

A. Pre-Reading Preparation

Cultural Context

While scientists are working on genetically engineering crops, more and more people are discovering the virtues of organic food and natural lifestyles. Many people who live in the city feel the need to get back in touch with Nature and dream of living in the countryside and leading a natural life.

1. Would you like to live in the countryside? Why?
2. What are the advantages and disadvantages of living in the countryside? In the city?
3. Can you explain why more and more people are concerned about the quality of the food they eat?

About the Text

In this article, the writer recounts his experience on a communal organic farm. The writer and his wife decided to spend their holiday working on a farm and leading a natural life for a few days.

1. Can you imagine living and working on a farm for your holiday?
2. Do you think this return to the land is only a trend among city dwellers or do you think it is a yearning that everyone wants to satisfy? Justify your answer.
3. Do you think that it is possible to have a natural lifestyle in the city? How?

B. Reading

On Vacation and Back to Land

By Patterson Clark, Washington Post

- 1 Near the **secluded** Mondego River Valley of northern Portugal, ancient terraces of vineyards, vegetables, and fruit and nut trees support a small community of organic farmers and their animals. My wife Lenore and I have come to live and work with them for a week. We're not farmers, merely urban organic gardeners. Through an organization called Willing Workers on Organic Farms (WWOOF), we've signed on as farmhands of sorts. They give us free room and board; we give them six hours of manual labor a day, five days a week.
- 2 Lenore and I have long had a dream of moving to the country to grow our own food. We know farming is hard work. We are about to discover how hard.
- 3 Three hours from Lisbon, we hop off the night train at tiny Santa Comba Dao, where our host Toivo and his 11-year-old son Tezra greet us. They drive us to their mountainous farm at the end of a valley. It has no electricity; we rely on a late-October moon to illuminate the path to our candlelit trailer, where we find a firm bed with thick, warm blankets.
- 4 At daybreak, a chilly fog slowly yields to the sun, unveiling the landscape. Pines and cork oaks cover the wild hillsides that flank the 17-acre farm's terraced vineyards woven through orchards of fruit and nut trees.
- 5 Past the farm family's temporary home, on the bed of a big truck, and beyond their new house, which is under construction, we find the kitchen tent. Here we meet the residents, five adults and four children.

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