1. Pass the Salt
by Christine Broz

A 1What comes from water but makes you thirsty? 2Salt. 3You may think those tiny crystals are no big deal. 4However, salt has been one of the most valuable minerals in the history of man.

B 5The human body needs salt to survive. 6Salt helps send nerve signals to and from the brain. 7Salt helps nutrients move around the body. 8It helps muscles work properly, and it aids digestion.

C 9In ancient times, you could not buy salt at the local store. 10People found it near coastal areas where ocean water evaporated and left salt deposits on the ground or underground. 11It was also found in the meat of animals and fish. 12Many of the first cities began in areas where there was a natural supply of salt.

D 13Salt allowed people to keep food longer. 14It was used to preserve meat, fish, and vegetables so they could be stored and eaten later. 15Storing food made it possible for large groups of people to survive. 16The stored-up food kept them from starving during a poor harvest. 17Some of the foods we eat today—such as sausage, cheese, olives, corned beef, and soy sauce—were invented long ago by using lots of salt.

E 18Salt was so precious in some areas that it was used like money to trade goods and services. 19Marco Polo, the explorer, noted the importance of the salt trade routes that crossed China. 20In Tibet, he saw tiny pressed cakes of salt used as coins. 21Greek slave traders traded salt for slaves. 22African traders crossed the Sahara Desert to trade salt for gold. 23Roman soldiers were even paid with salt. 24This is where the word salary comes from.

F 25At different times in history, people had to pay the government a tax on salt. 26These salt taxes paid for wars and built empires. 27As early as 2200 b.c., a Chinese emperor taxed salt. 28The British empire was supported by a salt tax. 29Napoleon brought back the salt tax after the French Revolution to pay for his European wars. 30The Erie Canal in New York was paid for in part by a salt tax.

G 31The value of salt is often taken for granted, just as the water we drink and the air we breathe. 32But without salt, we could not live.
DIRECTIONS: Circle the letter next to the correct answer or write the answer on the lines given. When asked for evidence, write the number of the sentence or the letter of the paragraph that best supports your answer.

1. Which of the following is the main idea of the story?
   A. Salt was not always easy to find.
   B. Salt was used as money to trade goods and services.
   C. Salt has been valuable to man throughout history.
   D. Salt makes you thirsty.

2. What is the main idea of paragraph B?
   ____________________________
   ____________________________

3. What is the main idea of paragraph C?
   A. Salt used to be scarce.
   B. People built villages near salt.
   C. People found salt in nature.
   D. Salt is found in fish and animal meat.

   Which two sentences are the best evidence? ____, ____

4. Sentence 17 supports the main idea of paragraph D that
   A. salt made food taste better.
   B. salt preserved food for storage.
   C. salt could be preserved.
   D. salt made food more valuable.

5. How does paragraph E best support the idea that salt was very valuable to people in the past? It tells
   A. where salt is found.
   B. that salt is found in the Sahara Desert.
   C. where the word salary comes from.
   D. how salt was used as money.

6. Which sentence is the topic sentence in paragraph F?
   Sentence ____

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1. **Pass the Salt**
   Reading Level: 4.8

1. Which of the following is the main idea of the story?
   A. Salt was not always easy to find.
   B. Salt was used as money to trade goods and services.
   C. **Salt has been valuable to man throughout history.**
   D. Salt makes you thirsty.

   C is the best choice. The article explains why and how salt has been valuable. A and B are supporting details. There is no evidence of D.

2. What is the main idea of paragraph B?

   **The human body needs salt to survive.**

   Sentence 5 is the topic sentence.

3. What is the main idea of paragraph C?
   A. Salt used to be scarce.
   B. People built villages near salt.
   C. **People found salt in nature.**
   D. Salt is found in fish and animal meat.

   Two best evidence sentences: **10, 11**

   Salt was found near the ocean and in animal meat.

4. Sentence 17 supports the main idea of paragraph D that (main idea)
   A. salt made food taste better.
   B. **salt preserved food for storage.**
   C. salt could be preserved.
   D. salt made food more valuable.

5. How does paragraph E best support the idea that salt was very valuable to people in the past? It tells (supporting details)
   A. where salt is found.
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6. Which sentence is the topic sentence in paragraph F?
   Sentence **25**