

**Chapter 19: Connectives that Express Cause and Effect,
Contrast, and Condition****Worksheet 1. Reading: *Potatoes***

Read the passage about the history of potatoes. Then review the glossary and complete the exercises that follow it.

1 Potatoes are so commonplace in most parts of the world today that we take them for
2 granted. In spite of the fact that potatoes seem to be native everywhere, in the majority of
3 places they have been around for only about three hundred years.

4 The history of the potato began high in the Andes Mountains of South America. The early
5 people in the area discovered and cultivated the potato about 7,000 years ago. The climate
6 conditions were bad and the soil was poor, yet the strong, durable potato grew well there. It
7 thrived despite the very thin air at the top of the Andes, where it is almost impossible for
8 vegetation to grow. Those early farmers appreciated the potato because of its heartiness as
9 well as its excellent nutrition.

10 No other people came into contact with the potato until the 1500s, when the Spanish
11 arrived in South America in search of gold. Although the potato was easy to grow and very
12 strong, the Spanish did not like the plant very much. Nevertheless, they brought the potato
13 back to Europe with them.

14 In Europe, the potato was not popular at first, and was eaten only by the very poor.
15 Because potatoes are part of the Nightshade family, people did not want to eat them.
16 (Nightshade is a class of plants which include some that are poisonous.) However,
17 eventually people realized that potatoes are not poisonous; they also discovered how easy it
18 was to grow them. Potatoes became a staple crop, particularly in Ireland. Among the first to
19 appreciate potatoes as food were the English sailors, who consumed them on their long
20 ocean voyages. That is how the potato reached India, China, and Japan early in the 1600s.

21 In due course, the potato returned to the New World, brought to the North American English
22 colonies by the Irish immigrants. Here, as elsewhere, its popularity grew. While at first
23 considered a food for ordinary people, it had been elevated to a much higher status by the
24 French. Now the potato is grown from China to the United States, from Russia to Kenya,
25 from Argentina to Canada, and to 100 more countries.

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26 The United Nations officially designated the year 2008 as the *International Year of the*
27 *Potato* so that the benefits of potatoes could be promoted world wide. Since a lot of
28 potatoes can grow on very little land, it is an efficient crop. The United Nations predicts that
29 the world's population will increase by hundreds of millions in the next decades; therefore,
30 efficiency in the use of land is necessary.

31 Nutritionally, too, potatoes are valuable. They are an excellent source of energy due to their
32 high carbohydrate and protein content. They also have a lot of potassium and Vitamin C,
33 the ingredient that kept sailors' gums healthy on those long-ago ocean voyages.

34 Potatoes are now the world's fourth largest crop, after rice, wheat, and maize. If the United
35 Nations succeeds in its promotion of potatoes, they will become an even larger crop, and
36 consequently, more easily provide food for more people.

Glossary

Lines 1-2 *take them for granted* — an idiom that means to expect that someone or something is and has always been there, and you never think about how important or useful they are

Line 3 *they have been around*; to be around — an informal way of saying *exist*

Line 8 *vegetation* — plants in general

Line 21 *in due course* — eventually and naturally

Line 32 *carbohydrate* — a substance in foods such as sugar, bread, potatoes, which provides the body with heat and energy; it consists of oxygen, hydrogen, and carbon.

Line 32 *protein* — one of several natural substances that exist in food such as meat, eggs, and beans, and which your body needs in order to grow and remain strong.

Line 32 *potassium* — a common, soft, silver-white metal that usually exists in combination with other substances; its chemical symbol is K.

Line 32 *vitamin C* — ascorbic acid, which aids the body in several ways; lack of vitamin C leads to severe bleeding of the gums.

Line 33 *gums* — firm, pink tissue in which the teeth are embedded

Line 34 *maize* — corn





Worksheet 1 (page 3)

Comprehension practice

Decide whether each statement is true or false, according to the reading. Circle T if the sentence is true and F if the sentence is false.

1. Potatoes have been common all over the world for thousands of years. T / F
2. Potatoes can grow only in very high places. T / F
3. Potatoes contain a lot of good nutrition. T / F
4. Potatoes are strong plants. T / F
5. The first Europeans to see the potato were the Irish. T / F
6. Potatoes are easy to grow. T / F
7. As soon as the potato arrived in Europe, it became popular with everyone. T / F
8. Potatoes are poisonous. T / F
9. Sailors were responsible for bringing the potato to Asia. T / F
10. There was something in the potatoes that kept the sailors healthy. T / F
11. The Irish brought the potato back to the New World. T / F
12. The United Nations is spreading information about the benefits
of potatoes. T / F
13. Growing potatoes uses a lot of land; it's not an efficient crop. T / F
14. Potatoes are currently the largest crop in the world. T / F

