

Harvesting Crops

Read about what it was like to harvest crops a hundred years ago and what it is like to harvest crops now and then answer the questions below.

Harvesting in the Past:

Most harvesting work for harvesting grains, like wheat and oats, was done using hand tools. The most commonly used tools were sickles and reap hooks. Sickles were crescent-shaped with small cutting teeth on them. Reap hooks were the same shape, but had a smooth edge. Sickles were used for cutting like a saw and the reap hooks were used by swinging them very hard and cutting.

Scythes were also used to harvest crops. Scythes were bigger and cost more money. They were also harder to use, so the person using them had to be strong. Even though they were harder to use, they saved time because they could cut more at the same time.

Harvesting Now:

These days, most harvesting work is done using machines. The machine that is most commonly used to harvest grains, like wheat and oats, is a combine. A combine is like a sickle or scythe, only there are many different blades in the machine that all cut at the same time. This means that a very large amount of grain can be cut down at the same time. Combines also take the grain that is cut and are able to throw it into another truck that stores it.

(From: https://www.history.org/Almanack/life/trades/traderural_tools.cfm and <https://www.britannica.com/technology/combine>)

1. How does a reap hook work? _____

2. What is the difference between a sickle and scythe? _____

3. Do you think it would be easier to harvest in the past or now? Why? Give specific details. _____
