

If you only have 30 minutes ...

Analyze how Moruga Hill Rice connects history, culture and preservation efforts by extracting key details from the text, interpreting their meaning and drawing conclusions about their significance.

Text Mining (12 minutes)

Task1: The Beginning of the Moruga Hill Rice Journey

Complete the paragraph below using the **Cloze Word Bank**:

The _____ men fought with the British during the _____ between Great Britain and the US. In exchange they received promises of _____ and _____ in Trinidad, then a _____. They eventually settled in the village of _____ in south Trinidad, carrying few belongings—among them tiny _____ of a unique red rice suited to land.

In Trinidad, people called the newcomers *Merikans*—_____ for “Americans.” Like their _____, captured and _____ West Africans in the American South, they knew how to _____ rice with uncommon skill. The variety they brought—“red bearded _____ rice” or “hill rice”—helped sustain them, aided by the indigenous _____ people who showed them where to hunt and fish.¹

Cloze Word Bank

Cultivate	Colony	Enslaved	Forebears	Freedom	Gullah
Indigenous	Land	Moruga	Pidgin	Seeds	Trinidad
Upland	Warao				

Task 2: The Later Years of the Moruga Hill Rice Story

Find a phrase from the article describing an inspiration or influence that helped preserve or promote Moruga Hill Rice in modern times. Write your phrase below:

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Text Analysis (12 minutes)

Use evidence from the article to answer each question. Write in complete sentences.

Life Phase/Event	Guiding Questions	Text Evidence (from reading)
Forgenie begins growing hill rice commercially in 2016. ²	What motivated him to promote this rice beyond his own community?	
Merikin ancestors arrive in Trinidad in 1816. ³	What materials did they bring with them?	

Historians trace hill rice's roots. ⁴	What connections do historians find between this rice and African American agricultural history?	
Gullah Geechee cultural leaders visit Trinidad. ⁵	How did this visit strengthen cultural connections?	

Synthesis (5 minutes)

What do you think has been the most influential factor in preserving Moruga Hill Rice? Explain your reasoning using examples from both historical and modern evidence.⁶

Common Core Standard(s) Met:

CCRA.R.1 Read closely to determine what the text says explicitly and to make logical inferences from it; cite specific textual evidence when writing or speaking to support conclusions drawn from the text.

CCRA.R.2 Determine central ideas or themes of a text and analyze their development; summarize the key supporting details and ideas.

1 The **Gullah** men fought with the British during the **War of 1812** between Great Britain and the US. In exchange they received promises of **freedom** and **land** in Trinidad, then a **colony**. They eventually settled in the village of **Moruga** in south Trinidad, carrying few belongings—among them tiny **seeds** of a unique red rice suited to land.

In Trinidad, people called the newcomers Merikans—**pidgin** for “Americans.” Like their **forebears**, captured and **enslaved** West Africans in the American South, they knew how

to **cultivate** rice with uncommon skill. The variety they brought—"red bearded **upland** rice" or "hill rice"—helped sustain them, aided by the indigenous **Warao** people who showed them where to hunt and fish

2 "Local lore holds that the grain carried curative properties." Or "I remember being told that the hill rice alone was the most nutritious thing you could eat" he says.

3 "They eventually settled in the village of Moruga in south Trinidad, carrying few belongings—among them tiny seeds of a unique red rice suited to dry land."

4 "According to the International African American Museum in Charleston, people from Africa's Rice Coast—modern-day Senegal, Gambia, Sierra Leone and Guinea—were forcibly transported to develop what would become the American Rice Coast from North Carolina to Florida in the 17th century."

5 "Gullah Chef Roosevelt Brownlee, who lives in Savannah, Georgia, first encountered red bearded upland rice at a symposium a few years ago." OR "Beyond nutrition, hill rice offers another, less quantifiable value: It endures as a powerful piece of cultural heritage, linking today's growers and eaters to the customs, foods, language and religion—including Islam—of their forebears."

6 Answers will vary, but strong responses should reference: 1) intergenerational farming knowledge; 2) cultural preservation efforts; 3) modern advocacy, research or community partnerships; 4) diasporic reconnection across continents.