

• Reading Comprehension 8 Level 4

Directions: Read the passage. Then answer the questions below.

Where does chocolate come from? Believe it or not, it grows on trees. Not as a sweet chocolate candy bar wrapped in foil, but as a cocoa bean.

These cocoa beans grow on a cacao tree, which is found in tropical areas such as Central and South America. The fruit of these trees are called pods, and they are long and hard. Inside the pods is a soft, white pulp that surrounds the thirty or so seeds. These seeds are what we call cocoa beans. They are very hard and bitter to the taste.

To make chocolate, people start by carefully taking the beans out of the pods, still covered in the white pulp, and leaving them in a bucket. The bucket is often covered with banana leaves and left for anywhere from a few days to a few weeks. This process is called fermenting. Then the beans are left to dry in the sun. Fermenting and drying the beans makes them less bitter. Then the beans are shipped to a factory to be turned into chocolate.

At the factory, beans are roasted in ovens to bring out their flavor. After roasting, the outer covering of the bean is removed. The inner bean is then crushed to form a paste known as chocolate liquor.

From this paste, people can either make cocoa powder or the chocolate we buy in stores. To make cocoa powder, the paste is crushed and pressed repeatedly to remove the fat, leaving behind only a dry, ground powder. To make chocolate, people need to add other ingredients to the paste such as milk, sugar, and cocoa butter. They then mix and heat the **concoction** several times to create a substance we would recognize as chocolate. It may even have fruit, nuts, or candy added to it before it is molded into a shape.

Considering all that must happen to turn a bitter cocoa bean into a chocolate bar, a dollar seems like a small price to pay for such a delicious sweet treat.

Questions

- 1) To make chocolate, what is the first thing people must do to the cocoa beans?
 - A. leave them in a bucket
 - B. roast them in an oven
 - C. dry them in the sun
 - D. ship them to the factory

- 2) After reading this passage, what can the reader conclude about chocolate?
 - A. Chocolate is only made in Central and South America.
 - B. People could make their own chocolate at home.
 - C. There are many steps involved in making chocolate.
 - D. It is too expensive to make chocolate.

- 3) According to the passage, which of these items is needed to make the chocolate that is available in stores?
- A. fruit
 - B. nuts
 - C. candy
 - D. sugar
- 4) As used in paragraph 5, which of the following best describes a **concoction**?
- A. To make the smoothie, Daryl blended strawberries, bananas, yogurt, and juice.
 - B. When Jenna left the room, the pot of milk boiled for twenty minutes before boiling over.
 - C. A sprinkle of powdered sugar on top makes everything sweeter.
 - D. Elaine heated the lasagna, froze it, and then heated it again before serving it two weeks later.
- 5) Based on information in the passage, it can be understood that the chocolate sold in stores is different from cocoa beans because chocolate is
- A. sweet and cocoa beans are bitter
 - B. cheap and cocoa beans are expensive
 - C. a dry powder and cocoa beans are not
 - D. uncooked and cocoa beans are cooked

Answers and Explanations

1) **A**

To answer this detail question correctly, we need to find where the author discusses the first thing people must do to make chocolate in the passage. A good way to do this is to scan the topic sentence of each paragraph, since this sentence will likely tell us what information can be found in the rest of that paragraph. The topic sentence of paragraph 3 reads: "To make chocolate, people start by carefully taking the beans out of the pods, still covered in the white pulp, and leaving them in a bucket." This lets us know that the details we are looking for can likely be found in paragraph 3. In paragraph 3, the author writes, "To make chocolate, people start by carefully taking the beans out of the pods, still covered in the white pulp, and leaving them in a bucket. The bucket is often covered with banana leaves and left for anywhere from a few days to a few weeks." This tells us that the first thing people must do to the cocoa beans is to leave them in a bucket for a few days or even a few weeks. Therefore **(A)** is correct. The steps listed in choices **(B)**, **(C)**, and **(D)** all come after the first step. Therefore they are incorrect.

