



About the Author



Hillary Schwei (b. 1980) studied Sustainable Food and Farming at Rutgers University and the University of Montana–Missoula and has worked on various urban gardening and farming programs, both in the United States and abroad. Schwei's belief that sustainable food production reconnects us to our environment and our communities informs her work with urban youth. She strives to educate young people about the benefits that urban, local food production can provide to the communities in which they live.

STANDARDS

Reading Informational Text
By the end of the year, read and comprehend literary nonfiction in the grades 6–8 text complexity band proficiently, with scaffolding as needed at the high end of the range.

Language

Acquire and use accurately grade-appropriate general academic and domain-specific words and phrases; gather vocabulary knowledge when considering a word or phrase important to comprehension or expression.

Urban Farming Is Growing a Greener Future

Concept Vocabulary

These words will be useful to you as you analyze, discuss, and write about the photographs.

rural: characteristic of the country; of or pertaining to agriculture

EXAMPLE: The family moved from a busy city to a quiet **rural** neighborhood surrounded by farms.

agricultural: related to the science and art of farming

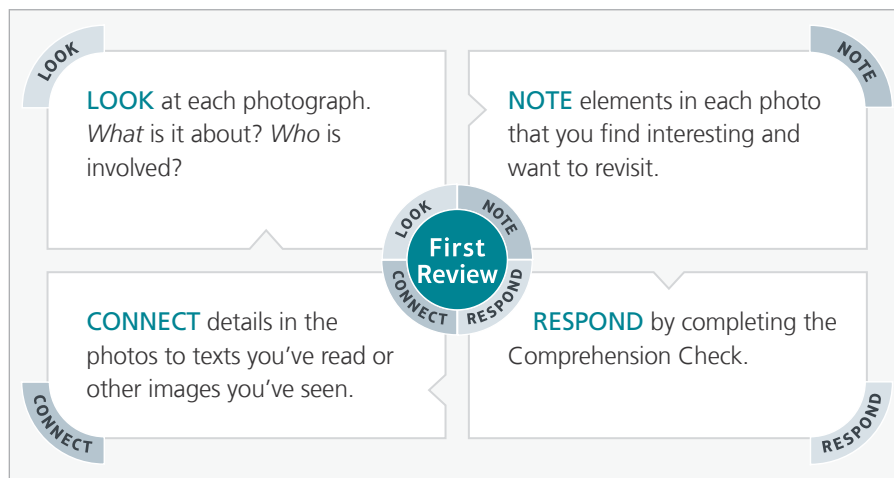
EXAMPLE: A lot of the **agricultural** land that used to surround the town has been turned from cornfields into houses and stores.

localizing: gathering, collecting, or concentrating in a particular place

EXAMPLE: **Localizing** food production helps to provide consumers with fresher produce because the produce comes from places near where they live.

First Review MEDIA: ART AND PHOTOGRAPHY

Study the photographs using these strategies.



Urban Farming Is Growing a Greener Future

Hillary Schwei

BACKGROUND

The year 2008 marked the first time that more people on Earth lived in cities than in **rural** areas. One significant consequence of this turning point is that most people no longer live in the **agricultural** areas that provide them with food.

Some city dwellers are transforming their concrete environments by establishing farms, often in the most unlikely locations. These urban farms create a new landscape that adapts the man-made structures of the city to the purposes of sustainable food production. **Localizing** food production through urban farming provides aesthetic, health, environmental, and economic benefits. Locally grown food not only supplies people

with fresh, seasonal produce, but it also strengthens local economies by supporting family farmers and other local businesses. Farming in urban areas reduces the need to transport food over long distances to reach the consumer. The decrease in transportation creates environmental advantages such as lower levels of pollution and decreased fossil fuel use. This photo gallery provides a glimpse at unique and innovative urban farming projects.

SCAN FOR
MULTIMEDIA



PHOTO 1: Urban farms are not a new idea. During both world wars, the government encouraged Americans to plant Victory Gardens where they could grow their own food. Here, in 1943, children work in a garden in New York City.



PHOTO 2: Urban farms can make use of vacant city lots that are often considered **eyesores**, or ugly, unpleasant sights in public places. The farms become not only a source of food and beauty, but provide a location for members of the community to gather. An area of neglected, polluted land next to a railway station in Perth, Australia, has been revived as an organic farm.

NOTES



PHOTO 3: New York City will never completely return to its long-lost agricultural origins, but in 2011, this midtown hotel began growing fruit, vegetables, and herbs on the building's roof to supply the hotel's kitchen. The hotel also keeps honeybees, which roam for miles pollinating city plants.

NOTES



PHOTO 4: Only 12 percent of Japan's land is suitable for agriculture, but in this company's headquarters in Tokyo, office workers can take time to cultivate produce. One-fifth of the nine-story building is devoted to farming.

NOTES



PHOTO 5: Urban farming, like traditional farming, is a year-round operation. The greenhouses at this farm in Chicago have to be maintained regardless of the season. Each acre of the farm produces 20,000 pounds of produce annually.

NOTES



PHOTO 6: This 30-year-old pickup truck is a mobile farm and travels around giving students in city schools a chance to experience how food grows. The farmers who own the truck made a film about their exploits and strive to support others who grow produce in creative ways.

NOTES

NOTES

Comprehension Check

The selection uses both words and photographs to provide information about urban farming. Use the chart below to note specific details about each photo. Then, describe how each photo relates to the text that accompanies it.

PHOTO	WHAT THE PHOTO SHOWS	HOW THE PHOTO RELATES TO THE TEXT
PHOTO 1 		
PHOTO 2 		
PHOTO 3 		
PHOTO 4 		
PHOTO 5 		
PHOTO 6 		