

Active Reading

Section 2: Air, Noise, and Light Pollution

Read the passage below and answer the questions that follow.

Several minerals that form in long, thin fibers and that are valued for their strength and resistance to heat are called asbestos.

Asbestos is primarily used as an insulator and as a fire retardant, and it was used extensively in building materials. The U.S. government banned the use of most asbestos products in the early 1970s. Exposure to asbestos in the air is dangerous. Asbestos fibers that are inhaled can cut and scar the lungs, which causes the disease asbestosis. Victims of the disease have more and more difficulty breathing and may eventually die of heart failure. Schools in the United States have taken this threat seriously. Billions of dollars have been spent to remove asbestos from school buildings.

IDENTIFYING MAIN IDEAS

One reading skill is the ability to identify the main idea of a passage. The main idea is the main focus or key idea. Frequently, a main idea is accompanied by supporting information that offers detailed facts about main ideas.

In the space provided, write the letter of the term or phrase that best completes each statement or best answers each question.

- _____ 1. Long, thin fibers made of minerals that are valued for strength and heat resistance are called
- | | |
|--------------------|----------------|
| a. insulation. | c. asbestos. |
| b. fire retardant. | d. asbestosis. |
- _____ 2. Asbestos has been used mainly in
- | | |
|--------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| a. water treatment facilities. | c. commercial food packaging. |
| b. chicken farms. | d. building materials. |
- _____ 3. Why is asbestos used?
- | |
|---|
| a. to control unpleasant smells by neutralizing enzymes |
| b. to insulate and to serve as a fire retardant |
| c. to filter air for those who have damage to their lungs |
| d. to repair walls in old buildings |
- _____ 4. Why isn't asbestos used much in the U.S. today?
- | |
|---|
| a. The government banned the use of most asbestos products. |
| b. Inflation has made it too expensive for most people. |
| c. A better form of insulation has been discovered. |
| d. The original manufacturer went out of business. |

VOCABULARY DEVELOPMENT

Read each question and write the answer in the space provided.

5. Define *asbestos*.

6. Define *asbestosis*.

SEQUENCING INFORMATION

One reading skill is the ability to sequence information, or to logically place items or events in the order in which they occur.

Sequence the statements below to show the steps of the disease asbestosis. Write “1” on the line in front of the first step, “2” on the line in front of the second step, and so on.

_____ 7. Asbestos fibers are inhaled.

_____ 8. A person is exposed to asbestos in the air.

_____ 9. The person has an increasingly difficult time breathing.

_____ 10. Inhaled fibers cut and scar the person’s lungs.

_____ 11. The person may die of heart failure.

_____ 12. The disease asbestosis develops.

RECOGNIZING CAUSE AND EFFECT

One reading skill is the ability to recognize cause and effect.

Read each question and write the answer in the space provided.

13. Why did people in the U.S. use asbestos in building materials before the 1970s?

14. Why would school officials spend money to remove asbestos from school buildings?
