Reading 3

Skills:

- Scanning
- Identify synonyms
- Establish connections

Getting started: Do you think humans can now plant whatever they want, wherever they want?

FARMING ON ALIEN PLANETS



Have you ever watched the movie The Martian starring Matt Damon? Whether you have or not, there is something interesting in this movie, and it's the fact that Mark Watney (Matt Damon's character) is able to grow potatoes on Mars. __1__

Mars and the Moon could be new spots to grow food. __2__ If we are ever to go on to colonize other worlds, with the Red Planet being our number-one target, then this is very good news for astronauts.

Thanks to a team of scientists in the Netherlands, __3__, we have been provided with the information that could help humans one day settle on an alien planet. Both soils have the essential ingredients

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plants need to grow such as nitrates and ammonium. By using 'fake' minerals from Mars and the Moon to try and grow carrots, tomatoes, weeds and wheat, the experts found that untreated soil found on Mars was the plants' favorite.

On the other hand, Moon dirt didn't agree with them completely, __4__ Nevertheless, not everything is lost for crop farming on the Moon, though scientists think that pumping our natural satellite's soil with nitrogen could be the ticket for growing crops on our cratered companion.

__5__, interplanetary farmers would play a vital role in feeding those who live there. Tomatoes, peas and quinoa are just a few of the vegetables they could potentially grow on the red planet, which is great news as carrying food from the Earth could take a long, long time.

**Adapted from How it Works – World of Tomorrow. Fifth Edition. DK Publishing.*

1. The sentences below have been removed from the text. Read them and complete the gaps with the correct option.

a. Believe it or not, the soil found on the Moon and Mars could actually be much more fertile than some of the dirt found on Earth.

b. If humans could successfully colonize Mars one day

c. as some crops find it really hard to grow.

d. Pure science fiction or a real possibility?

e. who have confronted volcanoes in Hawaii and Arizona to obtain material similar to Martian dirt and lunar soil

2. Match the following words with synonyms you can find in the text.

- **Paragraph 1**: seen, cultivate
- **Paragraph 2**: places, objective
- **Paragraph 3**: given, false
- **Paragraph 4**: totally, however
- **Paragraph 5**: crucial, only

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What do you think?

If you traveled to space to live there for a couple of years, and you could grow only three types of food, what would you choose to grow? Why?

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