

Dictation Contest (PRJr, 初級) No. 1090

Hi, everyone! Welcome back to PR Junior!

Today I will talk about fruits. Let's begin!

A fruit is the part of the flowering plant that has the seeds. The skin of a fruit may be thin, tough, or hard. Its insides are often sweet and juicy. But some fruits, including nuts, are dry. Fruits develop from a plant's flowers.

Some foods that people call vegetables are fruits. For example, cucumbers and tomatoes are all fruits. They have seeds, but vegetables usually do not have seeds.

That's all for today! See you!

Dictation Contest (PR 1, 中級) No. 1090

Hello, everyone! Welcome back to PR1.

Today, I'm going to share news about an issue happening in Italy.

Dozens of red fire ant nests have been found in Sicily, Italy. They were first noticed in Europe last year, and now scientists are working to control them. These ants are especially dangerous as they can damage plants by eating their roots and attacking helpful insects. In Sicily, there hasn't been major damage so far, but if the ants spread, agriculture and fruit production would suffer immensely. Therefore, the Sicilian government is taking action by appointing foresters to handle the situation. They are using steam machines to destroy ant nests in order to kill the queens and stop the colonies.

Wow, I do hope that they are able to stop the spread.

Well, that's all for today's news. See you next time!

Dictation Contest (PR2 上級) No. 1090

Hi, everyone! Welcome back to PR2!

Have you ever played a game called *Animal Crossing*? It is my favorite video game and I love the otter character called Pascal, or, in Japanese, Rakosuke.

So today, I will be talking about an interesting habit of sea otters.

In parts of the ocean where sea otters face stark competition for their favorite kinds of food, some otters are getting by with the help of tools — like rocks and even glass bottles — that let them bash open tougher prey that they wouldn't otherwise be able to eat. That's according to a new study of sea otters in Monterey Bay, California, which took a look at the tool use of individual otters to see how it affected their health and nutrition. The findings, published in the journal *Science*, reveal how this special skill set may increase their chances of survival in an uncertain world. Sea otters are large marine mammals that spend their days foraging in kelp forests. They dive to the bottom to grab tasty morsels, plus sometimes rocks that they plan to use as tools. They bring these to the surface and float on their backs, using their bellies as tables as they get to work on opening and eating their snacks. "Their preferred prey are usually urchins and abalone," says Chris Law, a biologist at the University of Texas and the University of Washington, who notes that urchins and abalone are relatively easy for otters to break apart.

However, in places where lots of otters are living together, they often have to eat alternative foods. Most of those alternative foods have super hard shells and require some kind of external force to break into.

That's it for today! See you!