

Lesson 6

Supporting Inferences About Informational Texts



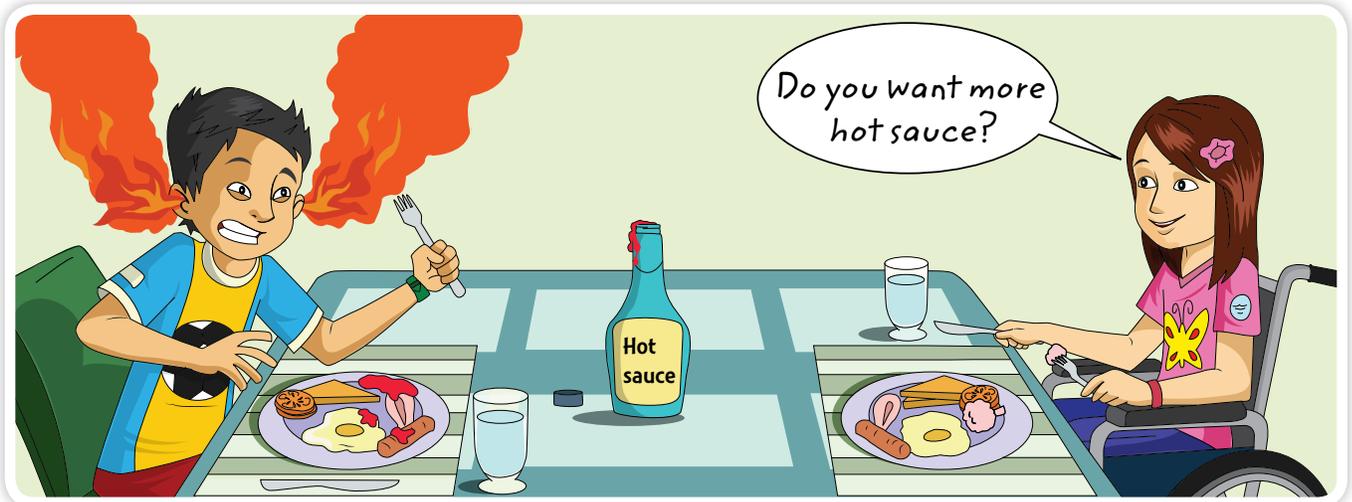
Learning Target



Making inferences based on key details and examples in an informational text will help you better understand the author's ideas about the topic.

- **Read** When you read informational texts, you can learn important information about a topic. Often, a text will state facts, **examples**, and other **details** directly. Other times, however, you must figure out an important idea on your own. To do this, use **text evidence** and what you already know from experience to make an **inference**, or a “sensible guess.”

Study the cartoon below. Use what you see and what you know to make an inference about what is happening to the boy.



- **Think** Consider what you've learned so far about making inferences. What is happening to the boy? Complete the *Inference Chart* below to make an inference based on cartoon details and what you already know.

What the Cartoon Shows (Evidence)	What I Know (Experience)	My Inference

- **Talk** Share your inference and chart with a partner.
- Did you agree on what happened in the cartoon?
 - Did you agree about the details added to your charts?
 - Why did you agree or disagree?



Academic Talk

Use these words and phrases to talk about the text.

- **examples**
- **details**
- **text evidence**
- **inference**

The Travels of the POTATO

by Marie Schaeffer



1 The potato plant is native to the Andes Mountain region of South America. This is where it first appeared and thrived. The ancient Incas were the first people known to eat the potato. It is an excellent food source, one that provides both energy and vitamins. During the 1500s, Spanish explorers to that region encountered the potato. They had never seen it before. By the 1600s, potatoes were grown in many places in Spain.

2 Early on, some Europeans shunned the potato. Scientists learned that it was closely related to some poisonous plants. But some European doctors accepted the potato as a medicine and used it to treat common illnesses. By the early 1700s, potatoes were being raised in England as a food crop. The plants grew well in the cool, moist climate. Soon, the potato became a major food staple, particularly in Ireland. Finally, in 1719, immigrants from England and Ireland introduced the potato to the New England area of North America.



Close Reader Habits

Think about key details in the passage that help you make inferences. Then **underline** key details that describe the events that brought the potato to Europe.

Explore

How do the details in the article help you make inferences about why the potato came to be used in Europe and elsewhere?



Look for details that help you make inferences about how the potato traveled.

