

1. Pass the Salt

by Christine Broz

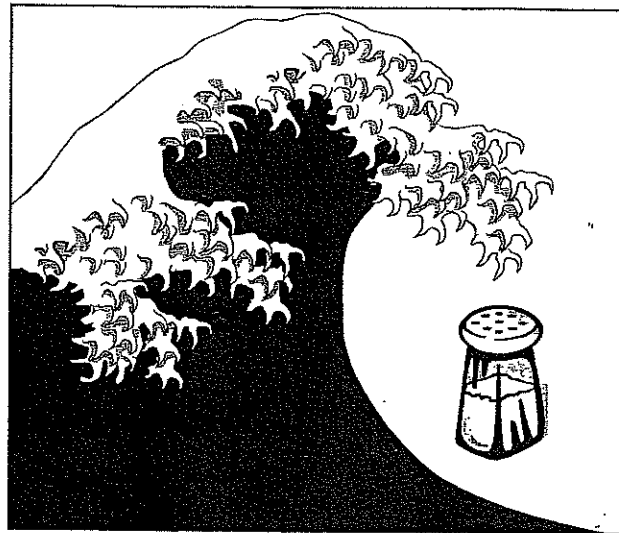
A ¹What comes from water but makes you thirsty? ²Salt. ³You may think those tiny crystals are no big deal. ⁴However, salt has been one of the most valuable minerals in the history of man.

B ⁵The human body needs salt to survive. ⁶Salt helps send nerve signals to and from the brain. ⁷Salt helps nutrients move around the body. ⁸It helps muscles work properly, and it aids digestion.

C ⁹In ancient times, you could not buy salt at the local store. ¹⁰People found it near coastal areas where ocean water evaporated and left salt deposits on the ground or underground. ¹¹It was also found in the meat of animals and fish. ¹²Many of the first cities began in areas where there was a natural supply of salt.

D ¹³Salt allowed people to keep food longer. ¹⁴It was used to preserve meat, fish, and vegetables so they could be stored and eaten later. ¹⁵Storing food made it possible for large groups of people to survive. ¹⁶The stored-up food kept them from starving during a poor harvest. ¹⁷Some of the foods we eat today—such as sausage, cheese, olives, corned beef, and soy sauce—were invented long ago by using lots of salt.

E ¹⁸Salt was so precious in some



areas that it was used like money to trade goods and services. ¹⁹Marco Polo, the explorer, noted the importance of the salt trade routes that crossed China. ²⁰In Tibet, he saw tiny pressed cakes of salt used as coins. ²¹Greek slave traders traded salt for slaves. ²²African traders crossed the Sahara Desert to trade salt for gold. ²³Roman soldiers were even paid with salt. ²⁴This is where the word *salary* comes from.

F ²⁵At different times in history, people had to pay the government a tax on salt. ²⁶These salt taxes paid for wars and built empires. ²⁷As early as 2200 B.C., a Chinese emperor taxed salt. ²⁸The British empire was supported by a salt tax. ²⁹Napoleon brought back the salt tax after the French Revolution to pay for his European wars. ³⁰The Erie Canal in New York was paid for in part by a salt tax.

G ³¹The value of salt is often taken for granted, just as the water we drink and the air we breathe. ³²But without salt, we could not live.

DIRECTIONS: Circle the letter next to the correct answer or write the answer on the lines given. When asked for evidence, write the number of the sentence or the letter of the paragraph that best supports your answer.

1. Which of the following is the main idea of the story?
 - A. Salt was not always easy to find.
 - B. Salt was used as money to trade goods and services.
 - C. Salt has been valuable to man throughout history.
 - D. Salt makes you thirsty.

2. What is the main idea of paragraph B?

3. What is the main idea of paragraph C?
 - A. Salt used to be scarce.
 - B. People built villages near salt.
 - C. People found salt in nature.
 - D. Salt is found in fish and animal meat.

Which two sentences are the best evidence? _____, _____

4. Sentence 17 supports the main idea of paragraph D that
 - A. salt made food taste better.
 - B. salt preserved food for storage.
 - C. salt could be preserved.
 - D. salt made food more valuable.

5. How does paragraph E best support the idea that salt was very valuable to people in the past? It tells
 - A. where salt is found.
 - B. that salt is found in the Sahara Desert.
 - C. where the word salary comes from.
 - D. how salt was used as money.

6. Which sentence is the topic sentence in paragraph F? _____

Sentence _____