



# Cherry Trees as Diplomacy: The Gift That Was Burned

Read the passage and answer the questions. (CEFR B1–B2)

Class \_\_\_\_\_ No. \_\_\_\_\_ Name \_\_\_\_\_

**1** The cherry trees around the Tidal Basin in Washington, D.C., are a famous symbol of spring in the American capital, yet their story began with a failure. In 1909, Tokyo pledged 2,000 trees, but when they arrived, inspectors from the Department of Agriculture found insects and disease. In January 1910, with President Taft's approval, every tree was burned.



**2** What could have become a diplomatic embarrassment turned into a lesson in persistence. Tokyo's city council approved a second gift, and in March 1912, 3,020 healthy trees of twelve varieties reached Washington. The young trees came from a famous row of cherry trees along the Arakawa River in Tokyo. On March 27, the First Lady and the wife of the Japanese ambassador planted the first two. Three years later, the United States sent flowering dogwoods to Japan in return.

**3** The friendship was later tested by war, but in 1965 Japan sent 3,800 more Yoshino cherry trees. The episode suggests that gifts of living things carry a special kind of meaning: unlike a statue, a tree must be cared for, year after year, by the people who receive it. Today, a festival celebrates these trees every spring.

## Comprehension

### 1. What is the main idea of the passage?

- (A) Washington's cherry trees came from Japan after a failed first gift, and the story shows the special meaning of living gifts.
- (B) Japan sent cherry trees to the United States every year from 1909 to 1965.
- (C) American scientists created a new kind of cherry tree in 1912.
- (D) The Tidal Basin festival is the oldest cherry blossom festival in the world.

### 2. Why were the first 2,000 trees burned?

- (A) They arrived too late for spring.
- (B) The trees were too small to plant.
- (C) Inspectors found insects and disease on them.
- (D) President Taft did not like cherry trees.

### 3. Which of the following is true about the second gift?

- (A) It included 2,000 trees of one variety.
- (B) It was sent by the Japanese emperor.
- (C) It arrived in Washington in January 1910.
- (D) It included 3,020 trees of twelve varieties from along the Arakawa River.

### 4. What can we infer about Tokyo's decision to send a second gift?

- (A) Tokyo wanted to keep the friendship alive instead of giving up after the first failure.
- (B) Tokyo was angry and wanted to test the American inspectors.
- (C) Tokyo had too many cherry trees and needed to remove some.
- (D) Tokyo was asked by the Department of Agriculture to pay for the burned trees.

### 5. In paragraph 2, the word "persistence" is closest in meaning to

- (A) anger
- (B) continuing to try even when things are difficult
- (C) luck
- (D) a quick change of plans

### 6. Why does the writer compare a tree with a statue?

- (A) To say that statues are more beautiful than trees.
- (B) To explain why the trees were burned in 1910.
- (C) To show that a living gift needs care every year from the people who receive it.
- (D) To suggest that Japan should send statues instead of trees.



## Vocabulary, Paraphrase & Summary

Match the words with the definitions. Then rewrite and summarize.

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- |                  |                                                                                      |
|------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1. diplomacy     | a. as a way of thanking someone or giving something back                             |
| 2. pledge        | b. the work of keeping good relations between the governments of different countries |
| 3. inspector     | c. to make a serious promise to give or do something                                 |
| 4. approval      | d. a person whose job is to check that things are safe or follow the rules           |
| 5. embarrassment | e. official permission to do something                                               |
| 6. persistence   | f. a situation that makes people feel uncomfortable or ashamed                       |
| 7. variety       | g. the quality of continuing to try even when something is difficult                 |
| 8. in return     | h. a type of plant or animal that is a little different from others of the same kind |

### Paraphrase — say it in your own words

1. “The cherry trees around the Tidal Basin in Washington, D.C., are a famous symbol of spring in the American capital, yet their story began with a failure.”

Hint: Split it into two sentences and use "But" for "yet".

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2. “What could have become a diplomatic embarrassment turned into a lesson in persistence.”

Hint: Start with "The problem" and use "Instead,".

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3. “The friendship was later tested by war, but in 1965 Japan sent 3,800 more Yoshino cherry trees.”

Hint: Use "Even after" and "had a hard time".

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### Summary

Summarize the passage in about 50 words.

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## Debate & Opinion Essay

Prepare for a debate. Then write your opinion (100–150 words).

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**Motion: Giving living things like trees is the best way to build friendship between countries.**

### FOR 賛成

- A tree must be cared for year after year by the people who receive it, so the friendship is renewed every spring.
- The Washington cherry trees led to a festival that people still celebrate every spring, so the gift keeps bringing people together.
- Living gifts invite a return gift, like the dogwoods the United States sent to Japan, so they create a two-way exchange.

Add your own reason:

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### AGAINST 反対

- Living things can carry insects and disease, as the first 2,000 trees did, so they can cause problems instead of friendship.
- Trees take years to grow and need a lot of care and money, which can become a burden for the receiving country.
- The friendship was still tested by war, so a gift of trees alone cannot protect a relationship between countries.

Add your own reason:

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|-------------------|---------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Opinion</b>    | <i>I believe / I think that ...</i><br><hr/>      |
| <b>Reason 1</b>   | <i>First, ... For example, ...</i><br><hr/> <hr/> |
| <b>Reason 2</b>   | <i>Second, ... In fact, ...</i><br><hr/> <hr/>    |
| <b>Counter</b>    | <i>Some people say ... However, ...</i><br><hr/>  |
| <b>Conclusion</b> | <i>In conclusion, ...</i><br><hr/>                |