

READ THE PASSAGE

Think about how the different kinds of salt are similar and different.

Flavoring the Globe

Most people are familiar with plain white table salt. But if you think that salt is just a bunch of tiny white crystals, you're mistaken. This common seasoning has many different colors and flavors.

French sea salt comes from seawater. The larger grains and milder flavor of this salt make it a popular choice for meals. Some people even like to sprinkle it on chocolate cakes and cookies.

Hawaiian sea salt, on the other hand, has a rosy color that comes from the clay in the region. The mellow flavor of the salt is perfect for pork dishes.

Like Hawaiian sea salt, Australian river salt is also pink. Its color, however, comes from algae in the groundwater. The soft pink flakes melt easily on warm foods.

Mediterranean black lava salt resembles tiny cubes of coal. This salt is made by mixing sea salt from the Mediterranean sea with charcoal from volcanic lava. The dark crystals, unlike the other salts mentioned, add a dramatic color contrast to baked potatoes.

Sampling different salts is a wonderful way to travel the world without leaving home! Try sprinkling one of the many varieties of salt on your food and enjoy the unique flavor and texture.

STRATEGY PRACTICE

How are the different kinds of salt mentioned in the passage similar? How are they different?

SKILL PRACTICE

Read each question. Fill in the bubble next to the correct answer.

1. What makes French sea salt popular?
Ⓐ the dark color
Ⓑ the fine grains
Ⓒ a chocolate flavor
Ⓓ a mild taste
2. What causes the rosy color of Hawaiian sea salt?
Ⓐ the regional clay
Ⓑ algae from underground water
Ⓒ volcanic lava
Ⓓ pork
3. Which statement is an opinion?
Ⓐ Most people are familiar with plain white table salt.
Ⓑ French sea salt comes from seawater.
Ⓒ Australian river salt is pink.
Ⓓ Sampling different salts is a wonderful way to travel the world without leaving home.
4. How are Australian and Hawaiian salts similar?
Ⓐ Both melt easily.
Ⓑ Both come from the sea.
Ⓒ Both are pink.
Ⓓ Both have large grains.

READ THE PASSAGE

Pay attention to how the main idea and details about synchronized swimming are organized.

A Splashy Sport

The sport of synchronized swimming is one part swimming, one part dancing, and one part gymnastics. This unique sport features a pair or a team of athletes performing acrobatic routines in the water. It is one of the most difficult sports because it requires concentration, athletic skill, endurance, and gracefulness.

Professional synchronized swimmers need strong basic skills. They must be good swimmers and must be able to hold their breath underwater for long periods of time. They must also be able to tread water, supporting themselves without touching the bottom of the pool. The swimmers learn challenging moves, such as holding themselves upside down vertically in the water while moving their legs and rotating their bodies. They also learn how to lift their teammates out of the water and to stay perfectly in sync with each other.

You will find synchronized swim teams throughout the country. They compete with each other and give performances to audiences of all ages. The sport of synchronized swimming is sure to take your breath away, whether you're watching or participating.

STRATEGY PRACTICE

What details does the author use in the second paragraph to support the main idea expressed in the first paragraph? List at least two details.

SKILL PRACTICE

Read each question. Fill in the bubble next to the correct answer.

1. Which one is a fact about synchronized swimming?
Ⓐ It is one of the most difficult sports.
Ⓑ The moves are very challenging.
Ⓒ Routines include vertical positions.
Ⓓ Everyone enjoys watching it.
2. Which of these is *not* important in synchronized swimming?
Ⓐ the ability to hold your breath
Ⓑ knowing how to tread water
Ⓒ the strength to lift other swimmers
Ⓓ the ability to touch the bottom of the pool
3. What do you think it means to tread water?
Ⓐ to hold your breath underwater
Ⓑ to swim upside down
Ⓒ to keep moving so you stay on the surface of the water
Ⓓ to swim with great speed across the pool
4. Which of the following is an opinion about synchronized swimming?
Ⓐ All of the movements are graceful.
Ⓑ A team has two or more athletes.
Ⓒ There are teams across the country.
Ⓓ The sport includes dance moves.

READ THE PASSAGE

Look for cause-and-effect relationships and how the author uses them to organize the text.

Dandelions to the Rescue

Some people consider the hardy dandelion to be an annoying weed, despite its sunny yellow blossoms, because it grows quickly and chokes out other plants. These people work hard, therefore, to remove dandelions from their lawns. However, this useful plant has played an important role in American history. And it may even have found its way to your dinner table.

Early settlers brought the dandelion from Europe to North America, and, as a result, the aggressive plant spread. But the settlers had a good reason for bringing the plant with them. They relied on dandelions for food and medicine. They ate the green leaves and roasted the roots to make a hot drink. Because dandelion greens are a good source of vitamins and minerals, it is likely that dandelions saved lives during times when food was scarce.

You don't have to be a starving settler to eat tasty dandelion greens. The key is to pick the leaves in the spring, before the flowers form. The young leaves are tender and less bitter. You can add the smaller leaves to salads, but larger leaves should be steamed to bring out the flavor. Put a little salt and olive oil on the greens. You'll be surprised by how tasty this common weed can be.

STRATEGY PRACTICE

Underline the words and phrases that signal a cause-and-effect relationship. Then describe one effect of eating dandelions.

SKILL PRACTICE

Read each question. Fill in the bubble next to the correct answer.

