Spotlight 9

# Reading Task 9324

**Read the four given texts and for questions 1-15, choose from the places 1-4 mentioned in the texts.**

## Mysterious Places

We've found out about some places that have some extremely weird phenomena. Read on to find out about some of the strangest places on the planet.

### 1 The Hum – New Mexico, USA & Woodland, UK

Everyone knows how annoying constant, low level noise can be. The sound of a slow dripping tap, or someone repeatedly tapping their foot could drive a saint to distraction. So imagine what it must be like to live with that kind of irritating sound all the time.

In the 1990s, residents of the town of Taos in New Mexico began complaining about hearing a faint sound like a distant car engine. Not everyone hears the strange noise called 'The Hum', but many of the 'victims' **complain of** loss of sleep, dizziness, headaches and anxiety. Investigators have suggested that the noise is caused by sounds produced **naturally** by the ear or by waves crashing together on the ocean floor. Most recently, a Hum also struck the **tiny** English village of Woodland in 2011. "It's loudest on Sundays," says one resident. "It's a bit like a fridge, but it definitely isn't my fridge." For the moment 'The Hum' **remains** a mystery that continues to drive its victims mad!

### 2 The Tree of Life – Bahrain

Sitting majestically on a high sandy hill in the middle of the desert, two kilometres from Jebel Dukhan in Bahrain, is one of the most fascinating natural wonders of the world. The Tree of Life, an ancient mesquite tree, has survived in the desert for 400 years, miles from any other form of vegetation, and with no **apparent** source of water. Although the mesquite tree can develop a very wide and deep root system, scientists and biologists have been unable to locate the source of water that sustains the tree. This **baffling** enigma has made the tree a major tourist attraction in the Middle East.

But for the local Bedouin tribes, there is no mystery about the tree. They believe that the mythical god of water, Enki, has blessed the tree and has kept it alive and growing all these years.



### 3 The Naga Fireballs - Thailand & Laos

Every year, around the time of the October full moon and at the end of the Buddhist rains, hundreds of red glowing balls of light are seen shooting up from the Mekong River before silently **exploding** in mid-air. Sceptics put the phenomenon down to a clever hoax, but there are records written by monks who **witnessed** the mysterious fireballs hundreds of years ago.

To many of the thousands of believers who gather along the banks of the Mekong to view this amazing sight, the fireballs are the breath of Naga, a mythical serpent that lives in the river. "I've seen the Naga," says one local. "It was like a huge, silver snake swimming down the river." Others, however, believe that the fireballs are a natural phenomenon **caused by** methane gas bubbles escaping from the river bed.

### 4 Black Mountain – Australia



Formed from volcanic magma around 260 million years ago, Black Mountain is made up of a labyrinth of massive black boulders. It's a wonderful, unique place but it has a dark history and locals claim visitors should beware. Explorers have described the maze of caves and narrow passageways in the mountain and some have reported an interior inhabited by vampire bats and gigantic pythons within pockets of suffocating bad air.

Countless stories tell of the people who have walked into the caves never to return. Even a farmer and his herd of cattle are said to have disappeared into the mysterious caves. Some say that the eerie sounds of loud cries and banging are the lost trying to find their way out. Others insist it's the natural sounds of water and cracking stones in the caves. There is also a legend that a cat-like beast called 'the Queensland tiger' is responsible for the disappearances as it prowls the area and drags victims into its lair in the caves. Intriguingly, descriptions of the Queensland tiger closely resemble a species of lion which became extinct in Queensland about 20,000 years ago!

***Which place:***

1. has an attraction that has no visible means of life support?
2. reports a phenomenon that gets worse at a particular time?
3. has reports of an event occurring in previous centuries?
4. locals believe is protected by a god?
5. might someone experience health problems?
6. has a phenomenon that occurs annually?
7. has a phenomenon that could be caused by the human body?
8. has a phenomenon that makes no sound?
9. is where visitors are warned of dangers?
10. has an attraction that is far away from any other species of its kind?
11. has a phenomenon some believe is caused by a mythical creature?
12. has a phenomenon that does not affect everyone?
13. is where the frightening sounds are said to be from trapped people? |
14. has a phenomenon witnessed by large crowds of people?
15. has a legendary animal that is said to kill people?

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