

Chocolate Reading Comprehension

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Did you ever hear the saying, "Money doesn't grow on trees?" If you were an ancient Aztec, it did. That is because the Aztec Indians of Mexico used the beans of the cacao tree as money. You probably know them better as cocoa beans. They are the same beans we use today to make chocolate.

While we do not use chocolate as money today, people continue to find uses for it. Some companies use chocolate to advertise. They order special candies with their company name stamped on them and hand them out to customers. Some artists use chocolate to make fancy sculptures. People have even invented chocolate perfume and chocolate soap!

What might be the most unusual way to use chocolate can be seen in New York, Paris and Tokyo. Every year, these cities hold a fashion show that gives new meaning to the phrase "eat it or wear it." People from all over the world come to see clothing and jewelry made from chocolate.

Chocolate may have even more uses. Scientists are currently studying the chemicals in chocolate. Some of these chemicals are good for your health. Some of the chemicals in chocolate help lower blood pressure. Others have been shown to help control coughs. There is even a chemical in the husks of cocoa beans that helps prevent tooth decay.

If you would rather eat chocolate than study it or wear it, you are not alone. People from all over the world enjoy chocolate. Of course, some people enjoy it more than others do. In Brazil, people eat a little over two pounds of chocolate per person per year. People in Switzerland and Austria consume ten times that much. It is estimated that people in those countries eat over twenty pounds of chocolate per person per year. Chocolate is such a big business that in the United States there are 995 companies that manufacture chocolate products.

