

1. Even when I was very young, I always loved plants. When we walked to school, I would look at the different plants. I would make up names for them. I would draw pictures of them. When my teacher asked us to draw a picture of anything we liked, I always drew pictures of plants.

2. When I got to high school, I took a course that was all about plants. Most students took the course in biology. But I took the course on plants. We went into the park to identify different species. It was amazing. I found out that there were at least 27 different kinds of plants in our neighborhood park. There were also about 12 different kinds of trees. Some were deciduous. We were there in spring, so they had their leaves.

3. I learned that weeds are not really bad plants. They are interlopers. They come from another environment. Somehow they get to the new environment. It could be that animals bring them. The animals might pick up the seeds on their fur and carry them to the new habitat. Then they fall off and start to grow.

4. When I went to college, I knew that I wanted to study plants. I wanted to be a plant scientist. I wanted to be a botanist. I took classes in math, English, and history. They were good classes. But it was the science classes I loved.

5. Now I teach at a college. I teach about plant life. I explain how fertilizers can help plants grow but also can destroy the balance of nature. I teach about helpful insects. One of the most helpful insects for plants is the ladybug. Ladybugs are small insects that eat aphids. They can protect plants by eating the aphids that would eat the plants' leaves. There are about 5,000 kinds of ladybugs. In winter the ladybug hibernates. Then in spring it comes back out and starts to protect the plants again. Several states have named the ladybug their state insect. I teach students ways to help the environment like that.

6. I teach about ecology, too. I teach how important decisions are. I explain that if you introduce a non-native herbivore into an environment it can cause problems. For example, in Australia long ago people brought rabbits. The rabbits ate so many plants that they caused a problem. This invasive species ate plants that other animals depended on. The rabbits even killed trees. They ate the bark off the trees, and the trees died. Some people think that Australia's desert has expanded significantly because of the introduction of the rabbits. They say it is a very big problem. If they had understood ecology, they might not have brought those rabbits. I hope my students take what they learn and make good choices for the environment.

7. I keep learning more about plants and the animals that depend on them, and I teach students what I learn. I learn from my research on the Internet now as well as going to the park and studying the plants in my community. I share what I learn when I teach, and I write books that help people learn about nature.

Summarize Fiction

Questions developed by Center for Urban Education for use by Chicago Public Schools 2010.

Choose the best answer for each question.

1. What do you write in a summary of a story?

- a. why you liked it
- b. all the things that happen
- c. the names of all the people
- d. the important events

3. What is a good summary of paragraph 6?

- a. Rabbits can kill trees.
- b. Understanding science helps you make choices.
- c. There is a desert in Australia.
- d. The writer teaches science.

2. What is the best summary of the first paragraph?

- a. Children can draw plants in school.
- b. What you do in school tells what you will do later.
- c. The writer really liked plants a lot.
- d. You can make up names for plants.

4. What is a good summary of the last paragraph?

- a. The writer helps people learn science.
- b. The writer likes science.
- c. The writer uses the Internet.
- d. The writer has many students.

5. *Write your own answer to this question. Write a short summary of the passage.*

TEACHER NOTES: Develop Students' Skills: Exercise Thinking

These questions have not been validated, so decisions about student's achievement should not be made based on their responses. They are intended to exercise skills. Recommended activities include: students work in pairs to choose the best response; give students the questions without the responses so they generate their own answers; students make up additional questions; students make up questions like these for another passage.

Answers: *You can remove this answer key and then give it to students and ask them to figure out the basis for the correct response.*

Item	1	2	3	4
Answer	d	c	b	a

Question 5 is open-ended. Here is a suggested response.

Answers should include that the writer started by liking plants and now has a career studying and teaching about plants.