

15. Historical Cold Cases.



History is filled with unsolved mysteries. Historians are always searching for answers to events, people and places that contain **puzzles** about why they happened, who they are, or what they mean. Knowing everything is not possible. The **mysteries** that the past contains are always interesting, and solving these mysteries is the job of historians.

The Tarim Mummies

In the early 20th century, a group of European explorers was searching for treasures in Central Asia in an area that is part of **modern** day China. They discovered mummies in their searches, but these mummies contained a mystery. Unlike the **local** Chinese population with dark hair and short stature, these mummies were tall red heads with long noses more **associated** with European people. These mummies were not the remains of recent European travellers, but were over 3000 years old. Historians today still **argue** about the origin of these strangely European looking bodies in the heart of Asia.



Rongorongo



Easter Island is a **Polynesian** island in the south eastern Pacific Ocean and is one of the **remotest** inhabited places in the world. It is famous for its large statues called Moai, which stand guard across the Island. The statues were constructed by the **ancestors** of the Rapa Nui people who still live there today. The statues seem mysterious but the people who live on the island have an oral history that explains them. The real mystery of Easter Island is the examples of carved writing.



24 carved wooden tablets have been found on

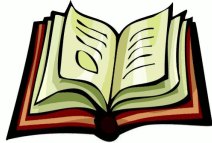
Easter Island. They contain a form of writing known as **glyphs**. To this day no-one knows what they say. The language is known as Rongorongo and remains a mystery.

Activities



Comprehension Questions

Before you start, define the terms in **bold**.



1. What is history filled with?
2. What are historians always searching for?
3. Where were the Tarim mummies found?
4. What is the mystery that surrounds them?
5. Where is Easter Island?
6. What is Easter Island most famous for?
7. What is the real mystery of Easter Island?

Thinking Questions

1. How do you think the people who became the Tarim mummies got to China, and why?
2. How do you think linguists and historians translate ancient texts?
3. Why are mysteries so interesting to historians?

