

READ THE PASSAGE

Read slowly and notice details about how the flowers look, smell, and taste.

Flowers for Dinner

Flowers might look pretty on the dinner table. But what about serving them for dinner?

In many cultures all around the world, people eat and enjoy different flowers in a variety of dishes.

The purple flowers of the lavender plant add a sweet lemon taste to chocolate cake or ice cream. Pansies, which have a grassy flavor, are a delicious addition to green salads. Bright yellow dandelion petals look cheerful when sprinkled over rice. Squash blossoms can be fried or stuffed with cheese. And the flowers of plants such as jasmine and chamomile are commonly used to make tea.

Does snacking on flowers sound weird? You may have eaten flowers already without realizing it! Several vegetables, such as cauliflower and broccoli, are actually flower buds. Broccoli forms tiny yellow blossoms as it continues to grow. Artichokes, if left on their stalks, form fuzzy purple blooms. And asparagus tips open into small, pale green or white flowers.

If you're interested in eating flowers, be sure to learn about the plants first. Not every flower is safe to eat. The best way to find a tasty—and safe—flower is to visit your local grocery store.

STRATEGY PRACTICE

Draw a picture to show how you visualized one of the flowers that can be eaten.

SKILL PRACTICE

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

- How are broccoli and lavender similar?
☐ Ⓐ Both have a lemon taste.
☐ Ⓑ Both are flowering plants.
☐ Ⓒ Both are used for tea.
☐ Ⓓ Both have yellow flowers.
- Why should you learn about a plant before eating its flower?
☐ Ⓐ to make sure the flower is safe to eat
☐ Ⓑ to find out how to serve the flower
☐ Ⓒ to learn more about other cultures
☐ Ⓓ to find out how the flower tastes
- What is the main idea of the third paragraph?
☐ Ⓐ Eating flowers is weird.
☐ Ⓑ Plants produce flowers of different colors.
☐ Ⓒ Some vegetables are flower buds.
☐ Ⓓ The flowers of some plants are used for teas.
- What is the main idea of the passage?
☐ Ⓐ Many flowers can be eaten.
☐ Ⓑ Flowers are often eaten with desserts.
☐ Ⓒ Many people eat flowers without realizing it.
☐ Ⓓ Flowers are tastier than vegetables.

READ THE PASSAGE

Look for details that help you visualize each competition described in the passage.

Crazy Contests

When you think about competitions, you probably think of sports such as basketball and football. Not all serious competitive events are athletic, though. One example is the Rock Paper Scissors World Championship, in which contestants compete for large cash prizes.

Rock Paper Scissors is a simple game between two players. Each player counts to three and then “throws” one hand forward, making one of three hand signals. A fist means “rock,” a flat hand means “paper,” and two extended fingers in a V shape means “scissors.” Rock wins against scissors, scissors wins against paper, and paper wins against rock. Although the game is simple, many players claim that they have developed complex strategies for winning.

Some people might consider a Rock Paper Scissors contest to be strange. Around the world, though, people compete in many events that others think are crazy. In England, a 200-year-old competition sends hundreds of people running down a hill, chasing a giant wheel of cheese. In Finland, hopeful guitar heroes compete in the Air Guitar World Championships by strumming invisible guitars in front of an audience. Wales hosts the yearly World Bog Snorkelling Championships, in which contestants wear silly costumes—dressed, for example, like a mermaid or an octopus—and swim through dark, stinky bog water as the crowd cheers.

These competitions are just a few of the crazy games that people play around the world. With some practice and training, maybe you could be a prize-winner in one of those contests yourself!

STRATEGY PRACTICE

Which competition was easiest for you to visualize? Why?

SKILL PRACTICE

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

- The passage is mainly about _____.
☐ Ⓐ playing Rock Paper Scissors
☐ Ⓑ playing sports around the world
☐ Ⓒ unusual competitions
☐ Ⓓ popular ways for people to compete
- Where do the competitions mentioned in this passage occur?
☐ Ⓐ mainly in England
☐ Ⓑ all over the world
☐ Ⓒ only in Europe
☐ Ⓓ wherever people do not play basketball
- The author probably thinks that the contests are strange because _____.
☐ Ⓐ they have no rules
☐ Ⓑ they are dangerous
☐ Ⓒ cash prizes are small
☐ Ⓓ the activities are silly
- How are the contests mentioned in the passage similar to basketball, football, or other sports?
☐ Ⓐ They all involve competition.
☐ Ⓑ They all require physical strength.
☐ Ⓒ None offer prizes to winners.
☐ Ⓓ None are entertaining.

