Name: _____

SUMMIT 1 - UNIT 9 - LESSON 4

PART 1

On October 15, (1)_____, a shocking news story caught the media's attention worldwide. In the state of Colorado in the western United States, a (2)_____ boy named Falcon Heene had somehow taken off in a hot-air (3)_____ and was drifting helplessly across the sky. The balloon, which was shaped like a silver-colored flying saucer, was reported to be traveling at an altitude of more than 2,000 meters, and the public was alarmed.

Richard Heene, the boy's father - who had built the balloon - said he was handling it when he accidentally (4)_____ and it floated off. When Heene and his wife realized that Falcon was missing - and when Falcon's brother said he had seen Falcon climb into the box that was attached to the balloon, they were very (5)_____ and called for help.

Police and TV-news helicopters raced to catch up with the balloon while (6)_____ vehicles followed on the ground.

Non-stop TV news programs interviewed experts to discuss how to stop the balloon and save the boy. On the Internet, bloggers and members of social networking sites referred to Falcon as Balloon Boy, and their posts were filled with (7)_____ about what had happened. More people used Google to search for "Balloon Boy" that day than for any other topic. And the events were a source of (8)_____ at schools, workplaces, and dinner tables.

The balloon traveled for almost (9)_____ toward the city of Denver, and the Denver airport was closed down. The balloon finally landed on the ground, after having flown for about (10)_____. But when emergency vehicles got to the balloon, the boy wasn't there. The police searched all over, worried that he may have fallen out of the balloon during the flight. Someone had even reported seeing something fall from it while it was high in the air. News programs reported the events as they happened, and their viewers worried about the boy's (11)_____.

But later that afternoon everyone was surprised to discover that the boy had been hiding in a (12)_____ in a room above the garage at his home. He said that he had been hiding because his father was angry with him. Everyone was greatly relieved that the incident hadn't ended in (13)_____ but instead had had a happy ending.

PART 2

After the good news, the family appeared on TV for interviews. On CNN, Falcon was asked why he had stayed in the garage that whole day. Falcon turned to (14)_____ and responded, "You guys said that, um, we did this for the show." And on two other programs

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the next day, when interviewers asked his father about that statement, Falcon got (15)_____ and vomited on TV clearly very nervous about the whole affair. News agencies began to be (16)_____ that perhaps the event had been a hoax after all, and the police and other local government authorities began to investigate. One thing authorities discovered was that the balloon could not have carried the weight of a child-so the claim that Falcon was in it could never have been true. More information was discovered about Falcon's father. He was a storm chaser, a UFO (17)_____, and thought of himself as a part-time scientist; he had designed the balloon as an experimental model for an alternative type of transportation.

He had a strong interest in mysteries and conspiracies. He was also a part-time actor who regularly proposed ideas for new TV shows-for example, one in which he would explore (18)_____ mysteries. He even had an idea for a reality show featuring his own family.

Later, Falcon's mother, Mayumi, finally admitted she had known that her son was hiding in their home, and that both parents had instructed their children not to (19)_____ to the police or news media. Police finally determined that the event had actually been nothing more than a publicity stunt; Richard Heene thought it would help get his family on TV for that reality show. Early estimates placed the cost of the rescue attempt at about $2 million U.S. dollars. In the end, Falcon's parents agreed to repay (20)_____. In addition, Richard Heene spent 90 days in prison, was required to do 100 hours of community service, and had to write a formal apology to the police. Mayumi Heene spent (21)_____ in prison. The Heenes finally sold the balloon for $2,500 and donated that money to victims of the 2011 earthquake and tsunami in (22)_____.

Many people noted that most TV reporters had presented the story as true right from the beginning, even though there were clear questions about whether or not the boy was even in the balloon. Some reported that Falcon had fallen out of the balloon, without having confirmed that (23)_____ either. Some critics also questioned the judgment of providing live TV coverage of the balloon when a six-year-old child could have been seen falling to his death.

In the end, many concluded that competition among news agencies to report this (24)_____ caused many to focus on being first instead of getting the story right.

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