

Talk/Lecture 3: Listen and fill in the blanks.

amazing

developed

horizon

magnetic

natural

northern

occur

ocean

spirits

translated

If you have ever seen the (1)_____ lights, you know that they are one of most beautiful sights. People often seeing a faint glow appear on the (2)_____ in the night sky. Then they may see wonderful colors such as green, red, blue, or purple stretch the sky. The shape of the northern lights can be straight lines, or it may be curved like the letter S, or round, just like a wheel. The colored lights and shapes move across the night sky, like (3)_____ waves. No matter what the color or shape is, the northern lights are truly an (4)_____ sight.

Many people know them by their common name "the northern lights." But do you know the meaning of the real name? The scientific name for the northern lights from Latin. It is *aurora borealis*. In English, the Latin word *aurora* translates to "dawn," which means "early morning." The Latin word *borealis* means "northern." So *aurora borealis* can be (5)_____ as "northern, dawn," which describes the look of the northern sky in the very early morning.

If you have never seen *aurora borealis*, you are not alone. This (6)_____ phenomenon is not common in most parts of the world. In fact, many people travel or go on tours to places where they can see the northern lights. Where are these places? The best place to see *aurora borealis* is near the North Pole - the northernmost point of Earth - especially in areas such as northern Greenland, Scandinavia, and Alaska.

Many years ago, before modern science, people (7)_____ stories, myths, and legends to explain natural phenomena such as *aurora borealis*. Finnish people called them "fox fires," and believed the lights were caused when foxes made fires to keep warm. The Inuit people of northern Canada and Greenland believed that the *aurora* was the dance of animal (8)_____ such as deer, seals, and whales.

The way the northern lights work is similar to a neon sign. Gas travels along (9)_____ lines. The lights (10)_____ when electric particles - electrons - collide with gas atoms, causing the atoms to give off light. The result is the amazing sweeps and waves of color that you can see. It's a wonderful sight if you happen to be in the right place at the right time.