

Bonsai



TOPIC SENTENCE

Write the topic sentence beneath the story.

For many years the Chinese and Japanese have practiced the unusual hobby of making tiny trees. This hobby, called bonsai (bon - si), probably began in ancient China to show admiration for trees growing on mountains or cliffs. The gardeners appreciate how these trees have struggled under harsh growing conditions in order to survive. Because of strong wind, poor soil, and the need to root in tiny cracks, full grown trees look small and twisted. Bonsai gardeners try to create trees that look like old twisted trees to honor such determination and will to survive.

To produce these tiny trees, gardeners select a tree, such as an evergreen, maple, larch, or beech. The gardeners put seeds, cuttings, or a very young sapling in a tray made of shallow earthenware. The future tree needs to be placed off-center so that it can be more easily pruned, or trimmed and cut, into an irregular shape.

Once the tree is planted, the gardeners shape it by wrapping branches with wire to force their growth in a certain direction. In this way, the gardeners can make almost any shape they like over time. One branch can spread sideways, for example. Other branches can stay short and close to the dwarf trunk.

Once the tree is established, gardeners must also control the rate of growth. They do this by sometimes re-potting the bonsai. Each time, they skillfully prune just the right roots to reduce growth and produce the tiny, twisted branches.

Fully grown bonsai, which would normally be 15 or 20 foot trees, range from barely two inches to an average of two feet. They take at least five years to create. With this much time and care required, it's not surprising that the gardener is proud of the grown bonsai as a work of art. It honors those qualities that have enabled trees in nature to survive by barely hanging on.

What is the topic sentence? _____

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Question 1

Read this sentence from the article.

"The future tree needs to be placed off-center so that it can be more easily pruned into an irregular shape."

What does the word irregular mean?

- A. Similar
- B. Normal
- C. Usual
- D. Uneven

Question 2

Describe how and why the hobby of bonsai started and what characteristics of the bonsai are emphasized by this hobby. Use details and information from the article to explain your answer.

Question 3

Describe how the gardener gets the tree's branches into the desired shape. Use details and information from the article to explain your answer.

Question 4

Why did the author write the article "Bonsai"?

- A. To persuade people to plant bonsai trees.
- B. To inform people about China and Japan.
- C. To inform people about the hobby of bonsai.
- D. To persuade people to visit China and Japan.