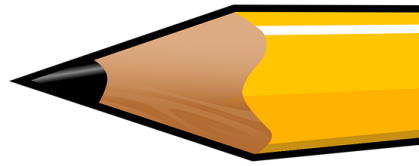


The invisible pencil-eating monster



At the end of a lesson you notice that your pencil is missing. 'It must have been eaten by the pencil-eating monster,' says your friend. When you say you have never heard of a pencil-eating monster, your friend explains that pencil-eating monsters sneak into school classrooms and eat any pencils they can find.

You say to your friend that you did not see a monster in the classroom. 'That is because the pencil-eating monster is **invisible**,' says your friend. When you explain that you didn't hear one either, your friend tells you that it is also **silent**.

You then point out that the door and windows have remained closed throughout the lesson and ask your friend how the monster got in and out. Your friend says that pencil-eating monsters are **intangible** (they can pass through doors and walls and nobody can feel them).

- 1) Do you believe the pencil-eating monster exists? Why or why not?
- 2) Is it possible to prove your friend is wrong and that the pencil-eating monster does not exist?
- 3) Even if you can't prove your friend wrong, does that make it reasonable to believe them?

Many people accept that it would be impossible to **prove** that the invisible pencil-eating monster does not exist. However, they believe it would be reasonable to doubt it. They would look for other explanations for why the pencil had gone missing. The important question for many people would be 'Is there any good **evidence** that the pencil-eating monster exists?'