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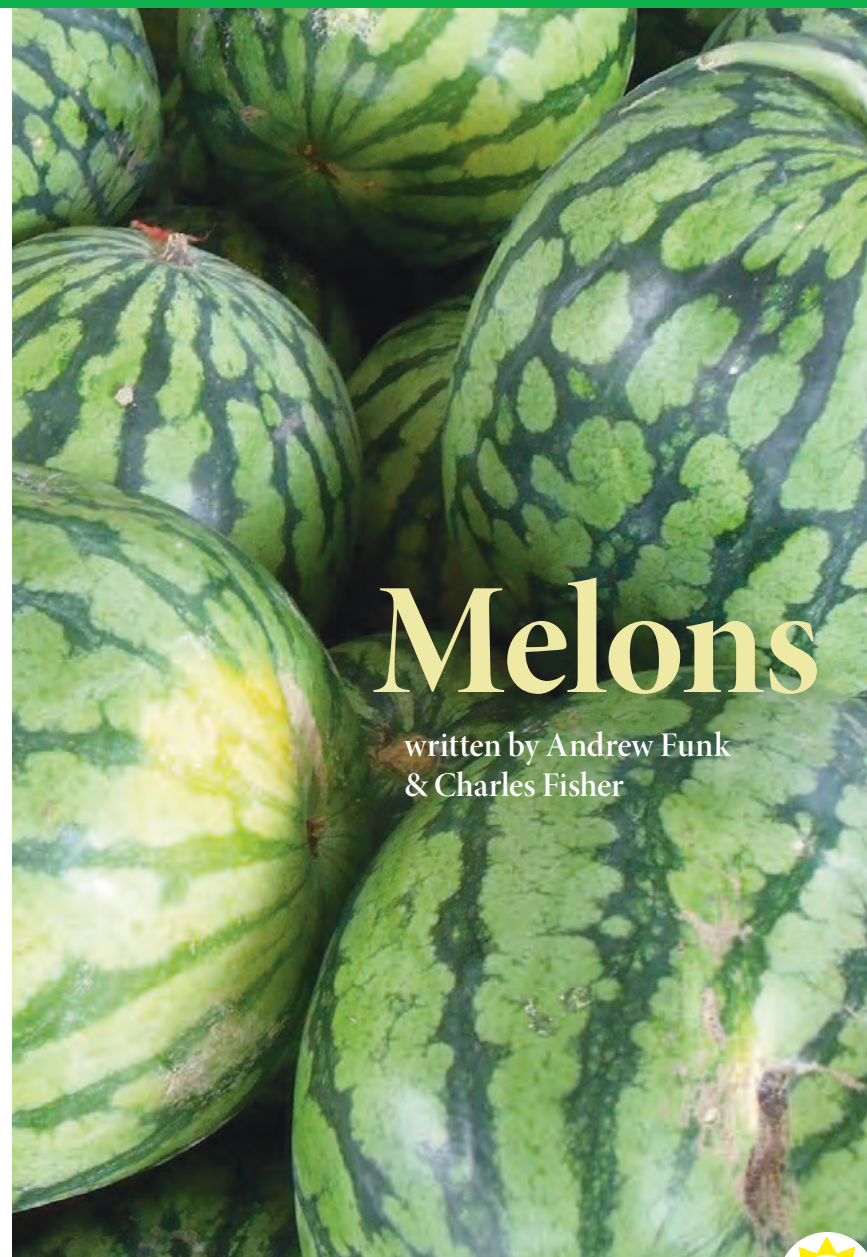


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# Melons

written by Andrew Funk  
& Charles Fisher

**Melons****Table of Contents**

Introduction .....	3
Growing Melons .....	4
Kinds of Melons .....	5
Fun with Melons .....	6
<b>Rate your thinking and reading .....</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Comprehension questions .....</b>	<b>7</b>

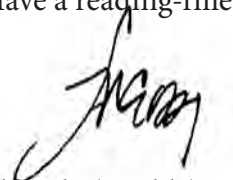
Dear Student,

I am a teacher who has studied how children learn to read well. What I have learned has been used to write SummerReads and programs like QuickReads® and Ready Readers.

The best way to be ready for the new school year is to read every day of the summer. You can choose to read a chapter or a book from SummerReads. But be sure to read it at least three times on the same day. Here's how to use SummerReads:

1. Start by reading it yourself. Mark the words that you don't know.
2. Next, ask someone to read with you. Get that person to help you with any words you don't know. You can even go to the computer to [www.textproject.org](http://www.textproject.org) and hear a recording of the books.
3. Last, you're going to read by yourself to answer the questions at the end of the book. You can go to the computer to find the answers.

Have a reading-filled summer!



Elfrieda (Freddy) Hiebert, Ph.D.

Inventor of the TExT model

## Melons



Photo: A square watermelon for sale in a shop in Japan, January 2007.  
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## Introduction

Melons are sweet fruits that people have enjoyed for thousands of years. Most melons grow on vines, have thick tough skins, and contain sweet fleshy fruit inside.

Most melons are round or oval. However, people have discovered how to make melons grow in strange shapes. In Japan, farmers put clear glass boxes over young melons. The melons grow into the shape of the box! Since then, people have grown melons in other strange shapes like hearts.

