



**Fluentlicious**  
Materials for language learning

# Spooky lakes

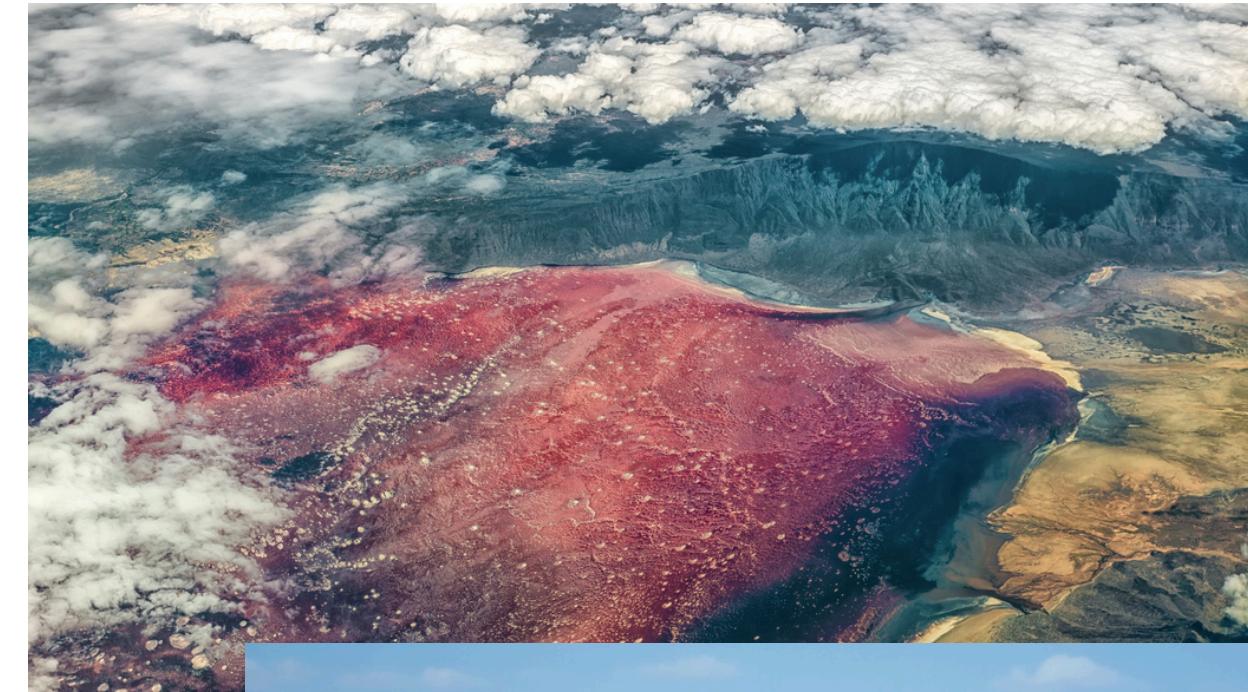
Scary stories from around the world  
B2 speaking class  
Passive voice practice

Would you swim in it? Would you survive?



# Would you survive?

F



## Lake Natron (Tanzania)

No, you probably wouldn't. The water is highly alkaline and could burn your skin or irritate your eyes. Sometimes the temperature is also very high, which makes swimming dangerous.

