UNIT 13

READING

The Blue Lights of Silver Cliff

Look at the picture. What do you think the "blue lights" are?

Today, the town of Silver Cliff, Colorado, has a population of only 100 people. Once, however, it was a prosperous mining town where thousands came with dreams of finding silver and making their fortune.

Late one night in 1880, a group of miners were headed back to their camp after a good time in town. They were still laughing and joking as they approached the graveyard on a hill outside Silver Cliff. Then one of the men yelled and pointed toward the graveyard. The others fell silent. On top of each grave, they saw flamelike blue lights. These eerie lights seemed to be dancing on the graves, disappearing and then appearing again.

This was the first sighting of the blue lights of Silver Cliff. There have been many other sightings over the years. In 1969, Edward Lineham from National Geographic magazine visited the graveyard. Lineham's article tells of his experience: "I saw them. . . . Dim, round spots of blue-white light glowed ethereally among the graves. I . . . stepped forward for a better look. They vanished. I aimed my flashlight at one eerie glow and switched it on. It revealed only a tombstone."



Lineham and others have suggested various explanations for the lights. The lights might have been reflections of lights from the town, but Silver Cliff's lights seemed too dim to have this effect. They could have been caused by radioactive ore, though there's no evidence of radioactivity. They may also have been caused by gases from rotting matter. This usually happens in swamps, however, and the area around Silver Cliff is dry. Or, perhaps, the lights are from the helmets of dead miners wandering the hills in search of their fortune.

A. Read the article. Choose the best option for each question.

1. How has Silver Cliff changed over the years?

- It has become a bustling city.
- It went from a prosperous mining town to a small town with only 100 people.
- It has always remained the same size.
- It is now a famous tourist destination.

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2. Where were the blue lights first seen?

- On top of each grave in the cemetery.
- In the town square.
- Near the mining camp.
- In the forest outside of town.

3. Who saw the blue lights first?

- A group of tourists.
- A local sheriff.
- Edward Lineham from National Geographic.
- A group of miners.

4. What do the blue lights look like?

- Bright and blinding.
- Small and green.
- Flamelike and ethereal.
- Flashing and colorful.

B. Identify whether the statements are facts or opinions. Check (✓) Fact or Opinion.

	FACT	OPINION
1. Today, the town of Silver Cliff has a population of 100 people.	☐	☐
2. The miners saw flamelike blue lights on top of each grave.	☐	☐
3. Edward Lineham suggested various explanations for the lights.	☐	☐
4. The lights were actually reflections of lights from the town.	☐	☐
5. There was no evidence of radioactivity.	☐	☐
6. The lights were from the helmets of dead miners.	☐	☐

LIVEWORKSHEETS