Think

1 Complete the Inference Chart below to help you make inferences about the spread of the potato as a food crop.

What the Text Said (Evidence)	What I Know (Experience)	My Inference
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “The potato plant is native to the Andes Mountain region of South America.” • “Spanish explorers. . . had never seen it before.” • “By the 1600s, potatoes were grown in many places in Spain.” 		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “By the early 1700s, potatoes were being raised in England as a food crop.” • “The plants grew well in the cool, moist climate.” 		

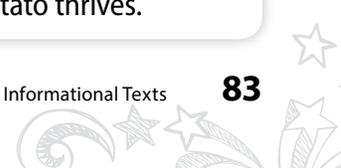
Talk

2 Explain what you can infer about how and why the use of the potato spread. Identify text details you used to support your inferences.

Write

3 Short Response Explain how and why the use of the potato spread to other countries. Include at least three text details as support. Use the space on page 86 to write your response.

HINT To organize your writing, identify details about the climate where the potato thrives.



Fruit of the Bog

by Alden Sims

- 1 The first people known to eat cranberries were the Native Americans in northern regions of what is now the United States. Centuries before the Pilgrims arrived in 1620, Native Americans ate a bread made with cranberries mashed into cornmeal. They also munched on dried cranberries throughout the winter. But cranberries were useful for more than just food. Native Americans made dye from the berries to color blankets and rugs. And, they used the berries as a medicine for the treatment of wounds.
- 2 In 1810, Henry Hall from Cape Cod, Massachusetts, became the first person known to cultivate cranberries. (The word *cultivate* means “to grow as a farm crop.”) Cranberries grow only in particular conditions. They grow best in bogs. They need an acid, peat soil, a steady water supply, and a covering of sand. The growing season must last from April to November, followed by a dormant period in the winter. The winter chill is needed for the fruit buds to mature.
- 3 Do you know how cranberry farmers know when the berries are ripe and ready to harvest? The small berries float to the surface of the bog and bob along there. The farmers are able to pull off this nifty harvest trick because inside each berry is a tiny pocket of air.
- 4 For years, the number-one cranberry-producing state in the United States was Massachusetts. However, since 1995, the state of Wisconsin has been the top cranberry producer. In 2010, Wisconsin harvested more than 4 million barrels of cranberries.

Close Reader Habits

What are growing conditions like in Massachusetts and Wisconsin? As you reread the article, **underline** details that tell about conditions all cranberries need to grow.





Good inferences are those you can back up with words, phrases, or sentences from the text.

Think Use what you learned from reading the article to respond to the following questions.

- 1** This question has two parts. Answer Part A. Then answer Part B.

Part A

What inference can you make about Wisconsin based on details in the article?

- A** It was first settled by Native Americans who ate berries and corn.
- B** It was a major producer of blankets and rugs dyed red.
- C** It provides the conditions needed for growing cranberries.
- D** It has always been the number-one cranberry-producing state.

Part B

Choose one piece of evidence from the article that **best** supports the answer in Part A.

- A** “The first people known to eat cranberries were the Native Americans in northern regions of what is now the United States.”
- B** “The growing season must last from April to November, followed by a dormant period in the winter.”
- C** “For years, the number-one cranberry-producing state in the United States was Massachusetts.”
- D** “However, since 1995, the state of Wisconsin has been the top cranberry producer.”

Talk

- 2** Explain what you can infer about growing conditions in Massachusetts and Wisconsin based on the details in the article. Use the Inference Chart on page 87 to organize your thoughts. Make sure to include details that describe the growing conditions needed by cranberries.



Write

- 3 Short Response** Using information from your chart, explain your inferences about growing conditions in Massachusetts and Wisconsin. Use details from the passage to support your response. Use the space provided on page 87 to write your answer.

HINT To organize your ideas, think about which details **best** explain your inference.

Fruit of the Bog

2 Use the Inference Chart below to organize your ideas.

What the Text Said (Evidence)	What I Know (Experience)	My Inference



Write Use the space below to write your answer to the question on page 85.

3 Short Response Using information from your chart, explain your inferences about growing conditions in Massachusetts and Wisconsin. Use details from the passage to support your response.

HINT To organize your ideas, think about which details best explain your inference.

Why Salt?

Valuable Little Cubes

by Leigh Anderson and David Chandler, *Appleseeds*

WORDS TO KNOW

As you read, look inside, around, and beyond these words to figure out what they mean.

- **role**
- **regulated**
- **access**



The *Via Salaria*, shown in yellow, led from the sea coast to Rome, an important center of trade.

