

READ THE PASSAGE Think about why the author wrote the passage.

A Small Beginning

Trees grow larger than other plants, including flowers and bushes. And yet, most trees begin as tiny seeds.

The seed is the first stage in a tree's growth. A seed has a hard shell that protects the plant inside. When the plant is ready to grow, it sprouts, or pushes out of the seed. The new, small plant is called a **seedling**. The seedling needs air, light, and water to grow. It also needs to be planted in good soil.

As the seedling gets bigger, it looks more like a tree. The shoot, or stem, of the seedling grows into a **sapling**. This young tree grows bark on its trunk and leaves on its branches. The sapling will continue to grow until it is a large tree.

All seeds have a built-in code. Tree seeds have a code that tells seedlings the kind of tree they will become. For example, an acorn will grow into an oak tree. A pine seed will grow into a pine tree. The size of the seed has nothing to do with how tall a tree grows. The code inside the seed determines a tree's type and size.

SKILL PRACTICE Read the item. Write your response.

1. Why did the author write this text?

2. Why did the author put some words in bold print?

3. What four things does a seedling need in order to grow into a sapling?

STRATEGY PRACTICE Describe a connection you made when you read the passage.
