

## Into the night: why walking in the dark is good for the soul

### Level 1 • Pre-intermediate / Intermediate

#### 1 Warmer

- What time does it get dark at the moment where you live?
- How often do you go out after dark? Why? (For work, to meet friends ...)

#### 2 Key words

- a. Match the key words with the definitions. Then find them in the article to read them in context. The paragraph numbers will help you.

evil      footpath      lane      scent      vision      surroundings

1. a narrow road, especially in the countryside \_\_\_\_\_ (para 1)
2. a way from one place to another that people can walk along, usually in the countryside \_\_\_\_\_ (para 1)
3. a nice smell \_\_\_\_\_ (para 2)
4. all the things that are in a place and that form the experience of being there \_\_\_\_\_ (para 3)
5. the ability to see \_\_\_\_\_ (para 3)
6. very bad and cruel \_\_\_\_\_ (para 4)

pond      breeze      navigational skills      valley      reluctant      torch

7. a small electric light that you hold in your hand \_\_\_\_\_ (para 4)
8. a low area of land between mountains or hills \_\_\_\_\_ (para 8)
9. an area of water similar to a lake but smaller \_\_\_\_\_ (para 8)
10. a light wind \_\_\_\_\_ (para 8)
11. the ability you have to read a map and find your way \_\_\_\_\_ (para 10)
12. not wanting to do something \_\_\_\_\_ (para 12)

#### a. Using the key words

Use some of the key words from task a. to complete these sentences.

1. Jonathan's good \_\_\_\_\_ helped him find the path out of the forest.
2. She was having a good time, so she was \_\_\_\_\_ to leave.
3. The grass moved gently in the \_\_\_\_\_.
4. I want to see what's at the back of the garden. Where's my \_\_\_\_\_?
5. The farm was at the end of a long country \_\_\_\_\_.
6. I'm taking my grandson to see the ducks on the \_\_\_\_\_ this afternoon.

## Into the night: why walking in the dark is good for the soul

### Level 1 • Pre-intermediate / Intermediate

#### Into the night: why walking in the dark is good for the soul

Lizzie Enfield

25 October, 2020

- 1 The lights from the houses disappear as we walk along a dark country lane. We take a footpath through a field into the countryside. Thick clouds cover the moon, but my eyes get used to the darkness.
- 2 I see a tree bent by the wind and sheep sleeping at the top of a field. A fox cries, a pheasant calls and the air is full of a strong earthy scent.
- 3 "For most of history, man lived in close contact with the land," says Nigel Berman, my guide. "Walking at night is a powerful way of reconnecting with our natural surroundings. When your vision is reduced, your other senses become stronger."
- 4 We have learnt to be afraid of the dark. We connect it with evil and depression, and we keep it away with electric lights. But in places where it is dark for much of the winter, the people who live there put on warm clothes, take a head torch and go for a walk.
- 5 Now the nights are getting longer, it is the time to go into the countryside, or walk across a deserted beach, to see starlit skies and moonlit rocks, see owls and bats, and breathe in the night air.
- 6 Nigel and I walk from the village of Glynde across the South Downs towards the town of Lewes. It's a walk I know well by day, but at night, everything is different, and it becomes a mini adventure.
- 7 When Nigel told me not to bring a torch, I was worried. I can't remember the last time I used my night vision, and I'm not even sure how it works.
- 8 From the top of the hill, we go down past groups of trees into the darker valley, walking towards the strange light of a pond where we stop and sit down. I feel the breeze on my face, hear the sound of leaves and watch the clouds moving and slowly changing colour against the sky.
- 9 Normally, at this time of night, I have a glass of wine in front of the television, but being out in the countryside is a better way to relax. I forget about work and family problems, and my mind calms.
- 10 It's important to choose a walk that you know well by day so that you know what features to pick out by night. You should have good navigational skills; wear a hat, gloves, warm clothes; take a flask of hot drink; and wait for good weather.
- 11 I hear a deep unfamiliar bird sound. Nigel tells me it is a raven. We continue walking up the chalk path that leads up Saxon Down. We climb carefully in the dark.
- 12 As we reach the top, the lights of Lewes appear below. I have enjoyed the night walk and am reluctant to walk back down. Walking at night is like discovering a new world.

© Guardian News and Media 2020

First published in *The Guardian*, 25/10/2020

## Into the night: why walking in the dark is good for the soul

### Level 1 • Pre-intermediate / Intermediate

#### 3 Comprehension check

Are these statements true (T) or false (F) according to the article?

1. The author is alone on her night walk.
2. Streetlights light up the country lane at the beginning of the author's walk.
3. She hears and sees new and unusual things on her walk.
4. She feels nervous and worried when she sits at the pond.
5. She would prefer to be at home with a glass of wine and the television.
6. She is afraid of the dark and is happy to see the lights of the town.
7. In northern countries where it is dark in winter, people go for walks in the dark.
8. When you go for a walk in the dark, choose a walk that you know well.

#### 4 Language

Join the sentence halves. Each sentence contains an adjective + noun pair from the article.

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| 1. Thick ...  | a. ... clothes on a winter night walk. |
| 2. They walked along a dark country ...                     | b. ... surroundings.                   |
| 3. The walk was a mini ...                                  | c. ... clouds covered the moon.        |
| 4. Walking at night helps us reconnect with our natural ... | d. ... adventure.                      |
| 5. Wear warm ...  | e. ... vision instead of a torch.      |
| 6. Use your night ...                                       | f. ... lane.                           |

#### 5 Discussion

- How do you feel after reading the article? Would you like to go for a walk in the dark?
- The guide says, 'When your vision is reduced, your other senses become stronger.' Have you ever experienced this?
- Do you know anyone who is afraid of the dark?

#### 6 Webquest

Find out more about one of these places from the article and share your findings.

- the South Downs
- Lewes