

Witch Panic (B2)

A - Before you start

Answer the questions with a partner.

1. Have you seen any films about witches or wizards?
2. If so, were the witches or wizards in them good or evil?
3. Do you believe some people have supernatural powers? Why (not)?
4. Do you know of any famous witch trials that took place in your country in past centuries?
5. If so, where? Who was involved? What happened to the so-called witches?

B – Listen and answer

Listen to the main article (without reading) and write T (true) or F (false) beside these statements.

1. The King James Bible was commissioned in 1611.
2. The *Malleus Maleficarum* was written by a Christian church minister.
3. King James thought witches had plotted to kill him.
4. He had read a book entitled *Daemonologie* and had been influenced by it.
5. This book was the basis for the witches (or Weird Sisters) in Shakespeare's tragedy *Macbeth*.
6. After James had become King of England as well as Scotland, witch panic increased.
7. In the 1640s, Matthew Hopkins, a witch-hunter, was officially named Witch-finder General.
8. He was responsible for the death of twenty-three women in his home town in 1644.

C – Read and answer

Read the main article and answer the questions.

1. What did the book *Malleus Maleficarum* contain?
2. What enabled the ideas contained in the *Malleus Maleficarum* to spread rapidly?
3. What made King James think that he was the victim of witches?
4. How was Agnes Sampson's confession obtained?
5. How, according to *Daemonologie*, did the devil act?
6. What real conspiracy endangered the life of King James?
7. What was the basis for Matthew Hopkins' witch hunt in the town of Manningtree, Essex?
8. How many women died following the accusations of Matthew Hopkins and his associates?

D – Listen to the interview (Optional)

N.B. This interview is graded as C1, so don't be discouraged if you find it difficult. Try to understand the main points.

Read these statements. Then listen to the interview with Ben Paites, without reading, and write T (true) or F (false).

1. Colchester Castle was used as a prison during the Essex witch trials.
2. The exhibition *Wicked Spirits* focuses less on the witch-hunters than on their victims.
3. The majority of people who were accused of witchcraft were found guilty.
4. Special tools were used to prick people to see if the devil protected them from pain.
5. During the Manningtree witch hunt, a mother escaped death by accusing her daughter.
6. Ben Paites says people are more likely to accuse one another in times of existing conflict.
7. Only a small number of men were accused of practising magic.
8. John Dee was put to death by Elizabeth I for practising alchemy and astrology.

E – Listen, read and check your answers

Listen to the interview while reading the text. (If you did Exercise D, check your answers while reading.)

F – Learn it! Use it!

Complete these sentences with words from the glossary. (You may have to adapt the expression in some way; e.g. change the verb tense or change from plural to singular.)

1. The _____ of that corrupt politician is taking place at the Central Criminal Court today.
2. When John cut his finger, it _____ for about ten minutes.
3. There was a wedding at the local church on Saturday. The _____ was the mayor's sister.
4. Don't _____ me! It wasn't me who broke your favourite cup.
5. Lisa's sure there'll be a Maths test on Friday. She _____ two teachers discussing it.
6. Our village has grown a lot and unfortunately many of its old customs are _____ .

G – Ready for the FIRST Certificate in English? (Reading and Use of English, Part 3)

Use the word in brackets to form a word that fits in the space given.

1. Witchcraft was considered to be heresy, therefore the _____ (PUNISH) was death.
2. It was thought that the Devil gave _____ (HARM) magical powers to certain people.
3. Many women were accused of witchcraft by Matthew Hopkins, a puritanical _____ (LAW).
4. He started his career as a witch-hunter during a time of religious _____ (HEAVE)
5. During the Essex witch trials, the suspects were _____ (PRISON) in Colchester Castle.
6. In the castle, the accused _____ (GO) torture, like pricking or sleep deprivation.
7. The _____ (FORTUNE) who were found guilty were hanged.
8. Some of the case studies included in the Colchester exhibition are _____ (TERROR).

H – Write about it

Write about an infamous figure in your country's history. Include:

- some biographical information;
- when/where he/she was active;
- what he/she did;
- who/what suffered as a result.

Answers

B – Listen and answer

1. F – It was commissioned in 1604 and published in 1611. 2. T 3. T 4. F – King James wrote *Daemonologie* himself. 5. T 6. T 7. F – He assumed the title. 8. F – He accused twenty-three women. Nineteen of these were convicted and hanged.

C – Read and answer

1. It contained a guide to witchcraft and it elevated witchcraft to the criminal status of heresy, which was punished by the death penalty. It also provided suggestions for the best ways to torture people in order to obtain a confession. 2. The invention of the printing press. 3. He had almost died in a storm while crossing the North Sea. 4. She was tortured. 5. By making pacts with people and giving them harmful magical powers. 6. The Gunpowder Plot of 1605, when a group of English Catholics tried to assassinate King James. 7. He claimed he had overheard some women discussing their meetings with the devil. 8. (Around) three hundred.

E – Listen, read and check your answers

1. T 2. T 3. F – The vast majority weren't found guilty. 4. F – They used ordinary tools, like needles. 5. F – A daughter escaped death by accusing her mother. 6. T 7. T 8. F – Under Elizabeth I, he was allowed to go around saying he was using magic. James I sent him away, but he was not put to death.

F – Learn it! Use it!

1. trial 2. bled 3. bride 4. blame 5. overheard 6. dying out.

G – Ready for the FIRST Certificate in English?

1. punishment 2. harmful 3. lawyer 4. upheaval 5. imprisoned 6. underwent
7. unfortunate(s) 8. terrifying/terrible