

ANG 5554 URBAN LEGEND INFORMATION

Read the following example and explanation of an urban legend

In 1994, the Las Vegas police reported a disturbing series of crimes along the Vegas strip. The first victim was an Ohio man in town for a sales convention. At the bar in his hotel, the man happened to strike up a conversation with an attractive young woman. According to the man, the two hit it off, sharing several drinks over the course of a couple of hours. At some point, the man passed out, and when he came to, he found himself lying in a hotel bathtub, covered in ice. There was a phone on the floor beside the tub, with an attached note that said, "Call 911 or you will die." He called an ambulance and was rushed to the hospital, where the doctors informed him that he had undergone massive surgery. A gang selling human organs on the black market had removed one of his kidneys.

There's a good chance that you've heard this story, or some variation of it. Thousands and thousands of people have passed on news of the Las Vegas "organ thieves" over the course of 10 years. Word of mouth, e-mail, and even printed fliers have relayed it. However, there is absolutely no evidence that any such thing ever occurred, in Las Vegas or anywhere else. This fictional story is an urban legend.

An urban legend is any modern, fictional story, told as truth, that reaches a variety of people by being passed from person to person. Urban legends are often false, but not always. A few turn out to be true, and a lot of them were inspired by actual events but have changed from person to person. Urban legends are usually a combination of humour, horror, warning, embarrassment, or morality. In the story of the organ harvesters, you can see how some of these elements come together. The most outstanding feature of the story is its sense of horror. The image of a man waking up lying in a bathtub full of ice, with one less kidney is a scary thought. The story also includes a moral lesson. The businessman ended up in the unpleasant situation only after going to drink at a bar and then flirting with a mysterious woman.

Not all urban legends are horror stories. Many of them are amusing stories or ordinary jokes told as if they really occurred. One common story is about a drunk driver who is pulled over by the police. The officer asks the man to step out of the car just as another car up the road crashes into a telephone pole. As the officer runs off to help the other driver, the drunken man flees the scene. In the morning, he hears a loud knocking on his door and opens it to find the police officer from the night before. The man swears he was home all night. The officer asks to have a look in his garage. When he opens the door, he's shocked to see the officer's police car parked there instead of his own car.

Read one or two examples of urban legends on the website, <http://www.urbanlegendsonline.com> to see the structure of a typical urban legend. Then, **write your own original urban legend**, without copying anything you have read. It should be 150 words, minimum. Try to limit time to 45 minutes maximum.

Don't forget to use the past tense, whenever it is appropriate.