Ghost stories have enchanted and enthralled us for years. They dance their way into our brains and lie there waiting to send a shiver down our spine when we find ourselves in a fearful scenario. There is a thrilling and exciting feeling that comes from hearing a ghost story, one which gives us a connection to the afterlife, to lost loved ones and to our own beliefs.

However, this enjoyment fades away if we take time to consider the reality of ghosts.

In real life there is no evidence of ghosts whatsoever. Yes, we have people who claim to talk to them. Yes, we have people who claim to have seen them. But psychics regularly get information wrong and when pushed for specifics they perform disastrously. They are good at convincing people to part with their hard earned cash. Those who have seen ghosts also tend to give vague details or clichéd responses. It's funny how all ghosts are from Victorian times and none ever appear at the end of the bed asking for the wifi password.

A theory for people's belief in ghosts is infrasound. This is sound at levels so low humans can’t hear it (though other animals, like [elephants](http://mentalfloss.com/article/64572/5-sounds-you-probably-cant-hear), can). Low frequency vibrations can cause distinct physiological discomfort. Scientists studying the effects of [wind turbines](http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4338604/) and traffic noise near residences have found that low-frequency noise can cause [disorientation](http://waubrafoundation..org.au/wp-content/uploads/2015/02/Broner-The-effects-of-low-frequency-noise-on-people.pdf), feelings of panic, changes in heart rate and blood pressure, and other effects that could easily be associated with being visited by a ghost. For instance, in a 1998 paper on natural causes of hauntings, engineer Vic Tandy describes working for a medical equipment manufacturer, whose labs included a reportedly haunted room. Whenever Tandy worked in this particular lab, he felt depressed and uncomfortable, often hearing and seeing odd things—including an apparition that definitely looked like a ghost. Eventually, he discovered that the room was home to an 19 Hz standing wave coming from a fan, which was sending out the inaudible vibrations that caused the disorienting effects. Further [studies](http://www.nbcnews.com/id/3077192/ns/technology_and_science-science/t/infrasound-linked-spooky-effects/#.VipBFhCrSRs) also show links between infrasound and bizarre sensations like getting chills down the spine or feeling uneasy.

So while ghost stories can provide thrills and enjoyment it must be remembered that they are just that. Made up accounts of events told for entertainment. We must be wary of charlatans trying to exploit it for profit and look to science to explain the unexplainable.

1. **Re-read paragraph 1.** How does the writer’s language highlight the enjoyment we get from ghost stories? (2)
2. What is the function of paragraph 2? (2)

**Re-read paragraph 3.**

1. How does the writer’s language show his scepticism towards people who have seen / spoken to ghosts? (2)
2. In your own words explain what the writer finds unusual about ghost sightings? (2)

**Re-read paragraph 4.**

1. In your own words explain what infrasound is and what it does. (2)
2. In your own words explain what Vic Tandy found. (2)
3. How effective do you find the final paragraph as a conclusion to the text? (2)