

Unit 3

Life in the Soil



What is so
amazing
about plants?

SICHUAN, CHINA

A woman transplanting rice in a paddy field in Jiuchi Town

Unit at a Glance

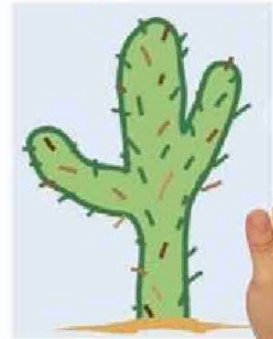
- ▶ **Language Focus:** Give Information, Define and Explain
- ▶ **Reading Strategy:** Make Inferences
- ▶ **Phonics Focus:** Review: Two- and Three-Letter Blends; Plurals: -s, -es, -ies
- ▶ **Topic:** Plants

Share What You Know

- 1 **Think** of the most amazing plant you know. Draw it.
- 2 **Display** all the class drawings. Don't tell which is yours!
- 3 **Say** an amazing thing your plant does. Can your class guess which plant is yours?



My plant grows without much water.



Language Frames

- Its _____ is _____.
- Its _____ are _____.
- It has _____.

Give Information

Listen to Marco's song. Then use **Language Frames** to give information about a plant you know.



Song  

My Big, Strong Plant

A big, strong plant lives in my yard.
Its stem is thick and wide.
Its leaves are nearly two feet long.
I'm glad it lives outside!

Chorus:

My big, strong plant!
It grows against my wall.
It has flowers in the summer
And seed pods in the fall.

Tune: "Oh! Susanna"



Science Vocabulary

Key Words

Look at this diagram. Use **Key Words** and other words to talk about the life **cycle** of a pea plant.

