九年級英語朗讀文章

1. The Northern Lights Sing in the Sky

Everyone knows the Northern Lights, also known as aurora borealis, as a beautiful natural phenomenon that lights up the northern sky. Especially during the cold winter months, these patterns seem to dance in shades of green, bringing wonder wherever they appear. What many may not be aware of, however, is that the Northern Lights don't just dance. They sing, too.

Finnish scientist Unto Liane has spent the past 15 years trying to find out why low crackling and popping sounds can be heard when the Northern Lights appear. He first became interested in the sounds 25 years ago. After attending a concert, Liane and his friends stared up at the nighttime winter sky and heard the amazing sounds. They listened without moving or saying anything. From that point on, Laine was hooked.

In the past, people said the sounds were just a product of the imagination. Others said they could be the voices of ghosts, speaking to us from the realm of the dead. Laine, however, wanted to take a more scientific approach.

Every day for the past decade and a half, Laine has kept a close watch on the skies. He has been particularly interested in nights when the Northern Lights are at their most intense. That's also when they are at their loudest. Whenever aurora borealis has put on a display, Laine has been there, so long as the weather has allowed him to. In order to pinpoint the sounds, he has a special set of microphones that he points up toward the sky.

In 2011, Laine was able to capture the sounds of a very intense aurora. He found that the sounds came from a much lower elevation than the aurora itself. This gave Laine an idea, and he came up with a theory. According to Laine, the sounds are caused by the buildup of opposite electrical charges in layers of warm and cool air. The layers are on top of each other, below the aurora. When the charges come together, this causes sparks to shoot out, and that's where the crackles and pops come from. Finally, after 15 years, Laine might have solved the mystery.

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2. Polar Bears Cope with Climate Change

As the average global temperature rises due to climate change, the amount of sea ice in the Arctic continues to decline. This is bad news for humans, as the melting ice caps are causing the sea level to rise, putting coastal towns and cities at risk of being flooded. It could also prove fatal for polar bears, who depend on the ice in more ways than one.

As of 2015, there were less than 25,000 polar bears left in the wild, according to conservation groups. In some areas of the Arctic, the polar bear population had dropped by 40 percent in the ten-year period between 2001 and 2010. Those that remain, however, have found some new ways to adapt to the warmer climate.

In the Norwegian Arctic, for example, polar bears have been observed hunting species that they have never previously hunted. Polar bears usually eat seals, which are high in fat. In order to hunt seals, polar bears have to wait on the ice for seals to pop up for air. Without the ice, other animals, such as dolphins, swim to ice-free areas of the Arctic and become food for the polar bears. Furthermore, the bears have also been seen eating part of their prey first, then hiding the rest in the snow to save for later. This behavior has never been seen before.

Other polar bears are turning to snow goose eggs as a backup source of food. According to scientists, eating 88 eggs is equal to eating one seal. However, eggs alone won't be able to save the polar bear from extinction. It will only help some bears, who have learned to adapt, survive.

Still other polar bears have started to invade Arctic towns, looking for food humans have thrown out. Not only is the food bad for the bears, but it also puts humans at risk of being attacked. A town in Northern Canada was forced to cancel trick-or-treating on Halloween in 2014 because kids were in danger of coming into contact with wandering bears. As temperatures continue to rise, though, we may have to get used to living side by side with these majestic animals.

366words

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3. Building Going Green

“Green building” is a popular term these days. You have probably heard it somewhere. You might even know that a “green building” is a construction that is considered environmentally friendly. But what does that really mean, and who decides whether a building is green or not?

In the United States, there is no governing body which says,“This building is green, and that one isn’t.” The Environmental Protection Agency does have a definition in place, though. According to the EPA, green buildings are structures that use natural resources efficiently and in a sustainable way. You might think that this is a new or very modern idea, but it actually dates back decades.

In the 1970s, buildings that used the modern “green” architecture concepts began to appear. For example, the Willis Faber and Dumas Headquarters building in England had a grass roof. It also had an atrium that was lit by natural light. In California, the Gregory Bateson Building became one of the first constructions to use solar cells to store energy from the sun.

By the following decade, people were starting to realize that besides helping the environment, green buildings could also save them money on their heating, cooling, and electric bills. Solar panels became more widely used for a renewable source of electricity. Buildings also began to be equipped with rainwater collection systems. In another decade’s time, even the White House itself was undergoing the process of turning green. Experts believe that, since 1996, the White House has saved US$300,000 a year in energy and water costs.

Today, green architecture is taking off all over the world. There is even a Global Award for Sustainable Architecture. It is handed out each year to five architects who design the most revolutionary and innovative green buildings. One of the winners in 2016, Japanese architect Kengo Kuma, designed the twisting, green-roofed Rolex Building in Dallas, Texas. In the future, more architects are expected to join in this “green trend.”

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