

• Beginning Critical Reading – Nuts

There is a small difference between nuts and seeds. Many seeds often are called nuts. For example, hazelnuts are nuts. Chestnuts are nuts. Beechnuts are nuts. Acorns are nuts. But, Brazil Nuts are not nuts. Cashews are not nuts. Peanuts are not nuts. Pistachios are not nuts.

So what are nuts? A true nut is a fruit with one seed. True nuts have very hard shells.

5 True nuts do not open on their own. You must crack a true nut to open it.

Cooks often call seeds “nuts.” In addition, English speakers often call seeds, “nuts.” The difference between nuts and seeds is small, so it is not necessarily wrong to call a seed a nut.

Nuts are good for your health. Seeds are also good for your health. Nuts and seeds contain a lot of oil. They also contain a lot of energy for your body. Nuts are a good snack food. 10 Seeds are also a good snack food. Nuts are good for the heart. Seeds are also good for the heart. Nuts help you grow. Seeds also help you grow. Nuts are good for the skin. Seeds are also good for the skin.

Many animals eat nuts. Squirrels eat nuts. Mice eat nuts. Chipmunks eat nuts. Raccoons eat nuts. Birds eat nuts. Even some dogs eat nuts.

15 Many animals eat seeds. Birds eat seeds. Mice eat seeds. Even some snakes eat seeds.

There are hundreds of nuts that people and animals can eat. There are hundreds of seeds that people and animals can eat. But many nuts and seeds are inedible. Look in a book or check on the internet before trying to eat unfamiliar seeds and nuts. Learn if new foods are safe and healthful by reading about them before tasting them.

Questions

1. According to the passage, which of the following statements is/are true?

- I) Cashews are true nuts.
- II) A nut is a fruit.
- III) True nuts do not open naturally.

- A) I only
- B) II only
- C) III only
- D) I and II only
- E) II and III only

2. What is the main idea of the third paragraph?

- A) Many cooks do not understand what nuts are.
- B) In normal speech, some seeds are called nuts.
- C) Seeds are nuts, but nuts are not seeds.
- D) Nuts and seeds are small.
- E) The English language uses the wrong words for seeds.

3. In line 17, *inedible* most closely means

- A) familiar
- B) not good for health
- C) not able to be eaten
- D) unbelievable
- E) safe to eat

Answers and Explanations

1. The correct answer is **E**.

- I) Incorrect. Line 3 states that “Cashew nuts are **not** nuts.”
- II) Correct. Line 4 states that “A true nut is a fruit with one seed.”
- III) Correct. Line 5 states that “True nuts do not open on their own.” Since they do **not** *open on their own*, they do **not** *open naturally*.

- A) I only
- B) II only
- C) III only
- D) I and II only
- E) II and III only

2. The correct answer is **B**.

- A) Incorrect. While line 6 states that “Cooks often call seeds “nuts,” it does **not** state that cooks do not understand what nuts are. It is a statement of language use, **not** a statement of knowledge. Since it is an **incorrect** interpretation of the sentence, it is **not** the *main idea of the paragraph*.
- B) Correct. Line 6 states that “...English speakers often call seeds, “nuts.”
- C) Incorrect. Lines 6-7 state that “difference between nuts and seeds is small.” There is **nothing** which says that seeds are nuts. So this **cannot** be the *main idea of the paragraph*.
- D) Incorrect. While it may be true that most nuts and seeds are small, the sentence in lines 6-7 actually states that the difference between nuts and seeds is small. So this is **not** the *main idea of the paragraph*.
- E) Incorrect. Lines 6-7 state that “In addition, English speakers often call seeds, “nuts.” The difference between nuts and seeds is small, so it is **not** necessarily wrong to call a seed a nut.”

3. The correct answer is **C**.

- A) Incorrect. Since the following sentence (lines 17-18) reminds readers to “Look in a book or check on the internet before trying to eat *unfamiliar* seeds and nuts.” If the seeds and nuts are *unfamiliar*, they **cannot** be *familiar*. So the word *inedible* **cannot** mean *familiar*.
- B) Incorrect. Lines 18-19 remind readers to “Learn if new foods are safe and *healthful* ...” To learn if foods are *healthful* means to learn whether foods are *good for health*. Checking whether they are *good for health* means that it is **unknown** whether the food is *good for health* or **not**.
- C) Correct. *Inedible* food is food that is *unable to be eaten*.
- D) Incorrect. The word *inedible* is **similar** to the word “*incredible*,” which means *unbelievable*. The word *incredible* is **not** used in this reading passage.
- E) Incorrect. Lines 18-19 remind readers to “Learn if new foods are *safe* and *healthful* ...” To learn if foods are *safe* means that it is **unknown** whether the foods are *safe* or **not**. So the word *inedible* **cannot** mean *safe*.