

Harvesting Crops

Read about how people harvested food in the past and then answer the questions below.

Humans may have begun taming animals and growing small crops as many as 10,000 years ago. However, many early people were nomads, or wanderers who moved from place to place. They found their foods in the wild as they traveled. They hunted, fished, and gathered nuts, berries, and roots.

Eventually, people learned to keep some animals in herds. They stopped roaming and began to settle in one place for longer times. They built homes and started to grow their own crops on the land around them. The crops provided a more dependable food supply than hunting and gathering. Small settlements grew into villages, towns, and cities.

About 200 years ago the Industrial Revolution brought great changes to agriculture. In the past people had used hand tools and animals to help them plant and harvest. Machines invented during the Industrial Revolution made that work easier. As a result, not as many workers were needed on farms. Many people moved away from farms to cities in search of jobs.

Today most agriculture takes place far outside big cities. Huge companies control much of the world's farmland. Crops grow on large plots of land with the help of irrigation and special chemicals. In poor countries, however, many people still depend on their own small farms and herding to survive.

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1. What did people who wandered around harvest for food? _____

2. What did people use to plant and harvest food before the Industrial Revolution? _____

3. Where do crops grow now? _____

4. Do you think it would be better to grow crops in small farms or do you think it is a good idea that big farms grow most of the food? Why? _____
