

Living Resources ▪ *Guided Reading and Study*

The Search for New Medicines

This section explains why biodiversity is important for medicine.

Use Target Reading Skills

Before you read, preview the red headings. In the graphic organizer below, ask a what, how, who, when, or where question for each heading. As you read, write the answers to your questions.

The Search for New Medicines

Question	Answer

Biodiversity and Medicine

1. Circle the letter of each sentence that is true about biodiversity and medicine.
 - a. About 50 percent of all medicines sold today contain chemicals originally found in wild organisms.
 - b. About half of the world's known plant species have been studied for possible medical use.
 - c. The American Medical Association has called for the protection of Earth's biodiversity.
 - d. Scientists and doctors believe there are no more new medicines in nature.

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The Search for New Medicines *(continued)*

2. What is the origin of plants' abilities to fight disease?

The Story of Taxol

3. Is the following sentence true or false? Some chemicals produced by rain forest plants can be used to fight human disease. _____
4. What is taxol?
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5. Circle the letter of each sentence that is true about taxol.
- a. It prevents cancer cells from dividing.
 - b. It causes cancer cells to grow and divide very rapidly.
 - c. It shrinks certain types of tumors.
 - d. It has not yet been tested in the laboratory.
6. Is the following sentence true or false? The demand for taxol as a cancer treatment has grown rapidly. _____
7. What discovery ensured a good supply of taxol for the future?
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