

# 14 A bittersweet journey

Level: **Let's think!**

1. What are some popular brands known for their chocolate treats?
2. Did you know what chocolate is made from?

PLAYLIST



READ ALONG



## The dark and sweet history of a beloved snack



**1** The cocoa fruit is long and round with a thick and hard skin. When ripe, it can have a yellow, orange, or purple colour. Inside the fruit, you will find many seeds embedded in a white pulp. 5

**2** Originally from South America, the cocoa fruit was brought to West Africa several hundred years ago. It thrives in hot weather and can only be grown in equatorial regions. Today, large cocoa plantations can be found in West African countries like Ghana and The Ivory Coast.

**3** In Europe, a drink made from cocoa seeds first gained popularity among royalty and the wealthy in the 1600s. It was believed to have various health benefits, such as increased energy and protection against infectious diseases. The first chocolate bars did not appear until the mid-19th century. 10

**4** There are several steps involved in transforming cocoa fruit into chocolate bars. First, the seeds, also known as chocolate beans, and white pulp are extracted and then wrapped in banana leaves or similar materials for fermentation. Afterwards, they are dried in the sun and roasted to bring out flavour. The roasted beans are then ground into cocoa mass, which is semi-liquid due to the melted fat within the beans. Finally, the mass is mixed with various ingredients and flavours such as sugar, milk, vanilla, cocoa powder and nuts to form different types of chocolate, such as milk chocolate, dark chocolate and white chocolate. 15

**5** The price of chocolate bars can vary greatly. This raises a question of why there is such a big difference. Well, the pricing usually depends on factors such as the chocolate's quality, brand and added ingredients. Prices can range from a bar of milk chocolate that can be purchased for HK\$10 at a convenience store to a premium truffle chocolate wrapped in gold leaf that costs around HK\$3,800! 20

25

6 Unfortunately, most of the profits from chocolate sales end up in the hands of large companies that sell cocoa mass and confectionery companies producing chocolates. Very little of the profit reaches cocoa farmers, who often earn less than HK\$10 per day. Consequently, many of them have never even tasted chocolate because they cannot afford it.

7 The low wages from farming cocoa have led to a reluctance among local people in Ghana and The Ivory Coast to farm the crop. In some cases, child labour is employed, with children taken from poor villages to work on cocoa farms. Some people have started to ask themselves if it is ethical to buy chocolates that could be farmed by children. 30

8 To improve the profitability of cocoa farming, non-profit organisations like Fairtrade International assist in organising individual farmers into groups. Instead of dealing with middlemen on their own, the farmers can negotiate higher prices collectively. Meanwhile, manufacturers can label their chocolates as 'fairtrade', indicating their contribution in helping farmers to earn a reasonable and stable income. When purchasing chocolate bars, it is advisable for consumers to consider whether it is worth choosing the slightly more expensive 'fairtrade' products. 35

9 Another way to support cocoa farmers is by developing local industries. Currently, the majority of cocoa beans is exported to Western countries, where they are processed into chocolate products. This has allowed Western companies to reap most of the profits. To help cocoa farmers improve their income, chocolate factories can be established in cocoa-growing regions to reduce the number of middlemen between the farmer and the factory. Additionally, such factories generate employment opportunities for local communities, enabling the profits to directly benefit the countries that cultivate cocoa. I wonder if there are more ways to support cocoa farmers. Feel free to leave your comments below. 40



45

~580 words

### Looking into Grammar

We use reporting questions to report questions that other people asked. We add *if* in the reporting question when it is a *yes / no* question.

✓ Some people have started to ask themselves *if it is ethical to buy chocolates that could be farmed by children.*

? Underline a reporting question in paragraph 9.

Read the text and answer questions 1–9. For multiple-choice questions, choose the best answer and blacken ONE circle only. (26 marks)

1. Read paragraph 1. Which of the following is TRUE about the cocoa fruit?

- A. It has a white skin.
- B. It can have various colours.
- C. The pulp is thick and hard.
- D. It turns red when it is ripe.

