

China's small mistake with big consequences

Have you ever made a small mistake that caused a big problem?

Vocabulary

1. famines 2. consequences 3. pests 4. sparrow 5. locusts 6. grain

True Story

In the 1950s, China's leader Mao Zedong started a campaign called the "Four _____." One of the pests was the _____. People were told to kill sparrows because they ate too much _____. Millions of people chased the birds, banged pots, and destroyed their nests. It worked—the sparrows died.

But without sparrows, there were more insects, especially _____. These insects ate the crops. At the same time, farming rules changed, and people had to share land and tools. This caused big problems. Food ran out. Between 1959 and 1961, up to 45 million people died in what became one of the worst _____ in history. A small mistake had huge _____.

Quiz

1. What was the name of the campaign started by Mao Zedong?
2. Why were people told to kill sparrows?
3. What happened when there were no sparrows?
4. How many people died between 1959 and 1961?

True or False

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| 1. The campaign was about killing only sparrows. | True False |
| 2. The campaign took place in the 1960s. | True False |
| 3. The famine was one of the worst in history. | True False |

Conversation

- A: Hey, did you hear about the sparrow problem?
B: Yeah, they told us to get rid of them.
A: I hope this helps with the grain.
B: I'm not sure. What if it causes more issues?
A: Like what?
B: Well, without sparrows, maybe more bugs will eat the crops.

Discussion

1. Which do you think are more annoying, birds or bugs?
2. What would you do if you had to protect your garden from pests?
3. Have you ever tried to grow your own food?
4. What is your favorite type of bird and why?