

If you only have 30 minutes ...

Analyze how the global history, local traditions and modern revival of saffron connect through evidence-based reading and interpretation.

Text Mining (12 minutes)

Task1: The Ancient History of Saffron

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

Saffron’s story begins far beyond Pennsylvania. Its _____ dates back more than 3,000 years to Ancient _____. By the 10th century BCE, it was widely cultivated in _____, where it appeared in elite _____ and graced the tables of kings and nobles. Phoenician _____ carried saffron corms from Greece to Persia, where it was cultivated, _____ and _____ along _____ trade routes to the Levant, North Africa, the Roman Empire and India.

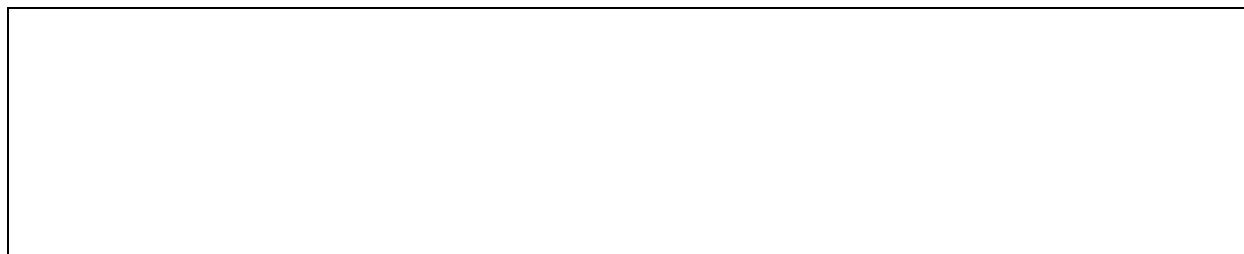
Moors brought saffron to _____ in the sixth century CE, where it became integral to Iberian Peninsula cuisine as well as traditional _____. During this period, saffron emerged as a _____ commodity. Its distinct flavor and _____ qualities fueled trade—and conflict—including stolen shipments, counterfeiting and smuggling.¹

Cloze Word Bank

Cuisines	Cultivation	Distributed	Greece
Medicine	Persia	Prized	Processed
Silk Road	Spain	Therapeutic	Traders

Task 2: More than a cookbook

Find a phrase from the article describing how saffron has cultural, historical, medical or economic importance beyond cooking.²



Text Analysis (12 minutes)

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

Article Themes	Guiding Questions	Text Evidence (from reading)
Saffron's global history³	How is Pennsylvania saffron connected to ancient trade or world history?	
Saffron and community life⁴	How did saffron shape everyday life or traditions in Mennonite communities?	
Saffron's modern revival⁵	How are today's growers adapting saffron for new uses or markets?	

Synthesis (6 minutes)

What do you think is the most significant reason saffron continues to be grown in Pennsylvania today—tradition, health benefits or economic opportunity. Explain your answer.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 Saffron’s story begins far beyond Pennsylvania. Its **cultivation** dates back more than 3,000 years to Ancient **Greece**. By the 10th century BCE, it was widely cultivated in **Persia**, where it appeared in elite **cuisines** and graced the tables of kings and nobles. Phoenician **traders** carried saffron corms from Greece to Persia, where it was cultivated, **processed** and distributed along **Silk Road** trade routes to the Levant, North Africa, the Roman Empire and India.

Moors brought saffron to **Spain** in the sixth century CE, where it became integral to Iberian Peninsula cuisine as well as traditional **medicine**. During this period, saffron emerged as a **prized** commodity. Its distinct flavor and **therapeutic** qualities fueled trade—and conflict—including stolen shipments, counterfeiting and smuggling.

2 Possible answers:

- “Beyond cooking, some growers and researchers explore its health benefits as a holistic remedy for inflammation, digestion, eye diseases, anxiety and depression.”
- “Toby and Janelle Allspach began cultivating saffron after discovering research supporting its medicinal properties.”
- “Their work reflects a broader movement to revive saffron as a viable crop for small farms.”
- “By the 10th century BCE, it was widely cultivated in Persia, where it appeared in elite cuisines and graced the tables of kings and nobles.”
- “Phoenician traders carried saffron corms from Greece to Persia, where it was cultivated, processed and distributed along Silk Road trade routes to the Levant, North Africa, the Roman Empire and India.”
- “Moors brought saffron to Spain in the sixth century CE, where it became integral to Iberian Peninsula cuisine as well as traditional medicine. During this period, saffron emerged as a prized commodity.”

- “During this period, saffron emerged as a prized commodity. Its distinct flavor and therapeutic qualities fueled trade”

3 Text evidence: Saffron originated in Greece and Persia and spread through trade routes to Europe, Africa and Asia before arriving in America with immigrants.

4 Text evidence: Women traditionally harvested saffron by hand, and families sold small packets at local stores. It was used in soups, stews and baked goods and became part of everyday cooking.

5 Text evidence: The Allspachs expanded their farm to an acre, sell saffron products online and host harvest parties. Universities promote saffron as a profitable specialty crop.

6 Possible answers: It preserves cultural heritage passed down through generations; It offers health and medicinal benefits supported by research; It gives small farmers a valuable, high-profit crop; It connects local food traditions with global history.