

Do you know any stories about unexpected death? From books, stories and TV shows...



# Who was the Somerton Man?

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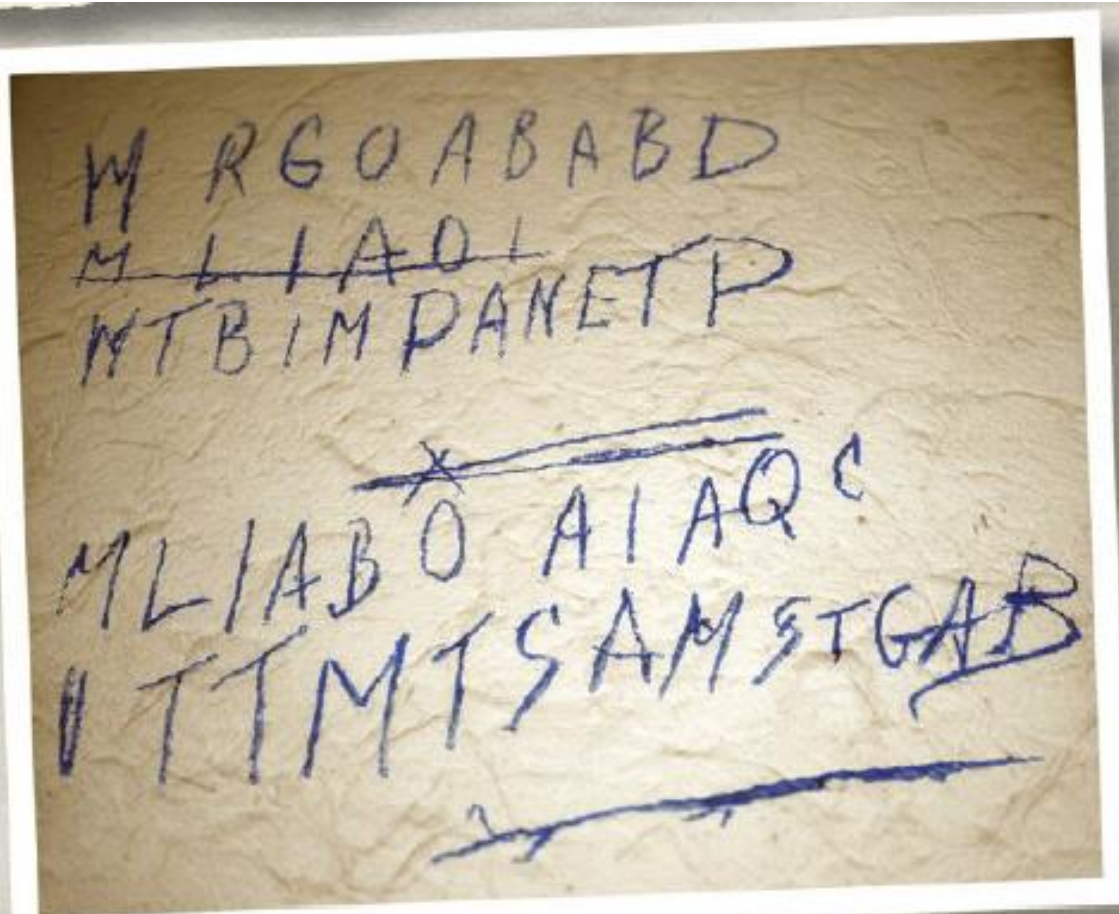
It began at 6:30 a.m. on 1 December 1948 when some passers-by discovered the body of a man on Somerton Beach in Adelaide, Australia, just west of the city. The police arrived and launched a murder investigation. At the hospital, doctors examined the body but could not find out for sure how the man had died. In his pockets were a bus ticket from the city, a train ticket, a comb, chewing gum, cigarettes and matches. There was no wallet or identification. Nobody knew who the man was.

The police continued their investigation. They could not identify the man using fingerprints or dental records. Then, two weeks after the discovery of the body, there was a breakthrough: they found a suitcase that the man had left at Adelaide station the day before his death. Inside the case were some clothes, a knife, scissors and a brush.

However, these possessions did not reveal the man's identity. In fact, somebody had removed the labels from most of his clothes and another label from the suitcase itself.







A new expert joined the investigation: John Cleland, a professor at the University of Adelaide. In April, he found a clue that everybody  
15 else had missed: a small piece of paper in a secret pocket inside the dead man's trousers. On the paper were two words in Persian: *tamám shud*. The words are from a famous Persian poem, and they mean 'it is the end'. Somebody had torn the paper from an old copy of a book.

