

## Building Language Skills with The Seattle Times

Date: **Thursday, April 6, 2017**

Article: **Gem hunters create chaos in Madagascar**

Print Replica: **Sunday, April 2, 2017**

Section: **Main, A10**

### Standard:

#### CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.5.10

By the end of the year, read and comprehend informational texts, including history/social studies, science, and technical texts, at the high end of the grades 4-5 text complexity band independently and proficiently.

### Key Ideas and Details:

#### CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.4.1

Refer to details and examples in a text when explaining what the text says explicitly and when drawing inferences from the text.

#### CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.4.3

Explain events, procedures, ideas, or concepts in a historical, scientific, or technical text, including what happened and why, based on specific information in the text.

### Objective:

Students will practice their reading skills to explore how the author uses reasoning and evidence to support specific points in the text by using deeper level questions and connecting the content to their personal lives.

**Pre-Reading:** Get into pairs and look at these pictures together. Answer the questions below.

An ***inference***, is making a conclusion or opinion that is formed because of known facts or evidence Examine the following pictures and make an *inference* about what the story will be about.



- What do you know about this part of the world?
- What do you think this island's largest export item is?

### **Vocabulary:**

Look up the definitions for the following word. First, write what you think the highlighted word means, then look up the definition and write it in the space provided, using your own words.

"The conditions at mining sites, with tens of thousands of people living in close quarters without **sanitation** facilities, can cause diseases that spread to local villages. Recently there was an outbreak of typhoid fever in the Didy area, Radoka said."

***sanitation guess:***

***sanitation definition:***

### **Building Language Skills:**

*Visualizing* text is a proven way that improves reading comprehension. Have students close their eyes and listen carefully. Have them think deeply about the words described in the statement.

The teacher will read the following information to the class, taken from the article.

**"Tens of thousands of miners and gem traders have poured into the rain forests around the village of Bemainty, said local officials.**

**The miners have cut down thousands of acres of forest in the protected area, which an environmental group, Conservation International, helps to manage, the officials said.**

**This island nation is renowned for its biodiversity, and the protected forests in the eastern corridor area are "one of Madagascar's most precious resources," according to the World Bank. The corridor is home to more than 2,000 plant species found nowhere else on Earth and 14 endangered species of lemur, according to the Ministry of Environment, Ecology, and Forests.**

**With local officials unable to control the situation, Conservation International has called for a military intervention.**

**Arnstein, who has been visiting the country for two decades, said about 70 percent of its sapphire market is controlled by Sri Lankans, who smuggle the gems back to their country to be cut and exported for sale. About \$150 million**

worth of sapphires might leave Madagascar every year, though the exact figure is impossible to know as the industry is not well regulated, he said.

**“You have all these small scale, Wild West operations,” he said. “Everything’s pretty much illegal. There’s no oversight, no taxes. It’s chaos.”**

Have students share their thoughts. What images did they see? What emotions did the paragraph stir inside of you?

### **Comprehension:**

1. What has brought tens of thousands of people into the remote rain forests of eastern Madagascar, disfiguring a protected environmental area and prompting calls for military intervention?
2. What’s being found, in large quantities that’s prompting this chaos?
3. What specific groups, numbering in the tens of thousands have poured into the rain forests around the village of Bemainty?
4. What have the miners done to that area?
5. This island nation is renowned for its biodiversity, and the protected forests in the eastern corridor area are “one of Madagascar’s most precious resources,” according to the World Bank. The corridor is home to what protected species of plants and animals?
6. With local officials unable to control the situation, Conservation International has called for what?
7. Madagascar produces how much of the world’s sapphires?
8. Arnstein, who has been visiting the country for two decades, said about 70 percent of its sapphire market is controlled by whom?
9. The gem traders bring laborers from other parts of Madagascar to the corridor, Rajaspera said. The workers carry in food and equipment by hand, trekking at least \_\_\_\_\_ hours through the jungle to reach the mining sites, which are inaccessible by car or motorcycle.
10. By October, the population at the main mining site was growing by approximately how many people a day?
11. Many residents of the Didy area that includes Bemainty and surrounding villages also want the national government to take action, according to Didy’s mayor, Davidson Radoka. Why? What’s happening to their village?
12. The mines are attractive to the newcomers because most of the sapphires are found within \_\_\_\_\_ feet of the surface.

### **Post-Reading Class Discussion or Journal Writing Assignment:**

- What do you know about the gem and diamond industries?
- Why is their government corruption surrounding these precious gems?
- Why does no oversight or no taxes in an industry lead to chaos?
- Why isn’t the government taking action?

***The gem traders bring laborers from other parts of Madagascar to the corridor, Rajaspera said. The workers carry in food and equipment by hand, trekking at least 5 hours through the jungle to reach the mining sites, which are inaccessible by car or motorcycle.***

- The workers carry food and equipment 5 hours into the jungle to reach the mining sites. Would you walk 5 hours to/from a job? If yes, what kind of job would it be?

***Above all, people worry about their safety. "Security is a very, very, very serious problem right now," Radoka said. Bandits are often out at night, and eight people have been murdered in the Didy area since Dec. 21, he said.***

- Will the government be able to keep the area safe? Why or why not?
- Do you think violence will increase in this area? Why or why not?

***Despite the living conditions, aspiring miners keep coming to the corridor. Two years of drought in many parts of Madagascar have led farmers to seek out alternative means of income.***

***"You have a lot of people who are employed. Without this discovery, they would be in serious trouble," Pardieu said. "That's why the authorities are not doing anything. They are letting people mine. They don't want to have 20,000 people starving in town, with no money."***

- What's your opinion on Pardieu's statement above? Do you agree or disagree with his theory?