



Manhattan during the blackout. You can't see: the Empire State building, the Rockefeller Center and the Chrysler building.

It was half past nine one hot evening in July 1977. The passengers on a plane flying into New York's Kennedy Airport were enjoying the sight of Manhattan below them. Suddenly the city disappeared. The sea of lights turned into darkness.

At the same time subways and elevators stopped, street lights and traffic lights went out. Water pumps failed and left kitchens, bathrooms and toilets without water.

The blackout lasted for 25 terrible hours. During that time almost nothing worked in New York except telephones and transistor radios. Buses and cars moved as long as they had gas. Cabs charged five times the normal fare. Banks, offices, factories, and most stores remained closed. Water became a luxury and air-conditioning a happy memory.

But in the ghettos, looting and burning started. Ten minutes after the lights went out, the city's poor were already breaking into stores. All in all, storeowners lost about a billion dollars during the blackout.

In August 2003 the lights went out once more, not only in New York, but also in other big US and Canadian cities.



The lights of Manhattan by night without blackout.

enjoy: like
disappear: go away
darkness: obscurity
subway (Am): underground
elevator: lift
fail: be unsuccessful

last: continue
terrible: awful
gas (Am): petrol
cab (Am): taxi
charge: tax
fare: price for transport

remain: stay
memory: mind
looting: stealing
billion (Am): 1000000000

Make questions:

The telephone works. ... *Does the telephone work?*

You can see the lights.

The radio works.

The offices are closed.

The blackout lasted for a long time. (HOW LONG)?

You have lost the money. (WHERE)

Somebody broke into the store. (WHO)

The light went out. (WHY)

The fare is 5 dollar. (HOW MUCH)

The bus stops. (WHY)