

- **1** Popcorn was first discovered and harvested in the Central American region of present-day Guatemala thousands of years ago. Today, it has become a worldwide favorite, inspiring various added flavors and methods of heating the kernels so they “pop” into the fluffy softened texture that can easily be eaten. **2** The Native Americans who brought popcorn to the attention of European explorers believed that the individual corn kernels contained spirits. **3** For those long-ago tribes, popcorn was considered an essential and nutritious part of the diet; for popcorn-eaters today, the treat is thought of as more of a snack than a necessary element of healthy eating. **4**
- **5** This traditional Native American dish was quite a novelty to newcomers to the Americas. Columbus and his sailors found natives in the West Indies wearing popcorn necklaces, and explorer Hernando Cortes described the use of popcorn amulets in the religious ceremonies of the Aztecs. **6** The Aztecs may have believed that wearing the amulets brought them favor in the eyes of their gods. **7** Bringing popcorn to the Thanksgiving celebration symbolized the respect these Native Americans had for the new settlers and the hope they had for unity with them. **8** According to legendary descriptions of the celebratory meal, Quasquima, the brother of Chief Massasoit, contributed several deerskin bags of the popped treat to the celebration.
- Popcorn differs from the corn generally eaten directly off the cob, also known as “sweet” corn, in that the kernels of popcorn have a hard nonporous exterior than is practically impenetrable by moisture and a dense starchy center. This combination of factors allows for the buildup of intense pressure inside each kernel when it is heated sufficiently which consequently causes an explosive pop that forces the center of each kernel out of the hull, or outside covering, and into a variety of popcorn “flakes,” as popped kernels are known as. In contrast, sweet corn has a much softer, porous hull which moisture can penetrate quite easily, thus preventing sweet corn kernels from achieving the amount of internal pressure necessary to make them pop.
- **9** The popping of corn started with relatively primitive techniques that involved some sort of roasting of the kernels over an open fire. **10** One method of popping corn involved skewering an ear of corn on a stick and roasting it until the kernels popped off the ear. **11** Corn was also popped by first cutting the kernels off the cob, throwing them into a fire, and gathering them as they popped out of the fire. **12** In another method for popping corn, sand and unpopped kernels of corn were mixed together in a cooking pot and heated until the corn popped to the surface of the sand in the heated pot. As can be imagined, these techniques resulted in significant amounts of popcorn being overcooked, lost to the open environment, or going unpopped.
- Modern methods of popping corn have removed many of the frustrations of earlier methods. **13** Households developed more efficient methods of popping corn in small amounts with the development of indoor stoves on which metal kettles and pots could be placed. **14** Electric air poppers were introduced in the twentieth century as a healthy alternative to popcorn steeped in oil over the stove’s heat. **15** As microwave oven use became more widespread in the late part of the twentieth century, microwaving popcorn became one of the most convenient and favored methods of making the snack. **16**
- In addition to the rise in popularity of making popcorn at home, the commercial market also took on the challenge of figuring out ways to produce it in larger quantities. A commercial breakthrough for popping corn in large amounts was made in the latter part of the nineteenth century, with Charles Cretors’s invention of a large-scale popcorn machine. Cretors’s invention increased the uniform heating of the kernels in mass numbers, which allowed for fewer unpopped kernels and more profit for vendors. His popcorn machine served as the prototype for many commercial machines used at large venues, such as stadiums and movie theaters. Alongside the introduction of this new popcorn machine, which made way for freshly popped corn to be served at public events, F.W. Rueckheim presented the first flavored popcorn, caramel corn. This flavor maintains its popularity today, partly due to his brother Louis’s modification of the recipe, which created the first commercially packaged flavored popcorn, Cracker Jack®.

1. Look at the four squares **1** that indicate where the following sentence could be added to the first paragraph of the passage.

Consequently, the ancient peoples gave the popped food positions of honor in various religious ceremonies in addition to enjoying its taste.

Where would the sentence best fit? Click on a square **1** to add the sentence to the passage.

2. Look at the four squares **2** that indicate where the following sentence could be added to the second paragraph of the passage.

A century after the early explorers, the Pilgrims at Plymouth may have been introduced to popcorn at the first Thanksgiving dinner by the Wampanoag tribe.

Where would the sentence best fit? Click on a square **2** to add the sentence to the passage.

3. Look at the four squares **3** that indicate where the following sentence could be added to the fourth paragraph of the passage.

This tasty treat has been popped for at least 5,000 years, using a variety of different methods.

