

# Ghosts Apparitions & Terminology

An article by Neal Bardell for [Ghost Science](#)

The claim that ghosts are all around us has been in the popular mind set since the earliest of time. Folklore was littered with stories of apparitions and spectral beings. Ancient seers called upon the spirits to help them foretell the future and by the 1<sup>st</sup> century A.D., historians were beginning to write down popular ghostly tales and legends. Almost all civilizations believe that there is a life after death and that the soul transcends the body and moves on.

Two thousand years later, the question still remains. “Do ghosts really exist?”

There have been too many reported sights of apparitions and spectres for such a question to be brushed aside and ignored. Something is going on and it is up to the scientists and paranormal investigators to try and solve the longest running riddle in human history. But before we can start to set the world of the paranormal right, we have to learn some of the basic terminology.

## **Supernatural:**

A lot of researchers and theorists of spirit sightings have taken a dislike of the word “Supernatural”, I am not sure why, maybe it is because the term seems to conjure up imagery of bad B movies.

The word Supernatural, broken down into its original meaning, is, in my opinion, a perfectly good word to use that has a very clear meaning: “existing or occurring through some agency beyond the known forces of nature”. The word comes from the Latin *super*, meaning “above”, and *natura* meaning “nature”. Put simply, it's beyond anything we know or currently understand.

The study of ghosts is quite a quirky and questionable subject to begin with. And for investigators wanting to be taken seriously they may want to avoid the word, supernatural, when talking in, or to the, public as some see it as carrying too many divine or even satanic connotations, so many investigators prefer to use the word: *paranormal*.

## **Paranormal:**

The word paranormal is one that is used on nearly every website to do with ghosts, UFOs and many other pseudoscience topics. [Dictionary.com](#) defines the word paranormal with the following:

*“of or pertaining to the claimed occurrence of an event or perception without scientific explanation, as psychokinesis, extrasensory perception, or other purportedly supernatural phenomena.”*

So the word paranormal can be used to fit many topics that are without scientific explanation, but is it the best word to describe what we do? Is it too broad or do we need to use a more fitting word?

For me, the word paranormal makes me think of Russian Telepathy or Psychokinesis experiments that were taking place in the 60's. What does it make you think of?

## Ghosts & Apparitions:

The word ghost, as used by most people, is the visual appearance of a deceased human being's spirit, soul or life force. In more general terms, an apparition is the visual appearance of any spirit phenomenon. Laypeople use the words interchangeably whereas lots of paranormal investigators prefer to use the word apparition as to some the term ghost is only one form of apparition.

Think of it this way, if you will: all ghosts are apparitions but not all apparitions are ghosts.

For those of you interested in the definitions of both ghosts and apparitions, then look no further.

**Apparition:** *“a supernatural appearance of a person or thing, esp. a ghost; a spectre or phantom; wraith: a ghostly apparition at midnight.”*

**Ghost:** *“the soul of a dead person, a disembodied spirit imagined, usually as a vague, shadowy or evanescent form, as wandering among or haunting living persons.”*

Just to add a little confusion, here are a few more synonyms for an apparition, though all are used to describe ghosts:

- Nightshade
- Phantasm
- Phantom
- Shade
- Spectre or spectre
- spook
- Vision
- Wraith

Now most people on the street do not normally make this distinction but to avoid confusion as to what claims are actually being made, lots of investigators believe that it's best just to stick to the word “apparition” unless you specifically mean a ghost.

There are all sorts of ghost out there and they all have their own schedules.

Some ghosts have only been sighted once, such as the well documented case of the luminous ghost of a boy appearing at Corby Castle in Cumberland on the night of the 8<sup>th</sup> of September 1824

Another well documented case, this time regarding a ghost that appears on every Friday the 13<sup>th</sup> at Simpson College in Indianola, Iowa, USA.

Some ghosts mark the anniversary of an event. Be it a death, as in the many cases of hitch hiker ghosts that are spotted all over the UK and indeed the world.

I am sure there are many other words commonly used in the paranormal field that you would like to know the true meaning of, so if you think of some, please do not hesitate to [contact us](#).