2) **C**

In this passage, the author describes how chocolate is made. He or she lists all the steps: fermenting the cocoa beans, drying them in the sun, shipping them to a factory, roasting them in an oven, crushing the inner bean into a paste, and finally adding ingredients to create the chocolate we can buy in stores. Furthermore, in the final paragraph, the author writes, "Considering all that must happen to turn a bitter cocoa bean into a chocolate bar, a dollar seems like a small price to pay for such a delicious sweet treat." The fact that all of these things "must happen" to make chocolate means that we can conclude there are many steps involved in making chocolate. Therefore **(C)** is correct. In paragraph 2, the author writes, "These cocoa beans grow on a cacao tree, which is found in tropical areas such as Central and South America." However, this does not mean that chocolate is only made in Central and South America. These places are only given as examples of where the cacao tree grows. Also, the passage tells us that the cocoa beans are shipped to a factory, so that means chocolate does not have to be made in the same place where the cacao tree grows. Therefore **(A)** is incorrect. The passage does not suggest that people could make their own chocolate at home. Instead it tells us how chocolate is made in a factory. This means **(B)** is incorrect. The passage does not discuss the cost of making chocolate. In the final paragraph, the author says "one dollar" is the price of a chocolate bar, but this does not tell us whether it is expensive to make chocolate. This eliminates **(D)**.

3) **D**

To answer this detail question correctly, we need to find where the author discusses the items needed to make the chocolate we buy in stores in the passage. A good way to do this is to scan the topic sentence of each paragraph, since this sentence will likely tell us what information can be found in the rest of that paragraph. The topic sentence of paragraph 5 reads: "From this paste, people can either make cocoa powder or the chocolate we buy in stores." This lets us know that the details we are looking for can likely be found in paragraph 5. In paragraph 5, the author writes, "To make chocolate, people need to add other ingredients to the paste such as milk, sugar, and cocoa butter." This tells us that sugar is needed to make the chocolate that is available in stores. This means **(D)** is correct. Although in paragraph 5, the author tells us that fruit, nuts, and candy can be added to chocolate, he or she does not suggest they are needed as basic ingredients in the same way sugar is. Therefore choices **(A)**, **(B)**, and **(C)** are incorrect.

4) **A**

concoction (*noun*): something mixed or blended; mixture.

In paragraph 5, the author writes: "To make chocolate, people need to add other ingredients to the paste such as milk, sugar, and cocoa butter. They then mix and heat the concoction several times to create a substance we would recognize as chocolate." This tells us that the concoction is the mixture of the paste, milk, sugar, cocoa butter, and other ingredients, so a *concoction* must be a mixture. A smoothie made of strawberries, bananas, yogurt, and juice is also a mixture. Therefore **(A)** is correct. Choices **(B)**, **(C)**, and **(D)** do not describe a mixture. Therefore they are incorrect.

5) **A**

In the passage, the author mentions several times that chocolate is sweet. In paragraph 1, he or she writes that chocolate grows on trees "not as a sweet chocolate candy bar wrapped in foil, but as a cocoa bean." In the final paragraph, the author writes, "Considering all that must happen to turn a bitter cocoa bean into a chocolate bar, a dollar seems like a small price to pay for such a delicious sweet treat." This sentence tells us again that chocolate is sweet, but it also tells us that the cocoa bean is bitter. This means that the chocolate sold in stores is different from cocoa beans because chocolate is sweet and cocoa beans are bitter. Therefore **(A)** is correct. The author does not discuss the cost of cocoa beans, so even though the author suggests that a dollar is cheap for a chocolate bar, we do not know whether cocoa beans are expensive. This means **(B)** is not the best choice. The author tells us that the paste known as chocolate liquor can be ground into a dry powder, but this makes cocoa powder, not the chocolate we recognize as sold in stores. This makes **(C)** incorrect. The author tells us that chocolate is heated "several times," which means it is cooked. Therefore **(D)** is incorrect.