Where would the sentence best fit? Click on a square **3** to add the sentence to the passage.

4. Look at the four squares **4** that indicate where the following sentence could be added to the fifth paragraph of the passage.

It remains a very popular method for preparing the snack, since the treat pops up ready-to-eat in just a few minutes.

Where would the sentence best fit? Click on a square **4** to add the sentence to the passage.

- Something unusual about lions is that they hunt in groups. **1** This may be in part because lions in particular are more social than other species; they travel and live together in a group called a pride, which is usually composed of related individuals. Prides range anywhere from 5 to 30 members, though they are more likely to fall on the smaller end of this range than the larger. **2** Group hunting is beneficial to lions because it means that much larger prey can be captured by the lions. **3** It also means that individual lions expend much less energy during a hunt. **4**
- There is a standard pattern to the process of hunting in groups. The process is initiated by a single female, who positions herself at a raised elevation to serve as a lookout to spot potential prey. **5** When prey is spotted, a group of young lionesses advances on the herd and pushes the herd in the direction of a different lioness that has hidden herself downwind. **6** It is up to this concealed female to choose the weakest member of the herd for the kill. **7** Once the kill is made, the hunters decide whether to consume it on the spot or take it back to share with the other members of the pride. **8** This decision is based on the size of the kill: smaller prey is devoured by the hunters immediately after the attack, while larger prey can be dragged back to be shared by the rest of the group.
- The younger and stronger females are the ones that go on the attack for food. **9** Although these females are at the peak of their health, speed, and strength, when compared to other creatures of the wild, their stamina is not as enduring. **10** Therefore, it is imperative that the females are in close proximity to their prey before they charge in the final attack. **11** Coordinating their movements to lead the victim downwind toward the main attacker lets the lionesses conserve their energy and strength for the final rush before the kill. **12** It is also the reason that lionesses plan the hunts strategically, typically hunting under the cover of darkness or in areas where they are not easily spotted.
- As can be seen from this description of the process, it is the females rather than the male or males in the pride that take part in the kill. There are several reasons why the females take the lead in the hunt for food. First, the typical pride consists of only 1 to 2 males, with the rest being females and cubs. As male cubs mature, they are pushed out of the pride, becoming solitary nomads, or joining other prides lacking male lions. On occasion, a male lion will make a solitary kill, one in which the single male takes down and consumes the prey. On these occasions, the male will not share his kill with other lions, though he does tend to insure that any larger kills brought back to the group by females are shared with the young cubs.
- Another important factor that hinders males from hunting is their anatomy, specifically the large mane that flows from the top of their head down across their shoulders. The voluminous amount of fur is thick and heavy, not only weighing down the lion more than the mane-free females, but also increasing their body heat. This increase in body temperature can be hazardous during hunts, especially in the warm climates that most lions inhabit. Higher body temperatures can lead to exhaustion, depleting the energy of the male lion and providing a means of escape for its prey while at the same time leaving him vulnerable to attack from other animals.
- **13** The male lions, along with the older and weaker females that are no longer eligible to hunt, stay behind and protect the pride from intruders as the hunt is carried out. **14** This is especially important when there are young cubs present that have not learned the skills to evade attack or appropriately protect themselves from outsiders. **15** The male lions present an intimidating presence to other animals watching the pride, and the males will rise to the occasion and attack when necessary in order to protect the group for which they are responsible. **16**

Sentences that you insert into the passage do not change the meaning of the paragraph they are placed in. However, they can help you understand the ideas in that paragraph in more detail.

5. Look at the four squares **5** that indicate where the following sentence could be added to the first paragraph of the passage.

Other cats do not.

Where would the sentence best fit? Click on a square **5** to add the sentence to the passage.

6. Look at the four squares **6** that indicate where the following sentence could be added to the second paragraph of the passage.

This is usually accomplished by knocking the prey to the ground and breaking its neck.

Where would the sentence best fit? Click on a square **6** to add the sentence to the passage.

7. Look at the four squares **7** that indicate where the following sentence could be added to the third paragraph of the passage.

It is primarily for this reason that the females hunt in groups and spend a long time stalking their prey before the attack.

Where would the sentence best fit? Click on a square **7** to add the sentence to the passage.

8. Look at the four squares **8** that indicate where the following sentence could be added to the sixth paragraph of the passage.

Thus, the males have a defensive rather than an offensive role.

Where would the sentence best fit? Click on a square **8** to add the sentence to the passage.