A      B      C      D  
        

2. According to paragraph 2, why is West Africa suitable for growing cocoa fruit? Write ONE word in each blank. Note that the suitable word may not appear in the text. Make sure your answers are grammatically correct.

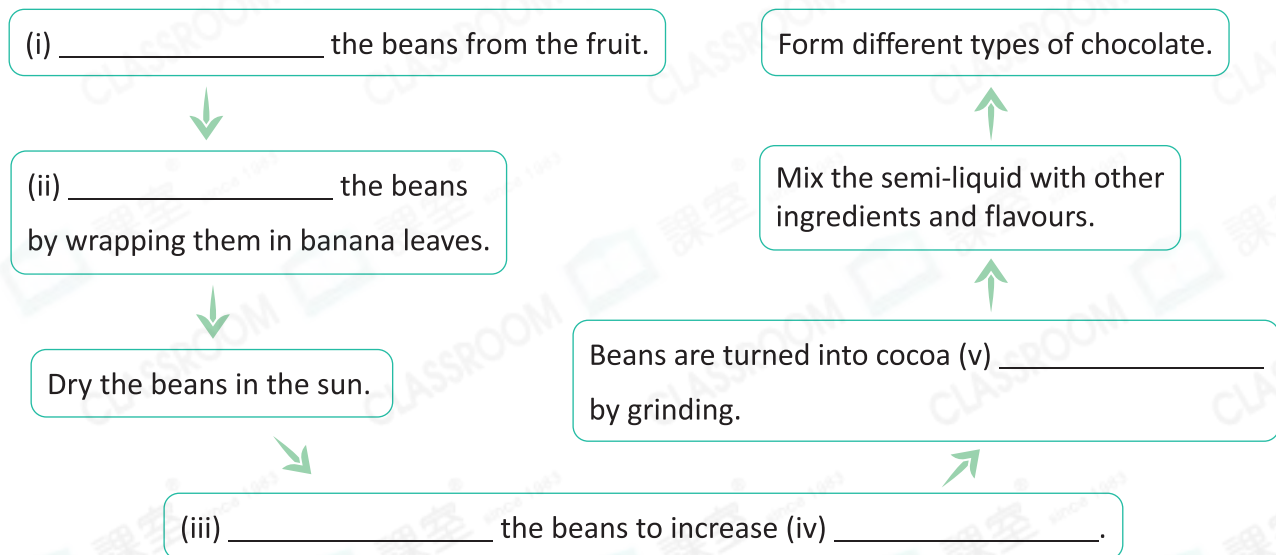
It is because the region is situated along the (i) \_\_\_\_\_, giving it a (ii) \_\_\_\_\_ climate.

3. Read paragraph 3. Decide whether each of the following statements is a fact or an opinion.

3 Can you spot any words in the text that suggest the statement is an opinion?

	Fact	Opinion
(i) The cocoa drink was once very popular among the upper classes in Europe.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
(ii) Cocoa drink could have health benefits.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
(iii) The first chocolate bars were developed in the 1840s and 1850s.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

4. Based on paragraph 4, complete the flow chart by writing ONE word to fill in each blank. Make sure your answers are grammatically correct.



5. Based on the information in paragraph 5, give TWO reasons why some chocolates are more expensive.

- Their (i) \_\_\_\_\_ is higher.
- They may contain (ii) \_\_\_\_\_ ingredients.

5 What are some factors that affect the price of chocolate bars?

6. What is ironic about 'most of the profits from chocolate sales end up in the hands of large companies' (line 26)?

Cocoa farmers \_\_\_\_\_.



