The Three Sisters Garden

4th Grade · Social Studies

Reading Comprehension · Native American Heritage Month

Name: _____ Date: _____

Directions: Read the passage. Then answer the questions on the next page.

Corn, Beans, and Squash

For hundreds of years, many Native American nations, including the Haudenosaunee (hoe-dee-no-SHOW-nee), have grown corn, beans, and squash together in the same garden. These three crops are often called the **Three Sisters**, because they grow best side by side and help one another, like members of a family.

Farmers usually planted the corn first, in small hills of soil. When the corn stalks were a few inches tall, they planted beans around them. Then they planted squash around the edges of the hill.

Each sister has a job. The tall **corn** stalks give the bean vines a pole to climb toward the sunlight. The **beans** help the soil. Tiny bacteria living in bumps on bean roots take nitrogen from the air and change it into a form that plants can use, like natural plant food. The **squash** spreads big leaves across the ground. The leaves shade the soil, which keeps it moist and blocks weeds. Many squash plants have prickly stems and leaves that animals do not like to step on.

The Three Sisters are also healthy to eat together. Corn gives energy, beans give protein, and squash gives vitamins. In the United States, November is National Native American Heritage Month, a time to learn about the many nations, traditions, and ideas, like the Three Sisters garden, that Native peoples have shared.



corn



beans



squash

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Questions

Name: _____ Date: _____

1. Which three crops are called the Three Sisters?

(A) corn, beans, squash (B) wheat, rice, oats (C) apples, pears, plums

2. How does the corn help the beans?

(A) It shades the beans. (B) It gives beans a pole to climb. (C) It scares away animals.

3. In the United States, which month is National Native American Heritage Month?

(A) September (B) November (C) March

4. How do the beans help the soil? Use details from the passage.

5. Name two ways the squash helps the garden.

6. Why is "Three Sisters" a good name for these crops? Explain.

Match each sister to its job

7. **corn** _____	A. adds nitrogen to the soil
8. **beans** _____	B. shades the soil and blocks weeds
9. **squash** _____	C. gives vines a pole to climb

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Answer Key

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1. A — corn, beans, squash
2. B — It gives beans a pole to climb.
3. B — November
4. Bacteria in bumps on the bean roots take nitrogen from the air and change it into a form plants can use, like natural plant food.
5. Any two: its big leaves shade the soil; this keeps the soil moist; it blocks weeds; prickly stems and leaves keep animals away.
6. Sample: They grow together and help each other, like members of a family.
7. corn — C
8. beans — A
9. squash — B

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