# Would you swim in it? Would you survive?

F



# Would you survive?



## **Lake Nyos (Cameroon)**

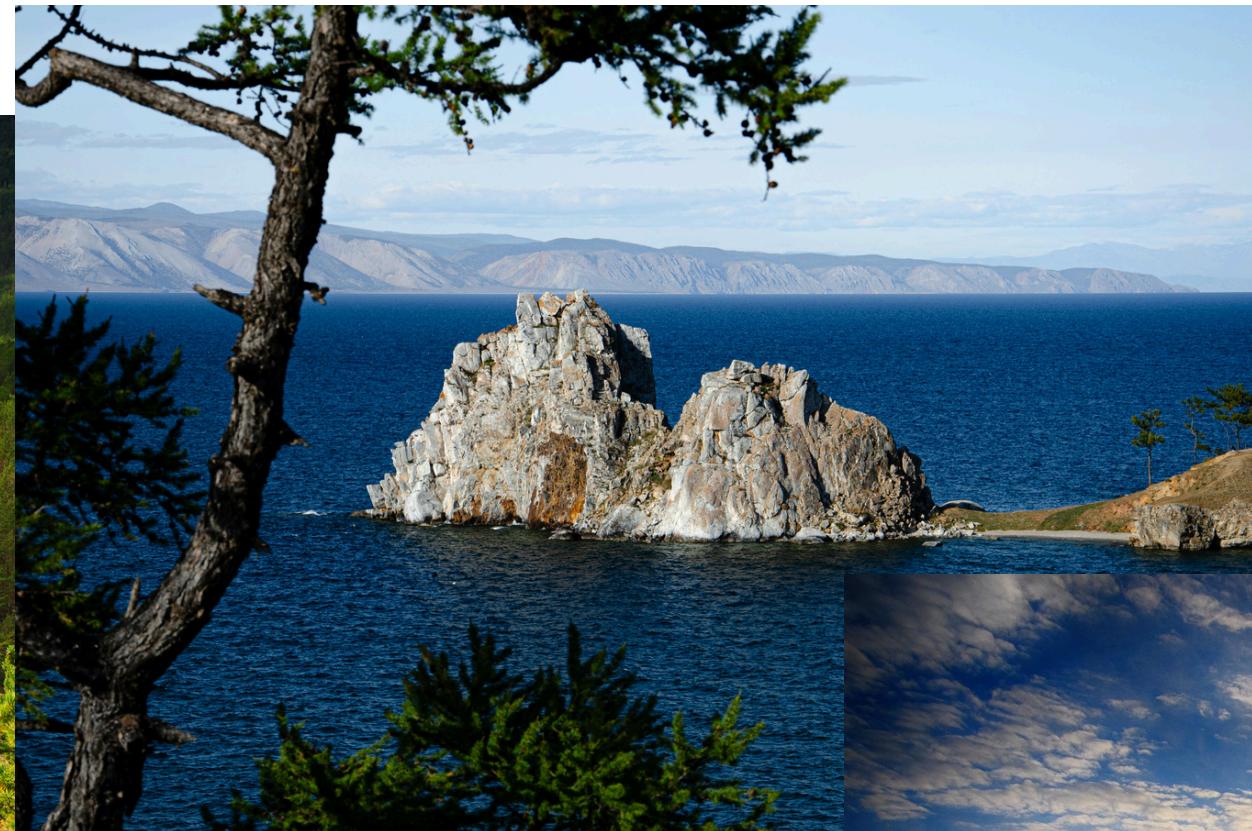
It's very unlikely you would survive. A sudden release of carbon dioxide gas can suffocate anyone nearby, so swimming in Lake Nyos is extremely dangerous.

# Would you swim in it? Would you survive?

F



# Would you survive?

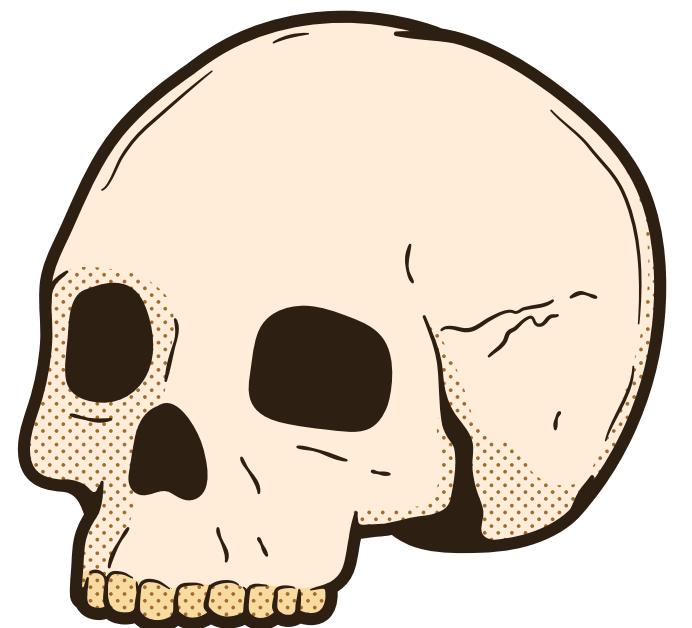


## Lake Baikal (Russia)

Yes, you could swim there, but only if you're prepared for very cold water most of the year. The lake is safe in terms of chemicals, but hypothermia is the main risk.

