

Comprehension Workbook 6

Organic Farming

(Chemical-free food)



Find out about the meaning of stories and articles

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(Chemical-free food)



Find out about the meaning of stories and articles

Caring for our environment

Matches the requirements of the Literacy Strategy and designed to integrate with your normal subject studies. (This material is independent of any specific text book and can be used alongside any publisher's books including our textbook.)


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Unit 6: Organic Farming



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Organic Farming

Drew is an organic farmer. He grows fruit and vegetables without using any chemicals. This is very difficult because it is hard to keep pests like insects from eating all of his crops. Drew talks about how he keeps pests from eating all his crops.

A man with short brown hair and a beard, wearing a white t-shirt and green overalls, is smiling and holding a green plastic basket filled with yellow and red cherry tomatoes. He is standing in a greenhouse with rows of tomato plants in the background.

"I do not want to use chemicals on my crops, because I think they can harm animals. Chemicals are also expensive. But without chemicals, insect pests can eat all of our crops. So we use different ways to get rid of these pests."



One way we get rid of pests is by raising chickens and ducks. We let the chickens and ducks wander around the farm. They eat up insects like centipedes, ants and snails that can eat our crops. We also use the chicken and duck poo in March to help our crops start growing. And of course we get delicious eggs to eat and sell.



When the plants are starting to grow, in April, we cover them with netting. This keeps flying pests such as cabbage root fly, carrot fly, and onion fly from eating the vegetable plants. In May, we plant garlic next to other crops, like carrots. Some insects do not like the smell of garlic plants and will stay away.

We also use good insects to help get rid of harmful insects. In June and July we buy small insects called ladybirds and put these on our crops. The ladybirds eat up insects called aphids that can eat our crops.



Instead of metal fences, we plant hedgerows around our crops. In August, when it is hot and dry, the hedges help to hold water in the soil. They also keep the soil from blowing away in the wind. The hedges also make a nice home for small animals like hedgehogs, bats and birds. These animals help us by eating harmful insects.

We also make nesting boxes for birds. We put these around the farm in November and December. Birds live in the boxes and eat insect pests.

It is very hard to get rid of all of the pests on our farm. Three years ago we planted soy beans and just before the crop was ready to be harvested, some deer came in and ate it all."





Understanding words

Before we can understand a story we have to know what all of the words mean. Let's try one...

a Write a sentence in which you found the word '**crops**'.

b From that sentence, write what you think '**crops**' means.

c Write a new sentence using the word '**crops**'.

d Use a dictionary to find words with a similar meaning (synonyms) to '**crops**'.

e Give an example of some types of '**crop**'.



Finding key words

Next, we need to find the key words that tell us what the story is about...

Read the story and underline the key words. Write the most important of these key words in a list like the one below. Write next to it a word that means a similar thing (a synonym). You don't have to use all the spaces, but you should not use more.

Key word	Synonym (similar word)
Example: rid	clear

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Summarising

(the gist of the story)

To summarise means to rewrite the story in a shorter version using as many of our key words from Task 2 as needed.

1 Write a heading for your summary.

2 Now write the main idea in one sentence.
e.g. "This story tells us..."

3 Now add some detail to the main idea by writing more sentences after it.

**Finally,
can you rewrite your
summary to make it better?**

1. Look out for errors such as using the same word too often – use alternatives.
2. Make sure you have summarised the author's purpose in your OWN words.
3. Make sure your summary is in a logical order.
4. Is your summary informative AND interesting to others?

There is nothing wrong with rewriting; even the best authors rewrite their work.

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Sequencing

Sequencing means getting the events in the right order. Write these sentences in the correct order, so they make sense.



In May, we plant garlic next to other crops, like carrots.

We also use the chicken and duck poo in March to help our crops start growing.

In June and July we buy small insects called ladybirds and put these on our crops.

When the plants are starting to grow, in April, we cover them with netting.

