

**READ THE PASSAGE** Look for causes and effects.

### Useful Dead or Alive

A living tree is a wonderful gift of nature. Trees breathe out oxygen, refreshing the air. Trees give cool shade to plants, people, and animals. Many animals make their homes in trees, too. The fruits and nuts of some trees are tasty foods for both people and animals.

A tree is important even after it dies. Insects and birds depend on the dead wood. Some birds nest in the holes of the tree. Bees and wasps might make homes there, too. Some insects lay their eggs in the bark. Birds swoop by and eat the plump larvae.

Fungi (FUHN-jye), or mushrooms, grow on the dead wood. They begin to decompose the tree. They cause the tree to rot. Soft green moss and various bacteria, or germs, grow there, too. They all help the tree to rot. The tree gets softer and more crumbly. The rotting is important. As the tree rots completely, it makes the soil rich. The soil will be just right for new plants to grow.

**SKILL PRACTICE** Read the item. Write your response.

1. This is the effect: The dead tree decomposes. Name the causes.

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2. This is the cause: A dead tree completely breaks down. Name the effects.

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3. Describe the benefits offered by a living fruit tree.

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**STRATEGY PRACTICE** Circle words and phrases from the passage that helped you visualize what you read.