

Oxen



Today, some people in the Asian country of Cambodia drive cars. But others still travel in the old way, by oxen. When you have more than one ox, you call them oxen. An ox is about the size of a cow. It cannot walk as fast as a horse, but it has stronger legs, so it can pull heavy things across rough roads and farmland.

In Cambodia, many farmers grow corn, beans and rice. For hundreds of years, farmers there have used oxen to pull heavy plows so they can plant seeds. When the crops are ready, the farmers load their harvest into carts. They attach each cart to a team of oxen, which pull the carts to markets so that the farmers can sell their crops.

Can you see how valuable an ox is to a Cambodian farmer? With an ox he can plow more land, carry heavier things, and sell his crops in markets far from home. That helps him make more money than he could by himself. Some Cambodian farmers use modern tractors and trucks, but an ox is still cheaper to buy and use.

For people who live in cities, though, an ox doesn't always work. In Phnom Penh, Cambodia's capital city, there's little grass for an ox to eat. And unlike farmers, many people who live in cities don't carry around things that weigh hundreds of pounds. But the average person in Cambodia earns only about \$2,300 every year, so many cannot afford to buy cars.

A common solution: motor scooters. Walking down a sidewalk in a Cambodian city, it's common to see entire families riding to school and work on a single scooter. The father usually drives, the mother rides behind him, and the children sit on the handlebars and the back of the seat.

Name: _____ Date: _____

1. What is an ox?

- A** a plant that is grown on many Cambodian farms and then sold
- B** an animal with strong legs that is about the size of a cow
- C** a vehicle used by many people to get around Cambodian cities
- D** a person who plants seeds and harvests crops

2. What problem do motor scooters solve in Cambodian cities?

- A** the problem of not being able to sell crops at markets far from home
- B** the problem of not having a modern tractor
- C** the problem of harvesting crops such as corn and rice
- D** the problem of getting around without an ox or a car

3. Oxen are valuable to Cambodian farmers.

What evidence from the passage supports this statement?

- A** An ox is about the size of a cow and cannot walk as fast as a horse.
- B** There is little grass for an ox to eat in Cambodia's capital city.
- C** Oxen allow Cambodian farmers to plow more land and carry heavier things than they could without oxen.
- D** Oxen are used by families living in Cambodian cities such as Phnom Penh to get to school and work.

4. How might having an ox allow a Cambodian farmer to sell his crops in markets far from home?

- A** An ox could be used to take the farmer's children to school.
- B** An ox could be used to win a race against another farmer's horse.
- C** An ox could be used to pull the farmer's crops to the markets.
- D** An ox could be used to get somewhere faster than a motor scooter.

5. What is this passage mostly about?

- A** Phnom Penh, the capital city of Cambodia
- B** oxen and getting around in Cambodia
- C** how to grow corn, beans, and rice
- D** the jobs that people who live in Cambodia's cities have

6. Read the following sentences: "In Cambodia, many farmers grow corn, beans and rice. For hundreds of years, farmers there have used oxen to pull heavy plows so they can plant seeds. When the **crops** are ready, the farmers load their harvest into carts."

What does the word "**crops**" mean above?

- A plants grown to be eaten or sold
- B animals used by farmers to pull heavy loads
- C countries in Asia where many people cannot afford to buy cars
- D places where there is not much grass

7. Choose the answer that best completes the sentence below.

In Cambodia oxen are used to get around outside the cities; _____, motor scooters are used to get around inside the cities.

- A therefore
- B for example
- C later on
- D meanwhile

8. Name three ways that people in Cambodia travel.

9. Why do some people in Cambodian cities use motor scooters instead of other types of transportation?

10. What is the best way to travel around Cambodia? Support your answer with evidence from the passage.

Teacher Guide & Answers

Passage Reading Level: Lexile 950

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8. Name three ways that people in Cambodia travel.

Suggested answer: Students may name any three means of transportation mentioned in the article, such as car, ox, and motor scooter.

9. Why do some people in Cambodian cities use motor scooters instead of other types of transportation?

Suggested answer: Answers may vary, as long as they reflect the passage. For example, students may respond that some people use motor scooters in Cambodian cities because scooters are cheaper than cars and more convenient than oxen.

10. What is the best way to travel around Cambodia? Support your answer with evidence from the passage.

Suggested answer: Answers may vary, as long as they are supported by the passage. Students may respond that the best way to travel around Cambodia is by oxen because oxen are relatively cheap. Students may also respond that trucks are the best way to travel around Cambodia, as they can be used by farmers to transport crops as well as by people living in cities.