



Questions 1–10

In past centuries, Native Americans living in the arid areas of what is now the southwestern United States relied on a variety of strategies to ensure the success of their agriculture. First and foremost, water was the critical factor. The soil was rich because there was little rain to leach out the minerals, but the low precipitation caused its own problems. Long periods of drought could have made agriculture impossible; on the other hand, a sudden flood could just as easily have destroyed a crop.

Several techniques were developed to solve the water problem. The simplest was to plant crops in the floodplains and wait for the annual floods to water the young crops. A less dangerous technique was to build dikes or dams to control the flooding. These dikes both protected the plants against excessive flooding and prevented the water from escaping too quickly once it had arrived. The Hopi people designed their fields in a checkerboard pattern, with many small dikes, each enclosing only one or two stalks of maize (corn), while other groups built a series of dams to control the floods. A third technique was to dig irrigation ditches to bring water from the rivers. Water was sometimes carried to the fields in jars, particularly if the season was dry. Some crops were planted where they could be watered directly by the runoff from cliff walls.

Another strategy Native Americans used to ensure a continuous food supply was to plant their crops in more than one place, hoping that if one crop failed, another would survive. However, since the soil was rich and not easily exhausted, the same patch of ground could be cultivated year after year, whereas in the woodlands of the eastern United States it was necessary to abandon a plot of ground after a few years of farming. In the Southwest, often two successive crops were planted each year.

It was a common southwestern practice to grow enough food so that some could be dried and stored for emergencies. If emergency supplies ran low, the people turned to the local wild plants. If these failed, they moved up into the mountains to gather the wild plants that might have survived in the cooler atmosphere.



1. What does the passage mainly discuss?
 - (A) Agricultural methods of Native Americans
 - (B) Irrigation techniques used by the Hopi
 - (C) Soil quality in the American Southwest
 - (D) Native American methods of storing emergency food supplies
2. The word “solve” in line 7 is closest in meaning to
 - (A) advance toward
 - (B) protect from
 - (C) keep in
 - (D) deal with
3. Planting in the floodplains was not ideal because
 - (A) the amount of water could not be controlled
 - (B) the crops could be eaten by wild animals
 - (C) the floodplains were too remote to be cultivated frequently
 - (D) corn grows better at high elevations
4. The word “enclosing” in line 12 is closest in meaning to
 - (A) defending
 - (B) measuring
 - (C) surrounding
 - (D) extending
5. The word “they” in line 16 refers to
 - (A) fields
 - (B) jars
 - (C) crops
 - (D) walls
6. Why did farmers in the Southwest plant crops in several places at the same time?
 - (A) They moved frequently from one place to another.
 - (B) They feared that one of the crops might fail.
 - (C) The size of each field was quite limited.
 - (D) They wanted to avoid overusing the soil.
7. The word “patch” in line 19 is closest in meaning to
 - (A) type
 - (B) level
 - (C) group
 - (D) piece
8. Why did farmers in the eastern woodlands periodically abandon their fields?
 - (A) Seasonal flooding made agriculture impossible.
 - (B) They experienced water shortages.
 - (C) They wanted a longer growing season.
 - (D) The minerals in the soil were exhausted.
9. What did farmers in the Southwest do when a crop failed?
 - (A) They planted in the eastern woodlands.
 - (B) They gathered food from wild plants.
 - (C) They moved away from the mountains.
 - (D) They redesigned their fields for the next season.
10. Farmers in the Southwest would have benefited most from which of the following?
 - (A) Steeper cliff walls
 - (B) More sunshine
 - (C) Regular rain
 - (D) Smaller dikes