20 A few months later, a man gave police a copy of the book containing the poem. He said somebody had dropped it into his open-top car the day after the man on Somerton Beach died. The last page of the book – with the final two words – was missing. In the book, the police found two clues: a telephone number and a  
25 message. The message was in a secret code. The second line was crossed out, and some letters were unclear.



The telephone number belonged to a nurse. She said she had given a copy of the book to a soldier called Alfred Boxall in 1945. Finally, the police had solved the mystery: obviously, the dead man was Alfred Boxall!

30 There was only one problem: Alfred Boxall was still alive. The police found him and interviewed him. What is more, he still had his copy of the book. The mystery of the body on Somerton Beach continued.

35 So what about the mysterious five-line message? Could that contain the answer to this puzzle? Perhaps, but unfortunately we do not know what the message says. Nobody has ever solved the secret code.



Passers-by = people who were passing that street

Breakthrough = a sudden good achievement

Dental record = a file about a person about what he has done in dentistry

Reveal = show

Clue = hint

open-top car = a car with no roof



W R G O A B A B D  
~~M L I A D I~~  
W T B I M P A N E T P  
  
~~M L I A B O A I A Q C~~  
~~I T T M T S A M S T G A B~~



This mysterious story is sometimes called as “Tamam Shud” case. Why?



### Reading Strategy

When you do a multiple-choice task, try to predict the answers just by looking at the beginning of each question, not the options. (It is not always possible, but sometimes you can.) Then look at the options. If one of them matches your prediction, it is probably the correct one. However, you still need to check carefully.

- 3 Read the **Reading Strategy**. Then look at the sentence beginnings below. Can you complete them? Do not look at exercise 4 yet.
- 1 The suitcase did not help to identify the man because ...
  - 2 University professor John Cleland was the only person who ...
  - 3 The two clues contained in the book with the missing page were ...
  - 4 After they'd interviewed the nurse, the police wrongly thought that ...
  - 5 After many investigations, we now know ...

#### 4 Circle the correct answers (a–d).

- 1 The suitcase did not help to identify the man because
  - ☒ a) nothing in it had a name.
  - ☐ b) nobody was sure that the suitcase belonged to him.
  - ☐ c) it only contained cigarettes, matches and a few other possessions.
  - ☐ d) they didn't find it until weeks after his death.
- 2 University professor John Cleland was the only person who
  - ☐ a) understood the meaning of *tamám shud*.
  - ☒ b) found the secret pocket in the dead man's trousers.
  - ☐ c) had read the poem.
  - ☐ d) looked for clues to the dead man's identity.
- 3 The two clues contained in the book with the missing page were
  - ☐ a) a soldier's telephone number and a secret message.
  - ☐ b) a message in Persian and a nurse's telephone number.
  - ☒ c) a secret message and a nurse's telephone number.
  - ☐ d) two telephone numbers and the name of a nurse.
- 4 After they'd interviewed the nurse, the police wrongly thought that
  - ☐ a) she had given Alfred Boxall a copy of the book.
  - ☒ b) the dead man was Alfred Boxall.
  - ☐ c) she could tell them what the secret message said.
  - ☐ d) the dead man had given her a copy of the book.
- 5 After many investigations, we now know
  - ☐ a) the identity of the dead man.
  - ☐ b) what the secret message in the book means.
  - ☐ c) how and why the man died.
  - ☒ d) where the piece of paper containing the words *tamám shud* came from.



- 5 **VOCABULARY** Find the words for these items in the first two paragraphs of the text.



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1 matches 2 comb 3 brush 4 knife 5 wallet  
6 scissors

- 6 **VOCABULARY** Complete the compound nouns (1–8) with the words below. Find them in the text. Which one is written as a single word?

car code gum investigation  
number prints records ticket

**Compound nouns**

- |                  |                     |
|------------------|---------------------|
| 1 a murder _____ | 5 dental _____      |
| 2 a train _____  | 6 an open-top _____ |
| 3 chewing _____  | 7 a telephone _____ |
| 4 finger _____   | 8 a secret _____    |

1 investigation 2 ticket 3 gum 4 prints  
5 records 6 car 7 number 8 code  
'Fingerprints' is written as a single word.



- 7 Work in pairs or groups. Work together to read this secret message and find out one more mysterious fact about the Somerton Man case.

