Newfoundland's cod industry began in the 1550s when Basque (from northern Spain) and Portuguese fleets began fishing the waters of the Grand Banks and the Strait of Belle Isle. The Portuguese and Basque fishermen were just the beginning. In the 1600s, the French and English also began fishing the area, but in 1713, the Peace of Utrecht changed the situation. It granted the island of Newfoundland to the British, with limited fishing rights for the French.

In 1763, the Treaty of Paris ceded all French possessions in Canada to England. England's wars with France and the United States brought many settlers to Newfoundland. In the 1850s, Newfoundland and England began battling over fishing rights. Nations have been arguing over fishing rights in the area ever since. The Newfoundland fisheries began to grow, and by the 1890s, 90 percent of the population of Newfoundland was involved in the fishing industry.

The fish were salted on board each ship, then taken back to Europe to be dried and sold. The English, who had limited access to salt, lightly salted their fish, washed it, and then airdried it, a method that eventually made Newfoundland cod famous.

Because the fish migrate annually, some fishermen returned to their homes in England at the end of each season. The Irish, however, came to stay, doing their fishing in the local bays. St. John's, Newfoundland, became the center of the cod-fishing industry. Even today, methods of cod fishing vary among fishermen. Some use hooks and lines; others hang trawling nets behind their boats.

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1. gave up
2. large nets that are dragged along the bottom of a body of water
In 1911, the Hague Tribunal, an international group that met in Holland, awarded Newfoundland control of its bays. For 38 years, Newfoundland had exclusive rights to the fish in the area. In 1949, when Newfoundland joined the Canadian Confederation, it gave up its exclusive fishing rights. For Newfoundland families, most of whom depended on the cod industry for their livelihood, this change was disastrous. From then on, fishing fleets came from everywhere. This response resulted in overfishing by fleets of foreign trawlers, and the cod stocks were depleted. In 1971, the newly formed Newfoundland Fishermen, Food, and Allied Workers Union gave power to the local fishermen, and six years later, a 200-mile limit was placed on Newfoundland waters. Foreign fishing fleets could no longer fish inside those limits. But it was almost too late.

In an attempt to put more fish into the local fishing grounds, in 1986 aqua culture (cod farming) industries were begun, but they weren't as successful as had been hoped. By 1990, the numbers of cod in Newfoundland's waters were the lowest ever. The situation had become desperate.

In 1992, the Canadian government placed a two-year moratorium on commercial cod fishing. Numerous Newfoundland families lost their income as fishing rights were taken away and canneries were closed. At one time, the waters around Newfoundland were so filled with cod it is said that it could be gathered by the bucketful. But what for years had seemed like an endless supply of fish had resulted in overharvesting.

The moratorium was expected to end in 1994, but when it was estimated that the cod catch had declined 90 percent in the preceding five years, the moratorium was extended. The processing plants that had remained open were forced to close. However, the situation outside the 200-mile limit did not change: Foreign fishermen continued to fish beyond this limit.

It wasn't until 1997 that the situation showed any sign of improvement. Still, commercial fishing was allowed only on a drastically reduced basis. Cod farms began supplying young fish to the coastal waters. Other species, such as crab and shrimp, are being caught in place of cod. But in spite of the reduced supplies of fish, cod fishing is still important to Newfoundland. As most families have been involved with cod in some way, the cod is central to the culture of Newfoundland. No visitor to Newfoundland escapes without “kissing the cod,” a traditional ceremony also known as being “screeched in.” The ceremony involves donning fishermen's clothing, kissing a codfish (or being slapped in the face with one), or biting the head off an uncooked capelin, a small, herring like fish.

A fisherman leads the visitor in an exchange of questions and answers that are spoken in the local, hard-to-understand dialect. The verbal exchange ends with the visitor asking, “Is we Newfies yet?” The answer is, “Deed we is me old trout, an’ long may yer big jib draw,” meaning, “Yes, we are and may your sails be full of wind.” The person being screeched in then drinks the strong local rum, “screech,” in one gulp.

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3. a temporary freeze on an activity
4. factories where food is canned
5. Drastic (adjective): likely to have a strong effect; extreme
Text-Dependent Questions

Directions: For the following questions, choose the best answer or respond in complete sentences.

1. PART A: What is the central idea of the text?
   A. The cod industry was an important part of life in Newfoundland before the fish went extinct.
   B. The cod industry has been an important part of life and culture in Newfoundland since the 1500s.
   C. The cod industry is, and has been, incredibly stable in Newfoundland because cod is widely available.
   D. The cod industry in Newfoundland has declined as fishermen have shifted their focus to other fish and sea life.

2. PART B: Which quote from the text best supports the answer to Part A?
   A. “methods of cod fishing vary among fishermen. Some use hooks and lines; others hang trawling nets behind their boats.” (Paragraph 4)
   B. “This response resulted in overfishing by fleets of foreign trawlers, and the cod stocks were depleted.” (Paragraph 5)
   C. “the waters around Newfoundland were so filled with cod it is said that it could be gathered by the bucketful.” (Paragraph 7)
   D. “As most families have been involved with cod in some way, the cod is central to the culture of Newfoundland.” (Paragraph 9)

3. What is the author’s likely purpose in paragraphs 1-2?
   A. to describe the history of Newfoundland and its cod industry
   B. to describe the status of the Newfoundland cod industry today
   C. to explain why the people of Newfoundland were so interested in cod
   D. to explain the different jobs available in the Newfoundland cod industry

4. What is the meaning of “depleted” in paragraph 5?
   A. sold
   B. hidden
   C. used up
   D. added to

5. How did local fishermen respond to the sudden increase in foreign fishermen catching cod in Newfoundland? (Paragraph 5)
   A. They made cod a protected species of fish.
   B. They made it illegal for fishermen to catch cod.
   C. They limited where foreign fishermen could catch cod.
   D. They forced foreign fishermen to leave Newfoundland.
6. How did the moratorium on catching cod affect businesses in Newfoundland?
   A. It encouraged businesses to sell cod illegally.
   B. It caused businesses to move out of Newfoundland.
   C. It forced businesses to start selling other types of fish.
   D. It caused businesses to lose money and eventually close.

7. How do the traditions discussed in paragraphs 9-10 contribute to the text?
   A. They show how cod are rarely eaten anymore, but used for ceremonies.
   B. They show how cod continues to be an important part of Newfoundland.
   C. They suggest that cod numbers are declining because of these traditions.
   D. They suggest that the cod industry in Newfoundland is largely a joke now.

8. Which of the following describes how the author organizes the information in the text?
   A. by discussing the different fishing trends in Newfoundland
   B. by comparing Newfoundland's cod industry to other countries
   C. by describing the various traditions common in Newfoundland
   D. by describing how the cod industry changed over time in Newfoundland

9. How has the population of cod in Newfoundland changed over time? Use evidence from the text to support your answer.

   __________________________________________________________________________
   __________________________________________________________________________
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   __________________________________________________________________________
Discussion Questions

Directions: Brainstorm your answers to the following questions in the space provided. Be prepared to share your original ideas in a class discussion.

1. In the text, the author describes how overfishing contributed to the decline in the population of cod in Newfoundland. How do you think new fishing technology contributed to this? How has the way fishermen catch fish changed over time?

2. In the text, the author describes how people overfished cod until their numbers were almost entirely gone. What other species has human activity severely affected? How might humans find a better balance between using the Earth’s resources without using them up?