

Active Reading

Section: Feeding the World

Read the passage below and answer the questions that follow.

Between 1950 and 1970, Mexico increased its production of wheat eight-fold and India doubled its production of rice. Worldwide, increases in crop yields resulted from the use of new crop varieties and the application of modern agricultural techniques. These changes were called the *green revolution*. Since the 1950s, the green revolution has changed the lives of millions of people.

However, the green revolution also had some negative effects. Most new varieties of grain produce large yields only if they receive large amounts of water, fertilizer, and pesticides. In addition, the machinery, irrigation, and chemicals required by new crop varieties can degrade the soil if they are not used properly. As a result of the overuse of fertilizers and pesticides, yields from green revolution crops are falling in many areas. Grain production in the United States has decreased since 1990, partly because the amount of water used for irrigation has decreased during the same period.

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. fertilizer used to increase crop yields. |
| b. water used for crops. | d. machinery used to harvest crops. |
- _____ 3. According to the passage, one problem with the green revolution is that
- few people have access to new techniques and machinery.
 - 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*

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*.

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?

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

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?

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

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

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