Key Words

blossom

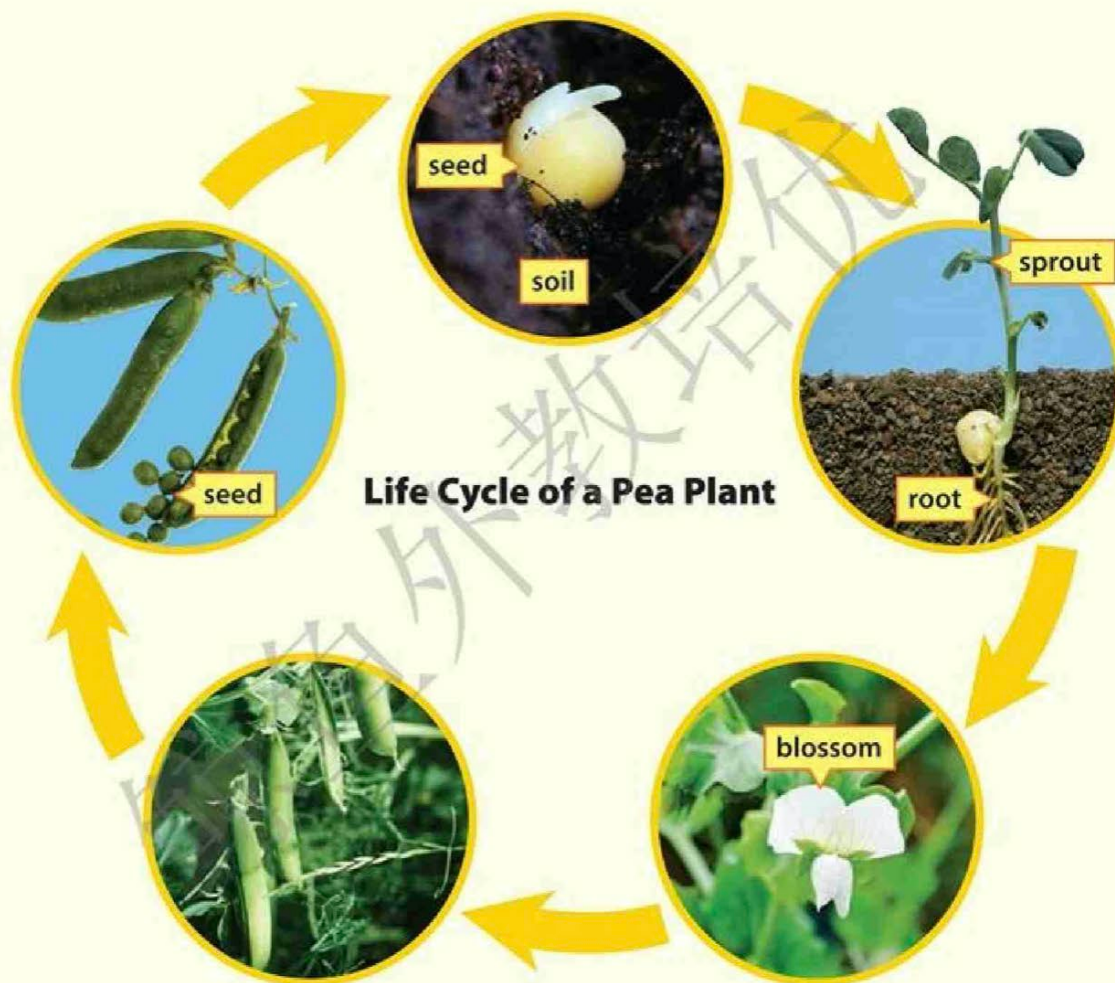
cycle

root

seed

soil

sprout



Talk Together

What is amazing about a pea plant's life cycle? Use **Language Frames** from page 152 and **Key Words** to give information to a partner.

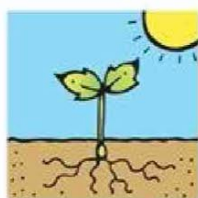
Sequence

When things happen in a certain order, they are in **sequence**.

When you talk about sequence, you can use:

- time-order words: *first, next, then, finally*
- names of days, months, seasons: *Monday, May, summer*

Look at the pictures of a growing plant.

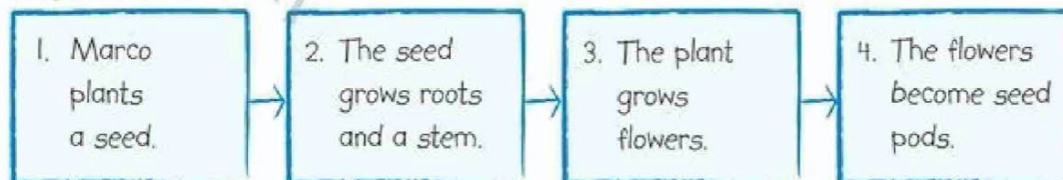


Map and Talk

You can use a sequence chain to show when events happen. Here's how you make one.

Each event goes in a box in the sequence chain. The first event goes in the first box. The second event goes in the second box, and so on.

Sequence Chain



Talk Together

Tell your partner the steps of a plant's life cycle. Your partner makes a sequence chain.

