



Read the text and fill in the missing sentences.



### Vocabulary & Reading

Look at the picture. Where do you think this place is? under the sea? on a mountain? on another planet? inside a cave? inside a volcano? in a frozen waterfall?



## The Deadliest Place on Earth?

It's 50°C and has a humidity of 100%, less than a hundred people have been inside and it's so deadly that even with respirators and suits of ice you can only survive for 20 minutes before your body starts to fail. It's the nearest thing to visiting another planet - it's going deep inside our own! While making documentaries, I have been lucky enough to film everywhere from tiny Pacific islands to the centre of the Sahara Desert, yet nowhere could prepare me for filming in The Giant Crystal Cave - *Cueva de los Cristales* of Mexico.

My director and I arrived in the quiet town of Naica as the morning sun painted the Chihuahuan Desert gold. **A** Within minutes we were going downwards inside the mine. The air became dusty, thick and heavy as sweat poured out of my skin - deeper and deeper we went.

1,000 feet down, we arrived at the control room where conditions were already an exhausting 45°C and 55% humidity. Here we met Gonzalo Infante of Speleoresearch & Films, who for more than five years has tirelessly worked to share the wonders of Naica with the world and to preserve them for future generations. **B**

"You think this is hot" said Gonzalo pointing towards an iron door. "This is just a cool breeze compared to what you will feel like in there ... ready to go?" **C** Everyone else was dressed like astronauts preparing to go on a spacewalk, but Gonzalo insisted that our first visit should be a completely natural experience. He wanted us to physically and mentally prepare, just in case we ended up spending much longer inside than we had expected ... anxiously we pulled open the door and entered.

My glasses steamed up and their metal frames almost burnt me. **D** Sweat poured from my head, my energy was sucked away, and my breathing became heavy. My eyes led me forwards, but my body wanted to go back. I was standing among a forest of giant gypsum crystals as sharp as blades - the largest crystals ever discovered, some up to 12 metres long (about the height of 6 men!) and as heavy as 55 tonnes.

The view was incredible; everything around us glittered, as though we were standing inside a star. However, within just five minutes I had gone from a fit 30-year-old to an unfit 60-year-old. **E** This was going to be the most challenging shoot of my life.

For over half a million years these crystals have been slowly growing out of hot hydrothermal fluids rich with minerals. Undisturbed, one can only guess how big they may have eventually grown. Yet when mining began here over a hundred years ago, the cave was drained and the development of the crystals froze forever. **F** This began the slow decay of the crystals and now no one knows what their fate will be.

Once the mine stops operating, it could be flooded by polluted mine water and abandoned forever. And that's if mineral sellers don't get to them first and rip them out to sell around the world, which has already happened to other smaller crystal caves in the area. My hope is that Gonzalo will succeed in finding funding to preserve this site as a World Heritage Monument.

**G** Who knows what other wonders lie hidden deep inside the Earth?

**Read the text and fill in the missing sentences.**

1. To me it's a wonderful example of the hidden forces of the planet.
2. The heat hit us like a brick wall.
3. I had to leave them at the entrance.
4. It is his experience, and a 15-man team, that kept us alive as we filmed this geological wonder.
5. At this point I had expected to step into a bright orange ice-suit and put on a big respiration backpack.
6. As the air became hotter, I only hoped that I would survive to tell the tale.
7. It wasn't until 2001 that miners, searching for lead, eventually discovered it.
8. It was a moment of calm that didn't last long.

A	B	C	D	E	F	G

