

Rain-Forest Medicines

A man carefully squeezes juice from a white fungus plant. Soon, he'll drip the juice into a boy's ear. In some rain-forest villages of South America, that's how earaches are treated.

Rain-forest doctors, called *shamans*, use many kinds of plants as medicines. They make tea from one plant to cure stomachaches. Yellow flowers from another plant are used to treat snakebites. Shamans have used the curing power of plants for thousands of years.

Today, scientists from all over the world want to learn what these shamans know about plants. Scientists are racing to find rain-forest medicines. They're worried because the rain forests are disappearing fast. Every year, an area of rain forest the size of Florida is destroyed. Loggers, miners, and farmers burn and chop down the rain forests.

The scientists travel by boat, helicopter, and foot to tiny rain-forest villages. After they get there, the scientists spend long hours walking through the jungle. Shamans show the scientists which plants would and wouldn't be good to use as medicine.

One U.S. company has already found an important new medicine from a rain-forest plant. The medicine is called SP-303. It's made from a plant found in the rain forests of Ecuador. One day, SP-303 may prove to be a cure for lung infections in young children.

Rain-forest plants might hold cures to many diseases, including cancer and AIDS. So some companies that make medicines are working to save the rain forests. When people buy SP-303, part of the money they pay for the drug will go toward helping to save the rain forests. If the rain forests survive, you may find cures made from rain-forest plants on your medicine shelf someday.

Resource Links RDI Book 1: p. 359

SAM Keyword: Conclusions

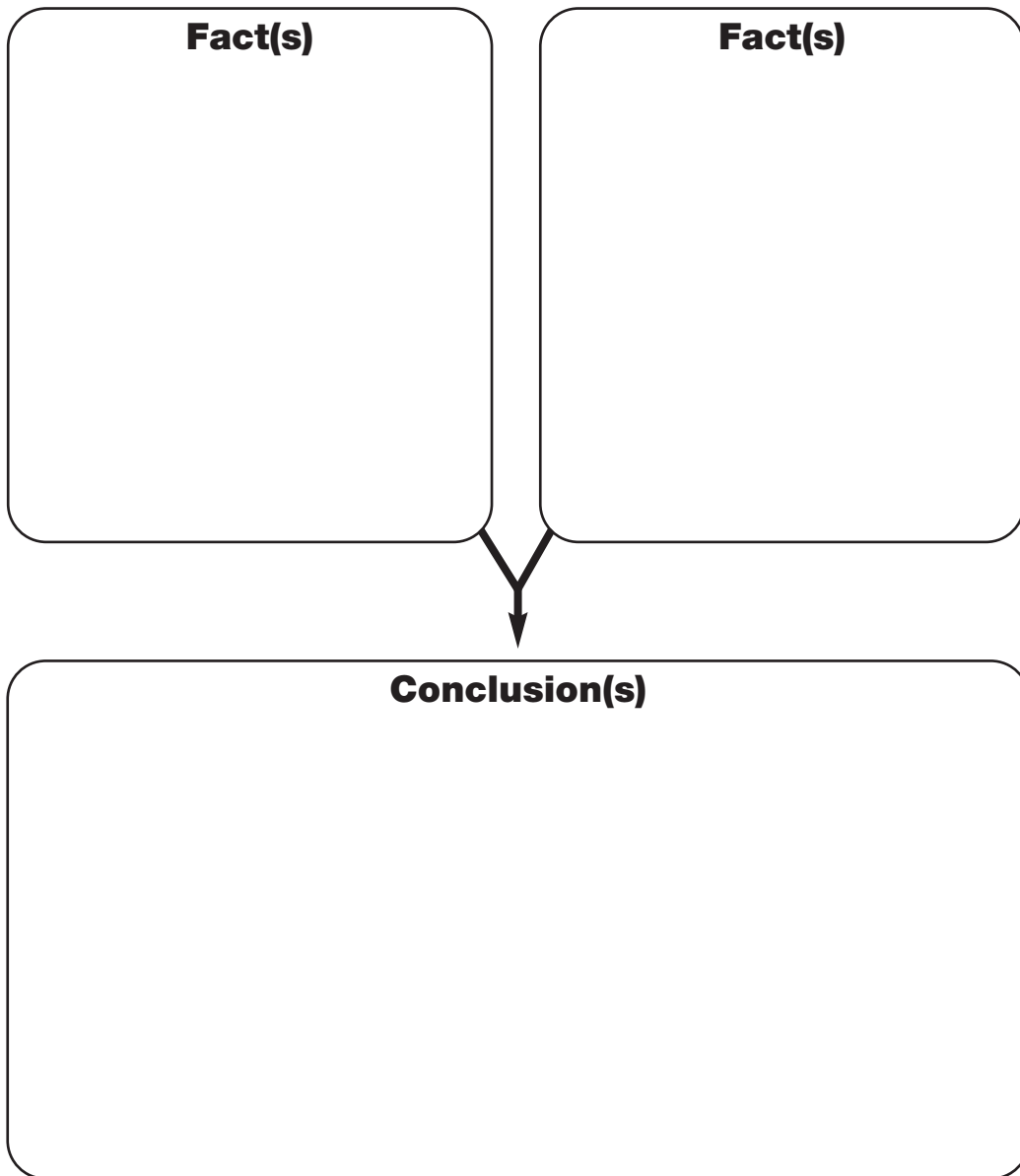
Use with page 304.

Draw Conclusions

When you **draw conclusions**, you consider all of the facts and use clues in the article to come to a new understanding about something.

Use this chart to help you record facts and then draw a conclusion.

Passage: _____



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