Article: Malaysia Airlines Flight 370

After the discovery this week of an airplane wing fragment that aviation experts say could be part of the missing Malaysia Airlines Flight 370, scientists who study the world's oceans say it is possible that the fragment could have traveled all the way across the Indian Ocean from Australia to where it was found, on a remote island off the coast of Africa.

The wing fragment has been identified as a "flaperon" from the trailing edge of a Boeing 777 wing, a U.S. official said. Flight 370, which disappeared March 8, 2014, with 239 people on board, is the only 777 known to be missing.

"It's the first real evidence that there is a possibility that a part of the aircraft may have been found," said Australian Transport Minister Warren Truss in an interview with the Associated Press (AP). His country is leading the search for the plane in a remote patch of ocean far off Australia's west coast. "It's too early to make that judgment, but clearly we are treating this as a major lead."

The roughly 6-foot-long wing piece was found on La Reunion, an island about 600 miles east of Madagascar in the southern Indian Ocean. Flight 370 had been traveling from Kuala Lumpur to Beijing, but investigators believe based on satellite data that the plane turned south into the Indian Ocean after vanishing from radar.

That's where they've been searching for the plane ever since, off the western coast of Australia, under the theory that it crashed in the ocean there. If the wing part is from the Malaysian plane, it would bolster that theory and put to rest others that it traveled north, or landed somewhere after being hijacked.

The prevailing ocean currents – which swirl in a counter-clockwise direction north from Australia, across the southern coastline of Asia to eastern Africa – could have brought pieces of the plane to where this week's debris was found. Debris from Malaysia Airlines Flight 370 could have traveled along the currents, experts say.

The fragment could have been caught up in what is known as the Indian Ocean Gyre, Mashable's Andrew Freedman points out, and followed the current all the way west to Africa, "like taking an offramp on a highway... it just so happens that one of those off ramps, so to speak, spits out right to the east of Madagascar and Reunion Island.

Robin Beaman, a marine geologist at Australia's James Cook University, told the AP there is precedence for large objects traveling vast distances across the Indian Ocean.

Last year, a man lost his boat off the Western Australia coast after it overturned in rough seas. Eight months later, the boat turned up off the French island of Mayotte, west of Madagascar — about 4,600 miles from where it disappeared.

"I don't think we should rule anything out, that's for sure," Beaman said. But the debris is unlikely to provide much help in tracing the ocean currents back to the location of the main wreckage, said aviation safety expert John Goglia, a former member of the U.S. National Transportation Safety Board, in an interview with the AP.

"It's going to be hard to say with any certainty where the source of this was," he said. "It just confirms that the airplane is in the water and hasn't been hijacked to some remote place and is waiting to be used for some other purpose. ... We haven't lost any 777s anywhere else."

Investigators have found a number on the part, but it is not a serial or registration number, Truss told the AP. It could be a maintenance number, which may help investigators figure out what plane it belongs to, he said.

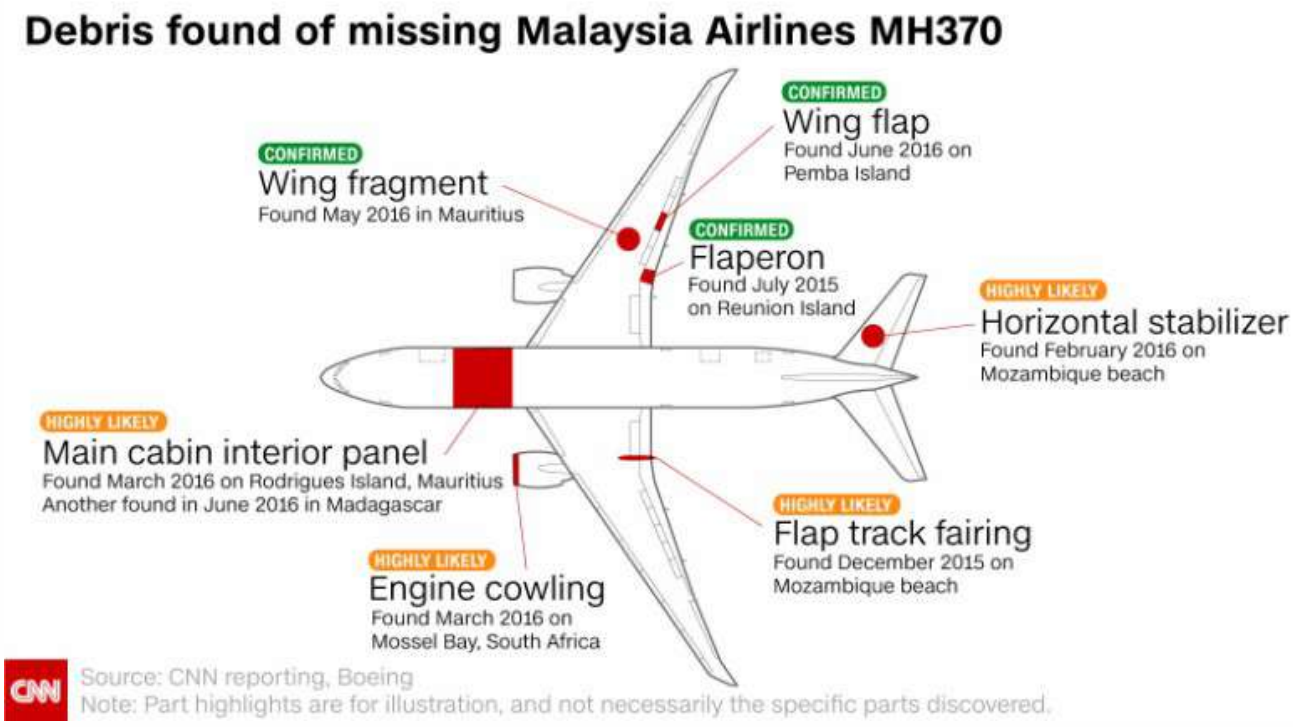
The discovery has changed the life of Reunion environmental worker Johnny Begue, who told the Associated Press he first saw the plane part on Wednesday morning, while collecting stones to grind spices.