1. Which statement is an opinion?
Ⓐ Dandelions have a delicious flavor.
Ⓑ Settlers got vitamins from dandelions.
Ⓒ Settlers brought the plant to North America.
Ⓓ People today still eat dandelions.
2. Based on information in the passage, how did dandelions most likely save lives?
Ⓐ The flowers were a source of food for farm animals.
Ⓑ The greens provided vitamins and minerals.
Ⓒ Dandelions were the only healthful food available.
Ⓓ The roots were a good source of water.
3. Dandelion leaves should be picked early in the spring because they _____.
Ⓐ have more vitamins then
Ⓑ become bitter as they grow
Ⓒ require less salt and olive oil then
Ⓓ are easier to find growing in lawns
4. Dandelions are weeds because _____.
Ⓐ they take over where other plants grow
Ⓑ they are a good source of vitamins
Ⓒ they grow in lawns
Ⓓ no one grows them as food

READ THE PASSAGE

Think about how the events in the passage are organized.

A Tasty Accident

Antonio López de Santa Anna, a former president of Mexico, was living in New York in the late 1860s. While he was there, he met with Thomas Adams, an inventor. Santa Anna shared with Adams his idea for an invention—a new process, really, for making rubber products such as tires.

Rubber is a natural product, but it's expensive. Santa Anna thought it would be possible to blend the rubber with chicle (CHIK-ul), the milky juice of a tropical tree. That would make rubber products much cheaper to produce. Adams told Santa Anna that he was willing to try. Later, Santa Anna arranged for one ton of chicle to be shipped to Adams from Mexico.

Adams experimented for about a year, trying different blends of rubber and chicle. None of them were successful. The inventor still had plenty of chicle left over and wondered what to do with it. Then he remembered Santa Anna's stories of people chewing chicle in Mexico. So Adams made a small batch of chewing gum, packaged it, and sold it in local stores. The soft and springy gum was much tastier than other American gum, which was made from wax or tree sap.

Although Adams's original idea was a failure, chewing gum was a success. In 1871, he invented a machine to manufacture gum so he wouldn't have to make it by hand. Adams enjoyed success for the rest of his life, and people have enjoyed all kinds of tasty gum for years.

STRATEGY PRACTICE

Underline the words, phrases, and dates that signal sequence. Then summarize what Adams did with the leftover chicle.

SKILL PRACTICE

Read each question. Fill in the bubble next to the correct answer.

1. Which event happened after Adams experimented with chicle?
 - (A) He met Santa Anna.
 - (B) He invented a machine to make gum.
 - (C) Santa Anna became president of Mexico.
 - (D) Americans began to chew wax gum.
2. What happened as a result of the failed experiments with rubber?
 - (A) Santa Anna told Adams about chewing chicle.
 - (B) Santa Anna moved to New York.
 - (C) Adams made chewing gum from chicle.
 - (D) Adams received one ton of chicle.
3. Which statement expresses an opinion?
 - (A) Adams's gum was tasty.
 - (B) Chicle comes from the juice of a tree.
 - (C) Rubber is a natural product.
 - (D) Santa Anna lived in New York.
4. Which event happened first?
 - (A) Adams invented a machine to make gum.
 - (B) Adams experimented with chicle.
 - (C) Adams received a shipment of chicle.
 - (D) Adams learned about chicle from Santa Anna.

READ THE PASSAGE

Think about the sequence that the author uses to tell the events of the story.

The Rafting Trip

Tina took the helmet from Dale, the rafting instructor who would be guiding the group down the river. Tina pushed her hair out of her face and fitted the helmet on her head. Then she fastened the strap. “I’ve never had to wear a helmet on a boat before,” she complained.

“This isn’t really a boat,” said Dale. “It’s a raft,” he explained in a casual tone. “A raft is filled with air and it doesn’t have an engine.” Dale picked up a stack of life jackets and began distributing them to people as they waited to climb into the raft. “We’ll hit some choppy water in the river,” he told everyone. “And we want all of you to be safe.”

“But I feel silly in this helmet,” Tina said. “Do I really need it?” Stepping forward to get a life jacket, she caught her foot in a rope that was coiled up near the raft. Tina stumbled forward in surprise and, with a shriek, fell down onto the pile of rope.

Dale smiled at Tina as she untangled herself. “Yes, you really do need it,” he answered, holding out his hand to help Tina up.

Tina stood up carefully. “You know,” she said, “I think you’re right.”

STRATEGY PRACTICE What is the message of the story, and which sentence delivers the message?

SKILL PRACTICE Read each question. Fill in the bubble next to the correct answer.

1. What caused Tina to fall?
Ⓐ getting tangled in the raft’s rope
Ⓑ not being able to see out of her helmet
Ⓒ tripping on a life jacket
Ⓓ hitting some choppy water
2. What did Dale do immediately after giving everyone their helmets?
Ⓐ He asked if anyone wanted a life jacket.
Ⓑ He helped Tina stand up again.
Ⓒ He picked up life jackets to hand out.
Ⓓ He took a helmet from Tina.
3. Why did Dale want everyone to wear a helmet?
Ⓐ because he knew Tina would trip
Ⓑ because he thought rafts were more dangerous than boats
Ⓒ because he did not have enough life jackets
Ⓓ because he wanted everyone to be safe
4. What was the effect of Tina’s fall?
Ⓐ Dale let Tina remove her helmet.
Ⓑ Dale decided to be more careful with rope.
Ⓒ Tina decided the helmet was silly.
Ⓓ Tina realized she needed the helmet.