Unit 4: Exercise 8

Read the information. Then do the IELTS Reading task.

The text has seven paragraphs, A–G. Choose the correct heading for each paragraph and move it into the gap. You do not need to use all the headings.

- You have already looked through the headings. Now, read the title and look quickly over the paragraphs to get a general idea of what the passage is about.
- Read the first paragraph and decide which headings might fit and which do not.
- Read the first paragraph again in more detail and choose the one heading that fits best.
- Do the same for the other paragraphs. If you have any time at the end, check your answers. If you have the same answer for two paragraphs, you need to look again!

The meaning and celebration of Matariki

Henry Wilkes travels to New Zealand to investigate an ancient Māori tradition

A Over the cliffs at Mission Bay in Auckland, New Zealand, an incredible number of kites give extra colour to the cold blue sky. It is no coincidence that so many people have gathered here to fly them; they have come together to celebrate the arrival of the Matariki, the group of seven stars that appear in mid-winter. Many of the kite fliers are Māori, descendants of the people who first arrived in New Zealand in the 13th century, but others have European ancestors, or are recent immigrants to this country. What all of them have in common is that they are keen to take part in the celebration, and a key part of this is the designing and making of a kite. The Māori used to make them out of pampas grass, flax and the bark of the mulberry tree, and would often decorate them with shells or feathers. Nowadays, although it is easy enough to make a modern plastic kite, people prefer to follow their customs and use traditional methods and materials.

B Before the Europeans began to arrive and settle in New Zealand, festivities associated with the Matariki were popular amongst all Māori tribes. They gradually began to disappear, eventually coming to an end with the last traditional festival held in the 1940s. It wasn't until the beginning of the 21st century that people began calling in large numbers for Matariki to be brought back as a cultural event. In 2000, around 500 people attended a community gathering and public firework display in Hastings, New Zealand, to mark the return of Matariki. This year, over 20,000 people are expected to participate in the same event. And around the rest of New Zealand, other similar events are co-ordinated.

C Māori have several stories about the origins of the Matariki. One is connected to their creation myth, in which the god of the weather and winds threw his eyes into the heavens, where they became the seven stars. In another version, the god of the forests, Tāne Mahuta, became jealous of a very bright star which everyone admired. He angrily threw the star to destroy it but instead it broke up into seven smaller stars. In a third myth, the main star is a mother and the six smaller ones are her daughters. Regardless of the origins, Māori communities have traditionally celebrated in similar ways.

D Although Māori living in New Zealand recognise January 1st as the official start of the year, it is the appearance of the Matariki which traditionally marks the beginning of the Māori New Year. Of course, people living in different parts of the world will be able to see the cluster of seven stars at different times of year. However, for New Zealanders hoping to see the Matariki, they should keep an eye out from the second week

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of June. If they look towards the north-east horizon, slightly to the west of where the sun rises, they should have a good chance of spotting it in the tail of the Milky Way. Of course, it is best to get up an hour before dawn, so the stars are bright enough to be easily noticed. A pair of binoculars can come in handy, too.

E Like the first people to settle in Tonga, Samoa, Niue, the Cook Islands, Hawaii and Tahiti, the Māori were great sailors. All these Polynesian peoples were able to travel long distances over water by observing the position of the stars. The seven stars that made up the Matariki were especially useful due to the fact that they changed position during the year, showing a clear direction for the huge traditional canoes to follow. It's easy to see the common ancestry of the people of Polynesia when you look at the names for the Matariki in the different countries: it is *Matali'I* in Samoa, *Makali'I* in Hawaii, and *Mataliki* in Tonga, for example.

F Nowadays, as in the past, Matariki celebrations provide an excellent opportunity for communities to unite. It is a time when people reflect on the experiences of the year which has just passed, give thanks for the good things they have received from the land and the sea, and look forward to the year ahead. It is also the perfect time for older members of the extended family or local tribe to share their knowledge with the young. They may teach them traditional songs or stories, demonstrate old ways of fishing or catching eels, or show them how to prepare *hangi* (food which is cooked on heated stones in a hole in the ground). For many Māori children, this contact and experience gives them a strong sense of cultural identity and belonging.

G While Māori arts such as carving and weaving were practised during Matariki celebrations in the past, the arrival of the seven stars had another significant role. Māori decided when to plant their crops according to how easily the stars could be seen. If they were clear and bright, Māori believed that the growing season would be a productive one, and they would plant their crops in September. But if they appeared to be out-of-focus and closer together than usual, they knew that the winter was going to be an extremely cold one. This meant they wouldn't start planting until October. But Matariki also occurred at harvest time, so there was plenty of food to share around between family members and visitors. This kind of feasting is still very much part of the modern celebrations.

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ii Different ancient legends told in New Zealand about how the Matariki were created

iii The possibility of the Matariki replacing traditional national holidays

iv Current interest in a craft once commonly associated with celebrating Matariki

ix The kind of traditional dishes guests can expect to receive during Matariki

i The role of the Matariki in bringing different generations of people together

vi Other cultures' legends about the origin of the seven stars

vii The Matariki's influence on customs associated with agriculture

viii The decline and later revival of the celebration of Matariki

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v The importance of the Matariki as a navigational tool in the past

x A strategy for locating the formation of the stars that make up the Matariki

Paragraph A

Paragraph B

Paragraph C

Paragraph D

Paragraph E

Paragraph F

Paragraph G

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