

UNIT 42: READING COMPREHENSION

Directions: Read the following paragraphs carefully, and then answer the questions below.

“When Lightning Strikes!”

During a storm, you may look outside of your window and see a bright flash of light. This phenomenon is called “lightning,” and it is an amazing thing to see! Almost everyone has seen lightning before, but most people do not know much about it. Lightning has been studied by scientists for hundreds of years, but some facts about lightning are still a mystery!

At this very moment, there are about 1,800 thunderstorms happening. When thunder is booming, lightning is usually striking! Every year, the planet Earth has about 25 million lightning strikes. That’s a lot of lightning! If you’ve ever seen lightning strike, you know that it strikes quickly and then disappears. Well, did you know that lightning bolts travel at speeds of up to 60,000 miles per second? That’s much faster than it looks! The normal size of these bolts is 2-3 miles long: that is about 24 times the length of the street that you live on! Can you imagine how long that is?

When lightning strikes, many interesting things happen. For example, when lightning strikes the sand on a beach, it forms a piece of glass. This glass is called a “fulgurite,” and it is very rare to see! Have you ever heard the expression that “lightning never strikes twice?” Well, this is not true. In fact, lightning commonly strikes the same place multiple times. Lightning strikes the Empire State Building in New York City about 23 times a year! And, Earth is not the only planet where lightning strikes—it also strikes on Venus, Jupiter, and Saturn! It is strange to think about lightning striking in outer space, isn’t it?

Lightning is amazing and beautiful, but sometimes it can be dangerous. It is fun to watch lightning from inside your home, but you should always be careful when lightning is striking!

Directions: Answer the following questions based on the story above.

1. “This phenomenon is called ‘lightning,’ and it is an amazing thing to see!” Based on this sentence, what do you think the word ‘phenomenon’ means?

- (An amazing thing, a miracle, a scientific occurrence, etc.)
2. True or False: Scientists know everything there is to know about lightning. (False)
3. About how many thunderstorms are occurring at each moment? 1,800/18,000 (1,800)
4. How many lightning strikes does the Earth have each year? About 25 million/About 25 thousand (About 25 million)
5. The normal size of a lightning bolt is 2-3 miles long/2-3 blocks long. (2-3 miles long)
6. When lightning strikes the _____, it forms a “fulgurite.” (Sand)
7. True or False: “Lightning never strikes twice.” (False)
8. Lightning strikes the top of the _____ about 23 times a year! (Empire State Building)
9. Name one other planet where lightning strikes. _____ (Venus, Jupiter, Saturn)
10. True or False: Lightning is beautiful, but can be dangerous. (True)