



Paragraph I

On April 26, 1986, the worst nuclear accident in history took place at the Chernobyl nuclear power plant near Pripyat, Ukraine.

A large cloud of (1) _____ radioactive elements was (2) _____ into the air when one of the plant's nuclear reactors exploded and started a huge fire. The plant was only two miles (about 3.22 kilometers) away from Pripyat, and its 45,000 (3) _____ were evacuated within 24 hours, never to return. Another 85,000 people living within 18 miles (about 29 kilometers) of Chernobyl were (4) _____ in the next month. Over the years, as many as 350,000 people have left their homes due to high radiation levels. Today, it is a ghost town that is being taken over by surrounding forests.

Paragraph II

The wind carried the radioactive cloud over large parts of Europe, as far away as Scandinavia and England. Over 55,000 square miles (about 142,449 square kilometers) were contaminated, but 70% of the radiation settled on nearby Belarus, which has since suffered hundreds of billions of dollars in damage.

Some scientists (5) _____ that more than 200,000 people have died since 1986 as a result of the accident, and another 100,000 deaths from cancer may occur in the coming years. Others think that these numbers are much smaller.

Over five million people still live in contaminated areas, and their health may be (6) _____ from eating contaminated food, such as fish from the rivers, mushrooms and berries from the forests, and meat or milk from cattle and sheep that graze on the land. Several European countries will not accept food products grown in these areas. Many workers have moved away, and life is difficult for those left behind. Some even believe that the accident (7) _____ to the collapse of the Soviet Union.

Paragraph III

April 26, 2006, marked the 20th anniversary of the (8) _____. Ceremonies were held in Ukraine to remember its (9) _____ and to bring attention to survivors who continue to be affected by it. In 2010, workers from 27 countries began building a new structure over the damaged reactor to prevent further contamination.

One positive outcome of this disaster is that the safety of nuclear power plants has (10) _____. Many nations now have strict safeguards and codes in place to prevent similar accidents. Unfortunately, a similar accident occurred in Japan in 2011 after an earthquake triggered a tsunami. Has the Fukushima nuclear disaster brought about even more safety regulations?