Read a Story

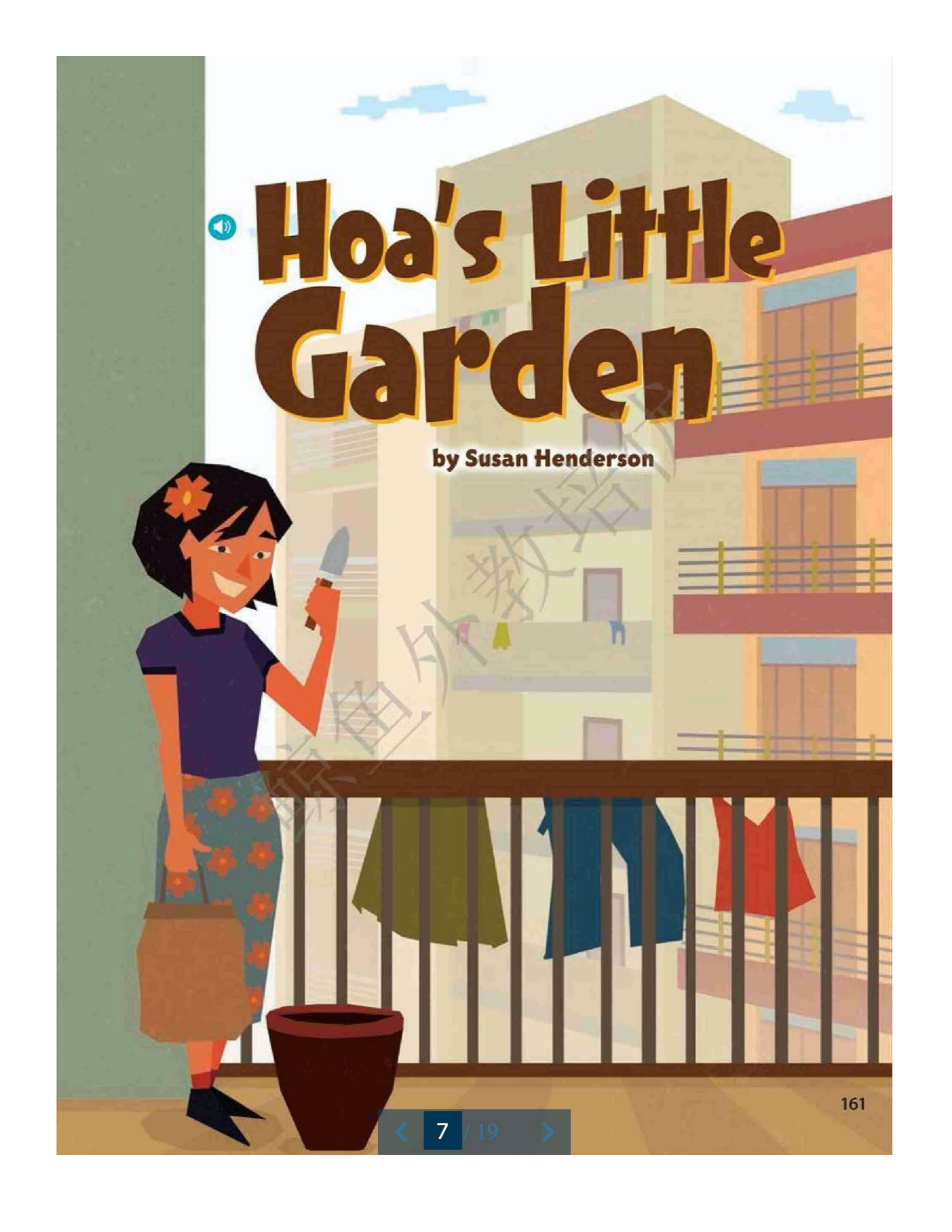
Genre

Realistic fiction is a story that sounds as if it could be true. The characters, plot, and setting all seem real.

Characters

Characters are the people in the story.



An illustration of a woman with short dark hair and an orange flower in it, wearing a purple shirt and a blue skirt with orange flowers. She is holding a brown bag and a small knife. She stands on a balcony with a wooden railing. Behind her, laundry (a green shirt, a blue shirt, and a red shirt) is hanging on the railing. In the background, there are several multi-story apartment buildings in shades of beige and orange, with some balconies having railings. The sky is light blue with a few small clouds. The title 'Hoa's Little Garden' is written in large, bold, brown letters with a yellow outline. A small blue speaker icon is to the left of the title. Below the title, the author's name 'by Susan Henderson' is written in a smaller, black font. At the bottom of the page, there is a navigation bar with a blue background, containing a left arrow, the number '7', a right arrow, and the text '/ 19'. The page number '161' is in the bottom right corner.

