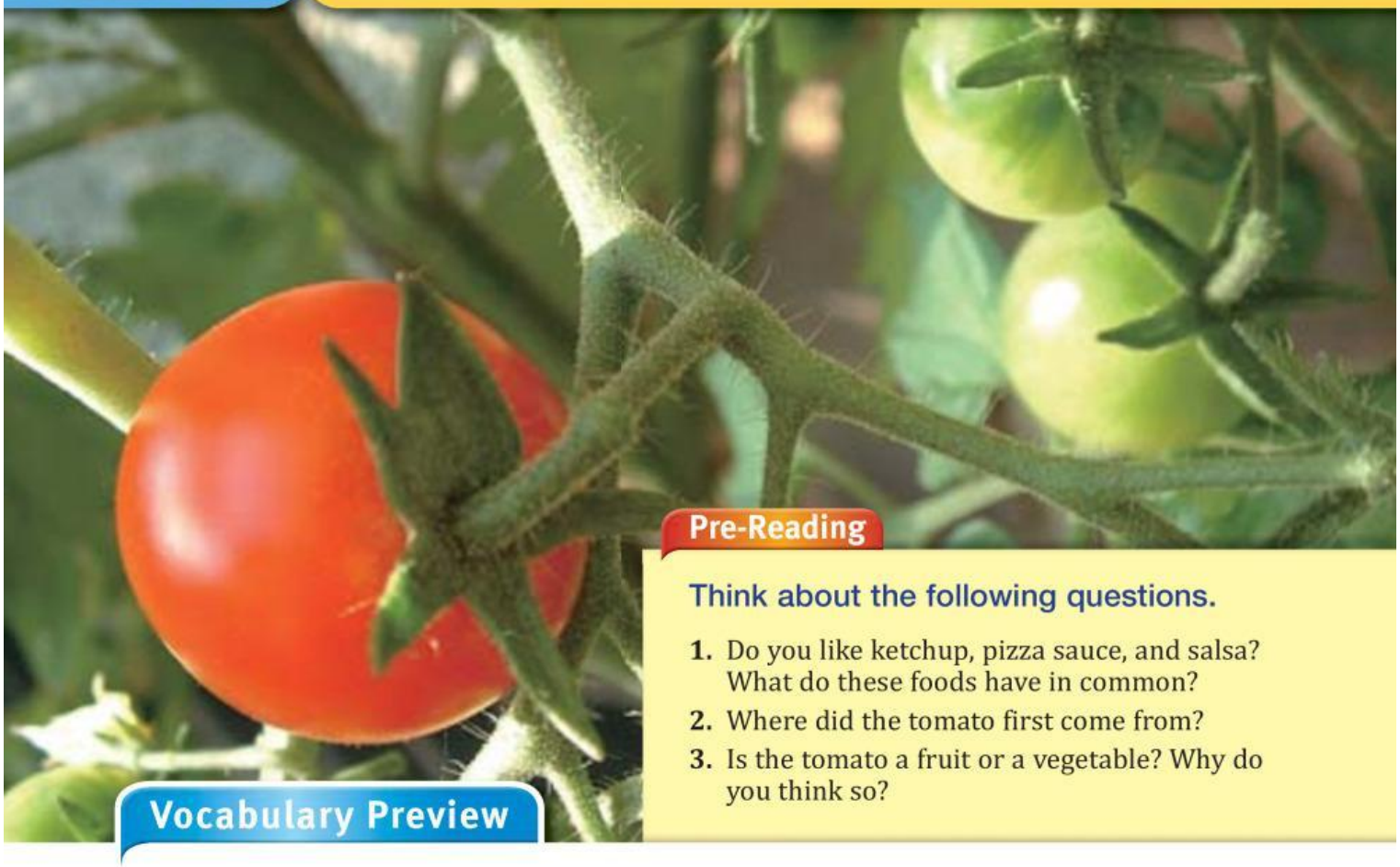
15 The Misunderstood Tomato



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

LIVEWORKSHEETS

The Misunderstood Tomato

Track 29

Do 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

7 *Aztec*: a tribe that lived thousands of years ago in the Americas

13 *werewolf*: a person that changes into a wolf during a full moon

14 *accept*: to agree to

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

27 *flesh*: soft inside; soft tissue

LIVEWORKSHEETS

Reading Comprehension

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.

LIVEWORKSHEETS

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

Track 30

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

	True	False
1. They are talking about a vegetable that many people think of as a fruit.	☐	☐
2. This vegetable is in the family of cucumbers and pumpkins.	☐	☐
3. The woman is eating a sandwich with this vegetable in it.	☐	☐

LIVEWORKSHEETS

Discussion

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!

LIVEWORKSHEETS

Vocabulary and Idiom Review

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

1. I really like to eat sunflower _____.

a. seeds b. flesh c. sauce d. powder

2. The ____ of peaches are bigger than those found in many other fruits.

a. flesh b. plant c. seeds d. common

3. How many problems are there _____ the new program?

a. accepted b. similar to c. surrounding d. due for

4. I had a lot of _____ about my final exams.

a. understanding b. aggression c. afraid d. apprehension

5. The political _____ caused the president to lose the election.

a. controversy b. tax c. mystery d. attraction

6. Is there a _____ for that disease?

a. poison b. cure c. damage d. recipe

7. The reports _____ a new product.

a. accept b. respect c. conquer d. mention

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

LIVEWORKSHEETS