# Warm-up

- What makes some places seem scary or mysterious?
- Would you swim in a lake if people said it was cursed?



# Passive voice recap

- People say Lake Baikal is haunted. → It is said that Lake Baikal is haunted.
- Gases killed hundreds of people. → Hundreds of people were killed by gases.

**Form:** be + past participle

**Use:**

- when the doer is unknown or unimportant
- to sound more formal or objective
- to report information (It is believed that...)

## Let's rewrite!

1. Scientists discovered dangerous gases in Lake Nyos.
2. People call Lake Natron “the petrifying lake.”
3. Locals tell stories about Lake Baikal’s ghosts.



# Passive voice recap

## Let's rewrite!

1. Scientists discovered dangerous gases in Lake Nyos.
2. Scientists are collecting water samples now.
3. People call Lake Natron “the petrifying lake.”
4. A cloud of CO<sub>2</sub> killed many villagers in 1986.
5. Researchers had warned the local authorities before the disaster.
6. Volcanic activity has produced many gases in the region.
7. Scientists will release a new safety report next month.
8. Researchers must monitor the water continuously.
9. They say that Lake Baikal hides many secrets.

# Vocabulary

1. glance	A. to make something last or stay in good condition for a long time
2. alkaline	B. to make something turn into stone or become frozen in fear
3. to preserve	C. a quick look
4. to petrify	D. to move or grow over a larger area
5. to spread	E. a living being, animal, or monster
6. to curse	F. the edge of land next to water, like a beach or lake side
7. shore	G. to say or believe bad magic words that bring harm
8. creature	H. having a chemical nature similar to soap or baking soda
9. howl	I. the long, loud cry of a dog or wolf

# Reading 1 - Lake Natron – The Petrifying Lake (Tanzania)

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At first glance, Lake Natron looks peaceful and beautiful. The water shines red and pink under the African sun, and thousands of flamingos walk across its surface. But this beauty hides a deadly secret. The lake is one of the most alkaline places on Earth, filled with sodium carbonate and other minerals. Its pH level is so high that it can burn human skin.

The temperature of the water can reach 60°C, and animals that accidentally fall into it are preserved by minerals, turning into strange, stone-like shapes. Photographs of these creatures have become famous online, and it is often said that the lake can “turn you to stone.” Of course, this is not true – the lake doesn’t petrify animals instantly. Instead, their bodies are preserved after death, just as fossils are formed over time.

Local legends tell of spirits living in the water, protecting it from strangers. People rarely swim or fish here, not only because it’s dangerous, but because it’s believed that the souls of the dead are kept under the surface. Whether you see it as chemistry or magic, Lake Natron proves that beauty and danger can exist in the same place

## Comprehension - True or False

1. The water in Lake Natron is safe to swim in.
2. Animals that fall into the lake are preserved by minerals.
3. The legend says that spirits protect the lake from outsiders.
4. The lake's color changes because of salt and temperature.
5. The story that the lake "turns you to stone" is scientifically true.

## Discussion

1. Do you think natural beauty can sometimes be dangerous?
2. Why do you think people create legends about scary natural places?
3. Would you like to visit Lake Natron to see it with your own eyes?

# Reading 2 - Lake Nyos – The Killer Lake (Cameroon)

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In August 1986, one of the strangest natural disasters in history took place in a quiet mountain area of Cameroon. Without warning, Lake Nyos suddenly released a massive cloud of carbon dioxide. The invisible gas was pushed out from the bottom of the lake and spread through the nearby valleys. Within minutes, more than 1,700 people and thousands of animals were dead – not burned, not drowned, but silently suffocated.

