

READING

A webzine article

- 1  Read the article quickly. What colour is the Aurora Borealis normally? In what colour has it been seen in the south of Europe?
- 2  Match the underlined words in the article with the definitions 1–6.
 - 1 when the sun appears in the sky sunrise
 - 2 used physical force to win against someone
 - 3 spirits of dead people
 - 4 problems or difficulties
 - 5 parts of a war, fights between two armies
 - 6 the person who makes something
- 3  Read the article again. Are the sentences **T** (true) or **F** (false)? Correct the false sentences.
 - 1 Aurora, Helios and Selene were all sisters.
F Helios was the brother of Aurora and Selene.
 - 2 It is unusual to find stories about the Aurora Borealis in different cultures.
 - 3 The French Revolution happened after red lights were seen in the sky over England and Scotland.
 - 4 The Cree Indians in Canada believed the lights were a bad sign.
 - 5 The Vikings believed the lights helped dead soldiers to their resting place.
 - 6 Electrical energy from the sun produces the Aurora Borealis.
- 4  Write your answer to the question at the end of the article.



Aurora Borealis: A wonder of nature

Origin of the name

The Aurora Borealis is an amazing natural light show around the Arctic Circle – a wonder of nature. The name comes from Ancient Greek – *aurora* meaning 'sunrise' and *boreas* meaning 'wind'. The Ancient Greeks believed that Aurora was the sister of Helios (the sun god) and Selene (the moon goddess). As the sun rose in the morning, Aurora flew across the sky to remind her brother and sister that a new day had arrived. Strange stories connected to the lights are found in many cultures.

Europe: bad signs

It was strange that the lights, normally green in colour, were seen in Greece. Scientists believe that the lights appeared red so far south. In 1789, red lights were seen by the inhabitants of England and Scotland. Shortly after this the French Revolution started, and many believed that the lights had been a sign of the trouble to come.

North America: other meanings

The Algonquin Indians in Canada believed the lights came from a fire that was built by Nanahbozah, their creator. This fire was a sign that Nanahbozah was watching over everyone. Their neighbours, the Cree Indians, on the other hand, thought that the lights were like ghosts who were trying to communicate with the living.

Viking women

Another ancient civilization – the Vikings – thought the lights were made by the Valkyrie, women who fought in their battles. This light delivered dead soldiers safely to Valhalla, where they could finally rest.

The scientific explanation

Now we know that the lights are created by the sun. Sometimes, scientists say, the sun sends huge amounts of electrical energy into space. When this energy reaches Earth, it produces these strange lights in the sky. ... But which explanation do you prefer?