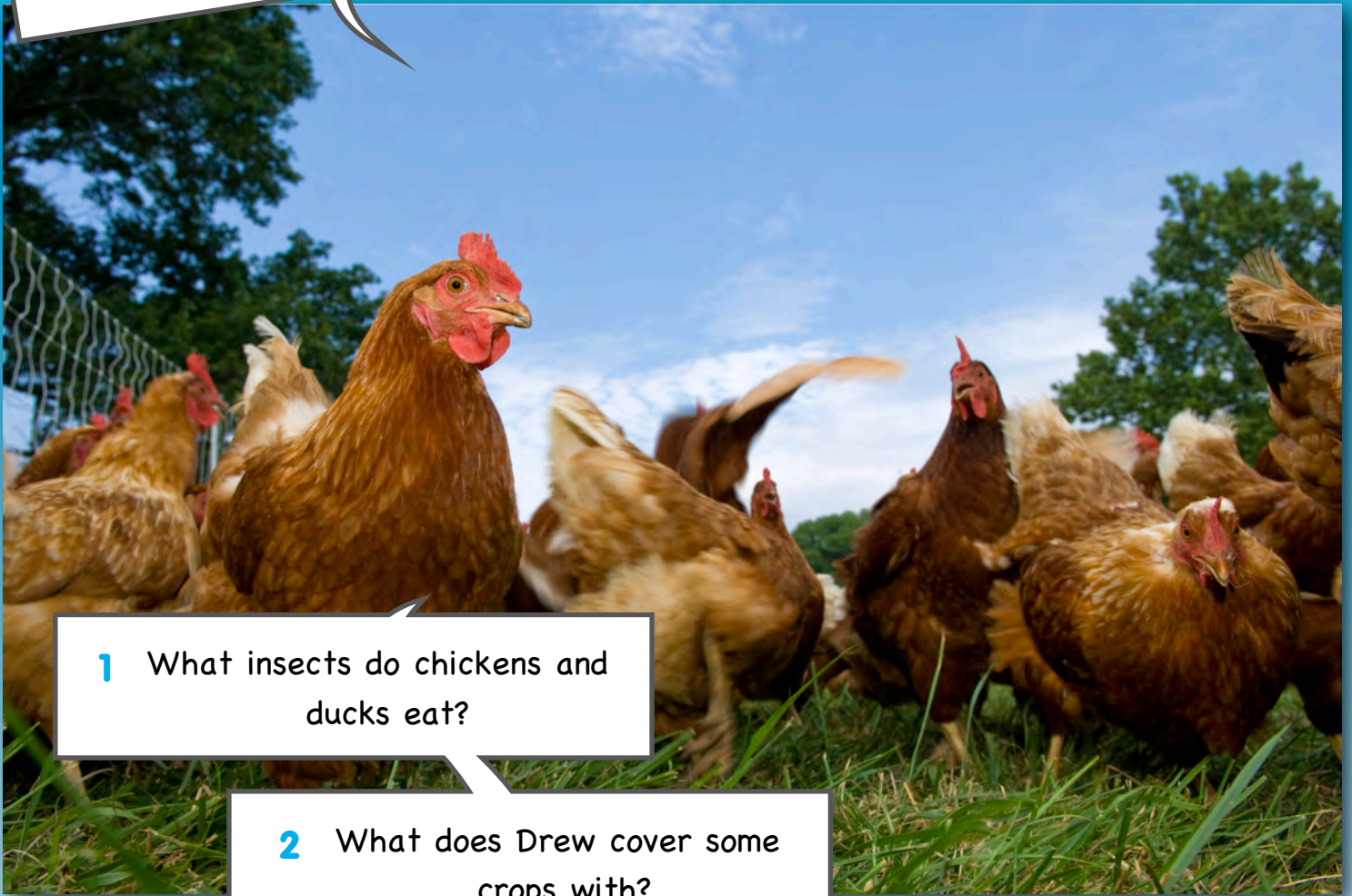
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Get to the facts

Answer these questions to see how much you know about the facts of the story.



1 What insects do chickens and ducks eat?

2 What does Drew cover some crops with?

3 What insect eats aphids?

4 Which animals live in hedges?

5 What animal lives in nesting boxes?



Whys and wherefores

Answer these questions to see how much you know about the meanings in the story and how it was written.



1 Why did Drew plant garlic next to other plants?

2 Why did Drew plant

3 Why are chickens and ducks allowed to walk all around the farm?

4 Why does Drew place netting over some plants?



Opinions matter

Answer these questions to give your views and to develop the story.



1 Why doesn't Drew use chemicals to keep pests away?

2 Do you think farming would be easier for Drew if he used chemicals to keep pests away?

3 Do you think keeping chickens and ducks is too time-consuming?

4 How do birds and bats help the farm?

5 Wouldn't it be easier to use pesticides to help carrots to grow?



Talking it through

It often helps if a group of people get together and discuss a problem.



Discussion topic: Organic Farming

Do you think organic farming is more work or less work than using chemicals? Do you think it is cheaper or more expensive than using chemicals?



Make a story...

When you read a description it often gives you ideas about how the event might be described differently.



A change to organics

You are a farmer and one day you decide that you will stop using chemicals to grow your crops.

(Now continue the story of describing why you decide to stop using chemicals and how you will keep insects away from your crops without chemicals...)

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