7. Read paragraphs 7–8. Decide whether each of the following statements is a fact or an opinion.

	Fact	Opinion
(i) It is wrong to buy chocolates made by children.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
(ii) We should buy chocolate bars labelled 'fairtrade', even if they cost more.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
(iii) Child labour is employed on some cocoa farms.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
(iv) It is shameful to force children to farm cocoa.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
(v) Fairtrade International assists cocoa farmers to earn more.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

8. Complete the table by filling in each blank with ONE word taken from paragraph 9.

When chocolate is ...	Impact
<b>produced near cocoa farms</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>reduces farmers' need for (i) _____</li> <li>increases farmers' (ii) _____</li> <li>creates more (iii) _____ options</li> <li>benefits cocoa-growing countries</li> </ul>
<b>produced in Western countries</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>allows Western (iv) _____ to make most of the money</li> </ul>

9. Complete the summary by selecting the best options from the choices below.

The writer describes the history of chocolate as 'dark and sweet' in the title because there are both positive and negative sides to it. The term 'sweet' refers to the \_\_\_(i)\_\_\_ that chocolate brings to people worldwide. Meanwhile, the term 'dark' represents the uglier side of the chocolate industry such as the \_\_\_(ii)\_\_\_ that abuse cocoa farmers and the use of \_\_\_(iii)\_\_\_.

- (i) A. bitterness  
B. popularity  
C. profits  
D. enjoyment

A B C D

- (ii) A. non-profit organisations  
B. large companies  
C. local factories  
D. consumers

A B C D

- (iii) A. farmer groups  
B. 'fairtrade' products  
C. child labour  
D. local factories

A B C D

# Vocabulary

GLOSSARY



A. Complete the article below with the given words. Make sure your answers are grammatically correct.

**Adjective:** ethical premium

**Noun:** flavour infectious disease plantation

**Verb:** cultivate export grind roast thrive

## Rice and its alternatives

Rice is the most consumed grain worldwide. It (1) \_\_\_\_\_ in deep water and can grow up to 5 meters tall if it is planted in such condition. For this reason, in most rice (2) \_\_\_\_\_, it is (3) \_\_\_\_\_ in flooded fields. However, germs can grow easily in water, so farmers need to make sure their crops do not catch (4) \_\_\_\_\_.



The majority of rice in the world is (5) \_\_\_\_\_ from Asian countries such as India and Thailand. It is consumed in many countries and used in all sorts of dishes. For example, rice flour can be made by (6) \_\_\_\_\_ rice grains. The flour can then be made into food like rice noodles. While Chinese people usually boil rice, Europeans prefer to (7) \_\_\_\_\_ rice in ovens as they think that the (8) \_\_\_\_\_ is much better than simply boiling it in water.

Certain types of rice, such as Thai jasmine rice, have been regarded as a / an (9) \_\_\_\_\_ variety due to their excellent taste and texture. However, Thai rice farmers did not benefit from the high demand for their crops. Rice merchants often tried to keep the price down. Some people thought this was not (10) \_\_\_\_\_, so they set up fair trading platforms for the farmers.



B. Put the phrases below in the right categories.

### Benefits and drawbacks of chocolate

Cause rotten teeth

Cause skin issues

Control blood sugar levels

Ease stress

Improve memory

Lead to addiction

Lead to weight gain

Lower blood pressure

#### Benefits

#### Drawbacks

1. \_\_\_\_\_

Chocolate can help you feel better if you are having a bad day.

2. \_\_\_\_\_

Eating dark chocolate can help people to absorb sugar more slowly.

3. \_\_\_\_\_

Dark chocolate can also allow more blood to flow into your brain, so that you can learn and remember things more effectively.

4. \_\_\_\_\_

Chocolate manages the flow of blood in your body.

5. \_\_\_\_\_

Chocolate has lots of calories and fat.

6. \_\_\_\_\_

Some people might get pimples due to eating too much chocolate.

7. \_\_\_\_\_

Some people may become dependent on chocolate and cannot stop themselves from eating it.

8. \_\_\_\_\_

Eating too much chocolate can lead to dental problems.

## Writing

What can we do to help cocoa farmers?

Write an article of about 180 words to suggest what we can do to support cocoa farmers.