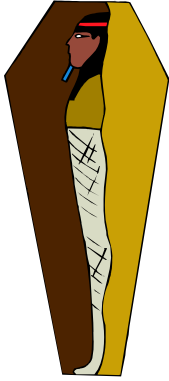


Grade 6 Main Idea
YOU DO
Answer Guide

Preserving Meat, Fish and Mummies



Most mummies, whether natural or manmade, formed by rapid drying. Ordinarily, when a living thing dies, decay soon sets in. The decay is caused by bacteria, molds, and other small forms of life. As they feed on dead material, they break it down. The material, which is rich in minerals that plants need, is added to the soil. In this way the material is recycled. It is used by plants, which are eaten by animals. To do their work, bacteria and other small living things need water. They cannot multiply or grow without it. If dead material dries out rapidly and stays dry, decay does not take place. In fact, for thousands of years people have been preserving meat and fish this way, by drying them in the sun or packing them in salt, which draws water from the tissues.

Main Idea, explicitly stated in the last sentence: People have been preserving living things by drawing water away from tissues.