

## Introduction

Download the LearnEnglish Themes podcast. You'll find more information on this page:  
<http://www.britishcouncil.org/learnenglish-podcasts-themes.htm>

This support pack contains the following materials:

- the article that you can listen to in the podcast
- a vocabulary activity based on the article
- an activity on word-building
- links to other activities on the LearnEnglish website on this theme (extra sensory perception).

## Read the article

### ESP (Extra sensory perception)

by Katherine Bilborough

ESP or Extra Sensory Perception is a catch-all expression for the alleged ability of certain people to receive transmitted thoughts from others, to transmit their own thoughts, to see what will happen in the future or to be able to move objects from one place to another without physically touching them. These special people are called psychics or sensitives. Some believe that we all have this ability to some degree but that most of us choose not to develop it.

Some people are happy to believe in ESP while others are firm disbelievers. Parapsychologists who are dedicated to scientifically studying the claims that are made, lend a certain seriousness to the subject. They have identified four distinct types of ESP:

**Clairvoyance** describes the act of being able to obtain knowledge of a person or event without the use of the normal senses.

**Telepathy** is the process by which a person is able to read another person's thoughts without the use of any of the normal senses.

**Psychokinesis** is the ability to influence a physical object just by thinking about it.

**Precognition** is the term applied when somebody is able to foresee future events.

Many people are sceptical about ESP. Alongside the existence of documented evidence there are plenty of claims that have turned out to be fraudulent. For most people it is difficult to accept such claims without having had first hand experience. The lack of scientific evidence is another factor to take into account. On the other hand, most of us have, at some time, experienced a seemingly inexplicable

occurrence; hearing the telephone ring and knowing who will be on the other end of the line or cases of coincidence that seem to be too extreme to be accidental.

Over the years there have been numerous ESP experiments conducted by serious scientists in serious institutions. Joseph Banks Rhine, a botanist at Duke University published a famous book in 1934 called "Extra-Sensory perception" in which he claimed to have overwhelming evidence of ESP. However, other scientists have been unable to duplicate his results since, which has resulted in the book losing much of its original credibility and fame.



The Ganzfeld experiments are considered to have been the most carefully scrutinised ESP experiments. Alleged psychics had their eyes covered and ears blocked while a "sender" attempted to transmit messages. Later the psychics would compare the messages received to the original messages sent out. There was a great deal of excitement and interest at the time

but the research failed to produce convincing results.

One of the strongest criticisms against ESP is that in order for it to exist, the fundamental laws of physics would necessarily have to be broken.

Human beings are attracted to the whole spectrum of supernatural phenomena. ESP will always continue to fascinate. This becomes clear when we see how much of the media is

dedicated to the topic; magazines, journals, web sites, television and radio programmes. Some of the most successful films in recent years have fuelled interest among the younger generations who are starting to ask the same questions and to look for explanations for the same phenomena as their parents and grandparents before them. Who knows? One day we might just find these answers because one thing is certain: "The truth is out there!"

## After reading

### Exercise 1

Find a word in the text that means :

1. claimed to be true	
2. get	
3. predict	
4. dishonest	
5. proof	
6. examined	
7. range	
8. basic	

### Exercise 2: Wordbuilding.

Look at the nouns below, write the related verbs and then check your answers by looking back at the text.

1. belief	
2. choice	
3. dedication	
4. identification	
5. description	
6. application	
7. acceptance	
8. scrutiny	

### More activities on this topic

You'll find links to all the following activities connected to the theme of refugees at:

<http://www.britishcouncil.org/learnenglish-central-themes-esp.htm>

- **Game: Magic gopher** - Let the amazing magic gopher read your mind!
- **Story: The Chrysalids** - The story of David, who is telepathic in an imaginary future time when mutations are considered to be evil.
- **Trivia:** Everything you (n)ever wanted to know about ESP.
- **Science:** cubed. **Mind reader:** brain scanning technique maps brain signals to predict our intentions.
- There is also an ESP-related cartoon, a poll, and some carefully selected external links.

### Answers to activities:

**Activity 1:** 1. *alleged*; 2. *obtain*; 3. *foresee*; 4. *fraudulent*; 5. *evidence*; 6. *scrutinised*; 7. *spectrum*; 8. *fundamental*

**Activity 2:** 1. *believe*; 2. *choose*; 3. *dedicate*; 4. *identify*; 5. *describe*; 6. *apply* 7. *accept*; 8. *scrutinise*