- 1 Today, salt is given out freely in shakers and packets at our favorite restaurants. We can buy it cheaply at any grocery store. But it hasn't always been so easy to get salt. This tiny crystal cube has played a much more important role in history than just flavoring our fries. Around the world, cities were founded, roads were built, wars were fought, and trade routes were established, all for one reason: humans can't live without salt. Literally. Because of this simple fact, salt became a valuable item a long time ago. People who controlled salt had power. Around 2,000 years ago, some of the people with salt—and power—were the Romans.
- 2 One way Rome controlled salt was by building villages along the Mediterranean coast. This gave them access to the sea where they could harvest salt. One of the first great roads built by Romans . . . is called *Via Salaria*, or "Salt Road." It is the oldest road in Italy today. As you might have guessed, it was built to transport salt.
- 3 As Rome grew, it became a great trading center, and salt was one of the main items traded there. Salt was so important in the daily lives of the Romans that soldiers were paid in blocks of salt. This pay was called *salarium argentums* or "salt money," giving us our word *salary*. In fact, the word *soldier* comes from the Latin *sol dare*, meaning "to give salt."



- 4 Throughout history and around the world, governments have regulated and taxed salt. . . . Salt played a role in the history of our country, too. In both the Revolutionary and Civil wars, keeping enough salt for the soldiers was important. In these and other wars, enemies have tried to keep salt away from each other. The history of the world is overflowing with stories of salt.

What's So Important About Salt?

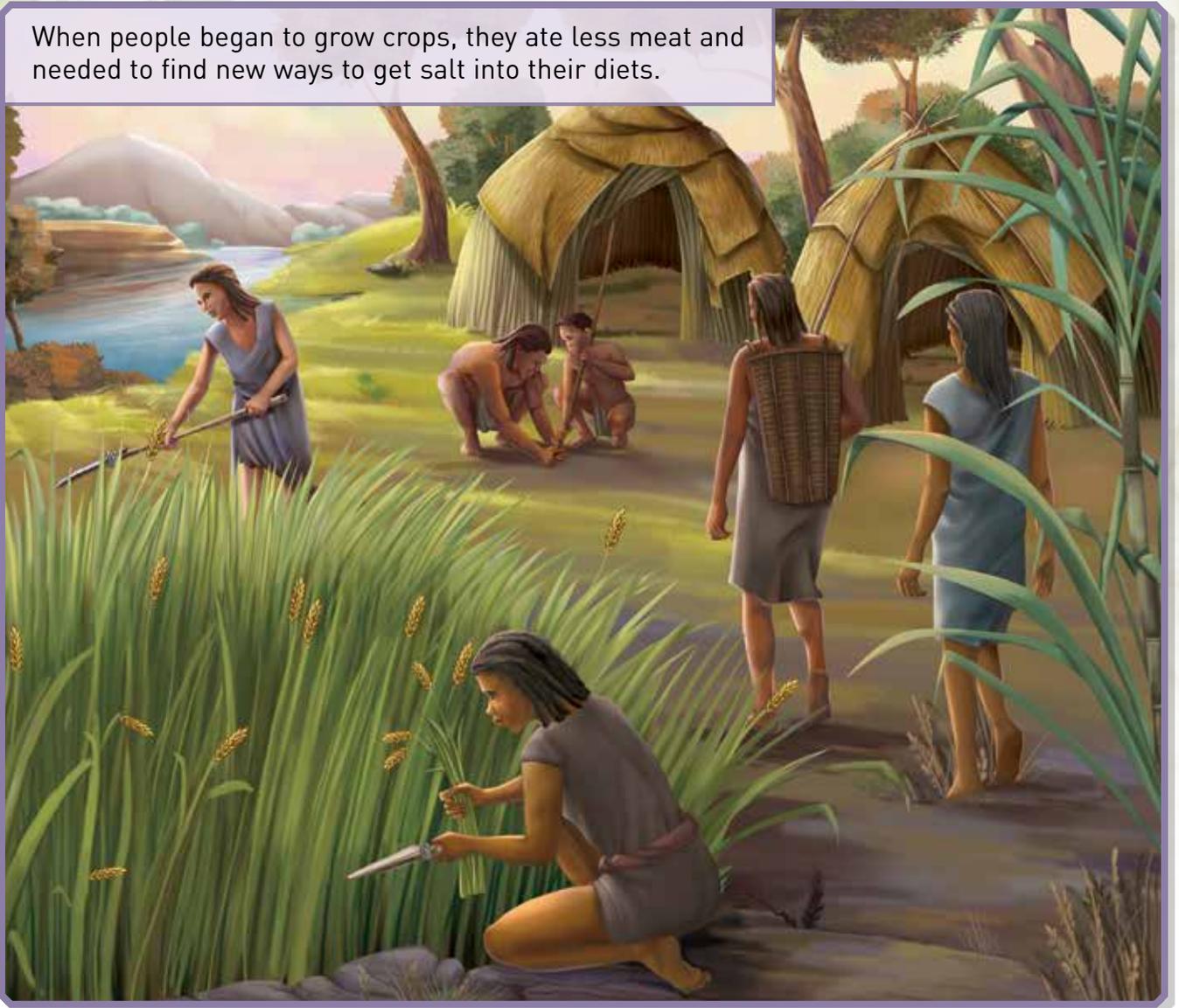
- 5 Human beings can't live without salt. It is a basic ingredient in our bodies. Salt is in our tears, sweat, saliva, blood, and even in our urine. Without this mineral our cells, nerves, and muscles can't do their jobs properly. However, too much salt can cause kidneys to work overtime, blood vessels to swell, and blood pressure to go dangerously high.



