

Reading Comprehension Stories & Questions for Skillsbank5 Lab Activities

For questions 1 and 2

Bob Black is an auto mechanic in Helena, Montana. He began working in his father's auto repair shop right after high school. After five years of working with his father, Bob moved to Helena and opened his own business.

Bob is an excellent mechanic and an expert on foreign cars. People come from miles away to have him repair their cars. His business is so successful that he now has five people working for him. While Bob encourages new business, he does not advertise in his hometown of Bozeman.

1. What does Bob do for a living?
2. Where is Bob's repair shop?

For questions 3, 4, 5

Have you ever seen a fish farm? I do not mean a fish that is farming. I mean a farm on which fish are raised as horses and cattle are raised on other farms. Fish farming is an old occupation. Historians believe that fish farming was done more than 4,000 years ago. Today there is extensive fish farming in China, India, Japan, Russia, the Philippines and many other countries. In fact, throughout the world, there are more than 7,000,000 acres of water involved in fish farming.

In the United States, enormous numbers of catfish are raised in several states, including Arkansas and Louisiana. Trout, salmon, carp, oysters and mussels are also raised in the United States. Although it is still a relatively small industry, fish farming is expected to grow rapidly over the next 15 years. Then almost everyone will know what is meant when someone asks, "Have you ever seen a fish farm?"

3. Which of the following fish are listed as being raised on farms?
4. How many of the world's acres of water are under "cultivation" for fish?
5. Which countries are listed as having a fish farming industry?

For questions 6, 7

For many of us, cheese is something we find on a hamburger. It often has little taste and is hidden under the bun. Cheese has a much more significant role in the lives of some people. In fact, cheese is served as a separate dish or course at the dinner tables of families all over the world.

There are lots of cheeses in addition to that yellow strip that appears on the hamburger. France, for example, produces approximately 340 varieties of cheese. The French make hard cheeses, sharp-tasting cheeses, soft cheeses, and mild-tasting cheeses.

The French make cheese from the milk of cows, goats, and sheep. The latter two are the most frequently used to produce cheese in France. How much cheese do you eat? The average American eats between 10 and 12 pounds of cheese a year. This seems like a lot until we look at the French. They eat approximately 30 pounds of cheese per person each year.

6. How much cheese do Americans eat annually?
7. Where does most French cheese come from?

For questions 8, 9

Barnesville has a river that flows through the middle of town. The river used to be very important to Barnesville. It provided a means for moving the logs and wood products from local sawmills to the large cities down the river. It also provided the power to run the sawmills and grain mills in Barnesville.

In the middle of this century, highways replaced the river as a means of transportation, and electricity replaced water as a source of power. Therefore, the town no longer uses the river for those purposes.

8. Why was the river important to Barnesville in the early 1900s?
9. Why did Barnesville stop depending on the river for transportation?

In the early 1900s, many farm families lived far from the nearest city and did most of their shopping at small general stores. Many general stores did not sell clothes and furniture, so these goods had to be handmade. Craftsmen who made clothes and other basic goods traveled to farm homes to make these items for rural families.

The visit of a clothing maker was an exciting event in those days. The clothing maker would be given a spare room, meals, and the task of making clothes for every member of the family. This task could take a week or two at each farm, so traveling craftsmen had to be well organized and bring enough buttons, thread and cloth to last for several weeks.

A major event changed this method of obtaining clothes and other household goods. The United States improved the mail system so that the mail reached all the homes in America. A new company, Sears & Roebuck, used the mail system to bring a new way of marketing goods.

They printed a catalog that allowed people to buy through the mail. Shopping for clothes and other goods became much easier for rural families. In effect, the mail service and the catalog ended one way of shopping and began a new one.

10. How did many rural families obtain new clothes in the early 1900s?

11. What happened that enabled rural families to buy clothes from catalogs?