

- G. Tourists can take pleasure from swimming in the shallow waters of the river.
H. From the beacon to the hotel.

TASK 4

Read the text below. Choose from (A-H) the one which best fits each space (17-22). There are two choices you do not need to use. Write your answers on the separate answer sheet.

NATURE WATCH

Wenlock Edge

At wood's edge, on a rabbit-scrabbled bank, a patch of white sweet violets, five yards square, glows under trees. There is so much energy in the air: a flash of sunlight catches the flowers and is gone under heavy cloud; in a matter of minutes there's rain, then snow. I take cover against an old field maple on the wood's medieval hedge bank.

Laid centuries ago, the maple's trunk grows in a right angle, (17) I watch snowflakes blow over violets and, as the two become almost indistinguishable, air and earth fill with white flowers.

Violets were dedicated to Persephone, (18) , and they flower while she is still down there, in derelict quarry pits and caves. For a flower beautifully adapted to (19), it also flowers too early for many of them.

Another violet enigma story says you can smell sweet violets only once. It's a myth but the fragrance contains the chemical ionone, which deadens smell receptors in the nose. Ionone may come from the Ionian nymphs (20), mythical forefather of the Ionians, the Hellenic tribe of Asia Minor (Turkey).

I can't smell them but I like Thomas Jenner's advocacy of violet oil in *A Book of Fruits and Flowers* (1653). Jenner says (21), for it "moistens the brain", and is a cure for melancholy and heaviness of spirit. These white sweet violets certainly do that just by being here.

Even in the snow, rain or hail, the flowers have an enigmatic toughness (22) They are strong and resilient. If they symbolise purity, it is of a sensual kind. [23]

- A. it's rather harmful
- B. attracting bees for pollination
- C. protecting the violets for many generations
- D. who gathered the first spring flowers for Ion
- E. it is good against headaches

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- F. that counters their reputation as delicate and fragile
 - G. who was Queen of the Underworld
 - H. which prove their unique influence

