. an escaped gorilla.
 - ☐ b. real.
 - ☐ c. a prankster in a gorilla suit.

Score 5 points for each correct answer.

_____ Total Score: Recalling Facts

C Making Inferences

When you combine your own experience and information from a text to draw a conclusion that is not directly stated in that text, you are making an inference. Below are five statements that may or may not be inferences based on information in the article. Label the statements using the following key:

C—Correct Inference F—Faulty Inference

- _____ 1. The Skunk Ape is a dangerous creature.
- _____ 2. The land area covered by the Everglades is smaller now than it was before the Civil War.
- _____ 3. The Skunk Ape would never eat a pot of beef stew left outside a tent overnight.
- _____ 4. Some people would like to shoot the Skunk Ape.
- _____ 5. No one in the Everglades believes that the Skunk Ape really exists.

Score 5 points for each correct answer.

_____ Total Score: Making Inferences

D Using Words Precisely

Each numbered sentence below contains an underlined word or phrase from the article. Following the sentence are three definitions. One definition is closest to the meaning of the underlined word. One definition is opposite or nearly opposite. Label those two definitions using the following key. Do not label the remaining definition.

C—Closest O—Opposite or Nearly Opposite

1. An engineer and amateur archaeologist, he had never believed in the Florida legend about a Skunk Ape living in the remote regions of the Everglades.
 - _____ a. professional
 - _____ b. former
 - _____ c. inexperienced
2. It is this stench that gives the creature its name.
 - _____ a. legend
 - _____ b. foul odor
 - _____ c. sweet perfume
3. Before the Civil War, runaway slaves sometimes found refuge in the Everglades.
 - _____ a. safe shelter
 - _____ b. a dangerous place
 - _____ c. employment
4. But he went on to point out a couple of flaws in the gorilla-suit theory.
 - _____ a. ideas
 - _____ b. perfect features
 - _____ c. defects

Author's Approach

Put an X in the box next to the correct answer.

- Choose the statement below that is the weakest argument for believing that the Skunk Ape is real.
 - ☐ a. Many people have seen the Skunk Ape.
 - ☐ b. If you put out lima beans, the Skunk Ape's favorite food, at night, they will be gone in the morning.
 - ☐ c. Some people have actually taken photographs of the Skunk Ape.
- What does the author imply by saying "A mysterious beast in the Everglades is good for tourism"?
 - ☐ a. The Skunk Ape is probably a tourist dressed up in a gorilla suit.
 - ☐ b. Fear of the Skunk Ape would prevent most people from visiting the Everglades.
 - ☐ c. People would come to the Everglades just to see the Skunk Ape.

3. Choose the statement below that best describes the author's position in paragraph 11.

- ☐ a. The author believes in the legend of the Skunk Ape.
- ☐ b. The author believes that everyone in the Everglades is crazy.
- ☐ c. The author is not sure whether the Skunk Ape exists or not.

4. The author tells this story mainly by

- ☐ a. describing various sightings and opinions about the Skunk Ape.
- ☐ b. expressing his own opinion about the Skunk Ape.
- ☐ c. retelling H. C. Osborn's experience with the Skunk Ape.

5. Besides, pulling off such a loony stunt could be dangerous.

- ☐ a. sensible
- ☐ b. crazy
- ☐ c. popular

_____ Score 3 points for each correct C answer.

_____ Score 2 points for each correct O answer.

_____ Total Score: Using Words Precisely

Enter the four total scores in the spaces below, and add them together to find your Reading Comprehension Score. Then record your score on the graph on page 135.

Lesson 14	
Score	Question Type
_____	Finding the Main Idea
_____	Recalling Facts
_____	Making Inferences
_____	Using Words Precisely
_____	Reading Comprehension Score

_____ Number of correct answers

Record your personal assessment of your work on the Critical Thinking Chart on page 136.

Summarizing and Paraphrasing

Follow the directions provided for questions 1 and 2. Put an X in the box next to the correct answer for question 3.

1. Look for the important ideas and events in paragraphs 1 and 2. Summarize those paragraphs in one or two sentences.
- _____
- _____
- _____

2. Complete the following one-sentence summary of the article using the lettered phrases from the phrase bank below. Write the letters on the lines.

Phrase Bank:

- Osborn's encounter with the creature
- opinions about whether or not the creature is a fake
- what the Skunk Ape looks, smells, and acts like

The article about the Skunk Ape begins with _____, goes on to explain _____, and ends with _____.

3. Choose the best one-sentence paraphrase for the following sentence from the article:

"A popular story is that campers who leave a pot of lima beans outside their tent at night will wake up the next morning to find that the beans are gone."

- ☐ Legend has it that a pot of lima beans left outside a tent at night will be empty the next morning.
- ☐ Legend has it that campers who leave a pot of lima beans outside their tent find that the tent is gone the next morning.
- ☐ Legend has it that campers who leave a pot of lima beans outside their tent are gone the next morning.

_____ Number of correct answers

Record your personal assessment of your work on the Critical Thinking Chart on page 136.

Critical Thinking

Put an X in the box next to the correct answer for questions 1, 2, and 4. Follow the directions provided for question 3.

- Which of the following statements from the article is an opinion rather than a fact?
 - ☐ "Before the Civil War, runaway slaves sometimes found refuge in the Everglades."
 - ☐ "But one thing is certain—someone in Florida is crazy."
 - ☐ "Since the 1920s, however, the Everglades have been shrinking under the pressure of human development."

2. From what the article told about the Skunk Ape, you can predict that it would

- ☐ a. try to kill anyone running around the Everglades in a gorilla suit.
☐ b. not hurt a camper in the Everglades.
☐ c. like to leave the Everglades and live in the Himalayas.

3. Choose from the letters below to correctly complete the following statement. Write the letters on the lines.

In the article, _____ and _____ are alike.

- a. Vince Doerr's opinion of the Skunk Ape
 b. David Shealy's opinion of the Skunk Ape
 c. H. C. Osborn's opinion of the Skunk Ape

4. What was the cause of the Skunk Ape's smell?

- ☐ a. It eats a lot of lima beans.
☐ b. It wears a gorilla suit.
☐ c. It hides in alligator caves.

Personal Response

I agree with the author because

Self-Assessment

I can't really understand how

CRITICAL THINKING

_____ Number of correct answers

Record your personal assessment of your work on the Critical Thinking Chart on page 136.