KEY: a = z, b = a, c = b ... x = w, y = x, z = y

Xifo uif ovstf tbx uif cpez, tif tbje tif eje opu lopx

When the nurse saw the body, she said she ...

ijn, cvu tif tffnfe up sfdphojaf ijn boe mpplfe tdbse.

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(When the nurse saw the body, she said she) did not know him, but she seemed to recognize him and looked scared.



**8 SPEAKING** Discuss these questions in pairs. Give reasons.

- 1 Do you think people will ever solve the mystery of the Somerton Man? Why? / Why not?
- 2 What do you think happened? Did he kill himself or did a murderer kill him?
- 3 Do you think the information in exercise 7 is an important clue?
- 4 Does it matter who the man is or why he died? Why have people tried so hard to find out?



# A mysterious disappearance

*I can understand a text about a mystery.*

**Revision:** Student's Book page 90

## 1 Match the two parts of the compound nouns.

chewing dental finger murder open-top  
secret train telephone

- 1 \_\_\_\_\_ records
- 2 an \_\_\_\_\_ car
- 3 a \_\_\_\_\_ number
- 4 a \_\_\_\_\_ code
- 5 a \_\_\_\_\_ investigation
- 6 a \_\_\_\_\_ ticket
- 7 \_\_\_\_\_ gum
- 8 \_\_\_\_\_ prints

## 2 Read the text. Are the sentences true (T) or false (F)?

- 1 A man took a bomb onto a plane. ☐
- 2 The man jumped out of the plane between Portland and Seattle. ☐
- 3 No one knows where the man is now. ☐

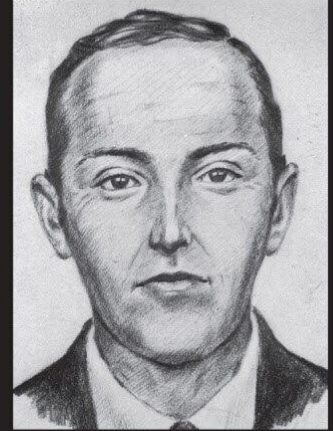
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## 3 Read the Reading Strategy. For questions 1–4, circle the correct option (a–d).

- 1 The man in the suit and raincoat
  - a wanted to fly to Portland.
  - b wanted a return flight to Seattle.
  - c used a false name when he checked in.
  - d got on the plane without a ticket.
- 2 In the note, Cooper
  - a ordered the plane to return to Portland.
  - b asked for a large amount of money.
  - c said he was hijacking the plane.
  - d said he would use the bomb if the passengers tried to leave the plane.
- 3 After leaving Seattle,
  - a Cooper became more nervous, but was always polite.
  - b the plane flew straight to Mexico.
  - c the pilot decided to fly as low as possible.
  - d only six people remained on the plane.
- 4 Since Cooper's jump from the plane,
  - a only one young boy has seen him.
  - b no one has found any of the money.
  - c the police have arrested a lot of suspects.
  - d the police have recovered a small part of the money.

# Where is DAN COOPER?



On 24 November 1971, at Portland Airport, a man wearing a suit and a raincoat bought a one-way ticket for the evening flight to Seattle. He checked in and got on the plane. The name on the ticket was Dan Cooper, but that wasn't his real name.

When the plane had taken off, he put on sunglasses and gave the flight attendant a note. The note said that Cooper had a bomb in his suitcase, that he would use it if necessary, and that he was hijacking the plane. He showed the flight attendant the bomb and told her that when the plane landed in Seattle, he wanted \$200,000 and four parachutes. He told her that he would let the passengers leave the plane.

When the plane landed, the police gave Cooper the money and the parachutes, and the plane took off again with just Cooper and five members of the crew. The flight attendant said that Cooper wasn't nervous, he didn't get angry, and he seemed to be a nice, polite man. Cooper ordered the pilot to fly low, at about 3,000 metres, towards Mexico. Twenty minutes after taking off, Cooper opened the back door and jumped out of the plane with a parachute and the money.

That was the last time anyone saw Cooper. The police launched an investigation and searched the area where Cooper had jumped – but they found nothing. Ten years later, an eight-year-old boy found some of the money (only \$6,000) on a beach nearby. The rest of the money is still missing. Over the years, the police have interviewed hundreds of suspects, but they haven't made any arrests. The real identity of Cooper and what happened to him remain a mystery to this day.