The cause was later discovered by scientists: volcanic gases had built up under the water for years. When pressure finally changed, the gas exploded to the surface. It was believed by many locals that an angry spirit had cursed the lake, and for a long time, no one wanted to return.

Today, safety systems have been installed to let the gas escape slowly, and Lake Nyos is constantly monitored. But some people still say that the lake “breathes” at night, and that animals disappear near its shore. It is said that those who died in the tragedy can still be heard in the misty valleys, calling for help that will never come.

## Comprehension - True or False

1. The disaster at Lake Nyos happened suddenly in 1986.
2. The victims were killed by poisonous water.
3. Scientists later found out that gas caused the tragedy.
4. Local people thought the lake was cursed by spirits.
5. Today, systems are used to prevent another gas explosion.

## Discussion

1. Would you trust science or local legends more in a situation like this?
2. How do you think people's relationship with the lake changed after the tragedy?
3. Why do silent or invisible dangers feel especially frightening?

# Reading 3 - Lake Baikal – The Deep Blue Mystery (Russia)

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Hidden in the cold heart of Siberia lies Lake Baikal – the deepest and oldest lake on Earth. It contains around 20% of all the world's unfrozen fresh water and reaches depths of over 1,600 metres. The water is crystal clear, and when it freezes, the ice becomes perfectly transparent, like glass. But under that beauty, Baikal hides many dark stories.

It is believed that Baikal has no bottom – that it leads to another world. Locals talk about strange lights moving under the ice, and divers have reported mysterious shapes in the depths. During Soviet times, it was rumoured that the Russian mafia threw bodies into Baikal, and that they were quickly taken care of by the creatures living there. Scientists say that the cold water slows decomposition, which only adds to the lake's eerie reputation.

The lake is also home to unique life forms – including the world's only freshwater seal – but many people claim that something else lives in its depths. It has been called “the sleeping eye of the Earth,” watching everything in silence. And when the wind howls across the ice, some say it's not the wind at all, but the lake whispering back.

## Comprehension - True or False

1. Lake Baikal is the largest and deepest lake in the world.
2. People believe the lake has no bottom.
3. Bodies that end up in Baikal decompose very quickly.
4. Strange lights and shapes have been seen under the ice.
5. The lake contains many unique forms of life.

## Discussion

1. Why do you think Lake Baikal inspires so many myths and legends?
2. Do you believe there could be unknown creatures living deep in the lake?
3. How does the mix of science and mystery make the story more interesting?

# Spooky time - Create Your Own Lake Legend

**Create** a short story about a mysterious lake – something spooky, strange, or deadly.

**Use at least three** of the following words:

disappear, legend, frozen, ghost, deep, mysterious, toxic

Include at least **three sentences in the passive voice**, for example:

- It was said that the lake was cursed by...
- People were frightened by ...



# Final words

1. Why are “scary places” often so fascinating?
2. Do you think such stories help us respect nature more?
3. Do you think scary stories are more interesting when they are based on real events?
4. How do movies, books, or social media change the way we think about mysterious places?
5. Have you ever visited a place that gave you goosebumps or felt eerie? What made it feel that way?

# Answer key

## Passive voice

1. Dangerous gases were discovered in Lake Nyos.
2. Water samples are being collected by scientists now.
3. Lake Natron is called “the petrifying lake”.
4. Many villagers were killed by a cloud of CO<sub>2</sub> in 1986.
5. Local authorities had been warned by researchers before the disaster.
6. Many gases in the region have been produced by volcanic activity.
7. A new safety report will be released by scientists next month.
8. The water must be monitored continuously (by researchers).
9. It is said that Lake Baikal hides many secrets. (or: Lake Baikal is said to hide many secrets.)

## Vocabulary match

1-C | 2-H | 3-A | 4-B | 5-D | 6-G | 7-F | 8-E | 9-I

Lake Natron - 1. False 2. True 3. True 4. True 5. False

Lake Nyos - 1. True 2. False 3. True 4. True 5. True

Lake Baikal - 1. True 2. True 3. False 4. True 5. True



Thank you!

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