The most common melon in America is the watermelon. If you ever wondered how the watermelon got its name, here is a fact that should give you a clue. About 92% of a watermelon is water. For many people, nothing says summer like a picnic with watermelon. Since melons are summer fruits, eat them for snacks this summer. They will be hard to find in the winter!



**Melons****Growing Melons**

Why are melons summer fruits? For one thing, melons need at least three months to grow. That's why melons need to be planted in spring. But they also need a long stretch of hot weather to ripen. This is what makes the melon sweet and

tasty. Usually, melons are grown in areas where the weather is hot during the summer. In the United States, more than 75% of all watermelons are grown in southern and western states like California and Texas. But watermelons and other kinds of melons grow well in other parts of the country too.

As a melon plant grows, it produces flowers. Each flower can be the start of a melon. Just like other fruit plants, melon plants need help to grow tasty melons. We wouldn't have as many tasty melons if it were not for bees pollinating the melon flowers. As bees visit flowers, they get pollen on their legs and bodies. Some pollen that is already on the bee's body may rub off and stick to the part of the flower that makes the fruit. In order to have melons grow, there have to be some bees to carry the pollen from flower to flower.

Farmers often place beehives near their melon fields. Without bees, farmers would have to use a tiny brush to pollinate each flower. Next time you see a bee near a flower, leave it alone. It's doing important work!

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## Melons

### Kinds of Melons



There are two kinds of melons: muskmelons and watermelons. Some muskmelons, like cantaloupes, have rough skins. Other muskmelons, like honeydews, have smooth skins. Cantaloupes and honeydews may look different on the outside, but they are still the same kind of melons. All muskmelons have a hollow center with some stringy material holding the seeds in place. Most muskmelons ripen in late summer or early fall. Their skins can be yellow, pale green, or orange.

Watermelons typically have less flavor than muskmelons and contain more water. Usually, watermelons are heavier

than muskmelons, but some are as small as cantaloupes. The most popular watermelons have green rinds and black seeds. The flesh of a watermelon is typically red, but it can also be white, yellow or pink.

Some people love to eat watermelon but they hate the seeds. Scientists and farmers have found ways to produce watermelons that don't have seeds. But seedless watermelons don't make much pollen. Smart farmers plant seedless watermelons near watermelons that have seeds and lots of pollen. When bees visit, they pollinate both kinds of watermelon.

When watermelons are picked, farmers have to separate the seedless from the seeded watermelons. Farmers can usually tell which is which by just looking at the watermelons. Most farmers get good at telling them apart. But sometimes they make mistakes. People may think that they bought a seedless watermelon at the store. But, when they slice it up, the seeds will tell them that the farmer got it wrong.

**Melons****Fun with Melons**

A slice of watermelon on a summer day is a favorite snack for many Americans. Watermelons usually weigh between 15 and 35 pounds. On average, every American eats 15 pounds of watermelon, or one small watermelon, each year!

Watermelons are so popular that they are the source of contests. One is to see who can eat the most watermelon in a short time. Many people claim to have found special ways to

win these contests. Some people swallow the seeds. They say that they save time by not spitting out the seeds. Other people take small bites. They claim that they can eat more because smaller bites are easier to swallow than bigger bites.

There are also “seed spitting” contests. In these contests, people try to spit watermelon seeds as far as they can. The person who can spit a seed the longest distance is the winner.

People also have contests to grow the biggest watermelon. Some of the winning watermelons have weighed 200 pounds or more! If you want to join in on the watermelon fun, this is probably the least messy of the watermelon contests.

Why are watermelons such a treat in the summer heat? Since watermelons are made mostly of water, a piece of watermelon is like having a cool, sweet drink. But be careful! People are not the only ones who like watermelon. If you leave a slice out at a picnic, you may find that ants have won the eating contest!

**Melons****Rate your thinking and reading**

✓ Put a check each time you read one of the chapters of the book.

★ Give yourself a star for Sharing if you told someone about something you learned from reading the chapter.

✚ Give yourself a + if you can tell that your reading is getting smoother.

	1st Read	2nd Read	3rd Read	Sharing	Smoother
Introduction					
Growing Melons					
Kinds of Melons					
Fun with Melons					

**Comprehension questions****Growing Melons**

1. Which of the following do melon plants need to produce tasty melons?

- ☐ Lots of sand
- ☐ Lots of heat from the sun
- ☐ Lots of leaves

2. Bees help make melons by \_\_\_\_\_.

- ☐ bringing other insects to the melon plants
- ☐ making honey for the honey dew melons
- ☐ staying away from melon plants
- ☐ pollinating the melon flowers

**Kinds of Melons**

3. True or false? Watermelons have a hollow center where all the seeds of the melon can be found.

☐ true   ☐ false

4. Why do farmers plant seedless watermelons next to seeded watermelons?

- ☐ Because seedless watermelons do not produce enough pollen
- ☐ Because seedless watermelons burn easily in the sun
- ☐ Because seedless watermelons need space to grow
- ☐ Because seedless watermelons do not produce enough leaves to grow

**Fun with Melons**

5. True or false? Spitting out the seeds is very important in a watermelon eating contest.

☐ true   ☐ false

6. Why do most Americans like to eat watermelons?

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