"I knew immediately it was part of an aircraft, but I didn't realize how important it was" Begue said.

He said he called several of his co-workers and they carried the wing fragment out of the water. He also told reporters he found part of a suitcase about 2.5 meters away, but it's unclear whether there is any link to the plane wing.\

MH370: Here's what's been found from jetliner 3 years after it disappeared

By Faith Karimi, CNN
Updated 2:40 AM ET, Thu March 9, 2017



(CNN) Three years after Malaysia Airlines Flight 370 vanished with 239 people aboard, one of the world's biggest aviation mysteries remains unsolved.

Searchers have found debris in the Indian Ocean believed to be from the doomed airliner that disappeared on March 8, 2014. They have confirmed three pieces as certainly from the plane, while five others remain highly likely but inconclusive.

The three governments involved in the search suspended it in January.

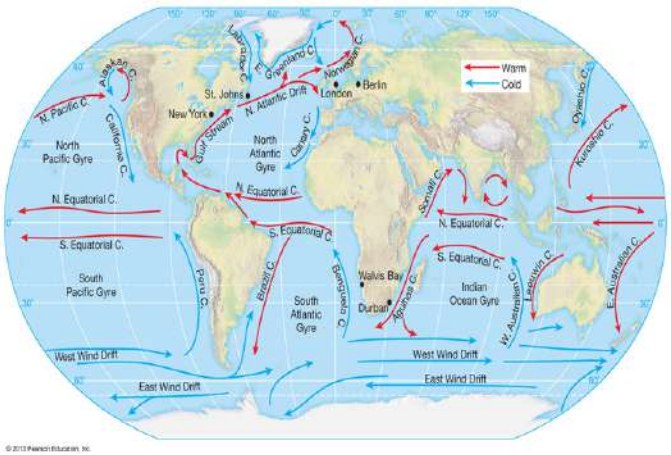
Here's a breakdown of the parts found:

Wing flap:

Where found: Tanzania

When: June

Authorities say this piece of debris has been confirmed to be from MH370. It was found in June on Pemba Island, in the Indian Ocean near the mainland. It is believed to be part of the outboard wing flap of the missing Boeing 777.



Plane wing fragment:

Where found: Mauritius

When: May

The fragment of plane wing has been confirmed as from the missing jetliner. A "part identifier" was legible on the plane piece, officials said, which allowed investigators to identify the wreckage definitively.

Flaperon:

Where found: Reunion Island

When: July 2015

Australian officials have said the flaperon is confirmed to be from the jetliner -- the first trace of the plane since it vanished in March 2014. Numbers found inside the flaperon match records from a company that manufactured it for MH370, French officials said. The unique identifier means it's definitely from this particular plane.

The Indian Ocean island sits between Madagascar and Mauritius.

Cabin interior panel:

Where found: Madagascar

When: June

Tests show the part is "almost certainly" from the missing jetliner. While Australian transportation authorities confirmed the part is from the same type of aircraft, they cannot confirm it is specifically from MH370.

MH370 is the only Boeing believed missing in the Indian Ocean. Australia spearheaded the search for the jetliner in partnership with officials from Malaysia and China.

Engine cowling:

Where found: Mossel Bay, South Africa

When: March 2016

The part was identified by the Rolls Royce stencil on it, which is consistent with those used by Malaysia Airlines. But just like the previous parts, it is "almost certainly" from the missing jetliner. But since it has no "unique identifier" linking it specifically to MH370, officials can only confirm it's from the same type of aircraft.

Main cabin interior panel:

Where found: Rodrigues Island, Mauritius

When: March 2016

This particular interior panel is from the main cabin, Australian officials said. Its parts, materials, dimensions, construction and fasteners were all consistent with those found in the airline's Boeings. But there were no special identifiers that made it unique to MH370, which is why it's "almost certainly" from the missing jetliner but not confirmed.

Horizontal stabilizer:

Where found: Mozambique beach

When: February 2016

Australian officials spearheading the search effort in the Indian Ocean confirm this part attached to the tail is "almost certainly" from the vanished jetliner.

While the debris is from a Malaysia Airlines Boeing aircraft, officials cannot definitely conclude it's MH370 because the part has "no unique identifier" linking it to that particular plane.

Flap track fairing

Where found: Mozambique beach

When: December 2015

Australian officials said the part from the right wing is "almost certainly" from the vanished jetliner. They cannot conclusively confirm it's from MH370 because while its font and color fits those used by Malaysia Airlines, it has no "unique identifier" that specifically ties it to MH370.

Questions:

After reading BOTH articles, on your OWN paper answer the following questions…

1. In your own words summarize the two articles.

2. Using evidence from the reading, make a claim as to why the missing plane and recovered pieces are discussed in this oceans unit.