Roman soldiers were paid in *salarium argentum* or “salt money.”

- 6 Our health depends on having the right amount of salt in our bodies. Generally, the human body is very good at keeping our salt levels balanced. But sometimes that balance can be thrown off. Our diets, for example, might contain extremely low or extremely high amounts of salt. If this goes on for too long, there could be serious consequences—even death.
- 7 When early humans survived on the meat they hunted, their bodies got enough salt from the animals they ate. As people learned to grow their vegetables and grains and began to eat less meat, salt became more important. And it was often hard to find. The need for salt and the limited supply of it made salt very valuable!

When people began to grow crops, they ate less meat and needed to find new ways to get salt into their diets.



Think Use what you learned from reading the history article to respond to the following questions.

- 1** This question has two parts. First, answer Part A. Then answer Part B.

Part A

What inference can you make based on the information in paragraph 3?

- A** The soldiers used blocks of salt as payment so they could travel along the Salt Road.
- B** Salt was so valued by Romans that it was used as a form of pay.
- C** The soldiers did not have a healthy diet, so they were paid in blocks of salt.
- D** The Roman government ran out of gold, so it paid soldiers in blocks of salt.

Part B

Which **two** sentences from the text provide the **best** support for your answer in Part A?

- A** "This . . . was called *salarium argentums* or 'salt money.'"
- B** "Throughout history and around the world, governments have regulated and taxed salt."
- C** "This tiny crystal cube has played a much more important role in history than just flavoring our fries."
- D** "The word soldier comes from the Latin *sol dare*, meaning 'to give salt.'"
- E** "Human beings can't live without salt."
- F** "The need for salt and the limited supply of it made salt very valuable!"

- 2** Underline **two** sentences in the paragraph below that **best** support the idea that our bodies need salt.

Our health depends on having the right amount of salt in our bodies. Generally, the human body is very good at keeping our salt levels balanced. But sometimes that balance can be thrown off. Our diets, for example, might contain extremely low or extremely high amounts of salt. If this goes on for too long, there could be serious consequences—even death.

- 3** Read the following inference.

The salt transported over the Salt Road helped Rome to become a great and important trading center.

Which **three** details from the text provide the **best** support for the inference?

- A** "People who controlled salt had power."
- B** "When early humans survived on the meat they hunted, their bodies got enough salt from the animals they ate."
- C** "Around 2,000 years ago, some of the people with salt—and power—were the Romans."
- D** "One way Rome controlled salt was by building villages along the Mediterranean coast."
- E** "Human beings can't live without salt."
- F** "As people learned to grow their vegetables and grains and began to eat less meat, salt became more important."

- 4** This question has two parts. First, answer Part A. Then answer Part B.

Part A

Read the sentence from paragraph 4 of the passage.

The history of the world is overflowing with stories of salt.

What does the word overflowing mean as it is used in this sentence?

- A** wide and vast
- B** overly full of
- C** covered completely
- D** in short supply

Part B

Underline **three** sentences in the paragraph below that provide the **best** support for your answer in Part A.

Throughout history and around the world, governments have regulated and taxed salt. . . . Salt played a role in the history of our country, too. In both the Revolutionary and Civil wars, keeping enough salt for the soldiers was important. In these and other wars, enemies have tried to keep salt away from each other. The history of the world is overflowing with stories of salt.

**Write**

- 5 Short Response** How is the value of salt different today than it was in ancient Roman times? Include **three** details from the article to support your response.

**Learning Target**

In this lesson, you learned to use text details and what you know to make inferences. Now explain how this can help you develop a deeper understanding of informational texts.
