



## Reading Comprehension — B2

*Urban farming in Southeast Asia*

Article

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_ DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

**A** Urban farming is rapidly gaining popularity in Southeast Asia's bustling cities. As populations grow and space becomes scarce, innovative residents are turning rooftops, balconies, and empty lots into productive green spaces. This movement, which combines agriculture with city living, addresses food security while promoting sustainability. In countries like Singapore, Thailand, and Vietnam, where urban areas are densely populated, urban farming offers a practical solution to local challenges.

**B** One major driver behind this trend is the need to reduce reliance on imported food. Southeast Asian megacities such as Bangkok and Manila import much of their fresh produce, which can be costly and vulnerable to supply disruptions. Urban farms, often managed by communities or entrepreneurs, produce vegetables, herbs, and even fish right where they are consumed. For instance, in Ho Chi Minh City, rooftop gardens have been established on apartment blocks, yielding enough greens to supply local markets and reduce food miles significantly.

**C** Techniques used in urban farming are adapted to limited spaces and resources. Vertical farming, where plants are stacked in layers, maximises output in high-rise buildings. Hydroponics, a soil-less method that uses nutrient-rich water, is particularly popular because it saves water and allows year-round cultivation regardless of weather conditions. In Singapore's Sky Greens vertical farms, which resemble giant green pagodas, lettuce grows up to ten times faster than in traditional fields, thanks to automated systems that mimic natural sunlight.

**D** Despite these advantages, urban farmers face several hurdles. High initial costs for equipment and the lack of government incentives can deter newcomers. Moreover, pollution and extreme heat in tropical

climates pose risks to delicate crops. However, initiatives like Singapore's '30 by 30' goal, aiming to produce 30 percent of the nation's nutritional needs locally by 2030, are providing support through subsidies and training programs. Community cooperatives in Jakarta have also shown success by sharing resources and knowledge.

**E** The benefits of urban farming extend beyond food production. It fosters community bonds as neighbours collaborate on plots, enhances biodiversity in concrete jungles, and cools urban heat islands through evapotranspiration. Environmentally, it cuts down on carbon emissions from transportation and packaging. Critics argue that yields are too low to compete with large-scale agriculture, but proponents counter that the social and ecological gains make it worthwhile, especially if scaled up with technology.

**F** Looking ahead, urban farming in Southeast Asia holds great promise. With climate change threatening traditional farming and urbanisation set to continue, governments and innovators must invest more in this sector. If policies encourage widespread adoption, cities could become self-sufficient oases of green, blending city life with nature in a harmonious way.

## Multiple Choice

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*Read the passage and choose the best answer (a, b, c, or d) for each question. Only one answer is correct.*

1. What is the best title for this passage?
  - a) Government Policies in Europe
  - b) The Benefits of Importing Food
  - c) The Decline of Traditional Farming
  - d) Urban Farming in Southeast Asia
  
2. In Ho Chi Minh City, rooftop gardens supply
  - a) international markets
  - b) export companies
  - c) local markets
  - d) rural areas

3. In Singapore's Sky Greens vertical farms, lettuce grows
- a) half as fast as in fields
  - b) at the same speed as in fields
  - c) only during rainy seasons
  - d) up to ten times faster than in traditional fields
4. Which is a hurdle for urban farmers mentioned in the passage?
- a) excessive rainfall
  - b) high initial costs for equipment
  - c) abundant empty lots
  - d) too many volunteers
5. What do proponents say makes urban farming worthwhile despite low yields?
- a) its social and ecological gains
  - b) guaranteed high profits
  - c) competition with large farms
  - d) reduction in urban space

### **True / False / Not Given**

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*Do the following statements agree with the information in the passage? Write True, False, or Not Given.*

1. Urban farming combines agriculture with city living.
- True       False       Not Given
2. Vertical farming maximises output only in low-rise buildings.
- True       False       Not Given
3. In Singapore's Sky Greens vertical farms, lettuce grows up to ten times faster than in traditional fields.
- True       False       Not Given
4. High initial costs for equipment do not deter newcomers to urban farming.
- True       False       Not Given

5. Urban farming originated in Southeast Asia.

- True       False       Not Given

### Short Answer

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*Read the passage. Answer each question in 1-5 words using information directly from the passage.*

1. In which countries is urban farming popular?

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2. Which megacities import much fresh produce?

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3. What do urban farms produce besides vegetables and herbs?

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4. What does hydroponics use instead of soil?

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5. What does Singapore aim to produce 30 percent of by 2030?

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## Cause & Effect

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Match each cause (1-5) with its effect (A-E) based on the passage.

Cause	Effect
1. Populations grow and space becomes scarce.	A. It is costly and vulnerable to supply disruptions.
2. Southeast Asian megacities import much of their fresh produce.	B. Innovative residents turn rooftops, balconies, and empty lots into productive green spaces.
3. Sky Greens vertical farms use automated systems that mimic natural sunlight.	C. They deter newcomers.
4. High initial costs for equipment and lack of government incentives.	D. Lettuce grows up to ten times faster than in traditional fields.
5. Urban farming involves evapotranspiration.	E. It cools urban heat islands.

1: \_\_\_\_\_ 2: \_\_\_\_\_ 3: \_\_\_\_\_ 4: \_\_\_\_\_ 5: \_\_\_\_\_

## Note Completion

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Complete the notes below using *NO MORE THAN TWO WORDS* from the passage for each answer.

### **Urban Farming in Southeast Asia**

#### **Main driver:**

reduce reliance on (1) \_\_\_\_\_ food

#### **Example:**

In Ho Chi Minh City, (2) \_\_\_\_\_ gardens on apartment blocks

#### **Techniques:**

(3) \_\_\_\_\_ farming maximises output

(4) \_\_\_\_\_, a soil-less method

#### **Hurdles:**

(5) \_\_\_\_\_ costs for equipment