

3 Read the first part of the article (lines 1–29). Answer the questions in your notebook.

- 1 Where is the author?
- 2 What time of day might it be?
- 3 Who is Cedric?
- 4 What is Cedric doing?
- 5 Where did the train journey start?
- 6 What does the train make stops for?

READING FOCUS Gapped text

4 Read the whole article. In your notebook, match gaps 1–5 with fragments A–F. There is one extra fragment.

- A This is nature in all its primeval magnificence, where troubles of the modern world become utterly insignificant. It is also a place of fun.
- B Okahandja, a country town of dusty roads and weather-beaten stores, appears suddenly and is quickly left behind. The hills recede into the distance and now we are in vast grasslands dotted with termite mounds, skyscraper sandcastles of the insect world.
- C Then we see a flock of vultures, wheeling in the sky like scraps of burned paper above a carcass in the bush. Next there are springbok and kudu, then wildebeest and zebra, grazing in a private game reserve.
- D Journeys on the Desert Express tend to be a bit out of the ordinary and this one is no exception, starting with the train's wildly inaccurate name.
- E But this is where we stop for breakfast and the dune sprinter appears, ready to guide us to the top. This strange place is now a tourist playground. Led by the train staff, we climb a massive dune.
- F The sense of an extraterrestrial experience is heightened by a line of yellow lights twinkling on the horizon, like a lone settlement on a hostile planet. This is the land the Nama people call Namib, meaning 'plain without end'.

Beside the train, the monotony is broken by two lines of wooden telegraph poles, marching into infinity, that deepen a sense of loneliness. ⁴ ? From the crest, there is a view to the ocean, three miles distant, shrouded in fog created by the convergence of desert heat and the icy Benguela Current. In days gone by, this was a place of death for mariners, their ships impaled on reefs. Now close to shore, a vessel hovers in the gloom like a ghost ship suspended in midair. Behind us lies a panorama of haunting beauty as we look back from the top of the dune over the Namib Desert. The desert is two billion years old and its stillness exerts an almost spiritual influence on travellers who take the time to stand and stare. ⁵ ? Running down a dune is easier than trekking up it, especially when you bound in great leaps and fly through the air. The excitement of running down a vast mountain of sand over, we approach the end of our journey and discover that the yellow lights we saw in the distance at dawn were the outskirts of Swakopmund. The ghosts of Schutztruppe cavalry who trotted through its streets are long gone, but happily the railway they left behind survives in the land God made in anger.

5 In your notebook, replace the words underlined below with the correct forms of the verbs in blue in the article. How many of these verbs could describe how you move? When?

- 1 The moths flew quickly and lightly around the lights. fluttered
- 2 The wheels turned and the old train moved slowly and heavily out of the station. (x2)
- 3 I watched the birds flying round and round in the sky.
- 4 I had eaten too much and I walked unsteadily out of the restaurant.
- 5 The horses moved with quick, short steps through the streets.
- 6 Nomads have wandered through the desert for centuries.
- 7 I took a running jump from the top of the dune and landed in the sand.

6 In your notebook, write the correct forms of the words and phrases underlined in the article for each gap.

Beautiful Mexico

Mexico's aptly named landscapes (the Copper Canyon really has a copper ¹ tinge) are incredibly diverse, from the ² ? of the coastline of Baja California with its picturesque ³ ? and the bone-dry and ⁴ ? desert towns of the north, to the ancient Mayan ⁵ ? and gorgeous, cosmopolitan tourist playgrounds of the south. You can walk through ⁶ ? rainforests, climb volcanoes, watch whales in a ⁷ ? ocean, scuba dive on ⁸ ? teeming with marine life or visit nature reserves to view protected animal species.

FOCUS ON WORDS | Descriptive verbs/adjectives

7 2.16 Look at the words highlighted in the article and match them with their synonyms below. Listen and check. Then find a noun that each word refers to and write an example sentence with each collocation.

- | | |
|-------------------------------|---------------|
| 1 very tall = <u>towering</u> | 4 shining = ? |
| 2 disappear = ? | 5 reduces = ? |
| 3 covered = ? | 6 rings = ? |

8 **SPEAKING** Discuss what your country has to offer to the following types of visitors.

- Those on a tight budget.
- Those looking for a bit of luxury.
- Those hungry for adventure.