

9.2 *Dirt*

Aim: Develop reading skills such as understanding vocabulary in context and making inferences

Preparation: Make one copy of Worksheet 9.2 for every S.

Comment: Use after or in place of the reading on page 77.

A Pair work

- Give each S a copy of the reading. Ask: *What do you think the article is about? Can you think of any positive things about dirt?* Elicit one or two examples from the class.
- Ss work in pairs to discuss. Then have pairs share their answers with the class.

B

- Explain the task. Have Ss read the article to find the answers.
- Ss work individually to answer the questions.
- Go over the answers as a class.

Answers		
1. True	3. Not given	5. True
2. False	4. False	6. False

C Group work

- Explain the task. Read the questions aloud.
- Ss work in small groups to answer the questions.
- Have groups share their answers with the class.

A Pair work Read the title. What do you think the article is about? Can you think of any positive things about dirt? Discuss and share your ideas with the class.

The Goodness of Dirt

Wherever you look, advertisements are telling you that dirt is bad and that you have to get rid of it. They say that to protect your family – and even to show that you really love them – you need to remove every speck of dust from the floors and furniture and kill every germ and microbe that might be on the faucets, doorknobs, or anywhere else in your house. But the fact is that the cleaner we've become, the more health problems we seem to face. As more and more children develop allergies, asthma, and sensitivities to certain foods, some health experts have suggested that this is because we are just too clean.

A young child's immune system is like a computer that hasn't been programmed. Some scientists claim that the human body needs to learn which substances are good or bad and build up resistance by being exposed to them. While parents are desperately trying to keep their infants away from dirt and grime, babies – who seem to know better – are attempting to eat the most

disgusting things they can get their hands on. So, while a mud pie might be a parent's nightmare, a baby's body needs whatever substances are in that mound of dirt to help build a healthy immune system.

That is not to say that a certain degree of cleanliness is not important, and even the scientists who extol the health benefits of germs are not saying you shouldn't wash your hands after handling certain foods or taking out the trash. What they are saying is that the constant use of anti-bacterial products is, in the end, not good for you, and that trusty, time-tested soap and water are good enough in nearly all situations. So, there is no reason to panic when the baby stuffs a handful of dirt in her mouth – she's just trying to show you what being healthy really means.



B Read the article. Are these statements true, false, or is the information not given? Choose the correct answers.

	True	False	Not given
1. Advertisers try to make parents feel guilty for not being clean enough.	☐	☐	☐
2. Being extremely clean can eliminate any health issue.	☐	☐	☐
3. The immune system is now being studied using computers.	☐	☐	☐
4. Dirt should be kept away from infants at all times.	☐	☐	☐
5. Soap and water are usually sufficient in order to stay healthy.	☐	☐	☐
6. Bacteria-killing products can directly cause certain diseases.	☐	☐	☐

C Group work Discuss these questions. Then share your answers with the class.

1. What is your attitude towards cleanliness? Do you agree that we are too careful about germs, or do you think the current approach is the best one?
2. What do you think influences peoples' lives more: advertising or scientific research? Explain.
3. If you saw a baby playing in a pile of dirt, how would you react? Why?