

**Pre-Reading**

Think about the following questions.

1. Do you like ketchup, pizza sauce, and salsa? What do these foods have in common?
2. Where did the tomato first come from?
3. Is the tomato a fruit or a vegetable? Why do you think so?

**Vocabulary Preview**

Write the letter of the word or phrase with the same meaning as the underlined word.

a. disagreement; discussion	d. talks about; says briefly
b. necessary	e. near; related to
c. with permission by law	f. defeated and controlled

1. \_\_\_ It is essential to use tomatoes when you make salsa.
2. \_\_\_ There is a lot of controversy about cloning.
3. \_\_\_ One of the difficulties surrounding farmers is farm products from other countries.
4. \_\_\_ The company pays a lot of taxes to legally bring goods into the country.
5. \_\_\_ Her letter mentions that her mother is sick.
6. \_\_\_ The Spanish conquered many other cultures.

# The Misunderstood Tomato



**D**o you enjoy eating salsa and chips? Or maybe you like having ketchup on your fries? Then, you must like the essential ingredient in these sauces, tomatoes. The tomato originally comes from South America and has been eaten by people there for thousands of years. Today, tomatoes are popular the world over. However, when they were first introduced, there was quite a bit of controversy and worry surrounding them.

Ancient **Aztec** writings mention recipes for dishes of tomatoes, peppers, and salt—probably the first salsa recipe! Spanish soldiers conquered the Aztecs and brought tomato seeds back with them to Europe. In Europe, these yellowish tomatoes were first called “apples of gold.” For a long time, people in Northern Europe and North America did not eat these “apples of gold.” People were afraid to eat tomatoes because the plant looked similar to the nightshade plant, a deadly poison. German people even thought that if someone ate tomatoes, he or she would change into a **werewolf**. However, by the mid-1800s, people all over the world had **accepted** the tomato as a good food to eat.

Nevertheless, the tomato was due for more controversy. Do you think tomatoes are a fruit or vegetable? Actually tomatoes are a fruit. However, in America, tomatoes are a vegetable by law. Why are tomatoes legally a vegetable in America? In the 1800s, there was no **import tax** on fruit from other countries, but there was an import tax on vegetables. At that time, many tomatoes were coming from other countries into America, and American tomato farmers became worried about making a living. The government made tomatoes a vegetable by law so that non-American tomatoes would be taxed.

It is easy to tell that the tomato is really a fruit. In fact, tomatoes are similar to berries. Both have seeds inside, and both grow from the flowers of a plant. Both also have delicious **flesh** surrounding the seeds. Tomatoes and strawberries are actually in the same family. Tomato ice cream, anyone?

Reading Time \_\_\_\_\_ minutes \_\_\_\_\_ seconds      338 words



<sup>7</sup> **Aztec:** a tribe that lived thousands of years ago in the Americas

<sup>13</sup> **werewolf:** a person that changes into a wolf during a full moon

<sup>14</sup> **accept:** to agree to

<sup>18</sup> **import tax:** money that must be paid to the government for bringing goods into a country

<sup>27</sup> **flesh:** soft inside; soft tissue

### Choose the best answer.

1. What is the focus of this reading?
  - a. What kind of thing tomatoes really are
  - b. How to grow tomatoes
  - c. The history of famous tomato dishes
  - d. Controversies surrounding tomatoes
2. What is NOT a reason why people didn't eat tomatoes at first?
  - a. They thought tomatoes could change them into monsters.
  - b. They thought tomatoes were poisonous.
  - c. They thought tomatoes were similar to a deadly plant.
  - d. They thought tomatoes cost too much to grow.
3. What does the US government say tomatoes are?
  - a. A kind of fruit
  - b. A kind of vegetable
  - c. Both a fruit and a vegetable
  - d. Neither a fruit nor a vegetable
4. How are tomatoes like strawberries?
  - a. They grow on trees.
  - b. The inside parts are similar.
  - c. Tomatoes do not grow very big.
  - d. Summer is the best time to pick them.
5. What is the most likely reason why people first called tomatoes "apples of gold"?
  - a. Tomatoes were very expensive.
  - b. Tomatoes tasted delicious.
  - c. Tomatoes were a color like gold.
  - d. Tomatoes came from South America.

## Idiomatic Expressions

### Find these idioms in the reading.

- **be due for** [ to be time for (something) to occur ]  
It's been really dry. We are **due for** some rain.
- **make a living** [ to have a job ]  
My sister **makes a living** as a police officer.
- **by law** [ officially; legally ]  
I am a Chinese citizen **by law**.

### Fill in the blank with one of the above idioms. Change its form if necessary.

1. Before I lost my job, I used to \_\_\_\_\_ as a photographer.
2. We \_\_\_\_\_ a federal election soon.
3. \_\_\_\_\_, no one under 19 can vote.

## Summary

Read the sentences from the reading passage. Paraphrase the sentences to create a summary of the passage.

- a. Spanish soldiers conquered the Aztecs and brought tomato seeds back with them to Europe.
- b. For a long time, people in Northern Europe and North America did not eat these “apples of gold”... because the plant looked similar to the nightshade plant, a deadly poison.

1. **a + b:** After Spanish soldiers brought tomato seeds back to Europe, \_\_\_\_\_.

- c. In the 1800s... many tomatoes were coming from other countries into America, and American tomato farmers became worried about making a living.
- d. The government made tomatoes a vegetable by law so that non-American tomatoes would be taxed.

2. **c + d:** The US government made a law in the 1800s to call tomatoes vegetables because \_\_\_\_\_.

- e. In fact, tomatoes are similar to berries.
- f. Both have seeds inside, and both grow from the flowers of a plant.

3. **e + f:** It is easy to see that tomatoes are like berries because \_\_\_\_\_.



## Listening

### Fruits and Vegetables



Listen to the dialog. Check **True** or **False** for each sentence.

1. They are talking about a vegetable that many people think of as a fruit.

True

False

2. This vegetable is in the family of cucumbers and pumpkins.

3. The woman is eating a sandwich with this vegetable in it.

Discuss the following questions.

1. What kind of fruit do you like? Why?
2. How often do you eat tomatoes?
3. What are your favorite foods containing tomatoes?

## Grammar

### Participle Phrases as Adjectives

A participle phrase follows a noun or a pronoun which it modifies.

*When tomatoes were first introduced, there was quite a bit of controversy and worry (surrounding / to surround) them.*

*Tomatoes and berries have seeds inside, and both have delicious flesh (surrounding / surrounded) the seeds.*

## Writing

Write your own short paragraph by answering the questions below.

### My Favorite Food Containing Tomatoes

(1) What is your favorite food containing tomatoes? (2) Why do you like it? (3) What do you need to make it? (4) How do you make it?

#### Example

My favorite food containing tomatoes is pizza. I like it because it tastes good, hot or cold. To make pizza, you need a crust and some cheese and vegetables. First, you put tomato sauce on the crust. Then you add the cheese and vegetables. After that, you bake it. Finally, you eat it!

## Vocabulary and Idiom Review

**A. Choose the best word or phrase to fill in the blank.**

**B. Choose the correct form of the word to fill in the blank.**

8. A(n) \_\_\_\_ thing to do in learning a language is to practice often.

a. essential                    b. non-essential            c. essentially

9. That fruit was \_\_\_\_ from Thailand.

a. import                    b. imported                    c. importing

10. The \_\_\_\_ Aztec nation had to give a lot of gold to Spain.

a. conquering                    b. conquered                    c. conquer