

## Grade 5 Informational

### Going Green

Selena reached over and turned off the radio in the car. “I don’t want to hear about it,” she said when her mother looked at her. “We all know Jefferson Elementary won first prize again in the State Science Fair. It is no surprise. This is the fourth year in a row they have won first prize.”

Selena could feel her mom frowning without looking at her. “I’m sorry, Mom,” said Selena. “I am just tired of hearing about other schools winning prizes. Last week, Lake Hood Elementary received an award for serving the healthiest lunches in the city. The week before that, Hamilton Elementary won an award for students reading the most number of minutes in the state. I wish Elliot Elementary could win an award for something. All we know how to do is grow flowers.” Selena’s mom smiled. She remembered how excited Selena had been when her class planted a flower garden on the school grounds.

“Growing flowers is unusual for a school,” she reminded her daughter. “Remember the television show we watched last weekend about ‘green’ schools? Maybe you could use that idea.” As Selena got out of the car, Mom said, “Have a good day in school.”

All morning Selena could not stop thinking about her mom’s suggestion. During lunch, she pulled out a piece of paper and a pen. She used ideas from the television show to create a list of ways her school could become “green.” After only a few minutes, her list looked like this:

1. Start a school-wide recycling program.
2. Use fluorescent light bulbs.
3. Reduce the amount of paper being used.
4. Help others use fewer plastic water bottles.

Selena knew there were many other ways the school could be “green.” However, some of those steps would mean spending money instead of just making some changes. She thought if she could get others to make some of the changes on her list, her school would have a good start at becoming “green.”

Selena went home and finished her homework. She spent the rest of the evening writing steps needed to make her ideas work. She quickly saw that her ideas asked students, teachers, and staff to work together.

At the school library the next day, Selena went online to find out how much money could be saved if her ideas were used. She knew facts would help get people to

listen.

Finally, after a week of writing and rewriting, Selena was ready to present her plan. She set up a time to meet with Principal Adams. She explained her ideas for having the school become “green.” She told how much money the school could save if some of the changes were made.

“Selena, I am impressed,” said Principal Adams. “You have some wonderful ideas. Let me take them to the next school board meeting. We will see if the people on the school board like your plan.”

Selena was thrilled when she heard the school board had said yes to her “green” ideas. Elliot Elementary began to make big changes. Light bulbs were changed. Recycling bins were placed in each classroom. The school began selling reusable water bottles with “Elliot Elementary” printed on them. The number of plastic water bottles thrown away decreased. Fewer papers were being used. Students, teachers, and staff were also finding ways to reuse paper.

At the end of the school year, Selena was very excited when Elliot Elementary was given an award for the Greenest Elementary School in the City. When the report came on the local radio station, Selena could not help but reach over and turn up the volume. “Now, this is news a person can enjoy,” she said with a grin. Selena’s mom just smiled to herself once more.

## **Grade 5 Informational**

### **What is a Corn Maze?**

People have built mazes for thousands of years. Mazes have been used to hide objects and to attract adventurers. Ancient Greek stories tell of a stone maze built to hide a creature called a Minotaur. In the United States today, farmers create mazes in their corn fields. These mazes attract visitors, provide entertainment, and earn money.

#### **A New Use for a Corn Field**

The first corn maze in the United States was reportedly created in the early 1990s. Corn mazes have continued to grow in popularity. Hundreds of corn mazes are created every year. Corn mazes provide hours of entertainment for adventurers of any age. Most corn mazes are only a few acres in size. In 2009, a farmer in California set a world record with a 45-acre corn maze. Other farmers continue to compete to break the record for the largest maze.

Farmers turn their corn fields into mazes as a way of earning additional money. Visitors pay a fee to find hidden objects or just find their way through the paths. Many people look forward to exploring a corn maze as a family experience. Corn mazes also attract scouts and other groups.

#### **How to Make a Corn Maze**

A farmer can make a corn maze in different ways. One way is to stake out paths for the corn maze before planting. Then corn is planted to create the walls of the maze. The paths are weeded to keep them clear for visitors. Another way to make a maze is to mow the cornstalks. A tractor with a mower attached can be used to cut the cornstalks to make the paths. A farmer may use a global positioning system (GPS) like the one used in a car to find directions. The GPS helps guide the trimming of the corn field to create the maze.

A farmer can plan the maze design or hire a company to create it. Some maze builders choose a state theme or another favorite design. Logos of sports teams or cartoon characters are popular. Some businesses pay farmers to use their company's logo as the pattern for the maze. Designs are often chosen for how they will look from the air. In fact, many farms with a corn maze post aerial pictures of their maze on a website.

#### **Finding Your Way through a Corn Maze**

Mazes may be large and complicated. Some people are concerned they may get lost. Farmers take steps to make sure people are safe. Some farms offer maps of the maze. Some mazes offer texting as a guide. A visitor can key in numbers on a cell phone, and directions will appear on the screen. Sometimes farm workers are available in a maze to assist with directions.

#### **A Popular Form of Entertainment**

In addition to a corn maze, a farm may offer other features to attract more people. Visitors may enjoy food, such as caramel apples. Activities such as pumpkin picking or a petting zoo may also add to the fun.

Corn mazes are a great way to enjoy time outside. They offer adventure, exploration, and lots of fun! Consider a corn maze for your next autumn outing.