READ THE PASSAGE

Look for words and phrases that help you visualize cockroaches.

Cockroach Fun Facts

When you think of interesting animals, you probably don't picture the common cockroach. However, although this insect isn't very pretty, it is pretty amazing.

Cockroaches are good at getting around. They can squeeze into very tight spaces, which comes in handy when they want to go through cracks in walls. A baby cockroach can flatten itself as thin as a dime. They're fast-moving bugs, too. Traveling at three miles an hour, a cockroach can easily scurry out of the way of looming feet or bug swatters.

Cockroaches are also tough. They can survive a month without food and a week without water. They can even survive for weeks without a head!

Next time you see a cockroach, show some respect for this common household pest. After all, the species has been around far longer than people—more than 280 million years, by some estimates. Now that's an old bug!

STRATEGY PRACTICE

List at least two traits of cockroaches. For each trait, draw a picture that shows what you visualized.

SKILL PRACTICE

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

1. What main idea is supported by the fact that a cockroach can survive without its head?
☐ Ⓐ Cockroaches are fast-moving.
☐ Ⓑ Cockroaches are tough.
☐ Ⓒ Cockroaches are common pests.
☐ Ⓓ Cockroaches are smart.
2. The passage compares a baby cockroach to a dime to show _____.
☐ Ⓐ the speed of baby cockroaches
☐ Ⓑ the round shape of baby cockroaches
☐ Ⓒ the thinness of baby cockroaches
☐ Ⓓ the color of baby cockroaches
3. Which of these tells one way that cockroaches and humans are different?
☐ Ⓐ Cockroaches can move faster.
☐ Ⓑ Cockroaches have longer lives.
☐ Ⓒ Cockroaches need food and water.
☐ Ⓓ Cockroaches have existed longer as a species.
4. Why do cockroaches flatten themselves?
☐ Ⓐ to move more quickly
☐ Ⓑ to survive longer without food or water
☐ Ⓒ to escape a rolled-up newspaper
☐ Ⓓ to squeeze through narrow spaces

READ THE PASSAGE

Look for details that help you form a mental image of the animal shelter.

A Sheltered Life

If you visit the animal shelter in Salinas, California, you'll see giant wood cutouts of a dog and a cat. These signs were placed in front of the building to catch people's attention. The supersized cutouts make people curious and encourage them to visit the shelter—and maybe even adopt a pet. Each year, the Salinas shelter takes in around 2,000 dogs and 2,000 cats. The animals are either strays or are dropped off by people who couldn't take care of them. Of the 4,000 animals, some of them are eventually adopted into new homes. Some animals are transferred to other shelters. And, unfortunately, some cannot be saved because they are too sick or are considered dangerous.

Animal shelters provide food, medicine, and a safe place for animals to sleep. But they are not ideal homes. The shelters are loud, and the animals stay in small cages. The people who work at shelters do their best to care for the animals, but the animals do not always get the attention or exercise they need.

To prevent so many animals from becoming homeless, pet owners should take good care of their pets. One of the best ways to care for pets is to spay or neuter them. This surgery prevents cats and dogs from having more babies. And that reduces the number of homeless animals that end up in shelters.

STRATEGY PRACTICE

Describe how you pictured the animal shelter in Salinas.

SKILL PRACTICE

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

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| 1. What is the passage mainly about? | 3. What is the result of spaying and neutering? |
| Ⓐ the city of Salinas, California | Ⓐ More puppies and kittens are adopted. |
| Ⓑ homeless animals in shelters | Ⓑ Pets need less attention. |
| Ⓒ how to attract visitors to animal shelters | Ⓒ Fewer animals become homeless. |
| Ⓓ people who work at animal shelters | Ⓓ More people work at animal shelters. |
| 2. Dogs in shelters probably do not get enough exercise because _____. | 4. What can good homes offer that animal shelters cannot? |
| Ⓐ the workers do not enjoy walking them | Ⓐ plenty of personal care |
| Ⓑ the workers think the dogs will be adopted soon | Ⓑ medical attention |
| Ⓒ there are too many animals for the workers to care for | Ⓒ a safe place to sleep |
| Ⓓ the workers are afraid of the dogs | Ⓓ food and water |