



1. What is a “Conspiracy Theory”?
2. How many famous conspiracy theories can you name?





Fundamental British Values: Respect and Tolerance

21/10/2020

Today's Title:

What happened at Roswell?

Previous lesson:

Are we alone?

This lesson:

What happened at Roswell?

Next lesson:

What is the evidence?

Learning Outcomes:

- **Describe** the events of the Roswell Incident
- **Investigate** the relevant context.
- **Make an early judgement** on what this investigation teaches you about the incident.

Key Words:

Conspiracy Theory = an idea that rejects the widely accepted explanation of an event.

Cover-up = When an organisation tries to hide the truth of an event.

Why do
governments
hide things
from people?

Your Task

Read through the Roswell information sheet and fill in the gaps using the words at the bottom.



EXTENSION: What **other words** could fit in the gaps?

Try to think of 5 synonyms that you could replace some of the words with and write them in a different colour.

The most famous UFO case happened in 1947 in Roswell, New Mexico. On July 4, many people from the town saw a large bright object fall from the sky and crash. A local rancher found pieces of metal from the crash site. He noticed the pieces did not bend or break. He found other unusual things too. He saw strange markings and symbols on some pieces. He called the police and the United States Army came to the crash site.

On July 8, the United States Army told newspapers that it had found a “flying disc” in the area. Later that day, the army changed its story. It now said the object they found was actually a weather balloon. The army showed some of the pieces from the crash site to photographers. They looked like regular balloon pieces. However, some people who had visited the crash site said that these were not the same as what they had found there. This caused people to wonder if the military was lying about finding a UFO.

For the next week, the army cleaned up the crash site. It would not allow people to visit or see it. No one could get near the crash site. People who worked at the local military base said they saw some very strange things during this time. Some of them say they saw alien bodies taken to the base. Along with the dead aliens, they also saw the wreckage of a crashed alien spacecraft. However, the United States military has always insisted that the events near Roswell in 1947 had nothing to do with aliens or spacecraft.

In a 1997 survey, more than half of Americans said they believed an alien spacecraft crashed in Roswell. They also said the American military had lied and was trying to cover up the UFO crash. What really happened on July 4, 1947 in Roswell, New Mexico? No one seems to really know.

Our investigation

Historians can think of themselves as “historical detectives”. We look at evidence and try to come up with the most reasonable explanation of what actually happened.

Over the next few lessons we are going to conduct a thorough investigation of the “Roswell incident”. We are going to examine evidence, look at sources and try and decide what really happened at Roswell in 1947.

The first part of our investigation is getting a good understanding of the timeline.

Read through the passage describing the events of Roswell and fill in the boxes with explanations of what happened on each day.

CHALLENGE: What evidence do you already have to support or challenge the idea that it was actually an alien UFO?

June 14th 1947 – Farmer Mack Brazel notices a strange wreckage in one of his fields 30 miles north of Roswell.

July 4th 1947 –

July 6th 1947 –

July 7th 1947 –

July 8th 1947 –

July 8th 1947 –

July 9th 1947 –

1980 –

1991 –

1994 –

What happened in Roswell in 1947?

On June 14th, 1947, farmer Mack Brazel noticed a strange wreckage in one of his fields, 30 miles to the north of Roswell Air Base. He didn't think much of it and drove home. Two weeks later, on July 4th, he returned with his family to look at the wreckage again. He hid it under a bush and went back home. Two days after this he finally decided to report it to the police. The police sheriff immediately informed the army and the next day, July 7th, the army sent Major Jesse Marcel to investigate the wreckage. He locks down the area of the crash site and only allows army staff to see it. On the morning of the following day, June 8th, army press officer Lt. William Haut releases a press statement in which he claims the US Army had recovered a "flying disc". Later that same day, the army calls a press conference. They show off parts of the wreckage and change their story, now calling it a crashed weather balloon. The local newspaper runs a story the next day with the headline *"Army Reveals It Has Flying Disc On Ranch In New Mexico"*. Following this however, interest in the crash died away and for 30 years nobody seemed at all interested in the crash.

This changed in 1980 when a book titled *"The Roswell Incident"* was published. It contained interviews with 90 witnesses and strongly claimed that the crash was actually an alien UFO that the army covered up. This reignited interest in the crash and suddenly lots more people started saying they saw strange and unusual things. This led to another book being published in 1991 called *"UFO Crash at Roswell"* which included 100 new witness statements. During this time the official US Army response was that it was simply a weather balloon, but in 1994, following the end of the Cold War, the US Army declassified secret records relating to the case. They said that actually the crash was part of "Project Mogul", a secret project to create military spy balloons that could fly over and photograph Russia during the Cold War, and that the wreckage was actually one of these secret spy balloons.

June 14th 1947 – Farmer Mack Brazel notices a strange wreckage in one of his fields 30 miles north of Roswell.

July 4th 1947 – Mack Brazel returns to the wreckage with his family to look at the wreckage – he hides it under a bush.

July 6th 1947 – Mack Brazel reports the wreckage to the local police, who inform the army.

July 7th 1947 – The army sends Major Jesse Marcel to investigate the wreckage.

July 8th 1947 – Army press officer, Lt. William Haut, releases a press statement to the media saying that the army had recovered a “flying disc”.

July 8th 1947 – An army press conference is held. The army changes its story and says that it was a weather balloon that had crashed.

July 9th 1947 – The local newspaper front page reads “*Army Reveals It Has Flying Disc On Ranch In New Mexico*”.

1980 – A book about the event called “*The Roswell Incident*” is published containing interviews with 90 witnesses who claim it was an alien UFO.

1991 – Another book called “*UFO Crash at Roswell*” is published, supposedly containing 100 new witnesses all saying it was an alien UFO.

1994 – Following the end of the Cold War, US military records are declassified. The crash is identified as part of “Project Mogul” and the army announce it was actually a military spy balloon.

What happened in Roswell in 1947?

On June 14th, 1947, farmer Mack Brazel noticed a strange wreckage in one of his fields, 30 miles to the north of Roswell Air Base. He didn't think much of it and drove home. Two weeks later, on July 4th, he returned with his family to look at the wreckage again. He hid it under a bush and went back home. Two days after this he finally decided to report it to the police. The police sheriff immediately informed the army and the next day, July 7th, the army sent Major Jesse Marcel to investigate the wreckage. He locks down the area of the crash site and only allows army staff to see it. On the morning of the following day, June 8th, army press officer Lt. William Haut releases a press statement in which he claims the US Army had recovered a “flying disc”. Later that same day, the army calls a press conference. They show off parts of the wreckage and change their story, now calling it a crashed weather balloon. The local newspaper runs a story the next day with the headline “*Army Reveals It Has Flying Disc On Ranch In New Mexico*”. Following this however, interest in the crash died away and for 30 years nobody seemed at all interested in the crash.

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Understanding the CONTEXT

Your Task:

Use the sheets to create a spider diagram that summarises the context surrounding the Roswell Incident.

EXTENSION:

In one colour, highlight or underline information on your spider diagram that suggests that it WAS an alien UFO, in another colour highlight information that suggests that it WAS NOT an alien UFO.

CHALLENGE:

You are an investigator, identify two people who you would like to interview to find out more about the incident and think of three questions you could ask each person.

Summarise your findings

In your book write a paragraph that explains what you think might have happened.

Consider:

- What could have caused it
- What the witnesses said
- How people's stories changed
- Why the army might have hidden information
- Who is trustworthy and who isn't

Use some of the information to help you explain your points.