IELTS Reading practice

Paragraph headings

18. ***Read the following paragraphs, taken from The Guardian newspaper.***

A) The hunt for intelligent species outside Earth may be a staple of literature and film – but it is happening in real life, too. Nasa probes are on the lookout for planets outside our solar system, and astronomers are carefully listening for any messages being beamed through space. How awe-inspiring it would be to get confirmation that we are not alone in the universe, to finally speak to an alien race. Wouldn't it?

B) Well no, according to the eminent physicist Stephen Hawking. "If aliens visit us, the outcome would be much as when Columbus landed in America, which didn't turn out well for the Native Americans," Hawking has said in a forthcoming documentary made for the Discovery Channel. He argues that, instead of trying to find and communicate with life in the cosmos, humans would be better off doing everything they can to avoid contact.

C) Hawking believes that, based on the sheer number of planets that scientists know must exist, we are not the only life-form in the universe. There are, after all, billions and billions of stars in our galaxy alone, with, it is reasonable to expect, an even greater number of planets orbiting them. And it is not unreasonable to expect some of that alien life to be intelligent, and capable of interstellar communication.

LIVEWORKSHEETS

Match each paragraph with one of the headings below.

1. A pessimistic prediction.
2. The probability of life existing on other planets.
3. Astronomers send messages through space.
4. How to avoid contact with aliens.
5. The search for alien life-forms.
6. Life-forms exist on other planets.

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