Hoa's Little Garden

by Susan Henderson

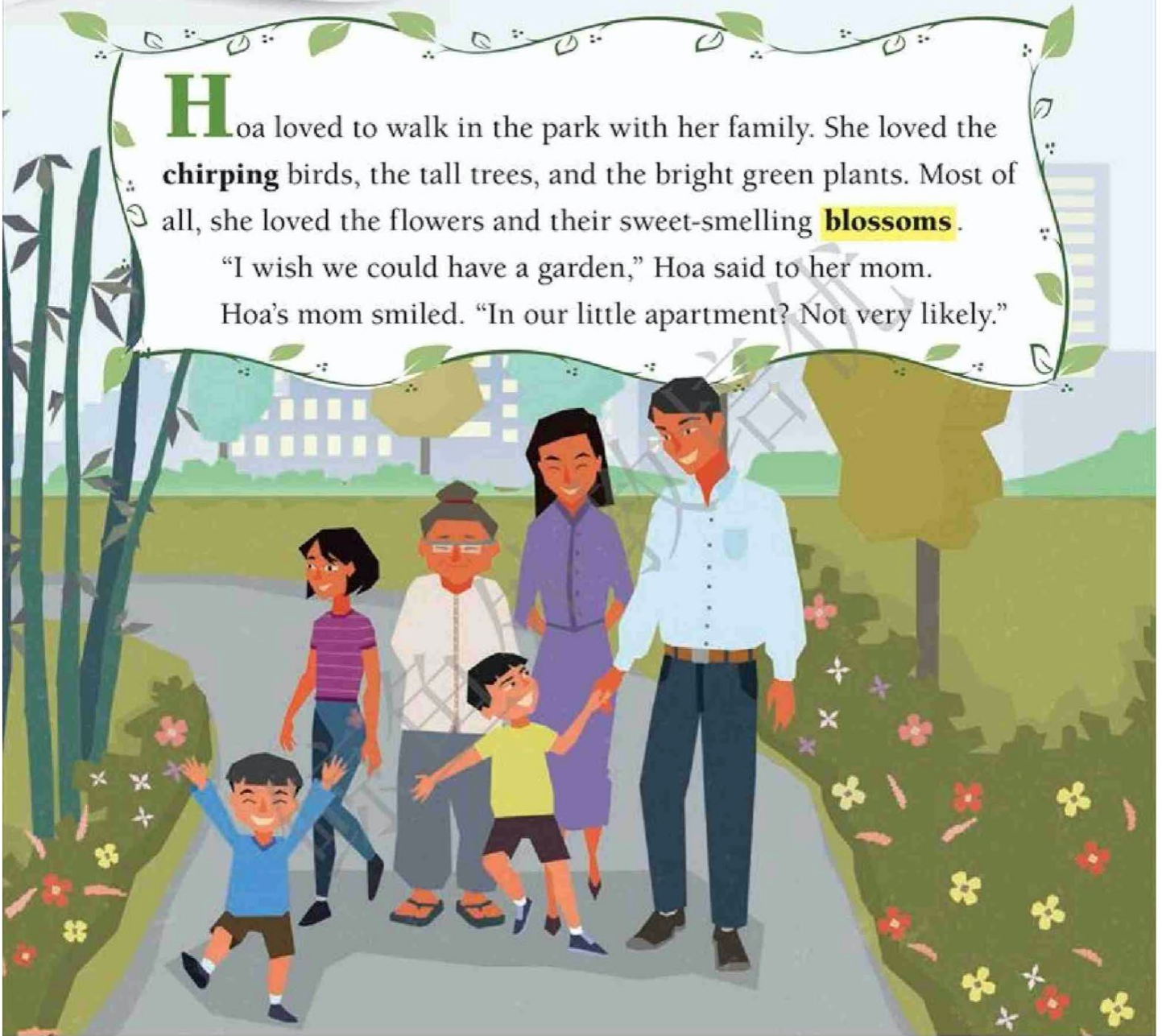
► **Set a Purpose**

A girl who loves flowers wants to grow her own garden. Find out what happens.

Hoa loved to walk in the park with her family. She loved the **chirping** birds, the tall trees, and the bright green plants. Most of all, she loved the flowers and their sweet-smelling **blossoms**.

“I wish we could have a garden,” Hoa said to her mom.

Hoa’s mom smiled. “In our little apartment? Not very likely.”



chirping singing

At home, Hoa drew pictures of flowers and plants. She **hung** them all around the apartment. She knew that colorful pictures made the apartment feel **lighter and brighter**.

Hoa's mom picked up one of her drawings. "You're a very talented artist, Hoa," she said.

Hoa **replied**, "If we had real plants and flowers, I wouldn't have to draw them."

"Your name means *flower*," her mom told her. "Maybe that's why you love flowers so much."



hung put on the wall
lighter and brighter happier and less dark
replied answered

► Before You Continue

1. **Setting** Where does Hoa live? How do you know?
2. **Make Inferences** What does Hoa like about flowers?

