Skills practice

Now practise the skills you have learnt by answering the questions on Reading Passage 6.

Reading Passage 6

The history of chocolate

A The history of chocolate started in South America and the Amazon. Ancient man picked the sweet fruit off the trees and ate it, throwing away the seeds. The pod of the cacao tree tasted sweet, like apricots, whereas the beans – or seeds – inside the pod were bitter. It's not known when ancient civilizations found out how to use the cacao's seeds. It might have been by accident, when the beans fell into a fire and roasted, releasing a chocolate-like smell – however, the use of cacao beans as a food probably took place during the time of the Olmecs.

B The Olmecs (1200 to 300 BC) were an ancient tribe from South Central Mexico. They were the first to grow the cacao plant and use the beans. They had a name for these bitter seeds that held secrets to health and power: *kakawa*, or cacao.

C Following the Olmecs, the Mayans treasured cacao as a medicine and a food. But they did not make chocolate bars. Instead, the beans were mixed with corn and flavourings to make savoury meals. These dishes were very bitter – very different from the chocolate we eat now.

D Many years later, between the 14th and 16th centuries, the Aztecs used the cacao bean as their form of currency: in other words, beans were used like coins. A list of Aztec trading prices looked something like this:
1 small rabbit = 30 cacao beans
1 turkey egg = 3 cacao beans
1 large tomato = 1 cacao bean

E Christopher Columbus saw how the people of South America valued the beans, but he thought they were a type of nut – an almond. Although he brought cacao beans back to Spain with him nobody knew what they were or what to do with them.

F Then, in 1519, Hernan Cortes arrived at the great court of the Aztec king, Montezuma. He and his crew saw how the Aztecs used chocolate. Cortes himself didn't enjoy the Aztecs' bitter brew, but he recognized its value. He wrote to King Carlos I of Spain that chocolate was a 'drink that builds up resistance and fights fatigue'.

G After the Spanish conquered the Aztecs and began building settlements in the New World, they adopted many of the foods of the native people, including chocolate. European immigrants to the New World brought sugar and other foods to South and Central America, and the Spanish settlers began drinking chocolate hot and sweet.

H It took a royal wedding to make chocolate a star in Europe. When the Spanish princess, Maria Theresa, came to the French court at Versailles to marry King Louis XIV in 1660, she brought her precious cacao beans with her. Hot chocolate was served at the wedding and the bride's guests loved it. Although chocolate was expensive its popularity spread in France and England. Hot chocolate was served in 'chocolate houses,' not unlike the cafés you see on every street corner today.

I The 19th-century Industrial Revolution saw inventions that changed the nature of chocolate, particularly in Switzerland. For example, Swiss chemist Henri Nestlé invented a process to create powdered milk, and together with Daniel Peter, a chocolate manufacturer, he created the very first milk chocolate bar in 1879. In the same year, Rudolphe Lindt invented the conche machine and the process known as 'conching' which made shiny, smooth and creamy chocolate. These advances made the Swiss the leaders of chocolate manufacturing, and throughout the 19th century they produced 12,000 pounds of chocolate per Swiss citizen per year, most of it for export.

1 Complete the flow chart. Choose **ONE WORD ONLY** from the passage for each answer.

The history of chocolate

South America and the Amazon: (1)..... eaten but not beans.

South Central Mexico: (2)..... the first to use the beans.

Mayans used beans in (3)..... dishes. (bitter, not sweet)

Beans used as a type of (4)..... – to buy and sell things.

Columbus brought cacao beans to Spain and Cortes recognized health properties.

Europeans brought sugar to the New World.

Spanish in New World started to drink (5)..... hot chocolate.

Chocolate introduced to Europe during a (6)..... .

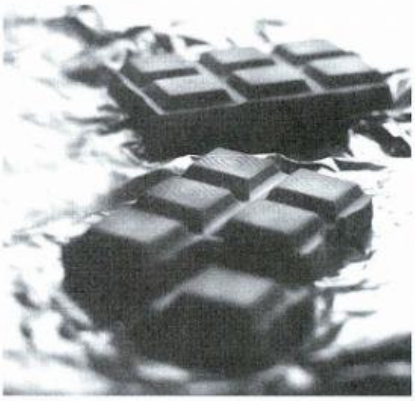
Hot chocolate drunk in (7)..... .

2 Complete the sentences below. Write **NO MORE THAN THREE WORDS** for each answer.

1 Although the seeds of the cacao plant were bitter, the pod had a taste similar to ..... .
2 Ancient civilizations may have discovered how to use the cacao's seeds by ..... .
3 To the Aztecs, one ..... was worth thirty cacao beans.
4 Maria Theresa's ..... enjoyed hot chocolate when she got married.
5 Chocolate was popular in Europe, despite it being ..... .

3 Complete the summary of paragraph I with the list of words **A–H** below.

A chocolate bars **B** consumed **C** exported **D** inventions
E machine **F** manufacturer **G** powdered **H** process

The birth of chocolate bars

Switzerland was responsible for many of the **6**..... that redefined chocolate and they became leading chocolate manufacturers. Henri Nestlé made **7**..... milk. He then collaborated with Daniel Peter to make **8**..... . Chocolate was made smoother through a **9**..... called conching, invented by Lindt. Most of the chocolate that was made in Switzerland was **10**..... .