

# Active Reading

## Section 1: Feeding the World

Read the passage below and answer the questions that follow.

Between 1950 and 1970, Mexico increased its production of wheat eightfold and India doubled its production of rice, without increasing the area of farmland used. These spectacular increases were called the green revolution. They resulted from new varieties of grain. The new varieties produce large yields if they are supplied with enough water, fertilizer, and pesticides. The green revolution reduced the price of food and improved the lives of millions of people.

The green revolution had limitations, however. Most of the increases that resulted from the green revolution came from large farms, which continue to increase their productivity. Because subsistence farmers often live in extreme poverty, they do not have the money to acquire the water and chemicals that the new crop varieties need.

### 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.

Write the letter of the term or phrase in the space provided, that best completes each statement.

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1. Between 1950 and 1970, the green revolution led to
- increases in crop yields worldwide.
  - the failure of new crop varieties.
  - water shortages in the United States.
  - grain shortages in Mexico and India.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2. *Irrigation* refers to
- |                              |   |
|------------------------------|---|
| a. varieties of crop yields. | c. machinery used to harvest crops.         |
| b. water used for crops.     | d. fertilizer used to increase crop yields. |
- \_\_\_\_\_ 3. According to the passage, one problem with the green revolution is that
- subsistence farmers did not have access to appropriate techniques and resources.
  - it did not last long enough to make a difference in grain production.
  - it led to widespread drought.
  - it led to the overuse of fertilizers and pesticides.

**Active Reading *continued***

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**VOCABULARY DEVELOPMENT**

**Read the following question and write the answer in the space provided.**

4. The verb *yield* means “to bear or bring forth as a natural product.” Use this information to define *crop yield*.

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**RECOGNIZING SIMILARITIES AND DIFFERENCES**

One reading skill is the ability to recognize similarities and differences between two phrases, ideas, or things. This is sometimes known as comparing and contrasting.

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

5. How did Mexico benefit from the green revolution between 1950 and 1970? How did India benefit?

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6. How was agriculture after the green revolution different from agriculture before the green revolution?

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**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.**

7. What do new varieties of grain require to produce large yields?

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8. Why has grain production in the United States decreased since 1990?

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9. Why are yields from green revolution crops falling in many areas?

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10. What effect do the machinery, irrigation, and chemicals required by new crop varieties have on soil?

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