► Predict

How will Hoa get plants to grow in her apartment?

At school, Hoa's class planted bean **seeds**. The plants grew well in the classroom, so Hoa took her bean plant home and set it on a table. But in a few days, her little plant died.

"It doesn't have the right **conditions** to grow," said her mom. "It needs more light."





Hoa wanted a flower garden **badly**, but she knew there was no space for one in her family's apartment.

One day, when Hoa was working on one of her drawings, she looked outside. She saw something she **hadn't noticed** before. The **sun's rays were shining** into a corner of the balcony.

badly very much

hadn't noticed didn't see

sun's rays were shining sunshine was coming through

“Mom!” called Hoa. “Come look. The sun is shining on our **balcony**. I can have a garden!”

Her mom laughed. “Well, maybe you can have a *small* garden,” she said, “a very small garden. You can grow one plant in a pot. But that’s it. There is no space for more than one pot.”



balcony terrace

Hoa thought about what she should plant. *I love flowers, she told herself, but it would be nice to grow something to eat, too.*

Hoa thought about the different types of plants she had learned about at school. *I know! A **passion fruit** plant will give us flowers to enjoy and fruit to eat.*



passion fruit a tropical fruit with lots of seeds

► Before You Continue

1. **Confirm Prediction** Was your prediction correct? What else will Hoa need to do to keep her plants growing?
2. **Character** Do Hoa and her mom get along well? How do you know?

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► Predict

Look at the picture. What will happen to the passion fruit **seeds**?

Hoa's mom got her a pot, a **spade**, and some **soil**. She helped Hoa cut open a passion fruit. Hoa took **a dozen** seeds from inside the fruit and planted them in the dirt.

"Do you think any of these **seeds** will sprout?" she asked her mom.

"I hope so, Hoa," her mom said.



spade small shovel
a dozen twelve

Hoa checked her plant every morning and every night. One night, after weeks of checking, she finally spotted a little **sprout** growing in her pot.

A few weeks later, the sprout had grown into a small **vine**. The vine kept growing and growing until it spilled out of the pot.

“You need a stick for the vine to grow onto,” said her mom.



vine creeping plant

Three months later, there was a big purple flower on the vine.

“Mom,” Hoa called, “come look! My vine has **produced** a beautiful flower!”

Her mom was very happy for her. “What a wonderful job you did, Hoa.” Hoa was **beaming**. She knew the beautiful flower would blossom into a fruit.



beaming smiling brightly

It wasn't long before Hoa's family was enjoying a bowl full of passion fruit. The family's next-door neighbor, Mrs. Nguyen, also had a bowl of passion fruit. Hoa's passion fruit vine had grown so much that it grew onto Mrs. Nguyen's balcony!

Hoa was very happy. Some of the passion fruit were sweet and juicy, and others were **tangy and tart**. But they were all very tasty.



tangy and tart sourish

I'm a great gardener, thought Hoa. She asked her mom for another pot.

"Another pot?" asked her mom. "What do you want to grow now?"

"Chilies," Hoa answered. "Bright red ones!"

Her mom thought for a moment. "Hmmm," she said, "maybe we should ask Mrs. Nguyen if there's enough room on her balcony." ❖



► Before You Continue

1. **Confirm Prediction** What did you think would happen to the passion fruit seeds? Were you surprised?
2. **Point of View** What does Hoa's mom think about Hoa's gardening? How do you know?

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Meet the Author

Susan Henderson

Susan Henderson likes to grow flowers and basil on her Seattle balcony. She grows blue and red petunias and bright orange marigolds. Her cat, Frankie, likes the pots of grass she grows for him to munch on.

Before she moved to Seattle, the author lived in Australia. She taught many Vietnamese children, who are now grown up and have children of their own. She is still in touch with some of them through e-mail.

The author loves to read. She also enjoys writing stories that she hopes children will love to read, too.

Writing Tip



Find places in the story where Susan Henderson helps you see and feel what is happening. Then write your own sentences. Describe the way your favorite plant looks and feels.

